A Matter of PreText, ConText, and Misconceptions

Bittersweet and Strange

Finding you can change

Learning you were wrong

~ Beauty and the Beast

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Harry woke to the grating scratch scratch scratch of an annoyed owl using its talons on his bedroom window. He blearily opened his eyes and immediately winced as the morning light pierced through the protection of one hastily thrown up hand.

Christ. He was never going to get used to waking after the sun. Three years of nightly runs, before dawn Floos, and crack-of-the-arse-end of morning field assignments and he was ruined for life. Even if he'd never ever have to do any of that shite again.

He felt beside him for a moment, force of habit leading his fingers, and was unsurprised by the distinct lack of another human body. The sheets were still cold; she probably hadn't even bothered returning.

Harry sighed and hauled himself out of bed, peeling back the crumpled, sticky covers.

Good thing, really. Considering the things he'd gotten up to last night.

At the window, irritated hoots joined the scratching.

"All right," he grumbled. "I'm coming." Harry scrubbed a hand across his stomach, briefly sliding from navel to chest to scritch morosely through the remnants of last nights activities, his pants hung low on his hips. Fucking ridiculous. He needed to start showering after.

A final scritch and his hand dropped back to his side. Or wipe off, or something. No more of this tucking away and falling directly to sleep business.

A brown speckled owl with tufts of feathers protruding from the top of its head like little horns stared disapprovingly at him from the windowsill.

He frowned back despite the very real urge to blush and hide beneath his overgrown fringe, only to realize he no longer had one. Besides, he was not going to let a bird embarrass him; he got his fill of disapproval from other sources, fowl weren't allowed a turn.

The window rattled and squealed when he pulled the latch up, causing the bird to squawk and flap its wings in alarm. A small part of him -- hell okay, all surface thoughts, took the opportunity to be smug.

The owl shot off into the sky before Harry could reach for it, hurling the missive it had clenched tightly in one clawed foot at his head in retaliation.

He supposed he should be grateful it was only a little white card and not a package.

But it was hard when he saw the distinct writing.

Harry sighed again, flipped the card into a bin and made his way to the toilet for a shower ...

He glanced back at the card dismally.

... and perhaps a wank.

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From the kitchen, sounds of life stirred. Harry entered freshly scrubbed, freshly dressed, freshly wanked. And maybe that last part was the problem, but he thought perhaps that it was more likely a symptom.

The other: the fact he couldn't walk into his own kitchen without bracing himself like a naughty schoolboy heading towards expulsion.

"I didn't think you'd spent the night," he said.

Not the most welcoming opening, no. Harry attempted to push non-existent hair back off his forehead, a left-over nervous habit from the days of the Dursleys he never lost no matter how many haircuts he got, and smiled warily at his infant sons currently squeezing bits of breakfast (one could only hope that's what it was) between their little fists.

"We got in early," Ginny replied, her tone every bit as welcoming as Harry's. "Mum's appointment isn't until three." She pushed a plate of food towards an empty chair, motioned for him to sit, swiped a practiced hand between Jamie's lips to extract the wrong end of his rubber spoon, and stuffed Al's own right ended spoon (full of green glop) into his mouth.

On the stove bacon popped and crackled in its own fat.

Harry stood behind his wife and watched her flaming hair gleam in the artificial light. Followed the swell of her breast to the soft curve of her belly, hidden beneath a thin muggle summer dress.

"Haven't seen you in a few."

"Mum needs us, Harry, you know that," Ginny said shortly.

"Haven't seen the kids either ... in just as long." And maybe, certainly, this time the accusation was there.

"And what am I to do with them while I'm gone? Leave them here? Besides, they like visiting their gran and she loves having them."

Harry's jaw clenched tightly until his teeth hurt, but he refused to respond when he couldn't remain speaking in an 'indoor voice' as Ginny recently had taken to saying. Indoor voice, please, boys. Harry, you're not a child, indoor voice.

"Sit, Harry."

Harry sat. And knew it wasn't fair to be bitter about being treated like a dog when he waited like one for her commands.

Ginny wrinkled her nose, shoved her chair back and returned to the stove, directing her words to the sizzling bacon as much as Harry, as far as he could tell.

"And what have you been up to then?" There was more statement than question in her tone, laced gingerly with disgust. She knew what the smell of freshly showered meant these days. As if to confirm his suspicions, a moment later she added, "Never mind. Don't answer that... it's clear."

"It's not a problem, Gin. Sometimes a man just has --"

He shot a glance at Jamie kicking his feet happily in figure eights.

"... certain needs," Harry finished.

"You have your appointment today," Ginny said. Certain obsessions, she was thinking. He knew her.

The boys babbled together in their high-pitch voices. Ginny swore they had actual words but Harry couldn't recognize anything more discernable than goblin gabble. Albus slapped the table with the soft palms of his green-gloop coated hands, his own legs began to pummel back and forth but with less joy and more indignation.

"I received the reminder this morning." Tongue tucked between teeth, he bit down on I just might not go. Ginny heard it anyway. She knew him.

He used to like how it went both ways. Now she only used her knowledge to be a ...

"You promised," Ginny said crossly.

... a goddamn nag. The real shit of it was, he had promised. There was no refuting the fact. And Harry Potter always kept his promises, right?

"Fucking Christ, Harry," she hissed, "you swore you'd do it."

Albus slapped harder and bits of green flew onto his brother. Jamie cackled delightedly and threw back a banana, all mushed into yellow slime. With Ginny over there attempting to draw blood, pretty soon they'd be able to taste the fucking rainbow.

Harry reached to wipe Jamie with a paper towel the same moment Ginny extended a damp cloth.

She got there first, just that bit faster despite his Seeker versus her Chaser, his Auror versus her Stay-At-Home Mother. "Harry, let go," she pressed, flashing his hand away. "I've got it."

He lingered there, his arm suspended motionless like a particularly final, limb specific Mobilis Stasis.

Ginny shot him a withering look and moved him forcibly. "Harry Potter, I can take care of my own son. I know what I'm doing."

Harry sighed and let go. It wasn't worth the fight. None of it was.

"I said I'd go, I'll go."

The baby cooed at her, something ending with a questioning inflection. And she smiled and said, "Yes, Al, you can have more. One moment, let mummy finish with the bacon."

And he thought, yes, she was right, her son.

He wished he was back in bed.

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After breakfast, Harry watched her gather up the children (not before clearing up the dishes, packing away the toys they'd strewn about the flat, setting aside lunch on a slow-cook spell, and changing two poopy nappies) with practiced ease, and a whole six hours before Molly's appointment.

When he'd pictured married life... it hadn't been like this. Of course he knew there'd be moments they wouldn't get along; he hadn't expected things to be perfect 100 per cent of the time. But the problem wasn't that they didn't get along, that would almost be preferable, at least they'd have to be in the same space long enough to yell. The problem was they didn't fit. He didn't fit.

If Molly and Arthur hadn't already had six other bodies living in the Burrow, Harry would have suggested moving in himself. If only to get a chance to actually see his family, be with them, learn how to be a part of them again. Instead of just apart.

Something of his thoughts must've been on his face. Ginny's own determined expression softened and she returned to him, Al on one hip, Jamie's little fingers peeking out from between the tight grip of her other hand. She leaned into him, briefly, her forehead pressed against his collarbone. Harry allowed his eyes to flutter shut for a moment, inhaled cinnamon and baby talc.

"Oh, Harry, you know I love you," she spoke into his shirt. "Don't sulk."

He allowed his arms to slide around her waist, slithering between the children and feeling their warm bodies pressed against the backs of his hands.

"Mum just needs a bit of help, you know she's not been the same since George..." Here she trailed off, swallowing hard even through the nine years, the countless births and Christmases and weddings, even now after all this time. He squeezed back, remembering the times when she would let him be her support, remembering how he felt then and what he knew that he never wanted to be a hero for anyone but her.

Then she pulled back and her game face was again set, her pre-Quidditch, pre-battle mask of fierce pride and determination. And he let go because experience had taught him the hard way how to be silent, when to let go, how to sacrifice his own pride to save his soul.

"You know, Harry, if you hadn't just up and quit, you wouldn't even notice we were gone." There was the slightest hint of challenge, a thread of sadness, but the annoyance would always be a sticking point between them.

She left unsaid, of course, that if he hadn't, she and the boys wouldn't be the only ones checking out. Harry didn't bother to argue.

"Boys, say bye to daddy."

He waved awkwardly to his sons, and watched them disappear through the Floo.

"Fuck this shit," Harry said aloud to an empty room, "I'm going back to bed."

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The problem was... the problem was this: Ginny was only happy if she felt useful and in control. Harry wasn't sure if this was a symptom of the war or a symptom of her upbringing. Being the only girl in a family of men, watching your one female influence wile away her life happily catering to the needs of her family; watching her be the strong one; the mender; the fixer; the disciplinarian; the be all and end all of all things. That had to warp a child.

His hands slid around his balls, rubbing slowly from base of his cock to his perineum (perineum, ha! The interesting things porn teaches) in gentle circles. He wasn't quite hard yet. But he was getting there, oh god how he was getting there.

And then, maybe it was even Harry himself. He hadn't really noticed her until she was doing, being -- helpful and useful and independent. That's when she stood out.

