Title: Of Prophecies and Potions

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Recipient: [info]starlight2463

Rating: R

Word Count: ~7k

Pairing(s): Harry/Draco, Ron/Pansy, Hermione/Blaise

Summary: Sometimes things happen whether you plan for them or not. Other times you have to make them happen.

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Author's Notes: Thank you to [info]sesheta_66 and [info]dysonrules for the invaluable beta, to [info]groolover for awesome britpicking, and [info]oldenuf2nb for the advice and encouragement. Dearest [info]starlight2463, I managed all your prompts except for Pig – he just wouldn't participate! :-D I hope you're happy with the way it turned out. (The original request can be found here.)

P.S. No Hufflepuffs were harmed in the writing of this story. :-D

Department of Mysteries

2 February 2005

The mistakes of your past will often come back to haunt you.

--Lucius Malfoy

"Why did you think I'd want to see this?"

"I thought it might be important. I thought you'd want to know."

Draco stared at the misty globe, his heart hammering in his chest. Knowing wasn't always a good thing. Draco understood this better than most. He turned with a flourish to head away from the towering shelves. They made him feel too small and insignificant. Pansy's hand on his forearm, gentle yet urgent, stopped him. "I don't want to know," he whispered. His words, as soft as they'd been, still echoed in the silence.

"Draco. It'll kill you if you don't look. You need to know. "

"I don't." He shook his head to reinforce the words. "I don't."

"Then what will you do? Go back to that hole in the wall you call a library and waste your life hiding from your past?"

"I'm not hiding, Pansy. That hole in the wall happens to house some of the most important genealogical tomes in history."

"And how many visitors do you have there in a week? Two, maybe? Three if there's a holiday? I don't understand your obsession any more. Blood status means nothing now. You, of all people, should realise that."

"It has nothing to do with blood status and you know it. People need to know where they come from. They need to know their history, if for no other reason than to prevent them from repeating the mistakes of the past. I don't care if there's only one person in the world interested. The library needs to be available, just in case." Pansy looked at him with sadness in her eyes. It wasn't the first time. It wouldn't be the last. "Pansy, don't, all right? I get enough grief about this from my mother. I don't need it from you, too."

"You need to see this, Draco. You know you do."

He turned back to the globe that seemed to be begging for his attention. What difference would it make

anyway? "Fine," he growled as he snatched the globe from the shelf. The air around him swirled into an eerie mist, and the voice, equally eerie, echoed through the halls.

Bound for eternity by a love beyond reason.

Pansy looked as confused as he did. "Happy now, Pans? That really clarifies things for us, doesn't it?" He set the globe back on the shelf and turned to go, avoiding Pansy's outstretched arm this time. He'd known it was ridiculous. His future would always be as obscure as the opaque balls that lined the shelves.

"Draco, wait!" He wanted to ignore her, but the urgency in her voice gave him pause. "There's another name on the globe."

He knew he should keep walking and never turn back, but curiosity had always been his most despised weakness. "Whose?" he asked, without turning.

The silence stretched for minutes until Pansy finally spoke. "Harry James Potter."

Severus Snape Genealogical Records Library

16 January 2006

Time has a strange way of slipping through your fingers.

--Lucius Malfoy

Pansy's heels clicked against the dusty counter as she swung her legs back and forth. Draco would have pointed out the annoying habit if he'd thought it would do any good. She wiped her gloved fingers along the dust that covered the bookcase next to her and scrunched up her nose in distaste.

"Honestly, Draco. What do you do here all day with all these books?"

Draco looked up from the pages he'd been attempting to translate. "Some of us work for a living. You should try it." Draco smirked. "Oh, wait, you did, didn't you? It... how did you say it again? It didn't suit you."

"Too much politics at the Ministry. I mean, being an Unspeakable was fun for a while, but who'd want to do it forever?" Draco rolled his eyes and went back to his work. "But you and these books? I swear I should set you up with Granger. You two would be very happy together."

When he looked up again, his horror must have shown because Pansy was scowling at him. "Please tell me you don't still believe in all that Mudblood crap. I thought you'd outgrown that."

Draco had to laugh. Yes, he'd grown out of it. It was either that or have it beaten out of him. He wasn't a complete fool. "In case it escaped your notice, Granger is a girl. Not to mention an obnoxious know-it-all."

"Takes one to know one, doesn't it, love?"

