Bound! by Draeconin

Summary: In order to avoid a worse fate, Draco subjects himself to a bonding.

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Chapter One by Draeconin

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This story was inspired by "Life Debt," by Dela Ria.

Chapter One

What's a boy to do? Draco was bored. Which was why he was now, just a little over two weeks away from the start of school, sneaking around the mansion, listening in on any conversation he could eavesdrop upon.

Actually, being bored was something of an occupational hazard for Draco. His father kept a very close eye on him, allowing only occassional visits to the offspring of select pure-blood children - although he could hardly be called a child any longer. In fact, he didn't even need all the fingers of one hand to count the contacts he was allowed to have: Pansy Parkinson, whom he was supposed to marry in a few years (although the very idea of a female touching him 'that way' made him shudder), Blaise Zabini, who was decent enough, then last and least, Greg Goyle and Vincent Crabbe, who were both only slightly better than visiting with rocks. Actually, there was one other, but Draco had scratched him off his list of 'friends' when they were only ten years old; so he, Theodore Nott, hardly counted.

But those visits were few and far between, and most of them occured there at Malfoy Manor anyway. Other than those rare visits, and his father training him in the Dark Arts, he had precious little to fill his time - even sketching, his heretofore favourite pastime, had palled. As for quidditch practice, chasing a snitch by yourself wore thin after awhile. It became a chore. It was only really fun when he had competition - and that meant Potter. But he didn't bear thinking about; especially right now. His pants always started to fill out in front, and he had other pastimes in mind.

He'd found out a lot of very juicy tidbits from eavesdropping. Not that he'd ever gossip about any of it. No, it was much more fun just knowing, and it could come in useful for blackmail material later, should it ever be needed.

So now, trusty Extendable Ear in hand (which had been given him by Blaise on one visit), he crept up to the door of his father's study, put the Ear in place, and retreated as far as it would allow him to go. Putting the earpiece to his ear, he was appalled to find his father in conversation with none other but the Dark Lord himself. As if that wasn't bad enough, he was the subject in question.

He'd always assumed that his father's interest in the Dark Arts was what he had always told him it was; merely a means to political power. But this put a whole new spin on that explanation - one he'd adamantly refused to consider, before. His father... His father - was not only a Death Eater, something he'd known and accepted (although he had tended to think of it in terms of a gentleman's club) - he'd even accepted the probability that his father would force him to join, although he didn't like the idea. But he actually knew and talked with Lord Voldemort, the ultimate Dark wizard!

He listened in horrified fascination for a few minutes, and with every passing second, he became more sickened; sickened, disillusioned and heartbreakingly saddened. As coldly as his father had treated him, he'd always believed that it was to train him to eventually take his father's place in the wizarding world, not because he truly didn't care for him. But here he was, planning to turn him over to He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named; and not as a trusted lackey, as he'd assumed his father was, but binding him to the dark wizard as some sort of disposable sex toy!

He almost dropped the Extendable Ear and ran, but remembered himself enough to retrieve it before retreating to the safety of his room. Now, however, he felt anything but safe. As he started thinking of his predicament, he grew more and more agitated. He would not be a play-toy for that thing! He had heard rumors about the Dark Lord's predilections. If they were lucky, his 'toys' died quickly. And his father wanted to do this to him? Father! Hah! Sire, perhaps. He no longer deserved the title of "father."

But what could he do? His mother was helpless against the man that had provided half of his genetic material, so there was no help there. His friends? Likely turn him over to curry favor. Run? Right! To where? Where could he go that he wouldn't eventually be found, and bound to that monster? There wasn't any such place. Magic would lead his - sire - right to him. There had to be a way out of this! But the only way to prevent being bound... Right. The only way out was to be bound to someone else! Quickly he got out quill, inkwell and parchment, and started making a list of the people he knew, no matter how unlikely. Maybe one of them...

Pansy Parkinson - wants to marry me. If I were bound to her, I would have to 'perform' for her in her bedroom. No! Theodore Nott - a Lord Voldemort want-to-be. Doesn't bear thinking about. Vincent Crabbe - obviously not. No brains Gregory Goyle - ditto - and more so Blaise Zabini - The best of the lot, but can I trust him with that kind of power over me? No, I think not. He's still too Slytherin to not take advantage of a power situation. Millicent Bulstrode - Why am I even writing it down?! Justin Finch-Fletchley - Same question. (I must be getting desperate!) Neville Longbottom - A good sort, in a bumbling way. Could be gay, but no real power, there, for protection.

He wadded up the paper and threw it in the fire. 'There has to be someone. Dumbledore? Old, half senile... Powerful, but he wouldn't bind me to him, and sooner or later I'd be kidnapped from right under his nose. He'd even gone so far as to list a couple of people from other Houses; that's how desperate he was.

'Who? Who? Who?' The idea insidiously wormed its way into his mind, and lodged there. Time and again, his mind kept coming back to a certain tall, raven-haired, green-eyed, handsome young man. (Well, maybe not tall, but taller than he, certainly.) And time and again, he pushed the thought aside. But in the end, he really had no other choice. Keeping his feelings and urges to himself was going to be hell, however. He had absolutely no idea on which side of the fence the Gryffindor sat. Hopefully they were on the same side, but... Anyway, he was perfect. Well, that was beside the point. He could talk him into it, he wouldn't take undue advantage of it, and best of all, he was powerful enough to protect both him and himself at the same time. But what if he refused? There was that stupid feud they'd been fighting ever since first year. A feeling of cold certainty came over him. If Potter wouldn't help him, then the grave could protect him from from 'that creature's' "affections."

Okay, now that that decision had been made, the question was - how? He couldn't just go and plop himself and his problems in Potter's lap (bad imagery!) without a plan to deal with it. Well, he had a plan - a binding. But there were so many! Some of them were almost worthless, they were so easy to break! And others... Well, others involved things such as he'd heard his father outline to Voldemort. Cutting runes into his flesh was not something he'd submit to voluntarily! So it appeared he'd have to take a page out of Granger's book, and do some research. He settled down to wait until the household was

asleep.

A little after 2 a.m., he snuck out of his room, wearing his slippers and bed-robe, so just in case he got caught, he could plausibly claim he'd had trouble sleeping, and was looking for some light reading. Although finding the titles he was looking for by wand light was difficult, he managed to find three fairly comprehensive books on the subject ('Of course', he thought bitterly, 'he'd need to know what to do to me.'), and get back to his room without detection.

Four days later, he'd narrowed his choices down to three; any one of which would do the job with a minimum of pain. But only one gave the kind of guarantee he knew Potter would need to convince him to go through with it, especially given their past interactions. Great! Now all he needed to do was go to Potter's residence, and... Drat! He had no idea where Potter resided, summers. Racking his brains for ideas, he was about ready to resign himself to his dagger, when a faint glimmer of hope dawned. Professor Snape. It was unlikely the professor would, himself, know where Harry Potter lived, but he had more resources to find out. And Draco had the means to coerce that help, if needed. His little eavesdropping sessions were about to pay off. It was doubtful that the greasy potions master would want anyone at Hogwarts to know that he was a Death Eater, after all. And since the old curmudgeon had a bad habit of handing out wheelbarrow loads of assignments for summer work, he had a perfect excuse for contacting him.

The next morning, he went to his lab (Yes, his lab. How else do you think he gets good marks in Potions? - - - Ew... No! That's disgusting!), took out his assignments, and deliberately fouled up the same potion four times, in four very imaginative ways, then looked his mother up to, very truthfully (somehow she always knew), complain about it.

"Mother, I'm afraid I'm having a bit of a bother with one of my assignments. In potions, actually. Do you suppose I could floo over to Hogsmeade to visit with Professor Snape and straighten it out? You know how father gets when I'm not first in class; well, outside of Granger, that is. I do wish I knew how she manages." (When you have an image to live up to, you live up to it, no matter how priggish it makes you sound; at least, when you're talking to your parents or their friends.)

And that's how Draco found himself, two hours later, at Professor Snape's very modest two-bedroom house just on the outskirts of Hogsmeade. Due to Snape's prejudice against people flooing in, however, Draco had to floo into The Three Broomsticks, and walk the short distance to his house. Personally, Draco thought that Snape's 'prejudice' was merely protection against anyone finding out about his Death Eather connections. He was almost right. Since the professor was expecting him, the young Mr. Malfoy

felt no need to knock, and just walked in. It was terrible breach of decorum, but in Draco's state of mind, he wasn't thinking of manners. As it turned out, however, although it gave the potions master a few minutes of quiet, but well-hidden fright, what Draco inadvertently found out was in his best interests and aided him immensely. Professor Snape was talking to someone by floo.

"That's correct, Professor; Kingston, Surrey. Seems he thinks to make a statement, since seven kings were crowned, there," Severus stated.

"Another terrorist strike, then?" came Dumbledore's voice.

"What else? A few people have joined his cause out of fear because of these strikes, but what his over-all hopes are, is beyond me," the professor snarled.

"Who knows what goes through Voldemort's head? He'd have to be insane anyway; he can't truly believe to achieve his ends in this manner. By the way, Severus; I believe you have a guest," Dumbledore revealed as casually as though he were discussing the weather.

Turning around, Snape was horrified to find he'd been overheard by the son of one of Voldemort's most ardent advocates. Whipping his wand out, he was about to cast "Obliviate," when Draco spoke up.

"No need for that, Professor. It seems I came to the right person to help me, after all."

At the young blonde's first words, the professor paused, giving his young visitor time to finish what he had to say. A few moments wouldn't hurt, should he decide he needed to cast the spell anyway - and Draco didn't seem upset, nor had he reached for his wand, so he hardly seemed threatening. Turning back to the fireplace, he said "It seems we must continue our conversation another time, Professor. Go putter in your garden, or whatever you do when you're not meddling in other people's lives."

Despite his anxiety, Draco snorted.

"A bit of sunshine might be just what I need, Professor. Good luck to you, and be careful," the old man replied.

"Do you always walk into other people's houses uninvited?" Snape snarled.

Startled, Draco realized the gaffe he'd made. Although making it easier to ask for aid, walking in and eavesdropping like that might have made it harder to get acquiescence for it. "I... I'm sorry, Professor. I knew you were expecting me, and I had so much on my mind, and..." Draco's voice trailed off as he realized that he was babbling. A Malfoy did not babble. He gathered himself, and began again. "I do appologize, Professor. However, what I overhead will go no further, believe me. I..."

"It had best not." Snape snarled, interrupting. "If I ever have reason to regret not Obliviating you..." He left the threat unfinished, sure that Draco's imagination could come up with worse things than he could - or would - do. He continued, making his voice as abrasive and threatening as possible. "You said in your owl that you needed help with your potions assignment. Why would what you just overheard have any bearing on that?"

Draco tried his best to ignore the man's tone, adopting a somewhat haughty, if slightly deferential, demeanor as defense. "None, of course. I need help to find Potter."

Of all the things Severus Snape thought might come out of Draco Malfoy's mouth, this one was among the least likely, and it took him a moment to recover from his private astonishment. "Even if I knew where the brat spent his summers, why would I tell you? What would you be wanting with him?"

"May I sit down?" Draco asked, hoping the slight delay might give him time to order his words.

"The chair by the fire is mine; site anywhere else you like."

Draco's mind was racing as he seated himself, trying to put the best possible light on what he had to say. In the end, he gave up, and just let the words flow. "Since you were talking to the headmaster about You-Know-Who's plans, I'm assuming you're not a loyal Death Eater. That being the case, I'm hoping

you'll help me escape him. I need Potter to do that."

This explanation needed some clarification. "Escape whom?" Snape asked. "And how can Potter help?"

Draco shot an irritated look at his Potions teacher. "The Dark Lord,, of course! I heard my - father - talking to him. He plans to whore me off to him! A Dark binding, to make me his sex slave! And you know what happens to them?! Well, I don't, personally, but I've heard rumors. Anyway, if I'm already bound to someone else, then it can't happen! You will help, won't you?"

Snape was horrified, although he did his best to hide it. He knew Lucius Malfoy was a cold-hearted bastard; but this? Upon reconsideration, yes; he could believe it. He'd never heard a kind word from the man about his son, only of how weak and pitiful the boy was, although Severus couldn't really agree. The boy had survived with sanity intact in that household this long, hadn't he? Still, perhaps Narcissa had helped, there. "And you want to bind yourself to Potter?"

"He's the only one strong enough that won't take too much advantage of the situation," Draco explained.

"Have you thought of speaking to Dumbledore?"

"I believe I've covered all possibilities, yes. The headmaster wouldn't bind me to him, and sooner or later, I'd be kidnapped. I'd rather kill myself."

Snape nodded. The lad's reasoning was sound, and his reaction reasonable, under the circumstances. "Do you have a binding that 's strong enough? You believe Potter will cooperate?"

Draco sighed with relief, that his professor was no longer offering blocks, but exploring the situation. He took out the pages containging the binding he wished to use, that he'd carefully cut from the book of bindings he'd found it in, and handed them to his potions master while saying "I don't know that Potter will agree. I believe he will, but if not, I have contingency plans. I'll hide out in Europe. It's risky, but it's the best other chance I'd have." The last part was a lie, of course. He didn't want the man stopping him from slitting his wrists - or throat, as the mood struck him at the time - should Harry refuse.

Looking over the ritual Draco'd provided him with, Snape was struck by how old it was; from the Dark Ages, it appeared. As he read near the end of the ritual, he smirked. "Are you sure Potter's magical strength and personal integrity are the only things you're interested in?" he asked.

Draco blushed. "They're the only things that matter, yes," he replied.

Snape leaned back in his chair, decision made. "Very well, then. When?"

Draco gaped, hardly believing his luck. Then he remembered himself, and his calm exterior returned. "In two days' time, would be good. My sire will be away at a meeting, and it's the night of the full moon; an auspicious time for the ritual. Also, it will give you time to set up an alibi, so you won't be implicated in my defection."

"You've thought of everything, I see."

Anxious, Draco asked the one question he still didn't know the answer to. "You do know the whereabouts of his residence, don't you?"

"If I didn't, I'd know it by that time," Snape replied evasively, still smirking. It was an ugly expression.

"In two days' time, then?" Draco inquired.

"In two days' time," came the affirmative.

Please review.

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Chapter Two

"Potter! POTTER!"

With the banging on his bedroom door, and the distress, no, the almost panicked desperation in the voice yelling his surname, Harry almost didn't recognise it. But he'd heard that voice too many times for it to go totally unrecognised under any circumstances. Usually, however, that voice was hurling insults or snide comments. Malfoy. Draco Malfoy. And that fact astonished him to no end. Draco Malfoy? At 4 Privet Drive? And his muggle relatives hadn't screamed out their anger at the intrusion of a strange wizard coming into their home? Maybe they'd decided cowering was better - if Malfoy hadn't just cursed them. Actually, they would probably have deserved it, if he had.

All these thought raced through Harry's head, even as he was striding towards the door. Turning the knob and throwing it violently open, he snarled "It wasn't frigging locked! What the bloody hell are you doing here, Malfoy, and what do you bleeding want! Not that I care so much, but where are the blasted Dursley's?!"

Draco, caught by that blast, stood, shocked, with his mouth open, but recovered quickly. "Do you kiss your aunt with that mouth?" he asked snidely, almost sounding like his old self.

"I wouldn't kiss that waspish harridan for all the money in Gringott's!" Harry declared, disgusted. "What are you doing here?"

At the Gryffindor's expression, the blonde quickly said "I... I need your help, Potter - Harry." The note of desperation was back, now.

"Why would I do anything for you? And you still haven't answered my question!" Harry said, stalling while he absorbed the shock of hearing Malfoy, of all people, asking him for help.

"I'm telling you, you... " Draco paused and took a deep breath, fighting for control of his temper. "Look, I..."

"The Dursley's?" Harry reminded him.

"Oh. They're fine. I put them to sleep when the big, fat one..."

"Young, or older?" Harry asked, interrupting yet again.

Draco frowned, his hard-won patience fraying rapidly. "Some old git. Anyway..."

"That was Uncle Vernon," Harry informed him. He was finding that annoying Malfoy was mildly amusing, now.

"I don't bloody care!" Draco yelled, frustrated. "Will you stop interrupting me and let me get on with it?! This is difficult enough as it is!"

"Sure. What did you use on them?" the brunette said, smirking as he leant up against the door frame.

"You're just going to stand there? You're not going to offer me a seat?"

"You're not a guest, Malfoy. You forced your way in here, and most likely used magic against muggles; although I suppose squibs would be more accurate for my aunt and cousin."

"I don't bloody care! I need to sit down, now! I don't think I'm going to be able to stand, much longer," the blonde said, trying to push by the Gryffindor.

Harry automatically put his hand up against the Slytherin's chest, stopping him. Suspicious of the blonde, he searched Draco's face, and found not only the irritation and anger he'd exptected, but also the fear and desperation he'd heard in the Slytherin's voice. Deeper, hidden in those silver eyes, was exhaustion,

and behind that, humiliation and shame. Shoving away from the doorframe, he stood aside and waved the other boy in. "No chairs, but you can sit on the bed."

"What did you use on them?" he asked again, as the blonde made his way to the bed.

"Aegresco Dormitare," Draco said, sighing as he sat down.

Harry snorted, amused. "The nighmare curse? Good on you! Why?"

Draco eyed the young man, not quite sure how to react to this Harry. This wasn't how he knew him. This was more - Slytherin. "They were rude to me. Seems they don't care for wizard robes."

Harry grinned, relaxed.

"Gods, Potter; you actually live like this?" Draco sneered in disbelief, as he surveyed the room.

"Not by choice, I assure you," Harry replied, his grin fading rapidly from his face.

"I thought your family had money!"