Harry pressed his head back into the pillows, tilting it at an angle to expose his throat, loving the vulnerable feeling of that despite having no one in the room to be vulnerable with. His thighs flexed and shivered already with anticipation, just the feeling of being balls-arsed naked was enough to get his

breath quickening.

And at first that was great, that was excellent, having her there, having someone he could depend on to show him the things that he didn't know -- how to give Teddy a bath, how to cook a meal for himself based on his own likes and wants, how to live without the threat of death or belittlement hanging over his head, how to just be for a bit.

Harry moaned a deep guttural thing, reveling in the ability to groan aloud uninhibited even while he hated the alone part of it.

But maybe he'd let those moments define their relationship. Because clearly she now thought that being with him, being a good wife and a good mother and a good daughter meant being, and doing, independently and alone.

He just wished he knew how to fix it; how to take it back.

Harry curled a fist around himself and tugged hard, tugged fast, his hand a practical blur. This one was going to be fast, so fast it hurt a bit. He'd already come twice within the last couple of hours and his dick was sore, and he only had thirty minutes to get to his damned appointment, but if he was going to sit there for an hour and talk to some judgmental stranger about his sexual practices, he was damned sure going to have sexual practices to discuss.

He came with a weak sputter, barely any liquid left to expel. Still felt good though; pleasure ran up his body in molten waves.

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The building wasn't anything at all like he expected. It was located right out in the open on a main-street of a popular wizard district. No secret side-street, tucked away into the crevices of Knockturn Alley, oh no. And the office itself was brightly lit, warm, cheery... The complete opposite of what he imagined a

mental hospital should look like. For one thing, where was the security? They'd just let him walk in with his wand like he wasn't potentially a sex-crazed sociopath hell bent on destroying the world one orgasm at a time.

Or at least hell-bent on doing something perverted and public, right here in what Harry assumed to be the waiting room although it looked rather more like a spa complete with massaging chairs, warm towels, helpful House-elves, some sort of spicy fragrance in the air. They certainly shouldn't have little girls just wandering about. Harry frowned at the particular little girl in question, currently coloring calmly in a book planted on her lap, her mother sitting nearby while a House-elf cracked and popped the woman's neck.

At the front behind a counter, sat a bored looking witch tapping her fingers against the counter-top and reading through what appeared to be the daily paper.

He approached her quickly before any of the elves decided to offer him the same treatment.

"How may I help you," she greeted him immediately in a soft voice but flat tone nonetheless. Her eyes remained averted, but her fingers stopped tapping.

"I'm here for my two thirty appointment? Last name is Potter."

"Mr. Potter," she said briskly, gaze never leaving the paper she spread before her. "A specialist has been assigned based on presenting concern. Please be advised that once you step foot in the building all communication from that point forward is strictly confidential. Certain measures have already been taken to make sure your appearance here, as well as all others present, remains classified. Upon exiting, which you are free to do at any time, you will find that you are unable to describe, name, or otherwise place any individual as a client, should you attempt to communicate to others. There are only three circumstances in which confidentiality is obligated to be broken, and those are: serious, i.e. fatale, threat to yourself; disclosure of elder or child abuse; and/or serious, i.e. fatale, threat to another. In such a case, your specialist will work closely with you during breach of confidentiality. Additionally, your specialist will give you further information regarding the exact details of your own unique situation, as each client is unique. Please sign there and there to affirm your understanding of these rights of confidentiality."

Harry blinked, absorbing what was clearly a well rehearsed spiel, then signed where she indicated. He almost expected flashing lights, a blazing signature, explosions, something unusual to happen. Nothing did. Upon crossing his last 't,' the witch looked up and smiled hugely at him. "Thank you for choosing Greengrass and Higgs Psychosocial Services. Your specialist has been informed of your arrival. You may go back to room 232. We congratulate your courage in taking this first step, Mr. Potter, and wish you the very best on your journey."

And that was that really. He was officially a barking perv, signed sealed and on his way to be delivered. Five (okay maybe six) months of a slightly increased libido and now he was here

Harry reached down as he walked and gently, unobtrusively, pressed the heel of his palm against his stiffening prick.

Fuck, he'd hotwired it to respond to anxiety. What a bloody stupid thing to do.

He wished there was time to have one off.

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It started with a gag gift their second anniversary. His and Ginny's. They'd married seven years after the war; a poor choice on their part given the wizarding world's hard-on for the number seven. Harry hadn't been so hounded since the Triwizard tournament, not even since directly after Voldemort's demise. There had already been so much to do, especially with Harry and Ron's rapid climb up the Auror ladder, leaving in their wake revolutionary changes in procedures and policies, turning the Ministry upside down and inside out to create something better than before. There was always something else to do. But marriage really couldn't be put off, Ginny wanted to wear her mother's dress before she started to show. They went minimalist instead, had a small gathering instead of the gigantic bash Ginny wanted, made due without the extra frivolities.

So their second anniversary Ron insisted on throwing him the stag party they hadn't had time for the first time around. Harry should have known anything short of humiliating, gratuitously oversexed, and

pissed off your head was a lost cause from the get-go. Ron had had two years to plan, after all.

Dancing girls, tit-shaped cake, cups upon cups overflowing with Ogden's finest... And then there were the sex-toy party favors, a collection of Muggle and magical.

Self-stimulators, lubricating potions, edible massage oils that tasted of three course meals or so the box claimed, magically modified cock-rings...

Harry probably could have withstood all of it, until the final gift Ron shoved in his hands with a drunken wink and a "after the first five this is gonna be your best friend, take it from me, Harry." Ron'd had eight himself; he should know.

He hadn't opened it until he'd gotten home. The wrapping itself was discreet enough, inside though Harry extracted a gigantic torch shaped object that had clearly been modified magically because Harry had never seen a torch that had an arse where the light-bulb should be.

At first Ginny'd liked it, thought it was fun, wanted to use it on him and with him, every night. Then later as their schedules began to match less and less, field assignments became more regular, the boys got a little older and a little more demanding, it was just more convenient.

There were three settings: mouth, arse, or cunt. The face of the torch shifted with mood because sometimes you felt like being sucked off, other times nothing would do but a good fuck.

Even then, deep in the grips of denial so strong he didn't recognize what he was denying, Harry knew what it meant when it never pulled the setting for cunt.

And neither one of them could hide the fact he came harder with a portable wank-case than he ever had with his own wife.

After a while Ginny hadn't thought it was so interesting anymore.

Harry couldn't stop.

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He knocked on room 232 with a sense of foreboding that had never done him wrong while he was an Auror; so he wasn't entirely surprised to recognize the familiar pointy features and distinct platinum blond hair of one Draco Malfoy on the other side of that door.

"What are you doing here, Malfoy?" A mere year and a half ago that would have been a demand, seething with anger. Harry was proud of himself. Somewhere along the way he'd learned some decorum... or at least he'd learned that more often than not it wasn't worth emoting that much energy all the time.

"Hello, Mr. Potter," Malfoy said pleasantly. "I'm Draco Malfoy. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Harry blinked at him. "What the fuck are you playing at?" Okay, so he wasn't all the way there. Harry was man enough to admit he still had his moments.

Malfoy didn't bat an eye. "If you'd be so kind to come in, I can tell you a little about myself and my personal qualifications and we can begin the healing process together."

It was almost creepy how serene Malfoy was. Not even a light flush from the boy of reds and pinks. Or at least that was how he was nine years ago; Harry didn't believe it was possible to change that much.

But then again, look where he was. He wasn't one to talk.

"I reiterate," Harry tried again. "What the fuck are you doing here, Malfoy."

"I've been assigned as your psychosocialist, Mr. Potter." Unperturbed, Malfoy moved further into the room, letting his body language and use of space beckon Harry in without saying a word. Harry had been an Auror, he knew the moves. He remained planted at the doorway.

Malfoy sat in a plush-looking recliner type chair, and crossed his legs at the knee. "Now, I've read the details of your chart but it's always better to hear from the client himself. If you would..."

He continued on, of course, but it was somewhere after "read the details of your chart" that Harry blanked out for a moment. He began to suffer from an unfortunate type of hearing loss that came accompanied by black spots dancing behind his eyes, a constriction of the airways, and a spontaneous outbreak of sweat. If he fainted right here and now, no one would blame him.

The only thing that stopped him was the idea of being helpless in the presence of Malfoy. The last time that happened he'd come away with a broken nose.

"No." Harry was proud of how steady that sounded, he hadn't been sure it would be prior to letting it out. "I'm not doing this with you."

Malfoy let the first inkling of displeasure appear on his face, a small frown that reeked of insincerity. "Your wife will be disappointed, but it's your choice. You are free to come or go as you need."

"Ginny will understand."

Malfoy was already shaking his head before the sentence was completed. A small frown appeared, so distinctly disingenuous as to make the otherwise handsome features of his face into caricatures of themselves. "Mrs. Potter is well aware of the situation. I'm afraid there were few other available choices. Therapists that specialize in sexual deviance of the particular kind you're plagued with are hard to come

by. I'm rather a maverick in my field and a bit of an expert on the topic besides. It's really me or nothing."

And if there was ever anything that pinpointed exactly why this oversexed issue was an issue, classifying Malfoy as handsome was it.