"Last I checked, I was definitely male. Perhaps with all the time you've been spending with the Weasel you've forgotten what that means."

Draco hated how Pansy's face lit up at the mention of the redheaded cretin. Sometimes he was quite certain the Gods, if there were such things, hated him.

"You should try it, Draco. Gryffindors aren't so bad once you get to know them. They're like Hufflepuffs with spines."

"And that's supposed to make it better how, exactly?"

Pansy laughed. The type of carefree, happy laugh that had disappeared for so long after the war. He'd never admit it, but Weasley had been good for her. Draco still didn't understand how it had happened, but he was glad she'd found someone to make her laugh like that again.

"Oh, that reminds me of why I'm here. You're invited to dinner at our house next Friday. Potter will be there."

"Pansy, don't start. We've been down that road and look where it got us. He hates me more now than ever and you're living with the Weasel, for Merlin's sake. Do I need to suffer more?"

Pansy chuckled. Draco didn't find it funny at all. Stupid, ridiculous, idiotic prophecies that should never have been seen in the first place. He'd hate Pansy for it if he could.

"It's not my fault you decided a new owl would be a good peacemaking gift. And really, how were you to know he was so attached to Hedwig? Unhealthy obsession, if you ask me. It's no wonder the man doesn't date."

A raised eyebrow was all it took. Sometimes he hated that she knew him so well. "I knew it!" she said as she bounced off the counter and swooped down on him like an eagle. "You're still interested in him, aren't you?"

"I was never interested in him." It was easier to lie than to admit it. Every time he'd seen the git over the last year, the prophecy had echoed in his head, and he'd found it more and more difficult to deny that there had always been something about Potter that had affected him in one way or another. It had been

a sour potion to swallow then, and he wasn't at all interested in taking another dose.

"That settles it, then. You will come to dinner next week."

"No. I will not."

"Then I will be forced to drag out the photo albums of you playing dress-up in your mother's clothes."

"Pansy, I was five. Who cares?"

"You were thirteen, and I dare say you looked a damn sight better in those lace stockings than your mother ever did."

"You wouldn't." Draco glared, knowing full well she would.

Malfoy Manor

18 January 2006

Always hedge your bets.

--Lucius Malfoy

"So this is it, is it?" Pansy rotated the tiny blue bottle in her hand, inspecting it with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation. "What's in it?"

"It's nothing sinister. I promised you that."

"Yes, but I know you, remember? Honesty isn't exactly a character trait of yours."

That hurt. True, but it still hurt. "The ingredients are all completely innocuous."

"And they would be?"

Draco tried not to feel annoyed. "Crushed camellia seeds, ground peppermint, powdered stem of a cosmos flower, a tear of laughter—"

"A tear of laughter? From you? How'd you manage that one without me?"

"It was easy, actually. I just viewed the Pensieve memory of the time we attempted to have sex." Draco smirked at her affronted expression.

"That was not... okay, it was rather hilarious wasn't it?" Pansy grinned, her eyes sparkling with amusement. "It's not my fault you were frightened of breasts."

"They're still very frightening, I'll have you know." Draco stared at her expansive cleavage and shuddered. "So you'll do it, then? Just a drop in his glass before I arrive should do the trick. Two, perhaps. Three certainly wouldn't hurt him."

"Draco, are you sure this is the best course of action? If he finds out—"

"He won't find out unless you tell him." She didn't look convinced. Draco sighed and ran his hands through his hair. He had to convince her. There was no way Potter would give him a chance without it.

"It's not a Love Potion, Pans. It's just... think of it as a Congeniality Potion. He'll forget all the reasons he despises me just long enough for him to see me as someone other than the boy he's always hated."

"He saved your bloody life, Draco. He wouldn't have done that if he'd hated you. Besides, he's managed to come to terms with Ron and me. If he can do that without a potion—"

"Weasley is his best friend. We both know he'd never stand in the way of his friend's happiness. I'm an entirely different matter." He wasn't sure if it was his words, or the desperation in them that clenched the deal, but Pansy nodded and deposited the bottle in her pocket. Draco let out a sigh of relief. He might have a chance after all.

Fox Hollow

20 January 2006

Things don't just happen, Draco. If you want something, you have to make it happen.

--Lucius Malfoy

Draco was understandably nervous as he walked up the winding stone pathway to Pansy's new home. The house was a decent size, but tiny compared to what Pansy was accustomed to. He'd scarcely touched his finger to the bell before the door swung open. He hadn't expected to see Potter standing behind it, and he certainly wasn't prepared for the broad smile that crossed the man's face.