"The Dursley's wouldn't buy me an aspirin if I had a broken leg," the Gryffindor said bitterly. "My parents did have money, and I do, but I'm not about to let the Dursley's know that; they'd find a way to steal it from me. Not that it's any concern of yours," the brunette added, after a brief hesitation.

"And here I was, thinking you were treated like a king!" Draco marvelled.

"More like a servant; but that's irrelevant." Then he remembered. "What do you need from me?"

Draco sobered, then obliquely stated "I assure you, your financial stature is of great concern to me - or it will be, if you decide to help me."

"You're skint?" Harry asked, incredulously.

Draco sighed. "No, Potter. But if you decide to help me, I soon will be."

Harry eyed the Slytherin suspiciously. "What help could I give you that would leave you penniless, and why would you wish to be?"

Draco sat on Harry's bed and stared at the floor, gathering his courage. "I need you to bind me to you," he almost whispered.

"WHAT?! Why would I want to be bound to you?!" Harry asked angrily.

The blonde shook his head, still refusing to look at the Gryffindor. "No, Potter; not you bound to me - me bound to you."

"It's a two-way street, isn't it?" the brunette asked, confused.

"Well, in a way, yes, but..." Draco didn't get to finish that sentence, as he was interrupted yet again.

"I bloody knew it! Is this some plan of your father's to deliver me to Voldemort?" Harry demanded.

Draco shook his head again. "No, it's a plan to keep me from being delivered to him," he revealed.

Harry stared at the red-faced blonde. "What are you blathering about? I thought you wanted to become a Death Eater?!"

"I never wanted to be a Death Eater, Potter. I bow to no one. But my father... Let me rephrase that. The man who sired me upon my mother was going to force me into it, anyway. I didn't like it, but I could live with that. What I can't live with, and what I found out just a week ago, is that he is planning to bind me to the scaly bustard, to be his play-toy," the blonde said, his face red with the humiliation and shame he had been hiding.

Harry was in shock. "His..." His voice trailed off, unable to complete the sentence.

Draco mistook this for a lack of understanding. "His whore, Potter," he whispered, shamed humiliation evident in his face, and obviously fighting the tears brimming his eyes.

"Nobody deserves something like that, I don't care how much of a git he is," the Gryffindor replied quietly.

"There's only one way to stop it, Potter; if I'm already bound to someone else," Draco said, finally looking at the other boy.

"Dumbledore would..."

"Already thought of it, Potter. I'd have to be in his sight all the time, or I could be kidnapped, and you know he couldn't do that, even if he wanted."

"So you picked me? Why?"

"Because as much as you might hate me, Potter, you'd never take advantage of it. I couldn't think of anyone else, even friends, I could say that about."

Harry shook his head. "I'm not as goody-goody as you think I am, Malfoy. But I couldn't let something like that happen to anyone - even you. What does this binding entail?"

With the beginnings of real hope in his eyes, Draco replied. "There are a lot of different kinds of binding, Potter. Lucius and Voldemort would have used a blood binding, Dark magic, of course, that would involve cutting me up pretty badly."

Harry looked revolted. "I won't..."

"I won't, either, so you have nothing to worry about on that score, Potter. I did a lot of research on magical bindings, once I decided that I had no other choice. The one I've picked out involves the least amount of pain, and the most protection - both for you, and for me. Once it's done, I won't be able to do anything to harm, or bring harm to you, and I'm protected against ever being bound to anyone else." 'Not that I ever really wanted to harm you anyway,' Draco thought, 'despite what I've had to do.'.

"What does it entail?" Harry asked again.

Draco launched into an explanation of the details; the purifications that would have to be done, the designs that would have to be painted on his body, the spells that would need to be said, and...

"What?! Malfoy, I am not having sex with you!" Harry declared.

"It's not sex, Potter, it's domination, and it's an integral part of the ritual," Draco argued. "What? Do you think I want you to fuck me? Do you need to see it in writing?"

"Sounds like a bloody good idea to me, Malfoy! You have it with you?"

"I thought you might get squeamish over that part, so yes; I did bring it with me," Draco said, pulling a

few neatly-cut-out pages from his robe pocket.

"Mutilating books, now?"

"The book would have been missed. It will be a while before the pages are," Draco explained. "Not that I owe you an explanation."

"True," Harry replied. Draco looked at him, surprised with the agreement. "Let's see those pages," the Gryffindor requested, holding out a hand. After perusing the papers thoroughly, Harry looked at Draco. "Just as you said," he affirmed quietly, "right down to the sex."

"It's the best I could find, Potter. Others weren't strong enough, or entailed more pain than I wish to endure." Draco was again looking as though he was fighting the urge to cry.

"I'm sorry," Harry murmured, as he realised "this can't be easy for you."

"An understatement, Potter," the blonde replied, just as quietly. "I get to be a sex toy for the Dark Lord, or bound to you, my rival, for the rest of my life. At least with you, I have a chance of living a longer life; Voldemort isn't easy on his play-things."

"People around me have a habit of dying, if you haven't noticed," the brunette said softly.

"But not because you torture or kill them, Potter," Draco said.

Harry stared at the Slytherin. "Did you just - defend me?" he asked, amazed.

"Don't get used to it, Potter. And I think you're stalling. Will you help me, or not?"

Harry blushed, caught in the act - or in not acting, whichever was more accurate. "It has to be me?"

"I can't trust anyone else, Potter; not with this kind of power over me."

Harry sighed, defeated. He just couldn't let Voldemort happen to anyone, if he could help it. "When?"

"You'll do it, then?"

"Yes," Harry replied. Then asked again, "When?"

"The sooner the better. Tonight's a full moon, so that will help. I... I brought everything we'll need."

"Pretty sure of yourself, weren't you?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I'd like to take credit for doing exactly that, but the truth is, that I just hoped. If you agreed, the ritual would have to be started almost immediately. If you didn't..." He took a dagger out of the bag he'd been carrying, and showed it to the Gryffindor, making a slashing gesture across his own throat, then put it away again. "Thank you for my life. It's going to take some time to do the ritual; we should get started."

"The Dursley's?" Harry asked, concerned about Draco's spell wearing off.

"The sleeping spell will last until one of us ends it," Draco reassured the Gryffindor, "but we need to make sure that there won't be any other interruptions, either. Can you take care of that?"

Harry just nodded, and said "Yes." Despite his lacklustre performance in classes, he knew the material forwards and backwards. He did poory in some because he was bored, having already learned most of the material beforehand, and didn't like taking tests. In Potions, his problem was the professor. Since the

man had gone out of his way, from the first time Harry'd set foot in his classroom, to try to make Harry feel unwelcome at best, and like trash the rest of the time, the Gryffindor had subconsciously decided to do everything he could to anger the man, even if it hurt his own marks. Harry had accidentally found where the Weasley twins had set up the small lab where they invented quite a lot of their pranks, and had talked them into letting him use it when they weren't, so he could work on the practical's on his own. He had no intention of failing his N.E.W.T.s because of the greasy professor.

Harry had got in the habit, during the last free days at Hogwarts, of cozening Dumbledore or one or more of his adult friends into taking him to Diagon Alley to buy extra books on the practise of magic to read during the summer, before going to molder away at his relatives'. There was little else he was allowed to do at the Dursley's than study, other than the chores he was forced to do. Some of the books he acquired were on quite extensive and advanced magics. So he went about setting up extra wards - wards that prevented the detection of magic being used, first, then to prevent intruders of any kind. When he was finished, he turned around to find Draco staring at him.

"When did you learn to do advanced magic of that sort, Potter?" the blonde asked, impressed despite himself.

"Reading, and practising on the sly at school," Harry replied.

"Right," the blonde said, and dropped the subject. There were more important things to attend to, right now. "Where's your bath, Potter?" They both had to bathe before starting the ritual. They'd need to do so again afterwards.

"Down the hall, and on the left," was the reply.

"Right, then. I'll go first, so I can set up, while you're cleaning up. Every square inch of skin, Potter - I don't want this to go wrong."

"No worries, Mal- Draco."

Draco startled. "Why did you use my given name?" he asked.

"We're going to be quite - intimate, Draco, and we're going to be together the rest of our lives, in some relationship or other, so I think it best we get used to each other, don't you?"

Draco blushed, and hated himself for it. "Don't get any romantic notions, Potter," he said, trying to sneer. He'd been fighting an attraction for the Gryffindor Seeker for quite some time, now, but he wasn't going to give his rival any power over him by letting him know that.

"I'm not, Malfoy; I'm doing as you practically begged me to do!" the Gryffindor nearly shouted. He immediately regretted it. In a more normal tone of voice, he said "I'm sorry. I'm just nervous. Alright, and a little scared, too. Aren't you scared, Malfoy?"

Keeping his back turned to the dark-haired boy, Draco quietly admitted "Terrified." He then quickly swept out of the room with the few things he'd need to bathe with, leaving Harry staring after him, dumbfounded that he'd admit it.

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Chapter Three

When Draco emerged from the bath room, drying his hair, he was wearing a lush, maroon, floor-length terrycloth bathrobe with cream-coloured borders, and a large, embroidered 'D' monogrammed on the left breast.

When Harry left to take Draco's place in the shower, the blonde was brushing his hair. After adjusting the water, Harry stepped into the shower, then washed his hair and scrubbed himself all over twice, paying special attention to the crevices, just to be sure he'd been as thorough as possible. He dried himself off, and wrapped a dry towel around himself before returning to his bedroom, where he found Malfoy had changed into a deep green, silk dressing gown with a quilted collar and hems a shade darker, and gold

embroidery. He was kneeling on one knee, the other bent, bare leg sticking out from the dressing gown, poised to brace himself and help him up. The Slytherin was drawing symbols on the floor.

It was an innocuous thing to get turned on by, but the sight of Draco's hairless, bare leg... He shook himself to break the spell of the sight of that leg, then turned, and closed and locked the door, and wondered briefly where Draco had kept the robes, before he remembered the shrinking spell. With it, those two robes wouldn't have taken up as much room as a handkerchief.

Draco looked up at the sound of the bedroom door closing, and was lost in wonder. Of course, it could have been lust, just as well. Potter was wrapped only in a towel; but that left so much of him uncovered. And it was all - perfect. Every muscle was lightly defined on the Gryffindor's arms and chest, a small six-pack defined his stomach, and the rest was just as delicious. Draco found himself salivating, and found himself wanting his mouth on the brunette's neck; along with other parts. When the raven-haired lad turned to lock the door, the tightly-wrapped towel showed off Harry's rounded arse, and Draco had to swallow and look away to keep himself from drooling, or doing something else equally pathetic. The muscles in that arse would be driving Harry's erection into his arse, soon. Draco was almost glad that circumstances had driven him here. 'Almost,' being the operative word. Potter's unexpected physical charms notwithstanding, he was still an obnoxious goody-goody. But he was a powerful, obnoxious goody-goody that he could not only trust, but who could protect him, should it be needed; and he knew it would be. That thought brought him back to his purpose, and he returned to copying the needed symbols onto the floor.

Harry had turned around and, for a couple of seconds, had seen Malfoy staring at him, a rather strange look on his face. But it passed, and the blonde returned to painting symbols on the bedroom floor. Harry knew that look. He'd felt it on his own face a few times, mostly when he'd been looking at the blonde Slytherin too long. He knew what it meant for him, but - Draco? Feeling 'that way' towards him? No, he must be mistaken.

"Are you ready, Po- Harry?" Draco asked snidely. He hadn't meant for it to come out that way, but he was shaken; Potter wasn't supposed to be so - delectable. He had just grabbed an attitude from his imaginary bag of acting tricks to try to cover his true emotions.

Harry was startled out of his reverie, then sighed. He was not looking forward to a lifetime of that attitude, no matter how nice-looking a package it came in. "I suppose," he replied.

"Then take this. It's the potion you'll need to draw the designs on me."

Harry looked at the thick, dark goo in the ceramic pot. It looked - slimy, but the smell was rather medicinal, rather than the nasty odour he'd expect something that looked like this to have. "What do I draw them on with?" he asked.

"Your finger," the blonde replied.

"I have to touch it?"

Draco favoured him with a slight sneer. "Yes, Potter, you have to touch it. It helps with the bond. I have to have it on several places on my body," he replied exasperatedly. "And be careful to leave enough to act as a lubricant for when you - you know. I've already prepared myself otherwise. Now, if you are quite through with your bout of squeamishness, can we get on with this? I'd rather not have to think about it any longer."

Harry sighed again, then dropped his towel. "Can't do it while you're wearing that robe, M- Draco," he hinted.

Draco stood up, crossed to Harry's wardrobe, removed his robe and hung it up, then stood there a minute to let the beginnings of his erection go down, and to get over the shock of seeing all of Harry all at once. The boy was hot! He carefully refrained from looking down. The glimpse he'd had... While the brunette hadn't been erect, it had been well on the way, hanging full, with nicely heavy balls below it, and a small, neat patch of dark, curly hair at its base. He wanted a more thorough look, but knew he'd give himself away if he did.

Harry, in the meantime, was frantically trying to picture his Uncle Vernon in drag, in order to keep his reactions to a minimum. The sight of Draco's body from the back was... Words failed him. He quickly added a nude Aunt Petunia in a centrefold pose to his mental picture of his uncle, and sighed in relief as he regained control. It wouldn't do to let Malfoy know he was going to enjoy 'dominating' him.

Draco returned to the ritual area he'd laid out, and lay down, face up, in it.

Harry turned off the fantasies he'd been playing in his mind, and joined him in the area. From here on, it would be expected of him to be erect; he'd need to be, later. He cast a spell of protection to avoid the notice of those with ill-wishing influences over the room, then set his wand aside. He knelt over the blonde with the pot of ointment in his left hand, and dipping a finger into it, started drawing the first symbol on the blonde's forehead, to bind Draco's mind from acting on thoughts of harming him, then performing the spell on the symbol that activated it. He then went on to the symbols needed over the heart, to bind the blonde's loyalty to his service; the lungs, that he would live his life in Harry's service; the stomach, that he would always put the welfare of his binder over his own; the liver, that he would give his life to protect Harry if necessary; and finally, around Draco's genitals, that his descendants would never raise weapon against him or his house.

That was how the symbols were explained in the pages that Draco had brought. And if the ritual and the spells were being performed in the circumstances assumed by the writer, that of a warrior or lord binding an unwilling and physically restrained enemy, that is exactly how the ritual would have worked. That was not the circumstances, here. Draco would have drastically altered the parameters of the ritual simply by being willing. That he had actually sought to submit himself to the bond altered the magic even further. Add the sexual attraction and tension each young man had for the other, and their thoughts and hidden feelings, and the results that could be expected from it were altered completely.

It had been several hours since the ritual had begun, due to the intricacy of some of the symbols, and the pauses for purifications, so Draco was very thankful to be able to change positions. He was both looking forward to, and dreading, this next part. He got up on his hands and knees, legs wide apart, exposing himself to his rival. Harry started drawing the final symbols on the Slytherin's back - the symbols that would forever unite them. When he'd finished, there was still about an ounce of the potion left. He positioned himself between Draco's legs, scooped some of the potion up on two fingers, and then started rubbing it into Draco's entrance. "Are you okay?" he asked the blonde quietly.

"Yes." Draco's voice was strained. "Just - do it." He'd wanted to say 'just be gentle,' but he couldn't bring himself to expose his feelings that much. This was the boy he'd wanted, though not then in a sexual way, since they met at Madam Malkin's; the boy who'd refused his offer of friendship. Harry'd had cause, he could now admit to himself, but once he'd started venting his hurt feelings on the Gryffindor, he'd found it hard to stop, even when he wanted to. By that time, House rivalries and the urging of his House-mates, as well as his father's attitudes, had made any thoughts of making peace a hopeless dream - there was

too much to lose. He still wanted to fight those tender feelings. It gave too much power over him to the young man behind him who was, even now, preparing to enact the final phase of the ritual that would both protect him and make him Potter's subject. He banished those thoughts, and braced himself for his penetration. A still, small voice deep inside his mind wished that their first sex act together could have been a more loving one.

Had Harry known what was going on in the young blonde man's mind while he was lubricating him, and then his own straining manhood, he would have been very happy, indeed. For the past two years, what had fuelled his anger towards the younger Malfoy was frustration and disappointment that such a sexy and otherwise attractive young man could be so mean-spirited. Now one of his fantasies was coming true; at least in part. He was going to have sex with the blonde god of his wet dreams. He sighed, wishing the situation weren't so business-like. Well, at least he could fantasise that it was more romantic while they were 'doing it.'

Harry positioned himself. "Are you ready, Draco?" he asked softly.

The Slytherin nodded, and whispered "Yes." 'I wish his heart was in it,' he thought.

'I wish he really wanted me,' Harry thought as he slowly pushed in. At Draco's gasp, he stopped, panicked that he may have injured the young man under him. "Are you all right?" he asked, concern evident in his voice.

'As if he really cares,' Draco thought bitterly. "Just - give me a minute to adjust, Potter," he said, voice rough with the conflicting feelings he had.

"Let me know when you're ready."

Draco tensed, imagining for a moment that he heard derision in the tone, then relaxed as he realised his error. It was only softly-spoken direction. A few seconds later, he whispered "Okay," and felt the Gryffindor's manhood start once again to slowly invade him. He lowered his head as a tear slipped down his cheek. He was losing his virginity to the young man he'd dreamed of giving it to so often, and it meant nothing more than saving another person from the Dark Lord, to the Gryffindor - or so he

thought. Pain gripped him yet again as muscles unused to this activity protested the invasion of his body.

Harry paused once again as the blonde under him tensed. Draco's surrender to him was bitter-sweet. He could wish that they were face-to-face, those clean-cut, pale legs wrapped around his waist, pulling him in, rather than this position of the conqueror taking his prize. He couldn't help it; he leaned over and placed a kiss in the crook of the blonde young man's neck and shoulder.

Draco stiffened as he felt the lips on him. "H-Harry?" he stammered, before he could stop himself.