Malfoy shifted slightly in his chair with Harry's silence. Briefly, irritation fluttered over his features. "Leave it to you, Potter. You always did have to be special." His tone was bright enough but behind it lingered a glimpse of annoyance. Oddly enough it was this that finally put Harry at ease. A Malfoy without his bitter was not a Malfoy to be trusted.

Not that he'd be trusting any sort of Malfoy at all, really.

"Look," Malfoy said uncrossing his legs and leaning forward, crisply breaking the silence Harry wouldn't. "It's been nearly a decade since the war and the last time we've seen each other. I'm adult enough to put our pasts behind us and work with you as a professional. I'd heard that you'd done a bit of growing up too over the years."

When Harry still said nothing, lingering on the threshold, wavering between entering and leaving altogether, he continued in a softer beseeching tone. "How about we try this for a few sessions, see how it goes. If you remain uncomfortable with the arrangement, I can transfer you to one of my lesser informed colleagues and you can take your chances with them. According to your wife, you have a problem, Potter. I'm in the business of curing problems. Let me do my job."

It was the way those words rang of I have a debt to settle that made the choice for him. Harry knew all about debts. He went in and shut the door.

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Later at home, Harry entered their silent flat and turned on every light they owned. It only made things

brighter not less ... lonely.

He immediately went for the telly and flipped it on. His chest released some tension with the background voices, and unclenched completely as he got to the higher level channels, the ones that would have to be blocked in a few years if Ginny ever spent long enough in her own flat that the boys would actually get a chance to watch it.

He stopped when a flash of tanned skin and writhing motion revealed itself to be a threesome of energetic aquatic intercourse. Two blonds and a brunette, Harry noted absently. Pretty typical really, the most common combination he'd encountered. Although, perhaps not two men... and the underwater bit was pretty new. They were either part fish, making use of invisible bubble-head charms, or the whole thing was craftily edited. Harry punched the mute button before tossing the remote away and slumping down in the opposite end of the sofa, because two months in to this thing he'd realized why no one watched porn for the dialogue. And besides, it was easier to think without the fake moans, theatrical wet slaps, and stereotypical digitally enhanced elevator music.

He unzipped himself one-handed, head tilted at just the right angle to watch a tiny brunette swallow an improbably gigantic cock to the base, while holding her breath underwater, and wanking another.

Harry's own appropriately proportioned cock and balls slid free; not quite interested yet but on their way as the tension of the day drained from the rest of his body and he got to work.

The thing was... Well, over the last couple of months he'd been doing some heavy thinking and, despite how unconvinced Malfoy had managed to sound earlier with a single wordless snort and one raised eyebrow, Harry was completely capable of introspection.

And the problem was this: he didn't friend easy. Lately he'd been thinking a lot about childhoods and rearing, wondering what his virtual invisibility would do to Jamie and Al, wondering how much of a shit father it made him to admit that he'd been happy just with Teddy. He'd been done. He didn't like quickly or love fast, he waited, and he knew it probably had a lot to do with the Dursleys and then everything that came after. Just look at the Weasleys; they were his family but there was still only one Weasley, even after all these years, that he would fire-ring at midnight just to hear another's voice.

He didn't have to be a genius to know it said poor things about his marriage that he wasn't talking about his wife.

He loved Ginny. He adored her. But they'd never been friends like that.

To his credit, he was doing this ridiculous therapy-shit for her, that should be testament enough of his love. He loved his boys equally, but he didn't know what he could do for them, didn't know how to love them and lose them and not fuck them all up.

On the telly the girl screamed and thrashed her way through her third orgasm, and the two men finally turned to each other.

Harry surrendered to his own.

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"How often do you engage in these activities, Potter?"

"None of your fucking business," Harry responded cheerfully.

Malfoy briefly look irritated, the expression flashing across his face with the barest downward twist of his lips and then gone. At least it was a change from the bored disinterest of two sessions ago, which was even bigger of an improvement over the disturbing reality of Malfoy pretending to be pleasantly caring three sessions before that.

Irritated Harry could handle. Irritated was more honest. He wasn't sure just when exactly he began to care about Malfoy being truthful but he supposed if he was going to give this a shot (as he'd promised Ginny) he wasn't going to be the only one baring his soul.

"Once a day?" Malfoy pressed, hands clasped lightly in his lap, tone registering his lack of investment in Harry's answer. "Twice? Upwards of three times?"

"What part of what I said did you miss? The 'fuck' or the 'you'?"

"Your speech has degenerated since Hogwarts," Malfoy noted mildly. Damn, not even a flash this time.

Harry shrugged, one shoulder lifting and dropping. "There's only so many 'fuck-me fuck-me fuck-me's' you can listen to 'til they start peppering your language." Harry affected a breathless falsetto that blended the words into a pre-orgasmic moan.

The hands resting lightly in Malfoy's lap clenched. Just the once, the slightest of motions, but Harry was reasonably sure he hadn't imagined it. Nor the soft flush that began to spread up Malfoy's bared throat. Well, that was interesting.

"So you admit you watch an excess of pornographic material," Malfoy said. "What exactly would you define as excess?"

"I don't know about excess but, yes, I am a bit of a connoisseur." Harry smiled broadly and added in his best lascivious tone. "I can talk like a porn-star too now. Care to hear?"

Christ. That was a flush. It spread up Malfoy's throat and pinkened his cheeks the gentlest red.

"How about we talk about my fantasies instead? Would you like to hear about that? It's a lot more interesting than how often I get off," Harry teased. "How about the one where I'm trapped in a thunderstorm in the heart of Muggle London, and I'm drenched --"

And that! What was that? Was that a fidget?

How the hell was he a sex therapist when he was so obviously uncomfortable --

Harry looked harder at Malfoy's folded hands (cupped now, covering more than resting) and reconsidered, maybe easily aroused was a better term.

"That's all the time we have for today, Potter." Malfoy sounded a little parched, not quite breathless but maybe a little hoarse. "I'd like you to think about why you use deflection so often in response to simple questions and we'll pick back up there next week."

Harry rose immediately; admittedly slower to reach the door this week than all those previous.

"You look good, you know. I didn't say before but you do."

The moment it was out of his mouth he knew he meant it. It was true. Without Voldemort, Malfoy'd gained some color, put back on some weight. Maybe even grown a few inches. Gone was the reed-thin youth that was all knees and elbows, drawn tight until it looked as if he'd snap against his own skeleton. Or topple over with one good stiff breeze. Gone too was the nasty, falsely self-confident sneer of ages eleven through sixteen, and now that Harry had exited his own puberty he could recognize it for what it was: a spoiled little boy for the first time encountering things outside of his control putting on a show of superiority.

In place, Malfoy was fuller somehow. Rounder, more... whole. Though it wasn't his body line, or his features. His chin remained as pointy as ever, his nose one long and sharp projection dominating his face. And he might have finally gained those extra stones he needed, but he was also still all angles.

However, without the dark circles, without the sneer, without the unhealthy gray he'd gone around with during the latter of his teenage years; all those sharp and angled parts unimpressive in a singular context, were stunning as a whole.

Malfoy said nothing but his expression shifted to confused and Harry couldn't blame him. He was a bit

confused himself.

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It became a game. How long would it take before impassive turned to embarrassed, irritation to arousal? How much innuendo did he have to throw out before Malfoy gave up asking about 'obsessions' and 'compulsions' and 'addictions' and started answering Harry's questions. And did Malfoy like it better when Harry was explicit ---

"And there was this one scene where she was taking them both at once. Their hard cocks rubbing against each other in her cunt as they fucked. From all the groaning, it felt just as good as it looked. Do you think that's more bisexual or experimental?"

Or complimentary --

"You must've kept up with Quidditch over the years, nothing gives you thighs like that quite like clinging to a broom thirty yards above ground. Now that we're no longer rivals I can admit you were always breathtaking to watch."

Or subtly suggestive with body language instead of words. For instance, exchanging his typical "work-week even though I'm no longer working"-denims for his "lounging around the house during the weekends in my size too tight if only someone else were here to admire how well these hug my bits"-denims got him an aborted eye-fuck and suppressed swallow.

It was a riot. Possibly not so much for Malfoy.

Made it all the more fun. Harry wasn't quite sure which part was more interesting, the many shades of uncomfortably aroused Malfoy could turn... or just the part where he was able to get acquainted with this new Malfoy.

Harry hadn't much wondered what had happened to him, after the war. First there were the trials and he didn't need to wonder, he knew, he'd testified for Malfoy after all. Then he was busy defending that decision to Ron, especially after his testimony was instrumental in getting both Malfoy and Narcissa cleared as allies, and he hadn't wanted to think about anything. Not Albus, not fallen loved ones, certainly not reluctant Death-Eaters.

But now he couldn't help it. Malfoy was so different.

Or maybe the difference was in Harry himself. Maybe Malfoy had always bitten his bottom lip when he wanted to laugh but didn't think it was proper; maybe he'd always been capable of being polite; maybe he'd always referenced obscure literature and invented elaborate metaphors that couldn't possibly make sense to anyone besides Malfoy until he'd explained it and then Harry was left wondering how he hadn't got it in the first place. Maybe he'd always been slightly shy in a brash sort of way, shoving aside nerves by forcing forward self-confidence.