"Potter, I—"

"Shhhh." Potter put his finger to his lips and looked furtively over his shoulder. "You're late. Pansy threatened to remove your left testicle if you were late."

Draco stood on the front step completely dumbfounded. Perhaps three drops had been too much.

Potter reached out and tugged him over the threshold, leaning in to whisper into his ear. "If you can make it to the living room before she sees you, I'll vouch that you've been here for the last half hour. She's been too busy terrorising the house-elf to notice." Potter unwrapped Draco's scarf, gently swept it from around his neck and hung it on a hook next to the door. Draco managed to shrug out of his coat, which Potter took and hung next to his scarf before taking Draco's hand to lead him down the narrow hall towards the living area. He paused momentarily to look around the corner into the kitchen before tugging Draco behind him to the living room. "Sit," he said with a grin as he handed Draco a glass of wine.

Draco sat. There had been very few times in Draco's life when he could remember being rendered speechless. He stared at the glass of wine in his hand for a moment before looking back up at Potter. "You do know she wouldn't really have—"

"Yeah," he said with a sly smile as he sat on the sofa. "But why risk it, right?" Harry lifted his own glass in a toast before downing the remainder of his wine.

"How many of those have you had tonight?" Draco asked, eyeing the glass in Potter's hand.

Potter shrugged. "Two? Maybe three." He glanced over the back of the sofa into the kitchen again. "I find they're easier to take with a bit of alcohol in my system." As if on cue, there was a high-pitched giggle from the other room. "I still don't quite understand how that came about."

Draco followed Potter's gaze to the open kitchen door. He could clearly see Weasley's hand on Pansy's arse. It was a disturbing sight. "That's because we, as gay men, will never understand the power of big tits."

Potter laughed. It was the first time Draco had really heard him laugh, and it was mesmerising. Something inside him twisted. If there was ever a time when he wished life came with a guarantee, it was now. He couldn't screw this up. He just couldn't.

Severus Snape Genealogical Records Library

23 January 2006

Patience is not a virtue, Draco. It's a means to an end.

--Lucius Malfoy

Draco stared at the open book in front of him, not seeing the words written on the faded pages. All he could think about – all he'd been able to think about for the last three days – was Potter. The deep timbre of his voice when he laughed, the excitement in his eyes when he talked, the warmth of his skin when he touched Draco's hand.

Dinner had gone better than he could have ever dreamed. Apparently, Pansy had even slipped Weasley some of the potion. It was the only explanation for his civility. But Potter had been more than civil. He'd been kind and funny and... flirtatious even. Draco had gone over the ingredients in the potion a dozen times and there was no way to explain it.

Draco looked up from his book when the bell on the door chimed. He couldn't help but smile when Potter walked through the door.

"So this is where you're hiding out now, is it?"

Draco's smile faded. Potter sounded... irritated. Surely Pansy wouldn't have told him about the potion. Maybe he'd worked it out after his odd behaviour. He'd probably gone straight to the Ministry and had himself tested for possible curses. "Potter." Draco nodded, trying to keep all emotion out of his voice.

"It's taken me twenty minutes to find this place. How do you expect to get any customers when you're tucked away in a little side alley where no one can find you?"

"When you're an ex-Death Eater you take what you can get," Draco snapped. He didn't mean to, but it was easier to fall back on his defensiveness than deal with the possibilities of what Potter wanted.

Potter's brows crinkled, his lips turning down into a frown. "Oh," he said softly. "I hadn't thought about that."

"Yes, well, the mighty never do, do they?"

"Draco..." Potter sighed, closing his eyes for a moment before reopening them as if to bore a hole through Draco's skull. "I'm sorry. I was just..." He moved forward and shoved a paper bag onto Draco's desk. "I brought you lunch, although I suspect it's cold now. Pansy said you usually get busy with your books and forget to eat. I thought... oh, never mind." Potter turned to leave and Draco panicked.

"Wait!" Potter stopped, one hand still on the doorknob. "There are Warming Charms for that kind of thing, you know."

"It's never as good after it's warmed, though." Potter still didn't turn, but Draco could see his shoulders relax beneath his heavy wool coat. Draco opened the bag and pulled out a take-away container he recognised from Delilah's Delicatessen. It was his favourite lunch spot, although their portions were always too big. He and Pansy usually shared on the rare occasions when she managed to drag him away for lunch.