"Yes?" Harry was, inwardly, nervously awaiting the blonde's disdain, but tried to sound calm and collected. After all, he was in the driver's seat, as it were. He gave a brief grimace at his own bad pun, inadvertent as it had been.

He had control again, but the kiss had given the blonde hope that perhaps there was more than rutting to bond, in this. Perhaps his virginity wasn't being thrown away just for protection. But he couldn't show his hope and desires. Not yet. There would be time. "Get on with it, Harry," he said. But the voice was soft, the tone mellow.

Harry pushed forward again, and slowly his hardness disappeared into the other boy. Finally, he was firmly seated, completely encased in the Slytherin's warmth. He paused again for a few moments to allow Draco's body a little time to get used to him, then slowly withdrew until only a couple of inches were still encased, then forward again; out, then in, over and over again, the speed slowly increasing as sensation built. When he was close to explosion, he stopped, not yet wanting it to end.

He pulled Draco up, still joined, until the blonde was sitting on his lap. He grasped the Slytherin's manhood with one hand, steadying the blonde with the other, and slowly, gently, pumped it while he nuzzled and nibbled at the graceful, pale neck.

The last thing the young Malfoy had been expecting was a show of affection, and this was certainly that. But they needed to finish the ritual, so he adjusted his legs until he could move, and started moving up and down on Harry's hardness. He was close to completion, and he sensed the Gryffindor was, as well.

"The - spell - ah! - Harry. Say - the spell," the blonde urged.

Harry had all but forgotten, carried away on the wings of passion. "Cruinnleum bi le Harry Potter!" (Loosely translated, it means "Bound and belonging to Harry Potter.") He had barely cast the spell before he came, pumping his seed deep in the blonde's body as he clasped one hand on the Slytherin's shoulder, pressing down, holding him still, and thrusting himself as far up and in as he could. He was barely aware of the pumping hardness in his hand, as both young men cried out the other's name.

As they did so, a powerful wave of magic was let loose, pushing past even the powerful wards Harry had erected, and informing all who had the power to sense it, and were apt to take notice, that a powerful bonding had occurred. Only the most powerful would have noted a hint of the magical signatures of those bound, in that surge. But the bond was not as master and servant or thrall, as the ritual had been designed to accomplish, but as something else - something more - something far more intimate. Only time would tell what that might be. The original intention of the ritual still gave the scarred Gryffindor the more powerful position in their relationship, however it turned out.

They slumped, their still-joined bodies kept upright only by that fact, allowing them to naturally brace each other. Harry let go of Draco's member and wrapped both arms around the blonde boy, resting his head on his shoulder. Draco let his head fall back to rest on Harry's opposite shoulder, having neither the strength nor the desire to move right then.

About a minute later, a strong, but somehow hesitant knock sounded on Harry's bedroom door, and a voice called out "Mr. Malfoy! What the hell was that?! Are you alright?"

Harry's head had snapped up at the first sound. Now his eyes widened as he recognised that voice. "Snape?"

Draco gave a small smirk. "How do you think I found this bloody place, Harry?"

That did it. Harry softened immediately, and they separated with barely a sound. Draco made a small moue of disappointment.

"Mr. Malfoy! Are you alright?" came the voice again.

"I'm okay, too," Harry muttered murderously.

Draco chuckled, still in Harry's arms, then raised his voice. "We're just fine, Professor!"

"Then get yourselves dressed and get out here! We're going to have to leave immediately!"

Draco frowned. "I can't leave Harry, now! You know that!" he called back.

"Don't be more dense than you need be, Malfoy! I meant all of us! Is that troublemaker rubbing off on you already?"

"No, he got off in me, and he's rubbing on me," Draco muttered, but there was no trace of resentment in his voice.

Harry snorted, trying to hold back his laughter. "We need to clean up, Professor," he called out.

"You can do that at Hogwarts! I meant it when I said we need to leave now!"

Harry noticed Draco frowning. "I take it this wasn't a part of the original plan?" he asked.

"No, it wasn't. And Snape isn't an alarmist, so I think we need to take notice, and get moving," the blonde responded, leaning forward and breaking Harry's loose grip on him in preparation for getting to his feet. Once on his feet, he turned and held his hand out to his new 'master,' though the fact had yet to sink in.

Harry looked at Draco's hand, then looked up and grinned at him, taking it. "It took a while, but I guess I'm finally ready to take your hand," he quipped, as he got to his feet.

Draco looked puzzled for a moment, then a dark shadow crossed his face as he recalled the ignominious day that Harry had refused his hand. Then the humour of the situation hit him, and he gave the brunette a wry grin. "Yes, I suppose it has taken a while for you to come to your senses, hasn't it?" He winked at the dark-haired young man before him to show he didn't mean it unkindly, then turned to his clothing and robes to get dressed.

Harry tilted his head in wonder at this unusual show of humour, and began getting dressed, himself. Draco finished before him, took out his wand and, aiming it at Harry's trunk, incanted "Pack!" When activity ceased, he put the few things he'd brought with him in, as well, then turned and asked "Is there anything else you need to take? We may be gone for some time."

Harry looked at him, gobsmacked. "Is this the bond in action?" he asked.

Draco looked at him calmly. "Probably. Is there anything else you need?"

"Just Hedwig and my Firebolt," Harry answered.

"Then if you can grab those, I'll take care of your trunk," the Slytherin said. He then turned to the door and undid the spells Harry'd put on it. "Well, at least there are advantages to this, as well," he muttered. "It seems that in order to serve you better, I now share some of your knowledge. I certainly didn't know how to unlock the spells you cast, before."

"Good," Harry said, stepping up beside him, "I'd rather this wasn't just a burden on you."

Draco cast a sardonic smile in the Gryffindor's direction. "Truly?" he asked.

"As strange as it feels to say it, Draco, I'm glad there's going to be peace between us. I hated it when we

were always fighting."

Draco paused in the act of reaching for the door handle. "Why?" he asked, curious.

"Because I've wanted to be with you for a long time, now," was the soft reply.

Draco squeezed his eyes shut, trying to hold back the instant tears. There was no time for this, now. "We'll have to talk, later. I have things to share with you, too. But right now, we need to get out of here. I hope Professor Snape has a good excuse for this," he said, muttering the last sentence in frustration.

"Me, too," Harry said, having just barely been able to hear it.

Draco opened the door.

"It's about time! Did you clean up the... No, I can see you didn't," Snape said, as he caught sight of the room. Taking out his wand, he cast "Scourgify!" Then, turning to the two young men, he said "Never leave a ritual area without removing all traces of it, unless you want everyone to know what you've been doing!"

Both Harry and Draco blushed, remembering a part of what they'd been doing.

Catching their expressions, Snape faltered, and blushed as well. "Yes. Well..." he stammered.

Seeing their potions master so discommoded, Harry couldn't help himself; he snickered. It was a bad move.

Face now flushing with anger, Snape snapped "Twenty points from Gryffindor for your cheek, boy!"

Harry's eyes narrowed as anger suffused him. "Never call me 'boy!' That damned muggle downstairs has made my life hell, and it's his favourite way of addressing me," he continued, explaining his reaction.

"We can discuss that later, Potter," Snape growled. "Right now, we have more urgent matters to attend to. Is your flue hooked up to the Floo network?"

Harry stared at him. "You don't know a thing about my life, do you?" he asked. "The reason that thing that reluctantly calls himself my uncle makes my life hell, is that he hates anything having to do with magic. So do you think he'd let the flue be hooked up?"

"You're wasting time, Potter. A simple 'no' would have sufficed," the potions master sneered.

"What's the rush, Professor?" Draco asked, interrupting the glaring contest the other two seemed to have decided to participate in.

The potions master remembered himself, and turned to his favourite student. "That blast of magic, at what I presume was the end of the bonding ritual," he explained. At the boys' mutual look of incomprehension, he sighed. "That explanation will have to wait until later, then. I'll have to 'piggy-back' the two of you." He eyed the luggage Draco was lugging. "That," he said, indicating the trunk, "will have to stay behind. I don't have the strength to apparate the two of you and that thing. Nothing irreplaceable in there, is there, Potter?"

"Can't you shrink it?" Draco asked of Snape. "I can do some smaller things, but I'd have to practise a lot more before I could take care of that mass."

The professor looked at the blonde. "You have the..." He stopped as realization hit him. "Later. Again, we're wasting time, and I don't want to get into a discussion of magical physics right now. Just do what needs to be done."

Harry answered the question that had been put to him earlier. "My father's invisibility cloak and a couple

of other small things," he replied fairly politely.

Snape looked at him. "An invisibility cloak. That explains a lot. You can replace the broom. Turn the owl loose; it can find you at the school, later. Put everything irreplaceable in your pockets."

"The broom has sentimental value; it was a gift from someone I cared about, who is now dead," Harry replied, pain briefly sharing room in his eyes with his lingering anger with the potions master.

Snape closed his eyes, praying to his gods for patience. "Lose the robes, then; the less mass, the better," he directed.

Harry complied, Draco removing his robes as well, and with the blonde's help, the Gryffindor was soon ready.

Snape threw all the discarded items into the fireplace, and destroyed it. "The less we leave for others to find, the better," he explained.

"Clear as mud," Harry muttered under his breath. To his surprise, Draco snickered.

They went out into the back yard to get clear of the house wards. With a look of grave distaste on his face, and the same tone in his voice, Snape said "You'll have to hold on to me, and each other, quite closely." When they had complied, Harry holding tightly to his Firebolt as well, the potions master disapparated, taking them with him.

They appeared in a clearing quite near Hogsmeade. As the boys separated themselves from their professor, Draco stumbled. Harry steadied him, then noticed that the blonde was almost dead on his feet. He recalled that Draco had seemed on the edge of exhaustion when he first opened his bedroom door to the Slytherin, and that had been several hours, and a lot of 'activity,' ago. He mounted his broomstick, then held his hand out to the blonde, silently inviting him to get on behind him. "Come on, Draco. I'm not going to walk when I've a perfectly good broomstick." Then, speaking to his professor as Draco got on behind him, he said, "We've had a very tiring night, Professor; we'll meet you at the school, alright?" He didn't wait for an answer, and barely heard Snape's "My quarters," while he was instructing

the other boy to hold on tightly, and took off. He did hear Draco's murmured "Thank you," however. He didn't answer, choosing instead to concentrate on his flying. He felt the weight of the blonde's head descend gently on his back.

As they entered through Hogwart's huge double doors, they were surprised to find the headmaster standing there, apparently awaiting them.

"Headmaster!" Harry exclaimed, expressing his surprise. "Do you live here summers, as well?" he asked.

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled as he replied "No, Harry, I don't. I came here when I detected the magical blast engendered by your bonding ritual. I believe you and Mr. Malfoy, here, have some explaining to do."

There seemed to be a million questions swirling through Harry's mind at this point, but only one stood out. "How did you know we'd come here, sir?"

"Where else would you go?"

Draco swayed on his feet. "Can we sit down somewhere, sir? I'm afraid that Draco's about at the end of his strength, right now."

"'M fine," Draco asserted tiredly.

"Of course you are," Harry replied acerbically, "that's why you're almost falling down."

"I am..." Draco started to argue.

"This way, gentlemen," Dumbledore interrupted, gesturing to a small door in a dark corner that Harry'd

never noticed before.

Upon passing through the small door that the headmaster had opened for them, they found themselves in a small waiting room, apparently for visiting parents. Since Hogwarts was not yet in session, they had it all to themselves.

"Professor Snape is going to be looking for us as soon as he arrives from Hogsmeade," Harry reminded the headmaster.

"The school will tell me when he arrives," the old man replied.

"The... What?" the Gryffindor said, thoroughly befuddled by what he'd just heard.

"As the headmaster, I'm tied into the wards. I'll know when he arrives." Dumbledore's eyes were twinkling like mad, now. He loved his little jokes.

"Oh." If Harry hadn't had any doubts about the old man's sanity before, a seed had now been planted. Draco just chalked it up as another bit of proof towards what he'd always thought, anyway.

Albus gestured for them to take a seat on one of the sofas in the room. Harry chose one in fine leather, and sat. Draco sat beside him, and the headmaster sat across from them on a matching settee. Waving his wand, the headmaster conjured a small table between them, laden with tea and sandwiches. Pouring himself a cup, he indicated that the boys should also help themselves.

Harry picked up a couple of sandwiches, handing one to Draco, who tried to refuse. Harry wasn't having any. "It's been hours, Draco. I know you're tired, but you need to eat." He took a bite of his own sandwich, and his eyes widened. "Honey-glazed ham - Black Forest, I think - and genuine Derby cheese! That's good enough for even your aristocratic stomach; so eat!"

Draco reluctantly took the sandwich, and dutifully began eating. He had to admit, if only to himself, that

it was good; and once food hit his stomach, his appetite revived. The Gryffindor smiled at the sight of him eating, and where once the action would have irritated him to no end, now it made him feel oddly happy.

"Now, I believe you have something to tell me?" the headmaster inquired.

Harry told the old man a somewhat condensed and heavily edited version of what had happened. Of course, there came a place where he could not avoid mentioning, in the most delicate terms, of course, very personal events, and both boys turned a bright shade of red during the recitation. By that time, both had finished eating, and somehow Draco's head had ended up on Harry's shoulder, and Harry's arm had instinctively wrapped around the blonde's waist.

Dumbledore sat through the whole story without interrupting, except to ask for a more detailed account of the ritual they'd performed and how they'd performed it (which is how Harry wound up having to talk about - that), though his eyes had started doing their 'twinkle thing' when Draco's head had dropped wearily onto Harry's shoulder.

"Just a moment, please," the headmaster said, then went to the door. "In here, Severus," he called. Returning to his seat, he said "So you felt binding yourself to Harry was your best choice?" he asked Draco.

The blonde only nodded slightly, eyes closed. Harry noticed. "Could we continue this tomorrow, Headmaster? It's been a long day."

"When did you get here, Albus, and why?" Snape stood just inside the small doorway.

"About an hour ago, now, and I think you know why," Dumbledore said calmly.

The potions master coloured slightly, but otherwise there was no change in his demeanour. "You know the reasoning?" he asked.

"I think we could have come up with another solution, but what's done is done. I hope no ill comes of it," Albus replied.

"Professors?" Harry broke in. "Where do we sleep?" He knew, from previous conversations with the headmaster, that the dorm rooms weren't kept made up during the summer.

"There's a small room not far from here," the old man informed him. "There's only one bed, but it's a large one; there wasn't time to make other arrangements."

"I don't mind sharing, if Draco doesn't. I can sleep on a couch, here, otherwise," the brunette said, getting up and helping Draco to his feet.

"'Don't mind," Draco mumbled sleepily.

Harry looked at the blonde tenderly, then caught himself, blushing and smiling sheepishly at the headmaster. He caught sight of the potions master sneering at him, and went rigid. "Something wrong, Professor?" he asked coldly.

"Severus! Mind your position," the headmaster said, interrupting, as the lank-haired Head of House drew breath, most likely to deliver another unwarranted insult.

The potions master subsided, contenting himself with a glare at the famous young Gryffindor.

"You're not helping yourself, Mr. Potter," Dumbledore reprimanded.

"I am not my father, and I wish he'd remember that. The man he thinks wronged him is dead," Harry replied distantly, eyes focused on nothing. "How empty is revenge on the son, if the perpetrator cannot be hurt by it?" 'Where did that come from?' he asked himself. 'Never mind; don't care.'

Snape paled, the shot hitting home. As a Slytherin, it was in his nature to seek revenge, but the young Gryffindor was right; a proper revenge must end by hurting the perpetrator, and the perpetrator in this case was beyond his ability to harm. He had been pursuing an empty cause for years, and had therefore been behaving foolishly. He hoped none of his students ever caught on to that; it would lessen him in their eyes, and they were difficult enough to control as it was. Draco. He'd have to have a talk with the boy before school again went in session. He felt a headache coming on.

Harry turned to the headmaster and sighed. "I'm sorry. I really am very tired," he hinted.

Dumbledore headed for the door. "This way."

Albus tried to pump the young men for more details en-route, but was, instead, firmly told it could wait until tomorrow.

When they reached the room, Draco walked slowly over to the bed and sank tiredly onto it, not paying attention as Dumbledore said his good-nights. The potions master had not accompanied them. When they were alone, he told Harry "You were right. You should have said something like that years ago."

"What? Said what?" Harry asked, confused, since a lot of things had been said that night.

"What you told Snape."

"Oh." The silence grew. "You think it did any good?"

"If he's any kind of Slytherin at all, it did."

"Good."

That was the last thing said that night. They slipped off to sleep, too exhausted to even undress and get in the bed.

Please review.

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Bound! Draeconin

Chapter Four

During breakfast, Draco and Harry hardly spoke to each other, except to ask for some item or other to be passed to them. There was no animosity; they were just a bit discomfited. They had woken up rather intimately tangled with each other, and with Harry's hand somewhere it probably didn't belong. Neither really minded about the other, but they didn't know that, and were rather embarrassed about their own actions, even though it had happened when neither was consciously aware.

"Draco..." Harry began, when the tension got to be too much for him.

"Harry, don't," the blonde interrupted.

"Don't what?" Harry asked, confused.

"Don't complicate things. I - I liked what happened last night, but now you're my master. I don't want - "

"I don't think so," the Gryffindor said, interrupting.

Now it was Draco's turn to be confused. "You don't think - what?"

"I don't think I'm your master. You haven't been acting like a bond-servant. It's true I've never seen one before, but from the little I've learned since I've been in the wizarding world, that kind of thing is rather harsh on the bonded person. At least, on unwilling ones."

"You know I was willing, Harry. I had to talk you into it, remember?"

"My memory isn't that bad, Draco. I'm going to confess something to you, but you have to promise not to get nasty about it. Promise?"