Maybe it was Harry who just hadn't known.

"You're a lot better at this than I expected," Harry said, relaxed in his chair. Amazingly that wasn't a lie either. He hadn't lied about anything he'd told Malfoy in here. "If I had ever thought about you being a sex therapist, that is."

Malfoy looked at him, incredulous. "Good at this? You must be joking, Potter. I'm pants at this shit."

Harry had never thought he'd be defending Malfoy to Malfoy but there it was. "No, really, you're easy to talk to --"

"Easy to goad, you mean," Malfoy cut off, knowingly. He didn't sound upset about it; resigned maybe, amused. Somewhere in the last couple of weeks Harry had become an expert on the different tones a Malfoy could take. Or at least this particular Malfoy. It felt surprisingly good. "The only reason I even have a job is because my ex-wife is part owner. She's the Greengrass in Greengrass and Higgs."

"I didn't know you'd married."

"It was brief," Malfoy said. "Exactly long enough to realize major life decisions shouldn't be decided while pissed out of your mind and in the middle of an identity crisis, actually."

Harry refrained from observing that Malfoy had a pattern of making bad decisions while in the middle of some emotional turmoil. He didn't think it'd be appreciated. And wasn't that a change? A month ago he would have brought it up specifically because it'd bother Malfoy.

Instead Harry stayed quiet, allowing Malfoy his own space to talk.

"It probably never would have happened at all if I'd only realized my life didn't change after the war. Everything important had already happened during it. I just had to learn how to pick up the pieces." He let his head fall backwards to rest against the back of his chair and closed his eyes. "There were more than I expected."

Harry closed his own. "We've all had better days."

Malfoy let out a soft chuckle. "Yes, that's one way of putting it. During... I used to think that if I just lasted through it... did what he told me to and held on, then that was it. I'd get a pass. Didn't work out that way though, did it?"

Behind his closed lids Harry saw his younger self pouring poison down Dumbledore's throat, thinking just this just this just this just get through this.

"Nothing's the way I've wanted or imagined. Except for Scorpius," Malfoy said softly.

Harry felt the gentle weight of something tossed onto his lap, and opened his eyes to Malfoy studying

him... no, studying the moving photo of a little blond baby blinking innocently up from a mound of pastel pillows. Almond shaped eyes a shade darker than Malfoy's own light grey, and a head full of straight light blond hair, there was no question whose child stared openly back at Harry.

"My son," Malfoy confirmed. "And even he was a surprise. I always knew I'd have a child to continue my family line, I just hadn't expected to love him so much."

Harry's finger traced the lines of the baby's fat cheek, watched him grin open mouthed and happy, exposing a mouth full of gums and the smallest of dimples. "How old is he?"

"Nine months and six days. I can't believe how quickly he's growing. He's starting to talk already, says 'dada.'" Malfoy's voice was awed and his eyes lit up. It was clear how delighted those two syllables made him. "And he's trying to stand by himself. He might even be walking before he's one. Everything happens so fast, it's so hard to keep up. You should know, you've got two."

"Three," Harry corrected automatically. "Teddy Lupin is my godson but he might as well be mine, too. I've always tried to be there for him like a father. He lives in Austria with his grandmother, but he comes to visit fairly frequently. When he turned five I had him for that whole year, we had great fun, just me and him. Gin was wonderful too, practically a second mother to him. She was so good with him, still is, through tantrums and picky eating, and all. I knew then she'd make an excellent mother. Actually, it wasn't long after that that Jamie was conceived."

Though when he'd said excellent mother, he'd been talking about for Teddy, not suggesting they make one.

"That's right. Aunt Andromeda did move after the war."

Harry blinked hard at the immediate gut-wrench that sucker-punched him, worse than a thousand Portkeys jerking his stomach into his spine. It was a decision he understood but still didn't agree with to this day. He looked at little baby Malfoy and wondered how his father would have felt if he was moved out of the country, wondered if visits would be enough, if he could replace him with another child. No, Harry didn't think he could.

"Andromeda, won't you please reconsider?"

"You don't understand, Harry, you got out. You don't have to deal with the constant reminders, or the pity from strangers, or the whispers. I can't stand to stay in England. I can't. I'm doing this for both Teddy and I."

"He'll just be so far away."

"I'd go, too, you know I would --"

"Harry, no."

"-- but there's my job, and Ginny..."

"Harry, no. You have a life here."

"I promised Remus I'd take care of him. I ... I promised Teddy."

"He has me."

"I'll miss him so much. He won't remember me, he's just a baby."

"He's three, and there are Portkeys, and fire-rings, and holidays. He'll see so much of you there's no chance he'll forget."

Harry forced a smile. "I went Muggle, she just went. I guess we all handle things in our own way."

"We could talk about that," Malfoy offered.

Harry's fingers curled gently around the picture, and he forced himself to toss it back before he crushed it accidentally. There was no reason to keep it, though a part of him really wished he could. "No thanks, really." Then amended because Malfoy looked so disappointed, and Harry... Harry almost wanted to. "Not yet."

"Didn't think so." Malfoy looked down at the picture he'd caught one-handed, plucked from the air like a snitch, then tucked it away again. "Fine, tell me about the Aurors. I'd heard you quit but didn't know if I believed it until Weasley confirmed on your initial contact. Hadn't you been wetting yourself about an opportunity there since Hogwarts? What changed?"

Harry smiled gratefully at the subject change, and Malfoy's inability to say "Mrs. Potter." No matter how professional he tried to be, he never quite managed to call her that, like it morally offended him to refer to her as anything other than a Weasley.

Neither one of them realized they'd gone over session by forty minutes until they were saying goodbye.

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There were times Hermione reminded him so much of that little buck toothed know-it-all he'd met half a lifetime ago that he'd miss the "them" they used to be with a physical pain, a sort of hollowing out of his insides. None so much as when she was pregnant and swollen, hair a tangle of frizzy curls and generally looking harassed.

He didn't know what it was about Hermione being pregnant that brought out her inner eleven year old, but possibly it had to do with mood swings. And her tendency to call Ron "Ronald" in that superior tone.

"Try not to have so much fun you forget to put Rose down for her nap," Hermione cautioned. "You know how you do, Ronald." Hermione was a flurry of reminders and last minute instructions as she headed out the door. "Rose, mind your Dad and Uncle Harry."

Their adorable little buck-toothed, freckled faced toddler nodded seriously without looking up from her art-work: all Hermione with Ron's grin, planted firmly in Harry's lap. Harry couldn't wait to see what parent his god-daughter ended up emulating at Hogwarts. Most days it was a toss up.

"I'll ring you later, enjoy yourselves."

"Right, Hermione, just not too much," Harry agreed, but it was too late she was gone.

Ron tracked his wife's departure fondly, and smiled.

"Just what is it she expects us to get up to in her absence?"

Ron shrugged. "I don't think she's ever quite forgiven me for your second anniversary."

Harry laughed. "I don't think I've quite forgiven you for that." Harry readjusted his hold on Rose, shook a crayon out of the box for her automatically when her hands fumbled with the opening. "How are things at the Ministry?"

"If you hadn't dropped us all the moment you quit, you'd know the answer yourself."

It was Harry's turn to shrug. He had his reasons. Ron already knew most of them. He couldn't be what the Ministry needed of him. He didn't want to live his life like that anymore. He didn't want to try.

The only thing he missed really was working with Ron, the camaraderie of shared goals, shared evenings. Changing their world one righted cock-up at a time.

Ron crossed his arms over his chest and leaned back in his chair, tilting precariously on its back two legs, and stubbornly refusing to answer Harry's question. They'd been through this before, too. If you really want to know, Harry, you'll go find out yourself. Scrimgeour isn't the sum of the Ministry.

Ron leaned forwards again before Harry had a chance to give him a mini cardiac arrest. Despite the eight years it'd been like this, he always managed to forget Harry didn't have any magical provisions in his entirely Muggle flat, and was usually reminded only when forced by some sort of unfortunate collision with a hard flat surface.

"What's going on?" Ron asked, changing the subject gracelessly while studying him critically.

"What do you mean?"

"You haven't dressed in robes since you quit. It's been 24/7 Muggle-topia. Something special happening?"

"No, I ... I'm just heading to a therapy session later, that's all."

Ron stared at him, befuddled; like that explanation did nothing in the way of explaining. "I thought you didn't want any part of the wizarding world anymore?"

Harry fingered the hem on the sleeve of his robe thoughtfully. "I think I just needed a break."

"So are you done with that then? Because, I'll tell you, mate, I've missed you."

Rose shoved the box of crayons into Harry's hand and demanded he find the yellow for her sun.

"Everyone has," Ron said softly.

Harry didn't know how to answer. He'd always known he'd return when there was something worth returning for, but until this moment he hadn't known he'd found it.

Worse yet, he didn't know what to do with that knowledge, because fuck, was it Malfoy?

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The night air was cool around him, brushing goose-bumps onto his bare skin. He could shut the windows, cover over, get dressed, any number of things. But he didn't, he just lay there bare as the day he was born and horny as an unmated Grindylow. It felt good. It was ... grounding, being bare.