"You're obviously not familiar with the famous Draco Malfoy Warming Charm then." Draco gnawed the corner of his lip, waiting.

Potter turned. "Obviously not," he said, lip quirking up at one side. "I suppose you're going to show me?"

Draco felt the corner of his lip turn up into a grin. It felt good. He plucked his wand from his sleeve and whispered the spell his mother always used on his tea when it'd gone cold. "Care to test it?" When he opened the container, the fragrant smell of fresh quiche wafted through the air. Draco pushed the chair across from him out with the toe of his boot.

Potter chuckled. He shook his head as he sat down and picked up one of the two forks that had fallen from the bag. "This is crazy, you know that, right?"

Draco only smiled.

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The quiche was good, but the company was better. Draco had forgotten how much he missed talking to people. For years Pansy had been accusing him of becoming a hermit after the war. He'd always brushed her off, but he knew her accusations had merit. Not that he'd had a choice in the beginning. After the war, it had been a wise decision to fade into the background – let people forget who he was and what part he'd played during the war. Being invisible had been safe.

"Look, I know I wasn't very gracious last year when you... well, the owl, she was so much like Hedwig and she... sort of brought back memories that I hadn't really dealt with yet."

"I didn't know that she... meant so much to you."

"I know. How could you, really? But Helga, she's—"

"Helga?"

"The owl. That's her name."
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"You kept her?" Draco couldn't help but be surprised. He was sure Potter would have sent the owl back in a rage. Pansy had never mentioned her.

"Not exactly. I sent her back to Eeylops, but then I went in the next day and brought her home. She's nothing like Hedwig, but... well, I guess she helped me realise that, while you can never replace those you love, it's okay to let others take their place." Potter blushed slightly and stared at his half-eaten quiche. "Probably doesn't make a lot of sense, does it?"

Draco wasn't sure why he did it, but he reached out and covered the clenched hand on the table with his own. "That's actually the most sensible thing I've ever heard you say."

Potter looked up from his food. His expression was... riveting. Draco wanted to look away from the pure emotion that showed in those green eyes, but he held the gaze – felt the anguish of everything the man had lost in his short life. Draco had never been the most sympathetic man, but at that moment he felt something he'd not felt in a long time. Compassion.

"So what do you do here all day, anyway?" Potter looked away, perusing the stacks of books that lined every available wall.

Draco shrugged and removed his hand from Potter's, almost thankful for the change of subject. "Research mostly. Wealthy purebloods, of course, have records of their ancestry, however convoluted those records may be. It's interesting piecing together the missing lines – those witches and wizards who've been erased from the family trees."

"Like Sirius?"

"And Aunt Andromeda." Draco nodded. "Did you know you had a great-great-great-great-uncle who was banished from your family tree for marrying one of my great-great-great-great-aunts?"

Potter's throaty laugh made Draco's spine tingle. "I suppose our families have always been enemies

then."

"History doesn't have to repeat itself, you know? Things change." Draco held his breath. He hadn't meant for his words to come out so laden with emotion, but he was glad they had. Better to lay your cards on the table when you have the upper hand.

Potter studied him with a mix of surprise and curiosity before seeming to come to a conclusion. "They do," he said finally. "How would you like to have dinner at my place on Saturday? No house-elves, but I make a mean shepherd's pie."

Draco wasn't a huge fan of shepherd's pie, but that certainly wasn't going to deter him. His plan was moving along quicker than expected. "I think I'd like that."

Ophidian Lane

27 January 2006

Love is only worthwhile if what you gain is infinitely greater than what you lose.

--Lucius Malfoy

Draco Apparated to a secluded corner near his shop and cursed under his breath for his late start. His sleep had been tumultuous at best lately. His recent encounters with Potter had brought back too many memories for his liking. Not to mention the dreams. Dreams of Potter – of fire and heat, angry words and heated looks across crowded rooms, sweat and warm breath. Just thinking of it as he walked towards the library made his heart race. The feeling moved into the pit of his stomach when he saw who was waiting outside his front door.

Potter's blood-red Auror robes whipped in the wind and gave him an almost menacing air against the backdrop of gray stone and sky. The weather had turned unusually cold overnight and Potter's cheeks looked red despite the thick scarf that was wrapped around his neck. Draco bit back the urge to cup the man's face in his hands to warm him, because that would just be ridiculous.