"I can hardly promise not to react when I don't know what I'm promising about, Potter."

"See? Would a true bond-servant be able to resist his master's wishes?"

The blond sat there with a stunned expression on his face. Slowly, he answered. "No, he wouldn't. And yet... We are bound, Potter. Professor Snape said... We need to talk to him. We still haven't figured out - "

"Draco!" Harry interrupted. "Your promise?" he reminded.

Draco sighed. "Very well, Harry. I promise."

"Thank you. Well, it's rather embarrassing, so please let me finish before you say anything. You see, having you be with me willingly has rather been a daydream of mine for a couple of years, now. So when you popped up at my door practically begging me to bond with you..."

"Malfoy's don't beg, Potter," Draco said, interrupting.

Harry looked at him with a half-hurt, half-annoyed look upon his face. "I didn't say you did beg; I said 'practically,' which isn't the same thing at all. Now, may I continue?"

The blonde nodded graciously.

"Thank you. As I was saying, when you showed up practically begging me to bond with you, I thought my prayers had been answered; until I found out the kind of bond it was going to be. That way, I didn't want you. That's why I was so hard to convince. I didn't want you in a state where you had to do what I wanted; I wanted you to be willing to be with me, because you wanted to be. I think what we got was something between the two. You've still got your free will, at least to an extent. We may want to test that sometime, to find out the boundaries of the bond, by the way. But since the bond, you've been very pleasant to be with, and I like it. I hope you're not too upset with it. Are you?"

Draco was touched, but ruthlessly shoved his emotions down. "That was quite a speech, Harry. Are you through?"

The brunette nodded.

"No, I'm not upset about it."

Harry waited for more, but Draco just sipped his coffee. "That's all you have to say about it?" he finally asked.

"You expect me to make a speech, too?"

"No, but I know you, Draco. You always have an opinion about everything. So what are you hiding?" Harry asked.

"Hiding? Why should I be hiding something?"

Green eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Tell me what you're hiding."

The blonde gazed at his, for want of a better word, master, gauging the other boy. Then, coming to the conclusion that he really had nothing to lose, he quietly spoke. "I think I may be falling in love with you, Potter."

Harry's eyes popped wide open, an expression of joy crossing his face, quickly followed by one of dismay. "Is this the bond's work?" he asked, fearful of the answer.

Draco shook his head slowly, silver eyes never leaving the emerald ones across the table from him. "I don't think so," he replied, "I've wanted to be close to you since we first met. Then circumstances got in the way, and I had to... Well, I had to act like I hated you." He dropped his eyes to his cup as he said "I never did."

Harry shook his head. "Then why were you so nasty about Hagrid - and Ron?"

"I'm not sure. I think... I think I was just aping my father. I worshipped him, you know. He wasn't always like he is now." At Harry's look of disbelief, he said "It's true! At least he was always to good to Mum and me. Then when the Dark Lord came back... He changed. He got moody, and... And why am I telling you all this, anyway?!" he concluded, defensively.

Harry took Draco's hand in one of his own and, squeezing gently, said "It's okay, Draco. People change. I'm sorry your father changed towards his family, but I saw an entirely different Lucius Malfoy. The one you're seeing now is the one I always saw."

Draco turned hurt eyes on the man he was now bonded to, removing his hand from the gentle embrace. He was going to hurl a retort at him, but looking into the Gryffindor's darkly green eyes stopped him. What he saw was sincerity, and hurt - for him. Anything he said now would either heap more pain on the Gryffindor, or be lame. And since what Harry had said was likely true anyway, it was really a moot point. So he did the only graceful thing he could do - he changed the subject. "Hagrid... Well, Hagrid is - huge! And you must admit, the way he dresses is rather... Well, it's not exactly stylish."

Harry understood, and allowed the change in subject. "And that makes him a bad person?" he asked

quietly, but pointedly.

"He's a giant, Harry!" Draco said exasperatedly, as though that explained everything. He was feeling on the defensive for reasons he couldn't quite fathom, and that was making him decidedly uncomfortable and edgy.

"He's a half-giant, and a very good and gentle person," Harry corrected, "and if you tried to meet him half-way, you'd see more of that."

Draco stubbornly refused to respond.

He knew that if he pushed it, Draco might dig in and never change his mind, just to spite him. But if he let the idea simmer in the blonde's mind, there was the off-chance. "And Ron? Hermione?" Harry prompted.

"My father's thoughts, of course. But Weasley's a hot-tempered little git," he offered.

Harry chuckled. "Yes, he lives up to his red hair, alright. But he's one hundred percent Gryffindor. Once you earn his trust and loyalty, he'd die for you. Almost has, on occasion. Hermione thinks things through, more, but she's put herself on the line for me a time or two, herself."

Draco hadn't known that, but knowing Harry, he wasn't surprised that he'd engender such loyalty in others. Still, it fuelled the jealousy he'd felt towards those two for so many years, now. They had been where he should have been. He hid a small smirk from the raven-haired lad across from him. Well, he had a closer tie, now, even if he'd been pushed to the other edge of desperation, and had to submit himself to the man, in more ways than one, in order to get there. If he could let himself be open enough to admit his feelings; and accept what his now-ex-rival could offer... He hoped he wasn't mistaken about what had happened during the bonding ritual, and that Harry really did care.

"Harry?" he asked, before he realised what he was doing. "How do you feel about me?"

That question seemed to come out of nowhere, insofar as Harry was concerned. He was totally unprepared for it, and he wasn't too sure he was prepared for any consequences of answering it, despite the blonde's earlier confession. "Um... Why?"

Draco looked at him as though he'd gone quite insane. "Because I want to know, of course."

"Well, I think you've been mean-spirited, malicious, sarcas-"

"Harry!" Draco interrupted. "That's not what I meant, and you know it."

Harry was frantically trying to find a way to avoid answering the question, so he answered the accusation, instead. "How am I supposed to know that? I'm not a mind reader!"

Draco closed his eyes, took a deep breath, then let it out, slowly. "Harry. Please just answer the question. How do you feel about me?"

Trapped, Harry sighed, then answered, staring into what was left of his coffee. "I'm not sure, Draco. I want you; that's for certain. I do have - tender - feelings for you, but I don't know if they add up to love. If given a chance, I suppose I might love you, someday."

"I'm glad," Draco said. An outrageous understatement, but he hid it well. "I hoped it wasn't just a physical act, last night. It wasn't, was it?"

"Not for me, anyway."

"Nor me. You took my virginity, you know."

"I what? You... But you... But what about that whole "slut of Slytherin" thing?"

The Slytherin looked up with an open grin on his face. It was dazzling. "You got taken in by that, too?" he asked. "That was just a rumour I had a few people start. I thought it would give me a more manly image."

"I rather thought it soiled your image," Harry said, sourly.

Draco's face fell. "I thought you were a lost cause anyway, Harry. Or rather, that I had lost any hope with you, so it didn't really matter."

"Yes, well, I'm glad to learn that it wasn't true, anyway," Harry said with a smile. "It will make getting to know you better a little easier, knowing I'm not having to compete with a lot of memories."

"Just because I didn't sleep around, Harry, doesn't mean I didn't experiment at all in other ways," was Draco's reply. "You're still going to have to give me your best."

Harry was now looking askance at the blonde, wondering just what it was he was letting himself in for. It was going to be interesting, anyway.

About ten minutes of somewhat uncomfortable silence later, Professor Snape walked into the Great Hall.

As curious as the boys were to learn what the professor might know, both were loathe to be the first to approach him. Given their history,Harry was naturally reticent about talking to Snape at any time, for any reason, but after their confrontation last night, he was doubly so. But even Draco, with his preferred-student status, was reluctant to approach the potions master before he'd had at least his first cup of tea. They decided to wait. To their surprise, however, the professor called them over to the faculty table just as soon as the house elves had served him his tea and toast.

"Sit down, Potter, Mr. Malfoy," he said, his voice carefully neutral in tone, "I have some questions for you." After they had seated themselves, Snape asked "What did you do last night?" To his astonishment,

both boys blushed. When he realised why, his lip curled in a sneer. "I know what the ritual required of you; I want to know what you did that was not required by the ritual."

"We followed the procedure exactly, professor," Draco replied.

"Um... Not quite, Draco." Turning to the potions master, his face crimson, Harry said "I, ah... I pulled Draco up into a kneeling position, so I could..." he paused, mortified that he was telling his potions professor, a man he despised, such intimate details, but he knew it might be important. "So I could kiss and nibble on his neck, easier." He held his head up high, looking the greasy-haired man in the eye, refusing to be ashamed, even though he was mortally embarrassed. Draco, he noticed, was almost as red as he was, and was glaring at him.

"To kiss..."

The look on the potions master's face was priceless. For Harry, all the embarrassment was worth it, to see that.

Snape looked sick. "Potter, please tell me you don't harbour feelings of - affection - for young Mr. Malfoy, here?"

"I'm afraid I can't do that, Professor," the Gryffindor replied.

The professor closed his eyes. "I'm almost afraid to ask... Malfoy? Draco? Do you reciprocate those feelings?"

"Stuck in it up to my neck," Draco replied evenly.

Abruptly, Professor Snape stood up from the table, knocking his chair over backwards in the process. "I have to check a reference, but if my suspicions are correct..." He didn't finish the sentence, but turned with a whirl of his robes, and stalked off, presumably on his way to the dungeons, and his office, leaving

two very curious and worried young men staring after him.

"Ah, good morning, gentlemen! Isn't it a glorious day?!" The headmaster had finally arrived.

"That depends on how you define "glorious," I suppose," Harry replied distractedly. Then, focusing more fully on the old man, he asked "Professor, what happened last night? You said you felt a blast of magical energy that had our magical signatures on it?"

"Indeed I did, but haven't you already talked to Severus?"

"He's gone to check up on something. He looked almost - sick," the brunette said.

"Ah, well... Then I suppose we aught to let him do that, aughtn't we?" Dumbledore replied.

"Do you know anything about this, or not?" Draco demanded.

Dumbledore peered over his glasses at the impatient young blonde. "I suspect a great many things, Mr. Malfoy," he replied gently. "What I know is that you could both be in a great deal of danger, should anyone of the wrong persuasion have sensed that blast, and could identify either of you as being connected to it. On the plus side, there are few who would be powerful enough to do so."

"And on the negative, my father and You-Know-Who are among them," the blonde said.

The headmaster's normally twinkly eyes were grave. "Quite so, Mr. Malfoy," he replied, "although your father would sense it more because of family blood ties."

"What caused that 'blast' of magic, anyway?" Harry asked.

"Two powerful wizards completing a love-bond," the old man replied.

"A what?" both boys exclaimed, in unison.

"It was a mastering ritual, not a love binding!" Draco protested.

"Even so, my boy," Dumbledore replied, eyes having regained their twinkle.

Harry just sat there, stunned.

"Well, that didn't take long," came the oily tones of Professor Snape, behind them.

Both boys swung around to face him, waiting expectantly for the verdict.

The potions master didn't keep them waiting. Having had a chance to absorb what he'd learned, he looked positively gleeful, in a nasty sort of way. He'd been against involving the Potter boy from the start, and now felt entirely justified. "Although the master/servant factor of the ritual couldn't be overridden entirely, the emotional factor, in effect, turned a straight-forward binding into a marriage bond. Congratulations, Mr. Malfoy; you're a wife." He then sat down and enjoyed the play of emotions on both young men's faces.

Please review.

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Chapter Five

"Married? Wi- Wife?" With his first word, Harry was quite shocked. By the second, the incongruity of Draco being in the position of 'wife' had hit him, and he was starting to laugh.

"I... Wife?! Never! You must be joshing!" the blonde Slytherin protested.

Snape leaned forward in his seat, almost looking as though he'd stand up out of it. "And when have you ever known me to joke about magic, Mr. Malfoy?" he said in a deadly calm voice.

"But I... Potter, will you please stop sniggering!" Draco was in a fine state of indignant pride, and Harry's reaction wasn't helping matters at all.

That did it. Harry fell off his chair, holding his sides to keep them from hurting, he was laughing so hard. "Wife!" Of a sudden, the realization hit him, and he stopped laughing, eyes going wide. "My wife. Oh, gods!"

"Exactly, Potter," Draco said, smugly. "Now what are we going to do about it? I'm not a wife!"

"Only in magical terms, Mr. Malfoy," the headmaster interjected. "I'm sure what Professor Snape meant was that you are in a magically induced relationship akin to being wed, and you, Draco, hold the less prominent position due to the bonding ritual's original intent - hence, 'wife.'" Turning to the greasy-locked man, he queried "Isn't that correct, Severus?"

"Must you spoil my fun, Albus?" Snape replied. The others ignored him.

"So how do we fix it?" Draco asked.

"Was there a counter to the bonding ritual you used?" the headmaster asked.

"No. Not that I could find, anyway," the Slytherin replied. "And I tried. The one I finally had to use was

meant to be permanent and binding,, even to the bondee's descendants, to an extent."

"Then I'm afraid you've just answered your own question, my boy. It's permanent."

The words had a mixed reaction from both young men. On the one hand, they had expected to be bound for life anyway, but on the other, they had expected a somewhat different relationship. There were so many conflicting thoughts and emotions, that they seemed to just lock up; the mental equivalent of a muggle traffic jam.

Dumbledore plowed on, ignoring the reaction his words had engendered. "We'll have to set up separate quarters from your Houses for the two of you, and if, sometime in the future, you wish to make the arrangement a formal one, that, too, can be arranged."

Harry made a strangled gurgling sound in the back of his throat. "That's going a bit fast, isn't it, Professor? Until last night, we've barely spoken two civil words to each other!" he protested. Catching a rather hurt look in Draco's eyes, he continued as though still talking to the headmaster, while truly explaining himself to the Slytherin. "I certainly fancy Draco, but it's a bit soon to be thinking of marriage." He was relieved to see a look of understanding come over the blonde's face.

"As you say, lad," was the reply.

With the wild twinkle in the old man's eyes, Harry was sure he hadn't fooled Dumbledore in the slightest with that last sentence.

"Regardless; we would have had to do something similar, had the two of you succeeded in your original intentions." He looked over the two young men, trying to judge what they would accept. A judicious prevarication, he decided. "The only rooms we can get ready in good time is a small suite; just a bedroom, bath, common room and loo. I'm afraid none of the others has a kitchen, either, so you're out of luck, there. Meals will have to be taken in the Great Hall with the rest of the student population."

"Why can't we sleep in our own dorms, and - date?" Harry wanted to know.

"So much about this bonding has changed," Draco said slowly, "but the original ritual only allowed for about forty to sixty feet of space between the bonded, so the 'slave' would always be close to protect the 'master.' Enough distance to allow for separate rooms, but not much else."

"Quite right, Mr. Malfoy," the old man replied. "We'll have to conduct some tests to find which restrictions still apply and which do not, but for now, we'll go on the assumption that all restrictions that have not already been disproven, are true. I don't think Mr. Malfoy would appreciate the consequences, else."

"What consequences?" Harry asked sharply.

"If you deliberately leave me behind, I suffer until you return," the blonde replied.

"And if it's not by my choice?"

"Then I do everything in my power to find you, and worry myself sick about you in the meantime."

"And if I - die?"

"I'd probably be dead before I allowed that, but if not... Insanity or death; I'm not quite sure."

Harry didn't react well to that. "Oh, that's just dandy! You couldn't have told me any of this before the binding, could you? No, you had to put up a brave front, and keep all that from me! I hate being responsible for other people's pain, Draco; I have nightmares about the people who have died because of me!"

"Would you rather I was dead in an alley somewhere, Harry?" Draco said, bitterly. "I could have used the dagger on myself, then you wouldn't have to worry about it!"

Harry immediately felt like tuppence worth of garden fertilizer, and wanted to take the blonde in his arms and comfort him, but he resisted, not knowing how it might be accepted. "I'm sorry, Draco. I forgot about that. I just... I hate it that you're restricted because of me."

"I'm alive because you agreed, Potter!"

Harry stopped trying to resist his urge to comfort the Slytherin, and moved over to the blonde, wrapping his arms around him, and disregarding the older men's presence. "I'm just sticking my foot in it deep, aren't I?" Harry asked, rhetorically. He held on tighter as Draco started squirming. "Of course I'm happy you're alive! I'd miss our fights, if nothing else," he added, slyly.

Draco was offended. "Our - fights? Let me go this instant, Potter!" he said, pushing against the dark-haired young man.

Harry grinned and did as he was told, but not before planting a kiss on the Slytherin's cheek. When Draco saw that grin, he knew he'd been had, and gave the cheeky Gryffindor another push, which landed the dark-haired lad on the floor, laughing his arse off, pleased with his successful baiting of the blonde, and that there were no overly-negative reactions to it. Draco even managed a somewhat sheepish grin through the glare he was sending him.

"I- I- I'm sorry, Draco, I- I just couldn't - help it!" Harry said, apologizing through his laughter.

"Very convincing apology, Harry," Draco dead-panned.

Harry held out his hand to Draco. When the Slytherin took it, intending to help Harry to his feet, the Gryffindor pulled him down on top of him, and kissed him. "There. See? I'm sorry," Harry said.

"Hem-hem! May I remind you two that you are not alone? I would prefer not to see you rutting in front of me." The potions master had decided to verbally rejoin the group.

"A kiss is hardly "rutting," Professor," was Harry's mild reprimand, " but I apologise if my little display of affection offended your delicate sensibilities." Harry forced his tone to remain light, and seemingly sincere.

There was no hint of sarcasm in Harry's voice for Snape to take offense with, especially with the headmaster sitting right there, so he was forced to accept the seeming 'apology' at face value.

Draco raised an eyebrow. 'That was worthy of a Slytherin,' he thought.

"Then perhaps you'd care to get off each other, and into a chair?" Snape sneered.