Harry always preferred the term bare to naked, but he didn't know why. Never thought much about it. Malfoy wouldn't care either, although once they'd had an entire conversation on the merits of society adopting formerly incorrect language as a part of acceptable speech due to popular demand. Which ended in Malfoy snorting and proudly exclaiming he'd sooner fuck a herd of "sheeps" before he'd succumb to the pressure of illiterate soft-brained Muggles and used the word "fishes" as a plural noun.

Harry twitched down below at the thought of Malfoy blowing the hair from his eyes, indignant and stunning, his lower lip a little wet where he'd bitten it. "Fish not fishes," he'd said. Always so correct with perfect enunciation.

He was more than a little hard already and the thought of Malfoy saying a different 'f' word caused a fresh pulse of pre-ejaculate to pump from his cock. Harry groaned but didn't touch himself yet. At first he had been too embarrassed to do things like this: wank to images of someone he knew.

But now he knew better. It didn't mean anything. It didn't mean he was going to fuck him, didn't mean he was going to touch him, most times it didn't even mean he found the other person sexually desirable.

Fucking big lie that was though.

Malfoy was beautiful, lithe and strong, and so fucking brilliant. Dead funny with that dry sort of sarcasm, and his smile, the way he'd hand it out like rewards.

Of course he'd want -- Of course he'd be thinking stupid things. Malfoy understood him, Malfoy challenged him, Malfoy made magic seem magical again, as trite and pathetic that was.

If he wasn't married, if he didn't have Ginny, if Malfoy --

Harry curled his hand around his fully erect penis, foreskin pulled all the way back and the tip glistening. If Malfoy would just stop looking at him with that reluctant helpless desire, flushed and burning.

"I thought Malfoy was supposed to be helping."

Harry jerked, his hand flung his penis away so hard the stiff organ flopped back and slapped painfully against his stomach. If there was ever anything more awkward than your wife walking in on you rubbing one off while thinking about your therapist, Harry had yet to meet it.

"Sometimes a wank is just a wank, Ginny." Harry's heart thumped hard in his chest.

"Maybe I could believe that if you ever did anything else." Her tone wasn't scathing despite her words and the gentle warning in them that said she could be, she could be very angry right now... except she wasn't that sort of woman. Ginny watched him from the doorway, assessing. He didn't bother to cover himself. They'd made two children together, she knew what he looked like without his clothes.

"I thought it might be helping. You're different lately," she observed.

I'm happy, was the first thought that shot to Harry's mind. And how funny that it should, he hadn't

thought he'd been miserable before. Hard on its heels the equally unhelpful (and hurtful), How could you tell? You're never here.

"Where are the boys?" he asked instead.

"At mum's." Ginny shed her own clothes as she finally moved in, hips swinging invitingly. "I haven't seen much of you lately, thought we might spend the night together."

Harry was still rock hard from his earlier thoughts, and the fact that lately his cock was always one half-step of a mood away from excruciatingly erect.

Harry let her come to him because she was his wife. Because she was beautiful and amazing and he loved her. He loved her curves and her soft skin, and her deep red hair, and her long lashes that fluttered uncontrollably when she came. He let her fuck herself on him, and he found his own pleasure in her body, because they'd spent most of their lives together in one manner or another. Because he'd saved her when she was eleven and she'd saved him when he was seventeen by loving him back. He let her, but it was as arousing as an old habit you'd forgotten to let go. Like running your hand through hair that didn't exist anymore because it'd been cut off three years ago.

Later, after, they lay together, Ginny curled against his side. Her head was cushioned by his shoulder, and his hand rubbed circles against her hip.

"I just don't understand," Ginny said, whispered into his clavicle. "Why do you need to wank so often? You've got me, we have a pretty satisfying sex life, I think."

It would have been too cruel to contradict her, when she knew the lie for what it was regardless; so he gave her a lesser truth.

"I do it to think," Harry admitted. "I don't even imagine situations anymore." Not normally. His tongue tripped over that, lie, half-truth. "At first it was for the pleasure of it, and then I realized how everything clears away when you wank. Worry, fear, anxiety, doubt. It streamlines down to pleasure and motion and

then just logic when all the emotion drains out of me. It's... comforting."

"What, like a baby sucking its thumb?"

"That's not quite the analogy I'd make," Harry said dryly, "but if you want to get vividly disturbing about it, then I guess so."

Ginny rolled away from him and sat up, her brows wrinkled. "Harry, what do you have to worry about?"

Harry didn't answer. If she didn't know, then his wanking wasn't the problem.

Finally she got up and went to the toilet. When she returned he pretended he was asleep and she let him. In the morning she was gone again.

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"Ginny came home last night," was the first thing he said to Malfoy during their next session later the next day. "She spent the night. First time in weeks."

"Did you fuck her," was the first thing out of Malfoy's mouth in response, and his entire posture stiffened, his eyes blazing. They'd left indifferent in the dust somewhere too far back for Harry to do something about it.

Harry locked eyes with him, refusing to back down. "Of course. She's my wife. It was the first time for that in months."

Malfoy's jaw clenched and Harry wondered if he'd always been this obvious. "As your counselor I have to

advise you against doing so again," he said tightly. "In fact, you will absolutely under no circumstances engage in any sexual activity with another party --- for a year."

"No sex for a year?!"

"Exactly. And that includes penetrative, non-penetrative, and oral forms."

Harry's heart slammed against his collarbone. "Really," Harry said, voice low. He didn't know what he was doing, but he couldn't stop doing it. "I wouldn't want to disobey your therapeutic recommendation..."

Somehow he'd made it to Malfoy's side of the room, and how funny that was, as close as they'd gotten over the last few months... Neither of them had ever breached the other's personal space. But here they were now.

"So what about a compromise?"

Up close, Malfoy was just as gorgeous as he was from a distance. More so. A light perspiration beaded the deep flush of his throat. His chest heaved, and he smelled of cloves of garlic -- the warm buttery stuff Ginny would sometimes make with Lasagna.

Jesus Christ, what was he doing thinking of Ginny?

No. What was he doing not thinking of Ginny?

Harry almost came to his senses then and backed up again, if not for Malfoy's aborted wriggle, just a lift and drop of one hip, barely a centimeter of movement really. But it was enough. Harry looked down and was greeted with the tightly swollen crotch of Malfoy's trousers, his erection pushing out the fabric in a long thick line. He was lost. "What kind of compromise," Malfoy asked, the words stuttering the faintest

bit as he tried to control his breathing.

One hand on either side of Malfoy's hips, gripping the arms of the chair in nearly the same stranglehold Malfoy was, Harry lowered himself to his knees and looked up through the half-lidded curtains of his lashes. "What if I promise to only fuck you?"

Malfoy groaned long and loud, all high-pitched and wavering, his legs parting almost unconsciously to allow Harry room to slide between them.

That was answer enough.

Harry pulled Malfoy's legs around him, rested his head down in Malfoy's lap, and let his cheek rub over the hard lump he found there. Mouth open, panting out great heave-fuls of air, he blew warm gusts of the stuff over what he imagined to be the tip of Malfoy's cock.

Malfoy shuddered and rocked up into it. On each breath, his thighs clenched and his groin tilted faster and closer into Harry's face. Harry hadn't been this excited in a long time. From Malfoy's reaction, he hadn't either.

Completely unconsciously, just reveling in the moment, Harry brought one hand down and began rubbing gentle circles over it, extended his tongue. His tongue rasped against the fabric, cotton or wool or something, he didn't know. But clean and soft, it tasted of nothing he could name and salt. He licked it and rubbed him, from waist-band to deep into the juncture where crotch met seat of his trousers. Each lick was more insistent than the last; tongue spread flat and wide; or pointed and firm, tracing each crease, each wet spot, each loose thread. Harry could taste the individual particles of fabric though he couldn't name the taste, felt the slippery slide of pre-ejaculate seeping through the material in salty wet bursts.

Malfoy's groans went higher, breathy whimpers now, lacking any form as words. His legs alternately spread wider or tightened around Harry as he worked, as if Malfoy couldn't decide which felt better: the hedonistic pleasure of baring it all, or the constant pressure of something warm and wet against him.

As the fabric got wetter from their combined efforts, Harry could feel each ridge and dip of Malfoy's cock. There was the head, round and softly giving even through his trousers. And there, that was the sensitive curl of skin beneath the head that Harry couldn't wait to play with once he got Malfoy stripped. He'd to flick his tongue there, rub it around his mouth and just nuzzle, breathe him in. And that, that was the shaft, hard and twitching. It was so long, so fucking thick.

But Jesus he couldn't feel Malfoy's balls through this fucking thing. He wanted to taste him, wanted to feel everything.

Harry turned his head fully into Malfoy's lap and opened wide, sucking wherever he landed.

Malfoy's hips practically flew, they were humping Harry's face so hard. It was so fucking good. Malfoy emitted a steady stream of incoherent babble, rocking and twisting and humping, while Harry lowered his head further, mouth, nose, cheeks, chin, everything involved, and sucked long.

His cries got impossibly louder and the material got impossibly wetter as Malfoy came, body thrusting through it.

Harry gave it one more lick, rubbed once more, and was rewarded with a final pump of ejaculate, before leaning back to look at what he'd done.