"You're an idiot for coming out in this weather without a hat, Potter."

"I wasn't planning on standing outside waiting for your sorry arse all morning."

Draco waved his wand to open the door. The fire in the hearth blazed immediately, bathing the room in both light and warmth. "If I'd known you were coming, I would have attempted to be more punctual." He motioned Potter through the door before approaching his worktable to deposit the stack of books he'd brought from the Manor for research.

Potter's eyebrows rose and he gave Draco a cheeky grin. "Pansy says punctuality isn't one of your stronger virtues." He shoved a paper cup into Draco's hands. Draco could feel the warmth even through his gloves. "Tea. I thought you might be cold."

Draco's bad morning melted away instantly. There was something about Potter when he smiled. The combination of innocence and confidence made Draco's heart quicken.

Potter moved towards the fire to warm his bare hands. "Why don't you Floo in? Wouldn't it be easier?"

Draco bit back a nasty retort. After all, it wasn't Potter's fault the Ministry was made up of idiots. "I've applied for a permit at least ten times. The Ministry is obviously too busy to give it much mind." He tossed his winter cloak across the nearest chair. Potter cocked his head curiously, but didn't respond. "To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit this morning?"

Potter strode forward and plopped a stack of books down on the table next to Draco's pile. "I thought you might find these interesting."

Draco picked the first one up and flipped through the pages, his eyes widening in surprise. "These are—"

"From Grimmauld Place. There's loads more there, but these... well, after lunch the other day I thought you might find them interesting."

Draco sorted through the next few books. They were all amazing records of genealogical histories. Not just of the Black family, but many other pureblood families as well. One book in particular caught his eye. The intricate engravings on the faded red leather cover looked strangely familiar. "Harry, this is—" Draco carried the book to the far wall and climbed up the ladder to search the top shelf. There he found a book that was almost identical to the one Harry had brought. "Look." Draco turned carefully around to find Potter staring up at him, holding either side of the ladder as if he were worried Draco might fall. Draco handed him the book. "It's from the Malfoy library. All wizards kept records like this at one time. These date back to the 12th century. You have no idea how valuable this book is."

"Consider it my donation then."

Draco climbed down the ladder, almost in shock from Potter's words. He wasn't accustomed to support for his little project as his mother liked to refer to it. Pansy tolerated it, but even she didn't understand what made it so important. "You're serious?"

Potter didn't move away. Draco was trapped against the ladder, Potter's arms outstretched just enough to allow him room to stand. "If you want it, it's yours."

Draco's heart hammered in his chest. He had a feeling Potter was talking about something much more priceless than an irreplaceable book. "I do," Draco whispered, waiting for Potter to make the next move.

"Under one condition." Draco grimaced. He should have known there would be conditions. There always were. "You called me Harry. I like that."

Potter's arms fell to his side and he stepped back allowing Draco room to breathe, as if his request was

one that Draco would need to consider. He hadn't realised he'd called Potter by his first name. It had just seemed... right. "That's all?" Surely there was more to it than that.

Potter shrugged. "Sometimes it's the little things."

Draco couldn't argue with that. Little things like a warm lunch or a surprise gift. Or the way Potter was fidgeting as though he expected Draco to deny him such a small wish. "All right."

Little things like the way Potter's eyes lit up with delight at Draco's reply.

"Brilliant. Tomorrow night, then?" Potter took his hand, gently pressing a folded piece of parchment into his palm. "Seven o'clock. Don't be late."

Draco simply nodded, afraid of what he might say if he spoke.

Crossroads Cottage

28 January 2006

True love will always be worth the risk.

--Narcissa Malfoy

The ringing of the bell was immediately followed by a bang and a litany of what Draco was sure were curses. When Harry finally opened the door, he was limping.

"What on earth was that racket?"

Harry shook his head and stared at his foot. "I shouldn't buy heavy pots. They hurt when they fall on your toe."

Draco couldn't help but laugh. The man's hair was a wild tangle of black and there were several white smudges on his cheek and down the front of his shirt. "You look a mess. Am I early?"

"No." Harry's lips turned up into a grin. "I'm just late, apparently." He limped out of the doorway and gestured towards the small living room. "I'd help you with your coat, but I'm afraid with my luck today I'd ruin it."