Harry and Draco had been so comfortable in each other's arms, they hadn't really noticed the impropriety of their positions. They now scrambled to their feet, straightening their robes, then sat in a chair - the same chair. Harry dragged Draco into his lap, just to cheese off the potions master. Well, he had said "into a chair," so he was, more or less, being obedient. He caught Draco's eye and winked, quietly whispering "Shh" to him.

Draco wasn't quite sure what was going on, but he knew two things; Harry was showing an intriguing side he hadn't seen before, and this was going to really upset the potions professor.

"Just what do you think you're doing, Potter?!" the greasy-haired professor roared.

"Just what you told us to do, Professor," Harry replied 'innocently.' "You said we should get up and get into a chair. We're in a chair."

Draco couldn't help it; he felt himself losing control of his laughter, so he buried his face in Harry's shoulder, to muffle it. Unfortunately, his shaking, heaving shoulders gave his reaction away.

Snape turned every shade of red, then started on the purples.

Fortunately, Dumbledore chose to intervene at this point, or who knows what would have happened.

"I believe separate chairs would be more appropriate, gentlemen," he directed. "And Severus, please do control your temper."

Professor Snape just glared angrily at him, then at the two boys who were desperately trying not to laugh, then got up and swept out of the room.

"That was, perhaps, not the wisest thing you could have done, Harry," Dumbledore said.

"I'm sorry, Professor; you're right, but he was insulting, as well as being so - prim!"

"And you were behaving improperly, Mr. Potter. If school were in session, you would have lost points and had detention for that. As is, I believe you should not only offer a sincere apology, but help Professor Snape catalogue and store away the potions ingredients the classes will be using this year. I leave it up to you whether you do or not." He got up and headed for the double doors, himself, then stopped and turned. "Look for the portrait of Sir Roxley; the password is 'togetherness.'" He continued on his way.

"You're going to do it, aren't you," Draco said.

Harry shrugged. "If he hadn't insulted us, there would be no question. But I'll talk to him, anyway. I suppose I was being rather childish. But I think we should have a cooling-off period, first. Let's go find Sir Roxley."

The fact that Harry had included him by saying 'us' meant a lot to Draco. That it hadn't been a conscious word choice on Harry's part meant even more - but it was his final sentence he replied to. "Why didn't Dumbledore show us where it was?" His irritation about that showed in his voice.

"I think I finally managed to irritate the old bugger," the Gryffindor replied, oddly pleased. Eyes twinkling at you all the time can be rather irritating; you keep wondering if you're the butt of some unknown joke.

Draco snorted, choking off a snicker. Their eyes met, and they grinned companionably at each other. "So where should we start our search?"

Harry shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe we should start in the library."

The blonde stared at him for a second, wondering if he'd gone daft, then light dawned. "Ah! Find out who he was and what he looks like!" he said triumphantly.

"Right. Shall we?" the brunette said, gesturing towards the doors of the Great Hall.

Four hours later, they finally found Sir Roxley in a book in the library.

Sir Roger Roxley [1734-1801]: Infamous for creating dangerous situations, yet not only surviving, but appearing afterwards as the hero of the incident.

"Sounds familiar, Potter," Draco said drily.

"I don't create dangerous situations, I just - wind up in them." Harry started defending himself strongly, but finished rather weakly.

"Mm-hm. Well, at least we now know what he looks like. Brown hair, blue eyes, hook nose... You, know, except for the colouring, he kind of looks like Snape.

Harry examined the print. "Just the nose, I think," he opined. "I don't remember seeing him anywhere,

though."

"Neither do I, which means he must be hung in a part of the castle we haven't visited, yet. I've been through almost all of the dungeons and most of the lower floors..." he said, inviting Harry's input.

"We need quills and parchment, so we can draw out where we've been. Between the two of us, we must have seen most of the castle, and I can't imagine where I haven't been." At Draco's look of curiousity, he explained. "Nightmares, visions, and just plain insomnia."

"Nightmares and visions. Would it be rude of me to ask?"

"My wife can ask me anything," Harry teased, ducking the gentle swipe Draco aimed at the side of his head. Then he sobered as he satisfied the Slytherin's curiousity. "Nightmares, about the people who have died or gotten hurt because of me, and visions about what Voldemort is doing. We seem to have a link through my scar."

"Can he see what you're doing?" Draco asked.

"Not very often, any more. I've taken Occlumency, and I've become rather good with it. I just need to remember to clear my mind before bed."

Draco nodded, and dropped the subject. These were things he'd want to think about later, but right now they needed to find their rooms.

"Dinner first, I think. It has to be past noon by now," Harry said.

Three hours after eating, and procuring the ink, quills and parchment they needed, they had mapped out most of the castle. Surprisingly, as much as they'd both explored, they found quite a lot of white space on their maps.

"I've been to Dumbledore's office any number of times over the years, but I never realised there was so much - castle - around it," remarked the Gryffindor, as he surveyed one of the maps. "Well, we still have a few hours until supper, unless you want a snack before we go exploring?"

"If we start in the dungeons and work our way up, we can stop in the kitchens for a bite," Draco suggested.

"I'm all for stopping in the kitchens, but if we start at the bottom, we'll have all those stairs to climb when we're getting tired," Harry pointed out.

"But if we climb all those stairs to start at the top, we'll be tired before we even begin!" the blonde protested.

"You have a point. Do you suppose Dumbledore would be amenable to giving us a clue?"

"You haven't apologised to Snape, yet,"

Harry pulled a face. "I was trying to forget about that. Well, I suppose there's no time like the present. "Lead on, Mcduff, and accursed be he who first cries 'Hold! Enough!'""

"Must you mangle your quotes, Potter? It's "Lay on, Macduff; And damned be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'"" Draco complained, as he led the way to the dungeons. He knew Harry was fully capable of finding Snape's office, but he also knew that he had a nice backside, and Harry was most likely feasting his eyes.

"I didn't know you knew Shakespeare," Harry commented.

"That wasn't Shakespeare, Potter, that was pure Francis Bacon.*"

Harry didn't feel like trying to argue the point. Nor did he walk behind for long; just long enough. He quickly caught up, and took Draco's hand, walking like that the rest of the way in a comfortable silence - although he caught the blonde giving him a curious little glance every now and again. But when nothing was said, he decided to leave it lay. *Just so I don't get a lot of mail on this point: Many scholars believe that Francis Bacon wrote the works that were attributed to Shakespeare - a point which is still debated. Please review.

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Chapter Six by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Chapter Six

Professor Snape had not taken the apology graciously; not that Harry had ever seen the man do anything graciously. He'd even offered to help with the catalogueing and storing as the headmaster had suggested - tomorrow, since they still had to locate their quarters - but was flatly turned down.

Three hours later, tired, footsore, and frustrated, they finally found Sir Roxley - one corridor over from Dumbledore's office. Draco started quietly swearing to himself. Harry only caught bits and pieces of it, but he was in general agreement - Dumbledore was a 'bloody old git' in his mind, right then.

"Do you remember the password he gave us?" the Gryffindor asked.

"Some bloody nonsense about being together, I think," the blonde replied.

"Oh, right. 'Togetherness.'" The man in the painting was looking at them with one raised eyebrow, but opened without saying a word.

They stepped inside. To say the quarters were lush would have been a vast overstatement. They had the bare essentials, and that was about it. In the common room was a couch that was sturdy, if slightly worn; two overstuffed chairs in the same condition, two end tables and a long, low table for the couch in fairly good condition, a large, somewhat threadbare carpet in front of the fireplace, and an assortment of leftover brick-a-brack on various shelves and other surfaces from the last tenant. Still, they weren't wizards for nothing; they'd be able to transform anything they needed to in order get what they wanted.

The bedroom wasn't much better, although the the bedding and curtains on the extra-large, king-sized bed looked new; probably from school stores. The bath was clean, and the lion-claw tub was large enough for two full-sized adults, as was the shower, with room to spare. Otherwise, there wasn't a lot to say about them. The loo was the same.

Looking at the wardrobe in the bedroom, Harry groaned. "I predict a Hogwarts trip for us in the very near future," he moaned.

"Trelawney wearing off on you, Potter?" Draco teased.

"No clothes, Draco! Snape destroyed them, remember?"

"You didn't have any clothes, Harry; just baggy sacks that barely stayed on you," the Slytherin answered.

Harry glared at him. It was true, but he'd grown used to those 'baggy sacks.' "They were comfortable," he stated.

"Don't worry; I'll dress you like you should be dressed. As soon as you get used to it, you'll wonder why you ever decided to swim around in those old rags. Well-fitted clothing is much more comfortable."

"Why do you care?"

"Your my..." Draco stopped, puzzled. Just what was their relationship, anyway? Harry wasn't his master, although that's what he was supposed to have been, and they really hadn't gotten to know each other well enough to establish an intimate relationship, but they were bonded in a way that was actually more binding than marriage.

"Husband?" Harry suggested, grinning.

"Very funny, Potter. I don't know what we're supposed to be to each other," Draco said.

Harry surprised him by walking up to him, slipping his arms around his waist, and gently kissing him. "How about we try for boyfriends right now, and work our way up to something more serious?" he suggested.

"Boy-" Draco's voice broke, squeaking, so he stopped and tried again. "Boyfriends?"

"Mm-hm. You can start by giving me a hug, if you like."

Trembling, Draco tentatively put his arms around the Gryffindor, almost as though he was afraid the young man would break. He was doing something that, in his wildest dreams, he'd never dared to hope would come true. And it wasn't a dream; it was real; the real, live, warm, vibrant Harry Potter was willingly in his arms. He'd even asked for this hug.

Draco felt Harry's arms pull him gently, but firmly, up against him, as he was kissed again; this time more firmly, claiming the blonde as his own. And Draco, for the first time in his life, willingly surrendered. His arms moved of their own accord from around Harry's waist, to around his neck. As self-conscious as he was, he suddenly realized that they had yet to clean up from the ritual. "Mmmm.... Harry... I love this, but I think I'd like it more once I bathe."

Harry laughed. "Well, that was a mood breaker!" he said, grinning. "Okay. You go first, again."

Draco almost pouted, but caught himself and scowled, instead. "You're not smelling all that fresh either, Harry," he said. Actually, he loved the way Harry smelled; earthy, sweaty, but not yet stale. Harry didn't answer; just watched him indulgently. After a couple of seconds of this, Draco blushed. "Okay, so I want to be fresh for you. Satisfied? I've still got those potion runes all over me," he finished lamely. By the gods but he'd changed! He'd usually blast someone who'd caused him embarrassment, even if inadvertently. It had to be an effect of the ritual.

Fortunately, he'd seen a couple of towels in the cupboard he'd peeked into in the bath room, but what was he going to do about clothing afterwards? Well, it wasn't quite as good as washing, but he could cast

'Scourgify' on what he was already wearing.

"What are you going to wear afterward, Draco? No clothes, remember?" Harry reminded, unnecessarily.

"I'll just use 'Scourgify' on these. I hope we can go shopping tomorrow," he said as he headed for the bathing room.

Harry wondered if the fact that there was only one bed in the apartment had registered with the blonde. Draco'd have to strip to his skivvies and depend on their body warmth, rather than pyjamas, to keep him warm. He was rather looking forward to it.

After they'd bathed and dressed in their magically cleansed clothing, they headed for the Great Hall for supper. They'd missed tea-time while searching for their rooms, so were rather famished. When they arrived, they found place settings for two, at one table. Evidently the adults wouldn't be joining them, tonight. They'd no sooner seated themselves than Dobby appeared. Evidently a proximity spell had been placed on the table.

"Mr. Harry Potter, sir!" the elf exclaimed in greeting, beaming at the dark-haired boy, then looking anxiously at the blonde. "Master Draco," he said in polite ackowledgement. Turning back to Harry, the elf proclaimed "For supper tonight, we is having shepherd's pie, cheese, and special treat of rhubarb pie! What would the young masters like to drink; only Dumbly say no alcohol," he threw in, so he wouldn't have to refuse, should he be asked.

"Hm... Something cleansing for the palate with the meal... Perhaps limeade - no, lemonade; and coffee with dessert!" Draco decided. Then he noticed Harry looking at him, and he couldn't help himself "If that's okay with you, Harry?"

"I'll trust your judgement this time, Draco," Harry said, smirking. "But I don't like the placement settings. They're on both sides of the table. I'd like to sit next to you."

Draco blushed, then wondered why. It was almost as if... It was! He was acting like a bloody girl on her first date with the boy of her dreams! He rather wanted to fight it, but something leached the fight out

of him; that bloody ritual magic, again. But Draco found he really didn't care. Probably another effect of the magic. He sighed, then decided that trying to fight it was likely a losing battle. Isn't that why he'd picked that particular binding in the first place? So Harry would feel safe from him? He hadn't quite counted on the willingness/love/lust angle changing things, but instead of being a loyal, bound retainer, he had a little more freedom. He should be grateful that the magic was actually helping him win Harry's affections, although from what he'd seen so far, it hadn't taken much. All he'd have had to do was be nice to the Gryffindor, and they could have been together. Hindisight was wonderful, if a little useless. Still, that had no bearing on the reason for the binding.

While he'd been musing, Harry had been moving his place setting over next to Draco's, and was now sitting very closely, indeed.

"Harry, if I were meeting you for the first time, I'd swear you were a Slytherin," Draco teased.

The raven-haired boy's grin grew broader. "I could have been. The Sorting Hat wanted to put me there, but I'd just had that unpleasant interchange with you, and Hagrid told me that all dark wizards came from Slytherin, so I begged for anything else."

Draco was stupefied. That explained so much. "You should ask for a re-Sorting," he suggested.

Harry shrugged. "To what purpose? Too many Slytherins dislike, or even hate, me now. No, I may be more like you guys than like Gryffindors, but I've learned how to adapt; and Ron and Hermione are really good friends. They'd be crushed if I got re-Sorted."

Draco scowled. "I'm not sure about Granger, but that Weasley...!"

"What's wrong with Ron?" Harry asked, defensively.

Now Draco was sorry he'd said anything. "I... Look, it's just..." He took a deep breath, and sighed. 'In for a penny, in for a pound,' he thought. "You know Slytherins study people, to best be able to utilise them?" He scowled at his own wording. "Only not quite so clinically and coldly as I just put it; it's more of an instinct kind of thing." At Harry's nod, and his relaxing from the unconscious tensing of muscles caused

by his malaprop, Draco continued. "It seems to me that Ron is the sort to bathe in reflected glory, and wish it were his own." He sighed again, and continued. "And, if he ever got it, he wouldn't know what to do with it. He'd probably abuse it."

To his relief, Harry nodded.

"Pretty good reading there, blondie," the Gryffindor replied. "But he's a good sort, and makes me laugh."

Draco bristled a bit at being called 'blondie,' but let it go. He also let the subject drop. He was just relieved that Harry hadn't become angry with his analysis.

The rest of the evening passed without undue event. They went back to their apartment, and discussed how to decorate it, an occassional flick of the wand and muttered spell making decorating ideas evident. Eventually, they settled on a few things, leaving the rest for another time. The couch was outfitted with rich Cabretta leather in a toned-down, rich, reddish-brown colour; and soft, so you didn't slip on it, with the chairs set to match. The tables were pretty good as they were, so they only renewed the finish on them. The threadbare carpet was replaced by a large sheepskin rug. The walls of the common room, they made a light, sky blue, the ceiling being two shades lighter, then moved on to the bedroom.

Draco finally put two and two together, and noticed that two of something in the room that should be there, was only singular. "There's only one bed?" he said, his voice suddenly strained, as he blushed yet again. "I'll sleep on the couch," he volunteered.

"Don't be silly, Draco," Harry, insisted. "I won't ravish you - again - until you're ready. And we are boyfriends, right?"

Draco nodded. "I guess since we have - had sex, that I shouldn't be so prudish, but..."

Harry nodded, too. "That was out of necessity. The next time needs to be because we both want it, and are ready for that step in our relationship. Don't worry, love, I'll try not to rush you."

Draco's chest and throat grew tight. "Did you just call me - - - "love?"" he asked disbelievingly.

Harry's face grew red as he realised. It was no use denying it; he had. "Um... Do you mind?" he asked, somewhat fearfully.

The Slytherin shook his head 'no,' eyes wide as he looked at the other boy.

Tension grew with the silence, and Harry did the only thing he could think of that would break it; he gently drew the blonde to him, and kissed him. He was relieved to feel Draco relax against him, and kiss him back. They were soft, almost-closed-mouth kisses, but sweeter for all that, at this time.

They undressed, backs to each other, as much as they each wanted to look, and climbed into the bed. There was plenty of room between them, if they wished to have it so.

"Draco?"

"Mm-hm?"

"Can I cuddle with you?"

Draco froze, undecided. Finally, he let his body make the decision, and wound up with his back to the Gryffindor, Harry's arms wrapped loosely around him.

"Good night, Draco," Harry said softly.

"Good night, love," Draco sleepily replied.

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Chapter Seven by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Chapter Seven

When Draco woke up the next morning, they were no longer cuddling. Instead, he was half-draped over the Gryffindor, his head on Harry's far shoulder, and turned towards the foot of the bed, with a wonderful view of Potter's morning wood poking proudly up out of the flap of his boxers. He lay there, admiring it, then tinted a bit as he remembered where that beautiful column of flesh had been, and how good it had felt. He wouldn't admit it to anyone, but it had taken an effort of will not to walk tenderly the day before. He could still feel it a little bit, but instead of making him leery of a repeat performance, he was in danger of mounting Harry right then and there, and slipping that tool into himself again. A couple of things stopped him. For one, he wasn't lubed, and would wake Harry if he went looking for some; but the most important reason was that he wanted Harry to be fully cooperating. He also wanted their relationship to be more than sex, and that meant getting to know each other. If they started with sex, they might never get past it.