Malfoy was a wreck. Head thrown back, one arm flung across his eyes, his face wasn't just flushed, his cheeks burned red. He pulled in great gulps of air rapidly through his overworked lungs, so much so that his stomach as well as his chest rose and fell. His pants were ruined. Sticky-wet, they clung to Malfoy's lap, in what had to be uncomfortable.

So Harry would just have to help him out of them.

Malfoy lay limply as Harry pulled his trousers off. He had to peel the pants off underneath those, wriggled the wet bundle down past smooth toned thighs, around firm calves, and off altogether to land in a thump with Malfoy's shoes at the bottom of his chair.

Oh, God. He was just as beautiful as Harry'd expected. Malfoy was so pale that all the blood that had rushed to his prick turned it raw red, a bright flush of skin distinct from the pale cream of his belly. Proudly extended from a nest of honey-blond curls, his cock wasn't in the least bit soft despite the mess of saliva and ejaculate that slicked it. Wet and warm, it smelt strongly of the stuff; looked like it should hurt, should be sore. Harry swallowed hard, and couldn't help but to smooth a gentle consoling kiss, more tongue than lips, across it. Then he just had to suck it into his mouth because one lick wasn't enough.

Malfoy whimpered, his back arched and his thighs trembled, but otherwise he didn't protest as Harry licked him clean. And then, amazingly, sucked on him until his 'after orgasm' erection became a 'pre-orgasm' erection, and Malfoy was shooting pre-come again, this time directly onto Harry's tongue.

He could stay there all day, drinking him down, except Harry's own cock was a steel bar in his pants thrumming with want.

Harry let go, and Malfoy's body sagged. He was so bloody ridiculously gorgeous.

"Last night, I've never fucked Ginny before and felt so guilty," Harry said. "And yet I'm here with you and all I can think about is how amazingly beautiful you are, when by rights I should feel like shit for betraying Ginny. What do you think that means?"

"Stop talking about her," Malfoy growled. "I don't want to hear about her."

"Malfoy --"

"Call me by my name."

"I am --"

"Draco. Call me Draco."

Something fell into place, something unclenched or let go or streamlined the same as when he was wanking only a thousand times greater. Something felt right. Draco. Yes.

Harry felt blindly around for his wand, because he couldn't stop looking, he was drowning in the vision Draco presented, loose, aroused, beautiful. Relief echoed through Harry's body when his wand came immediately to hand. He didn't use it in his day to day life anymore but he wasn't stupid, he still carried it, he still needed it and wanted it, it was still a part of him.

Harry pulled it out and waved it over Draco, pronouncing the charm that would clean his arsehole well enough Harry wouldn't mind sticking his tongue up it. They'd both appreciate the effort in a bit.

Harry went back to work at his cock, both hands kneading at the slippery flesh of Draco's hips, while his mouth kissed from tip to base in great sloppy trails.

Draco panted out a steady litany of "oh god, oh god," stomach rippling as the tremors extended their way through his body. The way he jerked and twitched Harry could tell he was almost over-sensitive. Caught between that precipice of pain and pleasure where pain was pleasure, Draco bucked forward in a jerky involuntary motion and then immediately drew back shivering.

Harry continued to work his way down. His own penis rested against his stomach, joined to his abdomen by thick globs of pre-come. He ignored how his own balls begged him to come, and instead sucked Draco's into his mouth, one at a time getting them nice and wet.

Another whimper pushed out of Draco's mouth, and his knees shook. So Harry carefully arranged them over his shoulders, helped him lift his hips and lock his thighs against Harry's head.

Nothing left to do now but to lift his bollocks, nudge them out of the way with one final slurp and let his

tongue roam further back. Back across his perineum, back between the firm globes of his arse.

It was too tight; he couldn't get any space to move, much less breathe. Harry let out his own grunt of frustration and lifted Draco higher, pulling him forward and then tilting up so his legs fell back and gravity helped his arse cheeks reveal the little pink star it secreted away. Jesus, smooth as a baby's bottom, and round as two peaches. Harry moaned, delighted. Then he blew on it and watched the muscle spasm.

Draco's hands came down suddenly on Harry's head, both of them burying themselves into the sparse amount of hair they could find and gripping as tightly as possible. Harry almost wished he hadn't chopped it all off, wished he still had his fly-about curls for Draco to wrap around his fingers.

"Oh God," Draco whispered hoarsely. "I can't, it's too soon."

His voice was thick and clotted. Everything shuddered now as a constant shivering had overtaken his body. Harry's own body wailed in sympathy, skin stretched tight, his cock pounding to the tempo of his rapid heartbeat.

"No," Harry countered, words buried into the flesh of Draco's left thigh. "It's not."

The one good thing about this hair-cut, outside of it being a point to the general population that Harry would not be hiding from his past any longer, Draco couldn't get a real solid hold. He didn't let go, but his grip slackened, allowing Harry to move.

And with that dubious permission, Harry dove in. No tentative licks, no hesitation, Harry pointed his tongue and thrust inside.

It was different than he expected. He hadn't done this before, his only real lover had been Ginny and she certainly wasn't interested in shoving her tongue anywhere besides his mouth, and vice versa.

It was all wrinkled and ridged and warm inside. He couldn't get very far honestly, his face got in the way

when it bumped into Draco's arse. And there wasn't a particular taste like he'd expected there to be, but maybe the cleaning charm had wiped all that away. Mostly it was just warm and tight and made him really really want to shove his cock in there.

Draco, however, was clearly enjoying himself. He'd forgotten the no's and was giving off breathy little "Ah! Ah! Ah!"s steadily.

Harry switched to licks and open mouth kisses, sucking around the rim, diving back in, and Draco went wild thrashing beneath Harry's restraining hold.

"Please, Harry," Draco choked out. "Oh fuck, oh please!"

Harry couldn't take any more. He shed his robe, yanked off his trousers and pants, and, naked, pulled Draco down on top of him almost all in one go. Draco fell into him with a tumble of limbs.

"I'm going to fuck you," Harry promised into his neck, kissing his way up Draco's throat to his chin. "Slide my cock in you and fill you up."

Draco moaned, and dipped his head down. Eyes shut tight, he found Harry's mouth through trial and error, licked his way inside. Their tongues curled around each other, slid and rubbed against each other.

Harry's hands were everywhere, their mouths sucked and bit and kissed and licked, sliding and releasing against each other. Harry ran his palms down the firm planes of Draco's body, rubbed and squeezed the globes of his arse, and when he couldn't help himself allowed his fingers to circle around his hole. Sweat dripped between them. They slid in the mess of saliva and ejaculate they'd made of themselves, and all the while both of their cocks remained hard and dripping.

Finally when Harry felt the tell-tale bursts of pleasure and nothing else, just warmth and tingling and electric pleasure zinging between them, he pulled Draco in even closer. Harry helped him wrap his legs around Harry's own until they intertwined, calves and ankles and thighs and bellies all pressed together.

Harry directed them into a grinding motion with the rocking of his hips, their cocks rubbing against each other. "Help me get us both there," Harry moaned. "This is the best part."

Draco cried out and stiffened at that prompt, and Harry didn't need the rain of semen, shooting between their stomachs and up their chests, to tell him Draco was coming. It went on for minutes, everything pulled tight and jerking. Harry held him fast as he came apart, mouthed him through it, pressing noiseless kisses into his shoulder.

Draco kept thrusting, kept straining, kept jerking and twisting, and fucking himself against Harry's stomach until his cries were sobs and the shivers were full body tremors.

Finally, it ended and Draco flopped backwards onto the scratchy carpeted floor like a puppet with its strings cut, just panting.

After a few false starts and stops, Draco wet his lips and pressed out: "What do you want me to do for you?" Only then did Harry realize he'd somehow managed to avoid his own climax.

Draco was breathless, and looked impossibly young, impossibly innocent. He wasn't going to be able to avoid it for long.

"Christ," Harry said. "Just look at me like that. Like you want to suck me, eat me alive, and fuck yourself down on my cock, all at the same time."

Draco's eyes were wet, his voice hoarse, and his nose sounded clogged, but it was clear he was suffering from an overload of pleasure not pain when he answered immediately, deep guttural groan and words stumbling over themselves. "I do, do it Harry, do anything, do it all."

"Come here then." Draco moved gratifyingly fast despite his recent orgasm that kept his limbs jittery.

Harry maneuvered him back into position, belly to belly, Draco's arms wrapped tight around Harry's neck. Only this time Harry slid in close and moved his cock up beneath Draco's balls, pressing the length of it in the very cleft of his arse. "Close your legs, let me feel those smooth thighs."

Draco closed his legs and trapped Harry to rub there maddeningly.

"Tighter," Harry directed, "hold on to me, squeeze me." They rolled until Draco was on top, and Harry reached down to adjust his cock closer to the little hole of Draco's arse. It spasmed and clenched. Draco squeezed his legs shut and rocked his arse.

"Yeah like that," Harry hissed, "fuck that feels good." He could imagine being in there, could imagine just the right hitch Draco would make once he got inside. Groaned it into Draco's skin.

"Oh Harry," Draco said, so softly that whispering wasn't even the right word. They were so tightly pressed together that their breaths were shared between them, from Draco's mouth to Harry's nose and back again. And then, suddenly, Harry's cock wasn't the only one twitching.

"Shit," Harry gasped. "Are you getting hard again?"