Draco shrugged off his coat and draped it over the banister next to the door. The stairs, he assumed, led to the bedrooms. The house was small but tidy. There seemed to be no pattern to the decor, but it was homey and comfortable. The hardwood floor lent richness to the atmosphere, while the plush rugs scattered about added personality and character. Draco felt at ease instantly. "Come on then, let's have a look at your injury." Harry blushed lightly before draping an arm over Draco's shoulder, allowing himself to be led to the sofa. He sat with a whoosh, lifting the sock-covered foot.

"Here, let me see what you've done." Draco squatted in front of the sofa and gingerly held the injured foot. "This might hurt," he said as he pulled the sock off. Harry winced. The foot was swollen already. There was a deep gash across the top and the entire foot was red as a beetroot. "I think you've broken something. You should go to St. Mungo's."

Harry let out a groan, his head falling back onto the sofa. "Can't you heal it?"

"Harry, I don't even know what bones are broken. It could be—" Draco looked up from the foot to find Harry staring at him, trust written all over his face. If Draco hadn't already been kneeling, the shock would have buckled his knees. He ran his fingers over the top of the foot trying to feel for breaks, even though he had no idea what a break would feel like. "No. I can't... you don't want me to—"

"I do. I trust you."

There it was. Those three words that should have made Draco cheer with triumph. Instead they just made him feel sick. "You shouldn't," he whispered, staring at the floor. He started to push himself away but a tight grip on his bicep stopped him. Draco refused to look up.

"Episkey," Harry said with a casual wave of his wand. Draco watched the skin knit itself back together and ripple as the bones beneath it did the same. "Come here," Harry whispered, tugging Draco up to his knees and forward so that he was nestled between strong thighs. It wasn't exactly how Draco had pictured their first kiss, but when Harry's lips touched his, he decided he didn't mind at all. Harry's fingers threaded into his hair, one hand slipping back to cradle his head. It was perhaps the most insistent kiss Draco had ever had, but it still wasn't enough. He hadn't realised his hands had found Harry's chest until his fingers began fumbling with the buttons of his shirt. Luckily they could do the work without thought, because Harry seemed to be sucking all thoughts out through his mouth.

"Draco, fuck." Harry pulled away and rested his forehead against Draco's, hands still twined in blonde hair. Draco fought the urge to growl at the loss of contact. He could still feel warm breath brushing his lips, could feel the racing of Harry's heart beneath his hands. "I think we should just order take-out," Harry half-whispered, half-whimpered.

Draco let his hands roam over Harry's chest. He still had a Seeker's build, slim but perfectly defined muscles that fairly rippled when he breathed. "I think you should finish what you've started."

Harry must have agreed with him, because within seconds, Draco's jumper was being tugged over his head and the warm lips were back. Harry's fingertips were dry as they scraped against his back, but Draco didn’t mind. He allowed Harry to pull him closer, could feel a hard cock pressing against his stomach. Draco's fingers went to work on trouser buttons, loving the feel of Harry's erection against his hand. Harry moaned at the contact, his lips diverting temporarily to map out the length of Draco's neck. When Draco's hand reached Harry's cock behind the thick fabric, hard and already dripping, it was an exquisite feeling – the feeling of power and success – of finally catching the damn, elusive Snitch. He basked in it and pushed aside that little voice in his head that told him that victory wasn't real if you cheated.

He untangled the hand that had somehow wound its way into Harry's hair and nudged him gently back

against the sofa. Harry grunted a complaint, but when Draco's lips found a nipple, the grunt turned into a satisfied whimper. Draco kissed his way down Harry's body, enjoying the feel of the heated skin, the way Harry's chest rose and fell in staggered pants, the encouraging noises coming from Harry's lips. It was perfect. The thin line of hair that led to Harry's cock was perfect. The taste of Harry's cock in his mouth was perfect. The tightening grip in his hair and the way Harry arched up to meet him was perfect. Except... it wasn't. Because that damn voice in his head was screaming and Draco finally had to admit, it was right. Fuck it all, what a time to develop a guilty conscience.

Draco pulled away before he lost his nerve. "Wait." Harry looked almost pained by the word, but Draco couldn't continue. Not until Harry knew the truth. He'd never forgive Draco otherwise. He took a deep breath and the words just tumbled from his lips. "I need to tell you something before we... let this go any further."

"Your timing sucks. You realise this." Harry's words were more pants of air than anything and Draco understood exactly how he felt. His own cock was painfully hard and cursing him as it was, but this was something he had to do, whether he wanted to or not.