"You called me 'love' last night," came Harry's voice, just as Draco had decided to give that tool a few gentle strokes, and he felt the Gryffindor's hand start stroking his back.

"Did I?" Draco teased lightly, foregoing the experience - for now. "Must have been dreaming."

"You, or me?"

"You, of course. I wouldn't dream of calling you 'love,'" he said, and chuckled at his small joke.

Harry swatted the blonde's shoulder lightly in retaliation.

"Ouch! You beast," Draco accused, lifting himself up enough that he could turn his head and aim a

pretend glare at the boy under him.

Harry chuckled. "You seemed pretty comfortable, there," he said.

Draco laid his head back down. "Mm-hm. I was enjoying the scenery."

"Scene- Draco!" Pushing the blonde off him, he frantically rearranged himself, until he was decently covered - although it didn't hide his condition.

Draco was rolling on the bed, giggling (masculinely, according to him) at Harry's reaction.

Harry glared at him in embarrassment, and then he started grinning widely. "I see I'm not the only one," he observed.

Draco's laughter subsided, and he studied the dark-haired young man grinning at him. "Like what you see?" he asked coyly.

Harry nodded. "Very much so," he said softly.

"Harry," Draco said, suddenly serious, "don't you find this a bit odd, that we're so comfortable with each other so quickly?"

The Gryffindor thought for a moment, and then said "It is, isn't it? I was almost ready to throttle you when you showed up... What? Just day before yesterday? So much has happened." He thought for a moment more. "Must be the magic; after all, we are practically married, according to Snape."

"And Professor Snape would appreciate it if you two would stop lolling about!" came that worthy's voice. Fortunately for their modesty, the bed curtains were still drawn. "There are things that must be talked

about; plans to be made! So get your arses out of bed! I'll see you in the Great Hall in half an hour."

Two very surprised young men heard a door shut - very firmly.

"I think we forgot to ward the door last night," Harry said quietly.

"I don't think that would have stopped him," the blonde replied.

Harry cocked his head, thinking. "You're probably right," he finally said - then attacked his bedmate with all eight fingers and both thumbs, claiming "Tickle attack!"

A very shocked Draco Malfoy tried ineffectually to fend the boy off, but he was laughing too hard. When Harry finally let up, he glared at him. "Why did you do that?" he demanded, face flushed, and breathing hard..

"Look at us. No more morning wood!" Harry said, grinning. "Besides; it was fun!"

"Remind me, someday, to teach you what fun is," the Slytherin grumped. "It is not about just about making me piss myself!"

"I'm sorry," Harry said, laughing. "I'll make it up to you when we go shopping, okay?"

Draco shot him an annoyed look, got out of bed and went to the toilet. Harry used the shower, and was surprised to find Draco standing outside the stall, awaiting his turn, when he got out. He was a bit embarrassed, but tried to think of it as nothing more than the dorm showers. But it was different. This was a boy he had been intimate with, and wanted to be intimate with again. But he tried to be casual, anyway, and smiled at the blonde as they passed each other. He was relieved to receive a tentative, shy smile, back.

At breakfast, Snape was in a sour mood, which was explained when he said not one word, but let Dumbledore do all the talking. He must have been under orders.

"Now, boys," Dumbledore began, "I'm quite sure you realize some of the implications of what you've done, but I wonder -"

"We're bound for life," Harry interrupted. "Draco explained all the ramifications to me before I agreed to anything. Of course, then I was expecting a vassal that I'd have to take care of the rest of my life, not a possible life partner."

At those last words, Draco ducked his head a fraction, then raised it proudly. He wasn't sure that it could happen, or last if it did, but he wanted the position of Harry's life partner.

"And you know-"

Again Harry interrupted. "I know that Lucius, Voldemort, and possibly the whole body of Death Eaters will be after us, yes. But Voldemort, at least, is foiled. He'll exact vengeance, if he can, but he won't have Draco bound to him. The only thing I want to know is, can you, and will you, help us?"

Dumbledore sat back and folded his hands together, index fingers steepled and touching his lower lip, as he studied the two young men before him. Finally, he spoke. "Professor Snape and I talked about this for several hours last evening. To begin with; you, Draco, need to file for emancipation, so your father no longer has any legal say about you. Hopefully, he won't have anyone watching that portion of the Ministry, and won't interfere until it's too late. If necessary, Professor Snape, here, can sign and witness any papers. Then the two of you need to get married."

Two sets of eyes, one green, one gray, looked at him in astonishment. Snape looked like he was torn between glaring at the headmaster, and expressing almost sadistic amusement at the boys' plight.

"You need to have an explanation for why you're always together, and since neither of you is likely to marry anyway... I'm not mistaken, am I?" the old man asked. The hint of uncertainty was so faint that

Harry almost missed it.

Draco decided to handle this one. "I, at least, am not likely to engender children with a female," he said, making eye contact with the green-eyed young man beside him for permission to say more. Receiving an almost imperceptible nod, he continued. "And Harry has indicated an interest in being with me, but we hardly know each other! We just decided, last night, to try to be boyfriends. And now you want us to marry?"

"It would provide legal protection, to back up the magical protection you already have," Dumbledore replied.

Looking at Draco, Harry said "I... He's got a point, Draco. And we're already bound. What could it hurt?"

Draco gave the Gryffindor a look, then sighed and gave in. "I'd always envisioned romance when I was involved in a proposal; either giving or receiving. But neither of us is proposing," he said, giving the headmaster a glare, "it's being proposed for us." He looked at Harry. "I'm not at all sure this is a good idea relationship-wise, Harry, but if you want it, I'll go along with it."

"I wish we had time to become sure, Draco, but it's just a formality - a legal piece of paper. We're already far more bound than that can do, and we can still follow our own plan of action regarding each other afterward, if it would make you feel better." A glint of mischievous humour started showing in his eyes, then he said "After all; we've already had the wedding night."

This occasioned a short outburst of laughter from both men (although Snape's was more of a snort), and caused Draco to tint slightly as he glared at the Gryffindor; but there was little he could say that wouldn't make it worse.

Harry took pity on him, and pulled him into a hug, so he could hide his face. And the Slytherin did, but not before he slapped Harry's upper arm for embarrassing him. It was hardly enough to even sting, but Harry would have accepted it as his just due had it been much harder, and more painful.

The Gryffindor thought it about time he broached another subject that was rather pressing for both

himself and Draco. "Professor," he said, addressing Dumbledore, "Draco and I are in dire need of clothing. All we have is what we're wearing. Is there somewhere we could safely shop? There are other schools of magic, so presumably there are other magical communities, which means shopping must be had. They can't all be going to Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade," he reasoned.

Professor Dumbledore nodded. "Indeed there are, but - no other clothing?"

"Professor Snape destroyed everything we couldn't carry," Harry explained.

"Oh?" The headmaster was now looking at a decidedly uncomfortable-looking potions master. Turning back to Harry and Draco, he said "Then you'll definitely need to replenish your wardrobes, and other supplies. I'll see what can be arranged."

"Thank you, Professor," Harry said. Draco echoed him, comfortable in Harry's arms, but now his head turned to listen to, and participate in, the conversation.

Draco filled out the emancipation paperwork that night, with the headmaster's guidance when necessary, and gave it into his care.

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Three days later, they were back from Nice, France, which held the French version of London's Diagon Alley. Dumbledore had, somehow, convinced Snape to escort the boys on their shopping trip, and they had been under strict orders both to behave themselves, and to report any poor behavior on the professor's part. Amazingly, Snape's cutting remarks and impatient sneers were few; few enough that Harry and Draco decided not to report them.

Once Draco was assured that Harry could afford it, he very enthusiastically got into the job of outfitting his husband-to-be, Harry winding up with a dozen fine Italian dress shirts, six pair of dress slacks, two pair of fine Italian leather shoes, four dress robes in various styles and colours, four school robes, six casual robes, a dressing robe, a bathrobe, two dozen pair of silk underwear, two dozen pair of socks, casual clothing and foot-wear of various sorts, and various and sundry other pieces of outerwear and
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grooming accessories.

Draco had even pressed the Gryffindor into getting his hair styled. His hair was soft, but extremely thick and grew in different directions, so neat wasn't really an option, but 'sexily tousled,' was. He was advised to grow his hair out; shoulder-length would allow his hair to look much more in control, and he could pull it into a 'tail' for those times when he needed to keep it out of his eyes, such as during quidditch.

To Harry's surprise, however, Draco would have limited himself to the bare necessities, had he not insisted otherwise. "You're to be my wedded partner, Draco," he had said, "and I will not have you looking as though I neglect or mistreat you!" If he had said what he really wished to, that Draco deserved the best, he was afraid the Slytherin would have ignored him. But he knew Draco would pay attention to matters of social appearance and propriety, so now the blonde's wardrobe was almost as extensive as his own. Most of their purchases had been put away by the house elves by the time they arrived. Those few items that had to be tailored, or were to be custom-made, would arrive a few days later.

But the best was when they got back, and found that the headmaster had called in a couple of favors, rushing Draco's paperwork. Draco was fully emancipated.

When asked, the boys had talked it over, and decided to have their wedding the day before school went in session, before the other students arrived. They figured it would save trouble if they were to present everyone with a fait accompli. There were to be no guests. Dumbledore would officiate, and the teachers would witness the ceremony. Harry was sure that many people would feel hurt, but they could always have another ceremony at another time; when they felt they were ready to marry, and not just as a legal measure.

And so it was. When Dumbledore said "By the power invested in me by the Ministry and by custom, I now pronounce you man and partner," it rather fell flat, emotionally. There was no great joy, only a bit of self-consciousness and shyness, but Harry did gently hug and kiss his co-husband, smiling at him in reassurance. Draco clung to him, hoping they had done the right thing. Then they had a bit of cake and coffee that the house elves had provided, and made their way to their rooms.

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Chapter Eight by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Chapter Eight

Draco was now magically bound to his ex-rival, emancipated from his family, and married to that same ex-rival, all within the space of a week - and school started tomorrow. Students would be arriving this evening on the Hogwarts Express. Nervous? Yes; they both were.

They had spent last evening cuddling, quietly discussing how to handle problems as they came along. Draco had agreed to try not to bait Harry's friends, although habit might make him slip every now and again, and Harry had given Draco his blessings to defend himself from Ron or anyone else, should that become necessary. Draco would have done so anyway, but it was nice to know his husband wouldn't be upset with him when he did.

But Draco was rather looking forward to seeing everyone's faces when they saw Harry. Harry'd been something to see before, but with his new wardrobe... He'd have to be ready with a beater bat to repel would-be poachers. The only things really bothering him was the reaction of his own House, and Lucius' inevitable arrival. The man may not have known where to find them before now, but he knew his son would likely not want to miss schooling.

His breakfast musings were interrupted by the arrival of both his, and Harry's owls, who dropped small packages in front of them. Upon opening, they found identical silver bands; their wedding rings.

"Ah, I see your wedding bands have finally arrived," mused Professor Dumbledore, "I'm sorry they're late."

Looking at each other, Harry took the band out of his box, and with a smile, took Draco's left hand, and slipped the ring on the proper finger. Draco looked from the ring to his husband, touched by the gesture despite himself, and repeated it on his co-husband. They hugged, then turned to thank the headmaster. "Late or not," Harry said, "it was very thoughtful of you to get them. I'm afraid wedding bands were amongst the last things on my mind while we were shopping," he said, giving Draco a meaningful look.

"What?" Draco asked.

"I'm afraid I was a bit busy trying things on, getting my hair cut, and making sure Draco got what he needed," Harry explained, ostensibly talking to the headmaster. "If he hadn't been so set on stinting himself..."

"It wasn't my money, Harry!" Draco exclaimed.

"Speaking of Draco's money," the Gryffindor continued, still pretending to ignore the blonde, "do we know how much he has access to, now that he's emancipated?"

The old man had the grace to look just a tad discomfited. "As to that, I must admit my curiosity got the best of me; he has access to approximately seventy-five thousand galleons."

"Good!" Draco exclaimed. "Now I can pay you back for those clothes!"

Harry gave him a look that could best be described as stone-like. "That would be like paying yourself back, Draco. We're married, remember? What's mine is ours?"

"If that's the case, Harry dearest, I'll just close out my vault, and transfer the contents to yours!" Draco said triumphantly.

Harry opened his mouth to protest, but he'd rather painted himself into a corner with his own argument, and had nothing he could say that would now be logical. He had only one other course of action he could take. "Then I'd best instruct Gringott's that you have access to at least two hundred galleons a week from my vaults; unless you think you'd need more?"

Draco stared at him, then slowly said "I haven't thought to ask before now, Harry, but just how much do you have?"

"I'm not really sure," Harry said off-handedly. "Between the Potter vaults and Sirius' vaults, plus income from various rental properties and investments, I'm probably worth about as much as your family."

Eyes twinkling madly, Dumbledore chimed in "About half again as much, Harry," he said.

"And you dressed in hand-me-down rags," Draco said, in wonder. Then his mood shifted. "Two hundred galleons a week? You piker! Make it five hundred," he said, grinning.

Harry groaned. "Not married a whole twenty-four hours, and he's already gouging me!" Then he burst out laughing at the indignant look on his husband's face, before slipping an arm around his waist, and kissing his cheek when he turned away from a peck on the lips. "Can't accuse you of being a gold-digger, Draco. You didn't know I had more than enough to keep us comfortable, when you came to me."

Draco snorted, genteelly. "For a while, there, I assumed we'd be working to put food on the table," he admitted.

"But you were still willing to go through with it, so money wasn't the object, was it," Harry stated fatuously.

Draco shook his head. 'No, the object had been protection, and thank you so much for reminding me,' he thought.

Harry must have seen it in his face, for he became quite contrite, apologising profusely for his blunder. Draco let him go on for quite some time before he forgave him.

And then there was only minutes to go before a few hundred voices again flooded the halls. The teachers took their positions, and Harry and Draco tried to decide where they were going to sit. They had decided they weren't going to try to hide their marital status, and had been given permission for the two of them to sit together at any table they wished, until they graduated. Slytherins were likely to be more dangerous, since more Death Eater children were in that house than any other, but the Gryffindors weren't exactly likely to be welcoming, due to the long-standing rivalry between the houses, and Draco's (likely former) status as the unofficial leader of that House. They chose to ask the house elves to put a

small table, with four chairs, near the Gryffindor table. (Harry expected they'd have at least occasional visitors.) Once the Gryffindors were used to the idea of Draco being with Harry, they could join them at the large tables. And, if Slytherin House proved to be more amenable than was expected, they could trade off.

They took their seats at their table, and waited. Harry looked at his spouse, and gave him a reassuring smile, then entwined the fingers of their hands together, laying them on top of the table for all to see. He gave the Slytherin's hand a squeeze, and was relieved to feel the blonde squeeze back. They would support each other.

A babble of voices, growing louder. They were here. They squeezed each other's hand again. And then the other students were flooding through the doors into the Great Hall; heading for the tables that belonged to their particular House, whether that was Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff. The boys, sitting at their own small table, garnered not a few surprised stares, but nobody said anything, until "Harry! We were so worried when you weren't on the train!" It was Hermione. Ron was beside her, with a funny, twisted expression on his face. He was relieved his best friend was okay, but the scenario he was seeing was - just wrong!

"Ron! Hermione! Come sit down!" Harry invited cheerily, trying to hide how nervous he really was.

Hermione sat, looking warily and curiously at Draco, but Ron just stood there, shaking his head. "With Malfoy? I don't think so. And why are you sitting with him?" he asked Harry angrily.

Harry sighed. He'd expected this reaction, but had hoped it wouldn't happen. "It's a long story, Ron, but this," he said, holding up his left hand to show off the wedding band, "is the short answer."

Ron's face went white. "Tell me that's just a friendship ring, Harry," he begged.

Harry shook his head slowly. "No, Ron; it's not. It's the real thing. I'll tell you all about it later, when we have more time. They're bringing the new First Year's in, so the Sorting will begin soon. Please sit."

Ron sat, staring first at the ring, then at Harry, then Draco, then back at the ring again. When Draco put

out his hand, with his matching wedding band on it, Ron added it to his round of staring for a while, then gave up and just stared at his best friend, wondering where he'd gone wrong.

"Harry," Hermione began tentatively, "you're really married?"

Harry nodded. "Since yesterday."

"Just yesterday? But-"

"If I may have your attention, please?" Dumbledore called from the podium. "I'd like to welcome..." The new school year had officially started. It turned out that Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw got the larger share of the new students, with Slytherin getting only seventeen, and Gryffindor fifteen new members.

"Hah!" Draco gloated, "We got two more students than Gryffindor!"

Harry nodded sadly. "Quality's getting harder to find, evidently," he mourned.

Draco looked at him in surprise, then burst out laughing. "I still think you should have been re-Sorted, Harry; that was good!"

Harry looked very pleased with himself. He scooted his chair closer to Draco's, and put an arm around him, pulling him close. Draco relaxed into the hug, and laid his head on the Gryffindor's shoulder. Their table-mates were looking totally lost, and the redhead was looking just a little sick.

After the Sorting Feast, Ron was all for heading up to the Gryffindor common room. "Come on, Harry; we've got things to talk about!" he said grimly.

"Where, Ron?" the Gryffindor seeker asked.

"The dorm, of course!"

"Ron," Harry said gently, "it still hasn't sunk in, has it? I don't live in Gryffindor Tower any more; I'm married. Come on; we'll show you and 'Mione our rooms."

Both of his friends plied him with questions all the way to their door, but Harry refused to say anything until they were comfortably seated in their quarters. Seating himself in one of the large chairs, he pulled Draco into his lap.

"If this is what it takes to get you to be more affectionate, I hope you tell all your friends one by one," Draco whispered in Harry's ear.

Harry slapped Draco's leg. "I am affectionate; I just didn't know you wanted more of it!" he whispered back, then planted a swift kiss on the blonde's cheek before turning his attention back to his friends.