Draco whined and invitingly humped his pelvis up, opening to Harry. "Fuck me, please, fuck, Jesus, fuck me, Harry."

Oh Christ. Draco fumbled behind him and grabbed Harry's dick. His hand kept sliding off, the angle all wrong. But his intentions were clear.

"Don't I need to --"

"No. I'm okay, I'm stretched, just put some lubricant on and get in."

Harry had to shut his eyes to keep from coming. He fumbled for his wand, stumbled over the spell he'd been using daily to cover himself in something slick and wet.

He almost couldn't tell the difference when the spell worked, there was already so much wet and slick covering them.

Harry rolled him underneath, putting Draco on his back. Automatically, Draco wrapped both arms around Harry's neck and held on. His thighs gripped his hips, legs wrapped hard around Harry's waist. It was the work of a moment, Draco grinding up, Harry holding himself steady and directing his cock in with one hand. And then Harry was in. He let out his own gasping cry as Draco opened for him, warm and accepting. God, this wasn't at all what he'd expected either. Warmer, tighter, more friction than Ginny but still smooth, each thrust went full in and came right back out with the ease of a well oiled machine. And what the fuck was he talking about, he was in Draco. He was in Draco.

"Ho-Hold on to me," Harry panted. Hold me hold me hold me hold me, his mind chanted. Although they were wrapped in each other, arms and legs and hands through sweat-slicked hair, and Draco's cock bumping against Harry's stomach, and Harry's bollocks bumping against Draco's arse because he was inside... although they were breathing the same air and gasping whimpers of pleasure in each other's ears...There was no getting close enough.

"Oh god, yes," Draco breathed reverently, teeth clicking gently against the sensitive juncture between Harry's throat and shoulder with each word. "I've thought about this, I've fucked myself so har-- so hard thinking about this. You right here, holding me up, fucking me open."

They moved together, Harry thrusting down while Draco shoved up, and it was hard to tell who was fucking whom.

It went on so long, and it felt so fucking good, Draco moving counterpoint to him, that when Draco came again the contractions of his arse surprised Harry into his own climax.

Harry's orgasm slammed into him, a sucker punch to the gut. His eyes rolled into his head and no sound

could escape his throat, not a whuff of air not a whine. For a moment, he'd even lost the ability to process sound. His hips didn't stutter though, thrusting and rocking through it as his cock softened, the passage made even more slippery with the lubrication of his own come. Sight, sound and a feeling, besides that of being electrocuted in the most pleasurable way possible, returned to him just as suddenly, his heartbeat thudding loudly in his ears. And with it, Draco mumbling obscenities around a thick tongue in Harry's ear, his whole body tightening to come again despite himself. "Ohohohoh uhn, Harry yes," Draco hissed, eyes squeezed shut tight. "You're hitting it, you're ge-- Ahh oh fuck you're --"

Draco froze, sputtering come weakly between them to join all the rest of the fluid coating their bodies.

As the tension left his body, each muscle quaked in exhaustion, sending hard shudders through him. Harry was too exhausted himself to do much more than run a comforting hand down Draco's flank to soothe him.

It took them a long time to regain mobility, and even then when both sets of lungs were working properly again, they didn't go far. Draco pushed gently against Harry's chest, then rolled back into him once Harry lay flat again. Head leaning against Harry's shoulder, one leg lying across Harry's, an arm draped over Harry's waist. Who would have pegged Draco Malfoy for a cuddler? Harry smiled tiredly and rubbed his hand up and down Draco's arm.

The entire office smelled like distilled sex. Worse, like a whore house. He seriously hoped he was Draco's last client of the day.

"We can't do this again, you realize," Draco whispered hoarsely. "It's highly unprofessional." Harry didn't take it too seriously as between each word Draco peppered gentle kisses across Harry's throat.

"Now you think so?" Harry asked, amused. "This whole thing is unprofessional, and unethical, and immoral."

The kissing stopped. Then resumed at a more languid pace. "Thanks ever so, Potter. I'm really feeling better now."

"I don't think it could be anything but unprofessional," Harry amended apologetically, "given our history. You broke my nose once."

"You sliced my torso open from navel to sternum."

Harry paused. They hadn't talked about this before. They'd circled around the issue, talked about the war in broad terms and processed their own individual growths, absolved themselves of guilt in the general sense, but never had they done this. Joked about that.

"You tried to throw the Cruciatus at me," Harry said carefully.

"You spied on me during an emotional time." And Harry recognized this as a turning point. Their turning point.

"Are you seriously saying a little eavesdropping warrants being dropped to the floor to writhe in an agony so excruciating that the mere threat makes grown men piss their pants and blubber like babies?"

"I was a sensitive lad," Draco sniffed. A moment later his voice turned sultry, all the more sexy for the rasp. "Come home with me."

Harry did.

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Harry wasn't surprised that Draco still lived at the Manor. He'd known. He even knew neither of Draco's parents lived there any longer, nor his ex-wife who had a villa somewhere in the heart of the city surrounded by wards and hidden from the casual observer. He knew Draco had remodeled an entire wing for his infant son who only stayed during the weekends. The child hadn't spent a single night there

because "house-elves aren't to be trusted with complete control over their affairs," but really because Draco couldn't stand to have the baby alone all the way on the other side of the Manor, way out of his sight.

He also knew the last time he'd been here had been one of the worst nights of his life. So it came as some surprise to realize how not intimidating the place looked in daylight.

Also, there was much to be said for the restorative value of the afterglow.

It helped, too, that Draco wasn't in the mood for a tour. They headed straight to the bedroom. Harry only had a moment to look around -- earth tones of deep brown and burgundy, a huge bed in the center, a sitting room that pushed outwards in bay windows and overlooked what appeared to be gardens -- before he was brought up short by the figure of a house-elf standing on the small bench beneath the windows, and crouched over a wooden baby basinet.

The elf looked up with large watery hazel eyes and the tiniest of smiles. "Young Master Malfoy has been fed, sir, and sleeps now," the elf said. "Grimmet is going, yes? There is lots of washing that needs doing, sir, and Grimmet knows how sir values quiet time with young master."

It was testament to how far Harry'd come that he could be in this place and see an elf and only think of Dobby a little, without pain, without the heart-wrenching regret. Without wanting to retreat to his Muggle home and surround himself with his Muggle things. That he could realize Draco Malfoy wasn't perfect but he could still lov--

Harry inhaled sharply and clutched his fists to his side. Love? He could still love him anyway?

Draco nodded once to the elf, dismissively, and approached the bassinet. The house elf popped off with only the slightest of curious glances in Harry's direction. Elf gone, Harry found himself following at a slower pace, abruptly terrified to let Draco look in the cot alone as if something malicious waited for him just out of sight, but unable to move any faster himself.

Draco got there first, of course, reached in and carefully pulled out a curled up bundle of sleeping baby.

Just a baby. Just a small frail human person, all rolls of fat and gum-filled mouths, completely dependent, completely needing. That with each day grew a little bigger, a little more independent, a little harder to protect...

A little further away.

Just a baby. Blond met blond as Draco lifted his son to his shoulder, the little head lolled sleepily, soft snuffles blew out of his mouth. He was beautiful, a little miniature version of his father but softer, chubbier for one. And Harry was terrified.

Draco turned with the child, one hand cupping its bottom, the other cradling the back of its head. There was the softest smile alight on his face that had nothing to do with the shape his lips were making; he shone from the eyes. Draco hummed under his breath a song Harry recognized from his own childhood, but not one that had ever been sung to him. The north wind doth blow and we shall have snow and what will poor robin do then? He'll sit in the barn and keep himself warm and tuck his head under his wing poor thing/

"That's a Muggle song, you realize," Harry interrupted, his voice echoing oddly in his ears.

"You lie, Potter."

"No, really, Aunt Petunia used to sing it to Dudley when he was a kid. The ghastly off-tune version, but there you go." Harry trailed off into silence, watching them, heart thump thump thumping away. Draco's hum commenced, this time breaking from the melody and turning entirely improvised, his gaze never leaving that of his baby even though he had to keep his neck craned at an odd angle to do so.

"I'm not a fan of performing with an audience," Harry interrupted again. "Lately I find I'm more of a voyeur than an exhibitionist."

Draco snorted. "That's sick. Besides, I couldn't get it up again today if I had to," he said tiredly. "I didn't bring you here to fuck, Potter," Draco said loftily. "I brought you here because I needed you to meet him."

He finally looked up, smile slowly dropping away as he took in what must have been the sheer terror chiseled on Harry's face. A flash of something -- sadness, disappointment -- came to his eyes before that was washed away and replaced with a careful blank.

"You know," Draco said, "it is possible to love more than one person at a time." Tone conversational light and his eyes watching Harry closely. "More than two even."

"Is that what this is?"

There was a pause so long Harry wanted to break it himself twenty times over before Draco finally answered, slowly, so carefully. "This is infatuation. This is you choosing another method of distraction that's a little more fun than fucking your own hand and getting off to other people pretending to get off. This isn't love."

"It could be," Harry said.