Draco sat upright, his hands hovering on Harry's trouser-clad thighs. "There's a prophecy."

Harry took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. "We have to discuss this now, Draco?"

Draco clenched his eyes tightly shut. He wished, probably more than Harry, that they didn't. "It's about us." It came out as barely a whisper, and when he opened his eyes Harry was watching him with an unreadable expression. Draco wondered if he'd screwed things up already.

"What does it say?"

"Something about being bound for eternity by a love beyond reason." Once Draco had repeated it, it sounded completely ridiculous. "I know it sounds crazy, but..."

Harry didn't look alarmed, or even surprised. Perhaps having lived with a prophecy hanging over his head his entire life made him look at things differently. He tilted his head to one side as if choosing his

words carefully. "Prophecies are just a version of what might happen, Draco. They don't make things happen."

"Yes," Draco said nervously. "That brings me to the second thing I need to tell you." He couldn't resist leaning forward to rest his forehead against Harry's chest. He listened to the slowing heartbeat and breathed in the scent, because after he told Harry the truth... this would probably be the last chance he'd have.

"You mean the potion?" Harry's tone was so even it was almost frightening.

Draco lifted his head to stare into Harry's eyes. There was no accusation, no venom, no disgust. "You know?"

"Aurors are trained to be able to taste potion ingredients. I thought you would have known that—"

"I—"

"Wait, there's more. Something you wouldn't have known. I also trained rather heavily after the war in Legilimency."

"You mean—" Draco stopped to think of all the repercussions. He was a rather accomplished Occlumens, but that didn't mean Potter wouldn't have been able to—

"Not you. I would never... hell, I said I'd never use it on a friend, but when I tasted the wine Pansy gave me that night, I thought it was her. I thought the whole thing with her and Ron was an act. That she'd hatched some devious plan to... I don't even know what. I tend to act before I think, even now. But then it... well, it turned out to be you instead."

"But if you knew... why would you drink it?"

"I didn't. I spat the first sip into the bathroom sink and surreptitiously dumped the rest into one of Pansy's potted plants."

It made no sense. If he knew, why was he here? Was it just payback? Surely the great Harry Potter wouldn't be so cruel. "Why didn't you say something? You acted like—" Then it dawned on Draco, and he didn't know whether to be furious or impressed. "You were faking?"

It was Harry's turn to fidget before he finally answered. "Yes. But only because you were right. I couldn't let go of the status quo; I didn't know how to. But when I read Pansy's thoughts about the potion, it... well, it gave me an excuse, I guess. A reason to act differently towards you. I liked how that felt. I liked how you reacted. I liked you."

Draco wasn't sure how he felt. On the one hand, his plan was a success. Did it really matter that it hadn't worked the way it was suppose to work? Not really. What mattered was that Harry wanted him as much as he wanted Harry. "And the prophecy?"

"It wouldn't be such a bad thing, would it?" Harry asked quietly.

For the first time since he'd heard those strange words – for the first time that he could clearly remember, Draco's future wasn't a complete mystery. "No," he whispered. Reaching out to remove Harry's glasses, he laid them gently on the side table. "It wouldn't be such a bad thing at all."

"Good. Come on." Harry stood, reaching down to pull Draco to his feet. "I think we need to continue this discussion in the bedroom."

Harry's trousers were still open, his cock half-hard, and Draco no longer had the restraint of guilt holding him back. He cupped Harry's cock in one hand, twined the other in dark hair, and kissed the man for all he was worth. Harry groaned against his lips, his arms wrapping tightly around Draco's waist as if he never intended to let go. Draco thought about the prophecy, and finally understood exactly what it meant.

Fox Hollow

1 March 2008

A man's future is not defined by his past, but by those he chooses to share his life with.

--Draco Malfoy

"Merlin's balls, Pansy. The place looks like a redhead convention."

"Oh, shut it you. I couldn't very well not invite the whole family, now could I?"

Draco leaned back against the counter to consider the possibility. That would be a tad rude, he admitted.

"Here, darling." Pansy took a tray of cucumber sandwiches and shoved it in Draco's direction. "Take this out there before they start eating the furniture."

"Do I look like a house-elf to you, Pans?"

"You look like a man who's just been shagged senseless, but I wasn't going to mention it. Is that why you were late?"