A faint glimmer of hope had crossed Ron's face with the slap, which quickly died with the kiss. "Harry - must you?" he begged.

Harry frowned at his friend "No, Ron, I don't have to; I want to," he said.

"Ron, do control yourself. I'm dying of curiosity, and your carping isn't speeding anything up!" Hermione remonstrated.

Ron scowled, but subsided, sitting back on the couch.

"Now, are you two going to tell us what happened?" the girl demanded.

"Draco? This is mostly your story. You tell what you want, and I'll take it from there," Harry advised.

Draco looked a bit taken aback, but took on the challenge. He paused for a minute, considering what he'd rather not have these two know, while still giving the gist of what happened. He got up, walked over to the fireplace, and stood looking at the fire as he started talking. "I found out my father was going to bind me to You-Know-Who; and not as a Death Eater. The only way to prevent it, was to be bound to someone else, first. I went to Harry to ask him to help me, and he agreed. We did the ritual. If it had worked correctly, I would have been his vassal." His voice had become slightly more stressed with every word. At this point he turned to his husband. "Harry?" he said, silently asking him to take over.

Harry had gotten up as soon as Draco started his recitation, and had stood behind him with his hands on his shoulders. He turned the blonde around, and pulled him into a loose hug as he continued the story. "It turns out we had hidden feelings for each other, and that changed the results of the ritual, entirely. While the magic bound us as it was supposed to, it took our emotional states into account. We were bound as... Well, quite a lot more thoroughly than marriage."

"But that's not a legal marriage, Harry!" Ron interrupted. Hermione "shushed" at him.

Harry shook his head, but in agreement. "No, it's not, Ron. But there's more. There was a blast of magic at the conclusion of the ritual. Dumbledore says it was, and I quote, "the result of two powerful wizards completing a love-bond." I didn't know it, but Snape was the one who brought Draco to the Dursley's. He felt the magic surge, and got us out of there in a hurry so Voldemort wouldn't track us down by it. Once here, Professor Dumbledore advised Draco to file emancipation papers, and that we should get married, to provide Draco with even more legal protection. So yesterday, we got married."

Ron and Hermione sat silent for a minute, overwhelmed.

"But... Harry? Why couldn't you wait until we got here for the marriage?" Hermione finally asked.

Harry smiled sadly. Leave it to 'Mione to accept the necessity of something. "Mainly because I didn't want to have to fight with anyone about the decision, 'Mione," he said, looking pointedly at Ron.

Ron caught the look. "What?" Ron asked defensively. "Of course I would have tried to talk you out of it, Harry! You're my best friend! And he's... Malfoy!"

"I'm sure you'd think you were doing the right thing, Ron," Harry said gently.

"It would have been!" Ron said, stubbornly.

"It's a moot point now, Ron," Hermione said. "It's done. Draco was already a permanent part of Harry's life; the marriage just made it official. If we're going to accept Harry, we have to accept Malfoy, too."

Ron just settled himself deeper into his seat, arms crossed across his chest, and a look of stubbornness plastered on his face.

"Actually, Granger," Draco chimed in, "I'd rather appreciate you not referring to me as 'Malfoy.' You may call me Draco, or Mr. Potter."

The other three pair of eyes in the room turned to the blonde, thunderstruck.

"Draco?" Harry said, asking for an explanation.

"Well, it's not entirely unknown for the bride to change her last name, is it?" Draco explained. "So I'm not a girl; I was still in the position of the bride, and I changed my last name. I'm now Draco Lucien Malfoy Potter. No hyphen, thank you very much," he said, primly.

Harry couldn't stop grinning. He gave Draco a rib-crushing hug, causing the Slytherin to protest, and mashed a big kiss on that pale cheek, which caused him to blush. "Why didn't you say something?" Harry asked.

"I wrote it out on the documentation, Harry," Draco said somewhat acerbically. "Are you going to tell me

you didn't read our marriage document?"

Harry blushed, shaking his head.

"Just like a man," Hermione said, laughing.

Harry turned to her with a smile. "Thank you for your support anyway, Hermione," he said, then turned to the redhead, sobering. "Ron, I hope you're still my friend, but Draco is my spouse. Don't make me choose between you."

Ron looked up, shocked. "You'd choose him over me?"

Harry gave his friend a steely look. "Would your father choose any friend he had over your mother? Better yet; would any true friend try to make his friend choose him over his spouse?" Having given Ron some food for thought, he said "I know it's not all that late, yet, but it's been a stressful evening. Would you two mind letting us rest? We'll see you in classes, tomorrow."

Hermione gave Harry a hug, then after a moment's hesitation, gave Draco a rather tentative hug, too, which rather startled the young man.

Ron was still looking stubborn, but he wasn't glowering any longer, which gave Harry some hope. But Ron refused to do so much as say good-night, although it looked for a moment as though he might; he just exited.

With Ron and Hermione gone, it occurred to Harry to look at his class schedule. With everything else on his mind, he'd put that to one side. Dumbledore, or whoever he had do the schedules, had put them in all the same classes. Harry was rather relieved to find out he was no longer in Trelawney's Divination class, but he was going to need tutoring for Ancient Runes. He'd never so much as opened a book on it.

"Draco? I've been put in your Ancient Runes class. How good are you at tutoring?"

"Not too bad, but you might want Granger to help you, too. Your classes got changed? I haven't looked at mine, yet." A few moments later, "Blast and damnation!"

"What's wrong, mon ami?" Harry asked, with an atrocious accent.

"Well, Charms, DADA, Herbology, History of Magic, Potions, and Transfiguration are all required classes, of course. I had Ancient Runes, Arithmancy and Care of Magical Creatures as electives, and I've lost Arithmancy!"

"I got rid of Divination, and was put in Ancient Runes," Harry said. "I take it you were put in Muggle Studies?"

"How did you know?" Draco asked.

"I think we've got all the same classes together," Harry replied, handing his schedule over.

Draco compared them; they were identical. "You're right. We do."

"Makes sense, if we can't be all that far apart," Harry said. "You realize that we haven't even tried to test that?"

"The quidditch pitch?" Draco suggested. "It has distance markers that would aid us."

Harry nodded. "After last class tomorrow, then. I can get Hermione to come with us in case we wind up needing help."

"Good thinking. She doesn't seem a bad sort, when she's not punching you."

Harry gave a small laugh. "Well, you did rather ask for it," he said.

"Funny, that," Draco mused, "I don't recall issuing an invitation to fisticuffs. You'd think I'd remember something like that. Took me rather by surprise," he said, rubbing his jaw.

Draco's dry humour about the situation took Harry by surprise, as well, and it had him laughing freely. When Draco arched an eyebrow at his behaviour, it set him off yet again.

"Daft. Quite daft," Draco commented to the air. "I'm married to a nutter."

None of this, of course, did the least amount of good towards sobering Harry up. Quite the opposite. And Draco was very pleased with himself.

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Chapter Nine by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Chapter Nine

At breakfast, Professor Dumbledore made the announcement he and the boys had previously agreed upon. The old man stood, and a small gong sounded - an unusual occurrence in itself. "May I have your attention, please?" It was a measure of the respect the man commanded that he was met with almost immediate silence. "Over the summer, two of our students celebrated a most joyous occasion; matrimony. I'm sure we all wish them a long and happy union. Would the Misters Potter please stand?"

At the mention of Harry's name, the whispers began; then immediately intensified as the word "Misters" registered. But when Harry and Draco stood, arms about each other's waist, pandemonium reigned, and

at least three people fainted; two from Hufflepuff, and Pansy Parkinson. It was a good five minutes or more before the teachers were again able to establish order, during which the three fainters were whisked away to the infirmary.

"Well, a bit of a shock to everyone, eh?" Dumbledore commented amusedly. "Well, let's just say that one kind of passion can quite often mask another, and these two young men discovered that."

That comment had not been approved by the young married couple. Their faces went crimson. But it was just what was needed to defuse the situation, as most of the student body laughed. Unfortunately, there were a few hold-outs, and as predicted, most of them were in Slytherin House. Those who did not laugh were noted by Dumbledore's inner circle, and quite a few were noted by Harry and Draco themselves, despite their embarrassment. That didn't mean that all those un-amused were dangerous, but it was an indication.

Despite the variety of stares they received, from the merely curious to the downright hate-filled, the rest of breakfast went by without incident.

A messenger showed up halfway through Charms class. After whispering to Professor Flitwick, that worthy turned to the class, and said "Will the Misters Potter please report to the Headmaster's office?"

Draco and Harry exchanged looks. There were very few things that Professor Dumbledore would call them to his office for, now, and the most likely was Lucius Malfoy. They held hands all the way to the gargoyle.

When they entered the old man's office, this proved to be the case.

"What the hell is this old fool going on about, boy?!" Lucius bellowed as soon as he laid eyes on his son.

"I don't know," Draco replied coldly, deliberately omitting an honorific of any sort, "what did he say?"

"He bloody well claims that you've applied for and received emancipation, and married that abomination beside you!"

"I did get my emancipation, and this is my husband," Draco asserted.

"The bloody hell he is! I'll have it annulled!"

"Since you no longer have any legal say in my doings, I rather doubt that," the blonde replied boldly.

"Draco Lucien Malfoy, I demand you obey your father!"

"My name is Potter, and my father died when I found out he planned to bind me to the Dark Lord as one of his sex toys!" Draco retorted.

Lucius blanched. "What are you talking about, boy? Where did you hear such calumny?" he asked fiercely.

"From your own lips, when you were talking to the scaly bustard! I listened in!" Draco accused.

If anything, the older man became paler still. One could tell he wanted to do something violent, but he wasn't quite so far gone in anger to lose that much control. However, he couldn't keep himself from venting verbally. "You sniveling, whiney, weak, eavesdropping, pewling, good-for-nothing pile of droppings. This isn't over with," he said, his voice low, his tone deadly.

"I do hope you don't mean harm by that threat, Mr. Malfoy," Dumbledore said, his voice like steel, "because if anything untoward happened to either of these two young men, magical or physical, the Aurors would know where to start looking - no matter who you used as a tool."

The blonde man merely glared coldly at the headmaster, and stalked out.

Draco sagged, and might have fallen had Harry not grabbed him and helped him to a chair.

"You were magnificent, Draco!" Harry said, pride in every word of praise.

Draco raised his eyes to his husband's. "Why didn't you say anything, Harry? Why didn't you help me?"

Harry knelt beside the blonde, and held him tightly. "Would Lucius have listened to anything I had to say?" Harry asked. "Heard anything but interference in what he considered family matters of which I was not a part? All I could do was stand beside you and support you, Draco; be here in case I was needed. I'm sorry I couldn't do more, but you handled him wonderfully."

"I'm quite happy I decided to record this meeting," Dumbledore chimed in, holding up a green cube. "He admitted to everything when he called you an eavesdropper, Draco. As soon as this is heard at the Ministry, Lucius' power is as good as gone."

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The quidditch pitch was deserted as Draco started walking. At about 185 feet, he started feeling a little panicky. At 200, his head hurt, his heart was pounding, his stomach was queasy, he was fighting an almost uncontrollable urge to turn and run back to his husband, and he had broken out in a cold sweat. Still, he forced himself to keep walking. At about 230 feet, he passed out.

Harry had been watching his husband with misgivings. At the 180 foot mark, he'd started feeling a sense of loss. At 200, there was an almost physical directional pull to go find his spouse, though he was in plain sight. It didn't get any worse, but when Draco collapsed, he panicked, running full-tilt to his husband's side, Hermione close behind him. To Harry's relief, the Slytherin's eyes fluttered open almost as soon as the blonde head was in his lap. Leaning over, he gently kissed the presently pale, pink lips. "Why did you push it so far, love? You scared me half to death!" Harry scolded.
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Draco smiled. "I had to know if anything would stop me if I really wanted to get away. I guess there is," he said ruefully.

"Why would you want to know if you can leave? Are you unhappy?" Harry asked, worried.

Draco gave his spouse a wan smile. "No, I'm not unhappy. Not really."

Harry smiled. "Need more affection?" he gently teased. "'Cause I'd like that, too."

The blonde's cheeks pinked up, but he gave a small smile, and nodded.

"Heh-hem!" Hermione was standing by, her cheeks tinted from being privy to such intimacy.

"Um... Sorry, 'Mione," Harry apologised, grinning.

"I can see that," she replied sarcastically, before turning to his husband. "How are you feeling, Mal- Draco?"

"I'm okay now, Granger. Thanks."

Hermione's eyebrows raised. Draco Mal- Potter had just thanked her? Would wonders never cease? "You're welcome - Draco," she replied wonderingly.

"So why are you still laying on the ground?" Harry asked.

Draco smirked up at his husband. "I like my pillow," he replied insouciantly.

Harry grinned. "Well, your "pillow" is about to go to supper. Would you like to accompany me?"

Draco got to his feet with alacrity, proving his assertion that he was alright.

Supper was a milder version of breakfast. There were still curious stares, but they were fewer, and shorter. Still whispering, but most of it was of a more mellow, speculative sort. But at the Slytherin table, a small group of three or four people were whispering in a more malicious manner. Theodore Nott was obviously haranguing them. But Pansy Parkinson wasn't one of them. As soon as the couple had sat down, she was up and on her way over to their small table.

"You two-faced, lying, sack of dung!" she screamed, looming over the seated Draco.

Harry started to get up, but Draco put his hand on his shoulder, shaking his head 'no.' He looked coolly at the angry girl. "What are you on about, Parkinson?"

"You were supposed to marry me!" she yelled hysterically.

"It would never have happened, Pansy," he replied calmly.

"We were promised!"

"Lucius made that promise, and he was going to break it. If I hadn't gone to Harry, I'd be the Dark Lord's plaything. You want to scream at someone? Scream at him."

"Wha- What?" Pansy had become very pale.

"Sit down, Pansy," Draco invited, "everyone's staring."

She slowly, shakily, sat down.

"Now, what don't you understand?" the blonde boy asked.

"The... The Dark Lord?" Pansy asked.

"I overheard Lucius planning with him to make me his plaything."

"You're lying. You were promised to me!"

"Pansy, you know me better than that. I'm a lot of things, but a liar isn't one of them. I might keep silent, not tell the whole of a truth, or tell the truth in such a way as to give the wrong impression, but you have never known me to tell an outright lie. Admit it."

Pansy was shaking her head. "He wouldn't. We would have been happy together!" she said desperately.

Draco shook his head. "I might have married you out of duty, Pansy, but the happy marriage you envision wouldn't have happened, either," he said, taking Harry's hand. He smiled at his husband, then turned back to the distraught girl. "I've wanted to be with Harry since first year - as a friend, at first; I just never thought I'd ever be able to have him."

"No..." It was a wail; an acceptance of the truth despite her wishes. She broke down crying, and both young men tried to comfort her. She finally calmed down enough to shrug them off. She looked at them, still with tears in her eyes, then turned and walked, with what dignity she could muster, out of the Great Hall.

Draco caught Blaise' eye across the room and gestured; the boy followed Pansy out.

"Is he still a friend, then?" Harry asked.

"Blaise? I'm not sure. We still haven't talked. But he'll look after a fellow Slytherin. I just don't know if I still qualify in their eyes."

"That bothers you, doesn't it?"

Draco turned and smiled, putting his arms around Harry's neck (which caused another round of whispering). Harry's arms automatically encircled the Slytherin. "Not as much as you might think," Draco said, laying his head on the Gryffindor's shoulder, his nose in the crook of his neck. "Slytherins are an extended family, but you're my family, now."

That night, when they went to bed, Draco backed up to Harry to cuddle, as had been his husband's habit, but Harry started kissing and nibbling on the blonde's neck as he let his hand start roaming over the blonde's chest and stomach. Draco's eyes closed as his body automatically pressed back into it, demanding more. Harry backed up a few inches, and with a light press of his hand, urged his husband to roll onto his back, which Draco was only too happy to do.

With better access to the pale neck, Harry got busy, but found the blonde's silk pyjama top getting in the way of access to his collar bone. He left off what he was doing to his husband's neck, occasioning a protesting groan, and started unbuttoning the top. Draco caught the raven-haired young man's hand, a question in his eyes.

"Just tell me when to stop," Harry said huskily.

Draco gave a small smile, satisfied, and let go the hand, which got back to its task. Before he quite knew what was happening, they were both nude, arms and legs wrapped around each other, hips thrusting, cocks rubbing against each other, lips pressed almost bruisingly together as their tongues explored each

other's mouths. The Slytherin felt himself getting close, and broke their kiss. "Harry... I'm - close."

"Me- Me too," Harry said, panting.

And then they were there, Draco orgasming only a second after Harry. Draco's legs fell from around his husband's. Exhausted, they fell asleep like that.

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"Harry? Wake up, love. You're heavy. - - - Harry!"

"Mrmph?"

"Wake up, you great lump!" Draco said, laughing. "We need to shower, get breakfast, and get ready for classes!"

"Nuwunna," Harry slurred.

"You're heavy, Harry; you slept on me all night!"

"Hm?" Harry reluctantly opened his eyes to look around, to find that he was, indeed, still on top of the blonde. He smiled lazily and laid his head back down. "Nice," he opined.

"Get off me, you great git," Draco ordered affectionately. "I have to use the loo!"

Grumbling, Harry rolled off his lover, only to find that the results of last night's loving had dried, sticking their skin together, and making them 'peel' apart as he rolled.
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"Ew... Disgusting!" the blonde exclaimed.

"You didn't think so last night," Harry complained sleepily.

"Not you, you twit. We need to shower this mess off. We stink!"

Harry agreed, but was reluctant to get up. However... "Together?" he asked.

Draco looked at the Gryffindor, surprised. "You want to?"