Draco shook his head, one turn to the left, one turn to the right back to middle. "Not when you're using it to run away, Potter. You know you don't love her like you should. I know because I lived it. Astoria deserved better, so does Weasley." Draco dropped his eyes and raised them again all in one breath, like for a moment he forgot he needed to see this, that he couldn't look away. "Anyway, that's not who I was talking about. I was talking about your children. You can love James and Albus without feeling like you're replacing Theodore."

Harry heard the unspoken -- You could love Scorpius, you could love me, -- but wasn't sure if that was only because he wanted to hear it there equally as fiercely as he feared to.

"I don--." Harry broke off the lie and sighed. "It's not just betrayal. Sometimes I want so much to know them, to be a family. And then I remember how well that turned out in the past and I'm too terrified to allow it. Teddy is different, Teddy is like me. He's already lost so much, if I fuck up it's almost like it would hardly matter anyway. And then again, sometimes I feel so bad for even thinking that he's worth something less than my all that I don't want to split my love between three, even though I know it's not a matter of splitting."

"It's not a curse to love, Potter," Draco said softly.

"No? Okay, then answer me. Could this be love? For you?"

"I don't think there's anyone left in the wizarding world who's not a little bit in love with Our Saviour."

"That's not what I was talking about. I was talking about just Harry."

Another pause, this one not so long but when he answered the words were whisper soft. "No one deserves to be your 'just in case.' Especially not me."

"And if you weren't? Could it?"

"No. It couldn't," Draco said. Then he swallowed and even softer continued, "Because it already is."

"I lo--"

"Don't say it."

"Not saying it doesn't make it any less true. You're the counselor, you should know that."

"I told you I was pants at that shit. Let me pretend."

Harry was silent because how did you refute that. Irritation and banked fury showed on Draco's face -- his emotions would never just be his own again, Harry had learned all his tells-- because clearly he wanted to be refuted. "I understand hanging on to nothing is better than an actual literal nothing, but Potter, surely you realize that when your wife moves out of the home... she's left you, right?"

"I left first," Harry said quietly. Which was true. He'd been leaving Ginny a little more each day since he'd found out Jamie was on his way, like maybe if he left her first the leaving wouldn't matter as much.

"Why are you here, Potter?"

Harry reached out and brushed his fingers lightly down the sleeping baby's cheek. So soft.

Scorpius, he thought. Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy, even with that pretentious name, you don't know how lucky you are.

And I hope you never do.

"You make me want to try. You make me believe I can."

Draco closed his eyes and cradled his son a little tighter to his chest. When he spoke his voice was thick but determined. "Not like this," he said. "Go back to your wife, Potter."

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When Harry returned to his flat -- what he was quickly realizing had never truly been home, in the same way that due to his non-existent seventh year Hogwarts could never truly be either -- he heard the sounds of children playing coming from inside. His children.

His knees buckled and he had to press a hand to the door, palm flat, to keep from sinking to the ground. His children, laughing and happy, his babies. His boys.

The truth of the matter was... he hadn't wanted them. He'd been too scared to want them. He'd let himself be.

And Ginny... he'd always wanted to protect Ginny a little more than love her. Part of him had always felt that if he had only found some way to wrap her up, put her away somewhere safe, somewhere she couldn't be touched... he could save her.

He could keep her.

Christ.

Just in case.

And maybe the reason he didn't ...couldn't allow her to help find the Horcruxes was the same reason he couldn't say no when she'd wanted to marry him. He hadn't been able to risk her.

She was his just in case.

The moment he entered and looked at her he knew it was over. He knew she knew. Eleven years of his life, gone just like that.

Ginny smiled bravely, fiercely, gave both children a kiss on the forehead and directions to stay and play while "dad and I talk" then led him to the bedroom.

"Do you remember our first kiss? When you first kissed me?" She asked before he could stutter to a beginning.

"Of course."

"Sixth year, after you'd won the Quidditch cup. I was so scared." Ginny made an abortive gesture towards him, yanked her hands back and folded them across her chest. Still, he noticed they shook a little. "Everything was turning upside down, my family was a mess, Hogwarts had never truly felt safe to me since first year, relationships and love and all that were so new I hadn't a clue what I was doing. And there you were, a hero, so serious and sweet and kindhearted, and everything a girl could ever ask for. Looking at me, friends with me. I was so scared."

"I know. Not then, but now, I know."

"But I risked it," Ginny went on as if she hadn't heard him. "Because you were worth it. You've always been worth it to me. I'd hoped that one day you'd be able to see the same in me, that you'd trust me like that. Now, Harry? I just hope one day you'll find someone that makes you want to." She drew in a deep breath, it shuddered through her obviously. Tears stood in her eyes, beautiful forthright brown eyes. "I think I made a mistake here," she said. "I wanted to protect them from the pain of having their father reject them --" Harry winced "-- but I think instead I should have given you the opportunity to try to love them as much as I do. You're a wonderful father, Harry. I see that even if you don't.

"I want you to know I'll never keep them from you. They're your boys, just as much as you're their father. Maybe one day we ... can ... you and ... I can't. I need time --" Tears spilled over her cheeks, her nose turned red and in a moment would begin to run. " to stop loving you with all my heart."

"Ginny --" He reached for her. Because he adored her, because he loved her just not in the way he was supposed to, because she was the mother of his children and he'd just now realized how special that

was.

Ginny shifted away before he could connect. "I need time," she said firmly. "Go talk to your children, we'll spend the night at mum's and after that we'll come to some agreement about everything, I promise. But first, Harry, go talk to your children."

Harry returned to them; there was nothing else for him here, he was just so happy so fucking grateful that he still had a chance with them.

Jamie pushed a toy car across the floor making low beeping noises as he went, Al sat beside his brother and watched avidly, clapping every once in a while and making burbling noises that Jamie would respond to with louder beeps.

"I want to get to know you," Harry said, quietly under his breath so as to not interrupt their play. A promise to them made through himself. "I know I don't have a right to ask this of you, I don't deserve a second chance. I've been a right arse about the whole thing. I'm so sorry. But if you'd give me just one more chance...I'll do right by you this time, both of you. I swear. Give me a chance to be your dad, again, yeah?"

The last word might have been a little too loud, both boys looked up, greeted him with wide smiles.

"'lo daddy," Jamie said, "wanna pay wif us?"

"Daddy daddy daddy," Al repeated.

Harry smiled shakily. As he sat carefully next to them, he felt his own hands shake. "I'd love to."

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Ultimately they did work it out. It wasn't even as difficult as he had expected. Habit had really been the only thing keeping them holding on. And apparently, they were the only ones who hadn't known it. Ginny didn't have much in the way to move out as most of their things were already at her mothers, which honestly should have been their first clue. Harry immediately ended his therapeutic relationship with Greengrass and Higgs, there was no reason for him to return especially since Draco had reassigned him to his previously promised and much too late in coming "lesser informed colleague." Besides, he was too busy with his boys (all three of them) to worry about what he was going to do with his life, to need the illuminating qualities of a good wank.

For example, just now he was settling them in for their first sleep over. The first ever, as well as the first in his new flat that combined Muggle attributes with magical conveniences because Ginny didn't trust a home that wasn't warded, not when Harry was still Harry Potter and her boys were famous by birthright.

Just now he was really glad he'd folded on that point, because even with that concession Ginny was going spare.

"Got it, no water before bed, set their glow-bugs for half-past, no matter how much they beg they don't get ice cream for breakfast," Harry agreed. "But I keep forgetting, does the littlest one sleep in the hedges with the gnomes or is it Jamie's turn?" He teased.

Ginny didn't even bother with horrified, eight months pregnant and heavy with their daughter -- a little surprise from their last night together-- she wasn't much for the humor lately. "Okay, fine, I get it. It's just... it's the first time they'll be away from me for a whole night since they were born."

Her eyes went soft and she smiled fondly at him. "I know you'll take care of them, I do, I trust you."

Harry returned the smile, set his hand on her belly touching their Lily, and pressed a kiss against her cheek. He'd lucked up with her. "Thank you for that."

Ginny allowed the kiss and gave him a hug, awkward with her leading tummy first. "Mummy's just a silly worrywart, isn't she darlings?" She said to the children.

Al who was in his parrot-stage, which had been fun to find out during the middle of a crowded grocery store after a poorly muffled 'fucking hell,' repeated "whoawe-wat whoawe-wat" shrilly.

Christ that was going to be on replay for the next hour. Harry's grin widened.

Jamie was already too busy playing with his new toddler-sized 'my first racing broom' to bother.

"Anything special planned for tonight?"

"Of course." Ginny patted her stomach fondly. "Lils and I are having a girls' night in."

"Oh? Just you and Lily? Really? Someone needs to tell Ron so he can stop his grumbling."

Ginny blushed. "Well, maybe Lily, Dean, and I."

He hasn't been sure how he'd respond to her moving on, but he was very glad he could honestly say he was so very pleased for her. And proud of her.

"I'm happy for you Gin. Have fun." One last kiss to the children and she was gone.

Then again, Harry could afford to be charitable. He had his children, he had his life.

And he had the latest missive from Draco, right there on the kitchen counter promising him he'd get his second chance. He wouldn't need a third.

"I heard you'd divorced."

"If I say yes, will you let me love you back this time?"

"How about we start with dinner?"

"Tonight, seven. I've got the boys, bring Scorpius. I'd like to make a family meal of it."

"Make it six."

The End