Draco felt his cheeks heat. "Shut up," he answered petulantly as he took the tray and headed towards the dining room. He could still hear Pansy's cackle even after he'd closed the kitchen door behind him. He sat it on the table and hurried away to avoid the influx of Weasleys that were sure to flock to it in

droves. Spotting Harry across the room, Draco made a beeline for him. "Hey, there," he said as he wrapped his arms around Harry's waist, resting his chin on a sturdy shoulder.

"Oi, Malfoy." At least Ron had the decency to finish chewing before he continued. "How's the new location working out for the library?"

He could sense Harry's smile without seeing it. "Good, actually. The extra space will allow me to expand the collection quite a bit, which I'll need desperately if Granger manages to get the Ministry funding she's after."

Harry turned his head, his lips lightly brushing Draco's cheek. "Speaking of Hermione—"

"Harry! Draco! There you are." She swept them both up in a crushing hug, her bushy hair tickling Draco's nose. "You won't believe the owl I received just before I left the library!"

"Well? Out with it then." The poor girl was practically bouncing on her toes.

"The Head Historian for the Ministry of Greece has approved our request to copy and translate any genealogical records housed at their main library."

Draco was stunned. He'd been requesting permission for years and had never received so much as a response. Harry had been right. Granger had been an exceptional addition to the library staff. Not only was she intelligent, but she had the tenacity of a niffler after a gold coin.

"Draco? Aren't you excited? I thought you'd be thrilled!"

"I... yes. I am. That's... that's fabulous, Granger. Well done."

Granger beamed. "I'll plan our itinerary first thing Monday morning. It'll take at least a week to decide

what we can use and to make the proper copies. Oh, we'll probably have to make two trips, there are loads of records that will need to be—" Her words were cut off by a kiss.

"Thank Merlin," Draco said with a sigh. "I thought she was going to pass out from lack of oxygen. How do you put up with that every day, Blaise?"

Draco felt Harry's chest rumble with a deep laugh. "You're terribly rude. You know that, right?"

Draco tightened his grip around Harry's waist. "She knows I'm just kidding." Draco said it quietly, but Granger was no longer paying them any attention. Blaise, no doubt, was getting an earful of the exciting news. He didn't seem to mind, though, by the way his eyes were twinkling as she talked.

Harry turned in Draco's arms, his smile as broad as Draco had ever seen it. "I'm proud of you," he said softly.

"Ronald Weasley, if you so much as touch your birthday cake before dinner I'll cut you off for a month!"

A hush fell over the room and all eyes drifted to Ron, who was standing near the dining room table looking suspiciously guilty. Draco thought it might be a good time to go and check the kitchen to make sure Pansy hadn't murdered the house-elf.

"You can show me how proud you are later. Right now, I need to go and calm Pansy down before Weasley loses his left testicle." It was still her favourite threat. No one had lost one yet, but, as Harry had so wisely once said, why take the risk. "Blaise." Draco grabbed his arm as he headed towards the kitchen. "I might need backup this time." Blaise groaned, but followed.

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Draco sat on the sofa, pleasantly full of one too many helpings of cake and a few too many glasses of wine. Pansy had curled up in the armchair near the window listening to Blaise and Dean Thomas debate the possibilities of England winning the World Cup.

All the visiting Weasleys had long since gone home, save the youngest, who seemed to have disappeared along with the golden trio. Draco stretched his legs and stood, planning to make a trip to the loo before going in search of his missing boyfriend, until he heard voices coming from the behind the closed kitchen door. He couldn't resist pausing to listen at the crack.

"Slytherins? All three of you? What has this world come to?" That would be the Weaselette. Draco was tempted to burst in and give her a piece of his mind, but curiosity got the better of him.

"They're really not so bad, once you get to know them." Granger. Always the practical one.

"Yeah, Gin. Deep down inside, they're more like..." Ron's words slurred and Draco could practically see him swaying. He'd have one hell of a hangover in the morning. "Hufflepuffs."

Draco's mouth fell open. The audacity—

Harry chuckled, his deep laugh not calming Draco the way it usually did. "Exactly," he added. "Only... more cunning."

Draco cocked his head to consider.

"And energetic," Ron piped in.

"And just a bit rough around the edges," Granger added.

There was a long pause before Harry's voice, low and seductive, continued. "And sexy. Really, really,

sexy."

There was a noise that sounded like a smack, followed by a round of sniggers. Draco smiled to himself as he continued towards the loo. He supposed that was acceptable. He would remind Harry of just how sexy once they got home. Hufflepuff, indeed.

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