In a trice, Harry was standing beside the bed, no longer sleepy, holding out a hand to help his husband up. "With you? I wouldn't miss it!" He was eager for a good reason to get his hands all over the blonde.

The blonde in question wasn't in a hurry; not with Harry standing nude in front of him. He slowly got up, obviously checking the other young man out, and ignoring his own unclothed state. They 'd sneaked looks at each other like this before, but now it was different. Now, it wasn't just the boy he was bound to, or his husband; now, it was his lover standing there.

Harry coloured, but was smiling. "Enjoying the 'scenery?'" he asked, recalling Draco's words of a few mornings before.

"Mm-hm!" Draco affirmed. "I don't think I'll ever get tired of that scenery."

They missed breakfast, and almost missed the beginning of class. But they were very clean.

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Chapter Ten by Draeconin

Bound! by Draecoin

Beta: Brenna Starr Disclaimer: If you don't recognize it, it's mine. Everything else belongs to the copyright holders. Chapter Ten

The rest of the week went by with only minor incident. It was clear that most of Gryffindor and Slytherin were unhappy with Harry and Draco being paired up, but they didn't know what to do about it. If the couple had just been dating, they would have been fair game for any number of slurs, pranks or dirty tricks, but their being married put them into a different category; one that they had been taught demanded respect. So confusion reigned in the minds of many as they tried to reconcile conflicting emotions with tradition.

This made Hermione's self-appointed task of getting the rest of her House to accept the boys into their company easier. As a married couple, there was no clear-cut and reasonable reason for creating mayhem for them. She was sitting with them at dinner on Friday, telling them about her progress in that regard, when a school owl dropped a note on Draco's plate.

Draco looked at it as though it might be poisonous, then slowly picked it up and opened it. "Be careful in Potions. B.," he read aloud, after reading it for himself, first.

"A warning, or a threat?" Harry asked.

"A warning," Draco said slowly. "If it were a threat, it wouldn't say to be careful, or name where we had to be careful."

"'B'..." Harry mused. "Blaise?" At Draco's bemused nod, he said "A friend, after all. Potions? Let's go," he said, standing up. When the blonde just sat there and looked blankly at him, he explained. "Don't you think Snape would like to know that his classroom is set to be a battlefield?" Draco smirked, and rose.

"I suggest that you pay more attention in class, and less to alarmist notes," Snape sneered, upon being presented with the note and what they'd been observing. Privately, he thought they probably had reason to be apprehensive, but until there was solid proof, he'd stand behind his House, and keep an eye on

those individuals most likely to cause trouble for the young couple. Yes, Draco had been his Golden Boy, but his prejudicial behaviour against Harry Potter was an ingrained habit, despite his recent revelation. He knew it was illogical, and he was fighting both it and the original prejudice, but Draco had automatically inherited the taint when he'd married Potter, making him at least somewhat "other."

But when the trouble started, the scope took him completely by surprise.

With Professor Snape's dismissal of their concerns (although both Draco and Harry would have called it a warning or accusations), the Potters' nerves were stretched taut. They weren't afraid, but they were on edge, keeping their wands handy; ready to reach for them on the slightest pretext. However, the day went fairly smoothly, other than the looks many Slytherins were giving them. Strangely enough, they weren't looks of animosity or gleeful anticipation, but almost of sympathy.

The time for Double Potions rolled around. The young men chose a position against the wall, near the door, but as the minutes ticked by, and nothing happened, they started to relax, and concentrated on making the potion for this lesson - a variation on healing elixir. It was one that Madam Pomfrey had to use quite often, as students hexed each other, or had magical accidents. Half an hour. Forty-five minutes. Then Theodore Nott stood up and shouted "Now!" At that, several Slytherin boys started firing hexes at Harry and Draco, who immediately dropped to the floor, grabbed their wands, and began casting hex-deflection spells. When it appeared that none of their efforts were working, Nott, face red and twisted with hate, shouted "Suffer, traitor! Crucio!"

Draco fell to the floor, writhing in agony, but he refused to make a sound. Although one never got used to the pain, Lucius' use of the curse as a too-common punishment had taught the blonde how to handle it. Just as Harry was about to retaliate, Professor Snape's shout of "Expelliarmus!" was heard, and Nott's wand went flying. Professor Snape then conjured ropes, which shot out of his wand and bound the boy tightly. "Halt!" he yelled stentoriously at the other spell casters. As Nott swore, threatened, and cursed, the professor also cast "Silencio" on him.

Seeing Nott nullified, and the other spell casters cowed, Harry put his need for revenge aside, at least temporarily, and anxiously turned to his husband. Draco was still quivering, but recovering.

"Harry, can we help?" Hermione whispered anxiously. Ron, beside her, was nodding, but looking more than a bit uncertain of his reception. Harry didn't have a chance to answer.

"Potter! Take Draco to Madam Pomfrey!" Snape ordered. He needn't have bothered. Harry had already determined to do exactly that. "And get checked over yourself!" the potions master added, to Harry's surprise. The professor turned to the rest of the class as Harry escorted Draco out of the room.

"Four of you." The professor's voice was calm, but it was the calm of a poisonous snake - deadly. "I expected perhaps one of you to be crass enough to attack the Potters. That a group effort was planned and executed was bad enough, but that the rest of Slytherin House were too cowardly to report it to me...! I will be speaking to the whole House after supper." Turning to the spell-casters, who had become quite pale, he said, in a furious hiss, "You three will have a month of detentions with Filch and me, and be restricted from Hogsmeade visits for three, plus 100 points apiece, including Nott, from Slytherin for your cowardly attack." It was a measure of his anger that he took points from his own house at all, let alone that many.

"Nott, of course, has cast an Unforgivable. The best he can hope for is expulsion. Get your supplies packed up, and pack Nott's; I'm sure the Headmaster will want to have a word with all of you," he directed, coldly. He looked up to address the rest of the class. "The rest of you put aside any thoughts of revenge, and get to work! That potion will likely be needed before the weekend is out, and perhaps by yourselves, so make no mistakes! I will be back shortly," he said curtly. Then casting "mobilicorpus" on Nott, he stalked out, the boy, fighting his bonds, floating along behind, and the other three offenders trailing along behind him.

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"Is he going to be alright?" Harry anxiously asked Poppy Pomfrey.

"Give me a chance to do some tests, Mr. Potter," she replied. "You've only just arrived!"

Harry subsided, but kept hold of his husband's trembling hand.

"Really, Harry, I'll be fine!" Draco protested. "Lucius held me under the Cruciatus Curse far longer, just for failing to beat you to the snitch!"
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The Gryffindor turned white with rage. "The next time I see that man, he won't be walking away," Harry vowed.

"Harry - you're hurting me," Draco complained quietly.

Coming to himself, the green-eyed young man found that he was squeezing Draco's hand far too tightly. "Sorry," he mumbled, embarrassed.

Looking up at the medi-witch, he found Madam Pomfrey still muttering spells and making notes of the results. Turning back to his spouse, he lifted the hurt hand, and kissed it. Except for Pomfrey's muttered spells, silence descended. Eventually, he heard an astonished "What?"

"What?" Harry asked, worried.

The medi-witch waved him to silence as she concentrated, performing several different spells, to the results of which she shook her head in denial, only to try another - apparently with similar results, as she kept this up for some time; even, once, looking suspiciously at her wand as though it had become infected with wood-worms. Finally, she sighed in exasperation. Looking sidewise at the young couple, she said "If you'll wait here, please, I must confer with the headmaster."

"Is something wrong?" Harry asked for both of them.

"No, Draco appears to be in perfect health; just some jangled nerves. Oh!" As if that reminded her, she went to a nearby cupboard, then came back, handing Draco a fist-sized chunk of chocolate. "Eat this. All of it! Excuse me, please." And then she was retreating quickly towards her office.

Draco could tell she wasn't lying, but she had that shifty look... "She's hiding something," he informed Harry.

"You think she's lying?" the Gryffindor asked.

"No, but there's something..."

"Well, we're not going to find out until she comes back, so eat your chocolate," Harry directed.

Draco absently began nibbling on the sweet stuff.

When Madam Pomfrey returned about five minutes later, she looked no less unsettled. "The headmaster should be here in a few minutes. Now, I believe I was to check you over as well, Mr. Potter?" she said, looking at Harry.

"This is going to get ridiculous, isn't it?" Draco muttered quietly.

When Harry looked at him, confused, he explained. "Two 'Mister Potter's,' Harry. When we're together, it could get rather confusing."

"And due to the bond, we're always going to be fairly close together," Harry said, nodding. "I see what you mean. And yet to allow the familiarity of our first names to everyone..."

"Not acceptable," Draco agreed. "I won't use Lucius' last name, Harry," he added quietly.

The Gryffindor grinned. "You don't have to. We'll just have to have fun confusing people when they address us!"

"I like the way you think, Mr. Potter," Draco said, grinning back.

"Of course, Mr. Potter," Harry answered with a smirk.

Madam Pomfrey paused long enough with her tests to shake her head in disbelief at these two, but didn't say a word. Still, Draco caught it, and gave an amused smirk of his own.

"Ah, there you are, gentlemen!" Dumbledore exclaimed, as an announcement of his arrival.

'And where else did he expect us to be?' Draco thought.

"I'll get right to the point."

'I wish you would,' was the blonde's mental comment.

"It seems your bonding ritual had quite an unexpected bonus," the headmaster said carefully. "In most cases, congratulations would be in order. However, I'm not quite sure that's the case, here."

'Would you get on with it, already!' Draco screamed in his mind. A quick glance at his husband told him that Harry was feeling the same way. But Harry had experienced communication with Dumbledore before, and knew there was no hurrying him, so he was forcing himself to be patient.

Taking a deep breath, the old man took the plunge, looking directly at Draco as he said "It would seem, Mr. Potter, that you are pregnant."

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Chapter Eleven by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Disclaimer: If you don't recognize it, it's mine. Everything else belongs to the copyright holders. Chapter Eleven

There was a long silence after the headmaster's pronouncement, and then Draco gave a genteel snort, smirking.

"Pull the other one; it's got bells on," he scoffed. Harry looked stunned at the news, but was also looking somewhat skeptical.

"I assure you, Draco, that I am not "pulling your leg," as you imply," Dumbledore replied.

"Wizards do not get pregnant," Draco insisted.

"There are fertility potions, Mr. Potter, although those usally take care of forming the egg and necessary structures," the headmaster replied, eyes twinkling.

"We're both male; no potion, no egg. How do you get past that?" Draco challenged.

"Magic, Mr. Potter. Usually, you would be quite correct; however, the excessive magic released during your bonding ritual took care of that problem."

Draco sat back against the hospital bed headboard, folded his arms across his chest, and smugly said "I'm listening - convince me."

Dumbledore sighed, then proceeded to explain. "All it takes is a cell and the proper number of chromosomes; twenty-three from each parent. According to the tests Madam Pomfrey conducted, and she used every test in the book to be sure before she contacted me, the magic made sure that the

chromosomes from one of Mr. Potter's sperm joined with the chromosomes found in one of your cells. The resultant fertilized 'egg' made its way outside of your intestine, and attached itself there. A womb, or womb-like structure, has formed around the cell, and is growing along with the fetus."

Draco was no longer looking so sure of himself, and Harry had paled just a bit. Then the Gryffindor's face relaxed with a smile. A baby? They were going to have a baby? He loved the idea.

"It's not... It can't be. I can't be pregnant. I'm only sixteen. I'm not ready to be a parent!" Draco protested.

The smile on Harry's face was gone. He had neglected to take into account the responsibilities of having a baby; a family. The idea of having a baby, in the abstract, was beautiful; but raising a child... He realized he'd been letting life carry him along without giving it much thought. He looked at Draco. He'd done a disservice to him, too. He'd accepted the relationship without taking into account everything that it entailed. Money was no problem, but a place to live... Well, they'd discussed Grimauld Place as a summer residence, but now he'd have to make sure it was fit to be their permanent residence. He'd have to send some owls, and get contractors in there to fix it up. That meant getting cooperation from Dumbledore and the Order. Even though he owned the property, they were the ones actively using it at present. And he'd have to start paying more attention to his interactions with the blonde; he couldn't continue to act as though they were just casual friends and lovers. They were married, and that was a serious relationship. All of a sudden, Harry felt as though a lot more weight were on his shoulders.

"Draco?" Harry wasn't quite sure what to do or say, now. So he closed his eyes, took a deep breath, opened his eyes, gazing into the grey orbs belonging to his husband, and just said what was on his mind. "Draco - we can do this. I... Well, I think I know at least a little of what you feel. I'm not pregnant, but I'm in this with you. It's our child, and we'll raise it together. You're not alone."

Draco had stared at his husband at first, then dropped his eyes to the floor. Now, he raised his head, and Harry could see tears shining in them. "But - Harry, my... Lucius."

Harry snarled, startling everyone present, including himself. A couple of nearby glass jars burst from the Gryffindor's momentarily uncontrolled magic. "If that bastard ever so much as shows his face, I'll...!"

"Harry!" Dumbledore exclaimed. "I do hope you're not contemplating murder?!"

The Gryffindor looked the headmaster squarely in the eye. "I'll do whatever it takes to protect my family," he said quietly, with deadly conviction. "And with that bastard, it wouldn't be murder; it would be justice - probably while defending ourselves," Harry concluded in a happy tone of voice.

"Whether you actually were, or not, I suppose," the old man commented drily.

Harry just smiled and shrugged. Draco's hand on his arm brought his attention back to the blonde.

"Harry," the blonde said quietly, calmly, "you'd do neither me nor the baby any good sitting in an Azkaban cell."

Harry frowned. Again, he'd neglected to think through the consequences of an action; fortunately, this time one only contemplated, not acted upon. Harry smiled at his husband. "Okay, love," he said reassuringly, "I won't go looking for him, and I won't do any more than is necessary to protect us, if he comes looking for us. Okay?"

Draco smiled and nodded, relaxing a bit. "But you won't be standing alone, Harry," he said with quiet determination.

Dumbledore and Madam Pomfrey relaxed as well.

"Oh, gods!" Harry suddenly exclaimed. "The curse! - The Cruciatus Curse!" Harry explained to the blank looks he received. "Did it harm the baby?"

Madam Pomfrey frowned, thinking. "At this stage in the pregnancy, it would be very hard to tell. But it's such a simple structure at this point, it's not likely," she opined. "However, we'll need to keep a close eye on it until we can tell for sure."

"How long?" Draco asked, dreading the answer. Draco was less than thrilled about being pregnant, although slowly accepting it, but family was too important to him to easily contemplate losing this baby.

"About two months," the medi-witch replied.

A slow, cold rage was building in the Slytherin towards Nott. If justice was not done, and his child were damaged, he'd see to it that Nott suffered. No. If Nott didn't wind up in Azkaban for life for using an Unforgivable on him, he'd make sure the bastard suffered anyway, merely for jeopardizing his child. And he knew how to make sure that happened - legally.

"So if Draco's okay, we can go now?" Harry asked.

Madam Pomfrey nodded. "Your tests came out negative as well, Mr. Potter," she said, "although with all the hexes I was told were flying around, I'm extremely surprised that only the one hit its mark."

Draco smirked. "What can I say? We're good!" he boasted.

"I daresay you're much better as a team, than as rivals," Dumbledore said slyly, eyes twinkling.

'Now what did he mean by that?' both boys thought to themselves.

"I want to see you again in two weeks, Mr. Potter," the medi-witch said as they made their way to the door. "And make sure you eat well!"

"Sure thing!" Harry said, using an Americanism.

"Certainly!" Draco replied, at the same time.

Poppy shook her head slowly. It may have been very mild, but she'd just been the victim of the Potters' first "confusion attack."

They found Ron and Hermione waiting outside the entrance to their rooms. They'd been hoping for some quiet time, to relax, but it didn't look as though it would happen for a while, yet.

"Are you both alright?" Hermione asked anxiously. "Pomfrey wouldn't let us in to see you at the infirmary, so we decided to wait here."

"We're fine, 'Mione," Harry answered. Nodding to the redhead, he said "Ron."

"Hi, Harry," Ron said shyly. "I just..."

"Let's go inside, where we can sit down and get comfortable," Harry interrupted. Stepping up to Sir Roxley, he whispered the password. He didn't want even his friends to have it, lest they say it too loudly while others were around.

"Right ye are, me boyo!" Sir Roxley boomed heartily, startling everyone.

"When did you start talking?" Draco demanded.

"Always could, me lad; always could! Just like to get to know folk afore I natter wi' 'em. Now, ye'll be enterin', yes?"

"Um... Yes," Harry said, a little overwhelmed. Even Sean wasn't as heartily boisterous as this.

"And a little restraint would be appreciated," Draco said sharply. "We don't need everyone knowing when we're coming and going."

"Ye have yersel' quite a wildcat there, me boy," Sir Roxley said to to Harry; but his tone was more in normal speaking range, if no less jovial.

Harry grinned at his husband, but replied to Sir Roxley. "He's not boring, for sure."

Draco blushed. "Can we go inside, now?" he asked pointedly. He heard a sound like someone choking to death. When he turned, he saw Ron desperately trying to muffle his laughter. "Something funny, Weasley?"

Ron shook his head 'no' violently, but it wasn't very convincing while he was still shaking with laughter, half doubled over, red-faced, and one hand stuffed halfway into his mouth.

"Ron!" Hermione remonstrated. "You're here to apologize, remember?"

"Leave it, love," Harry whispered in the blonde's ear, putting an arm around his waist. "It wasn't that funny, but I think he's nervous." Then gave Draco a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Are you trying to cozen me?" the Slytherin asked suspiciously, then smiled. "'Cause it's working," he said, kissing Harry back. Then he noticed a marked lack of sound. He turned, looking at Ron, to find the redhead was no longer laughing. Indeed, he looked a bit green.

"Come on inside," Harry invited, suiting action to words, and holding the door for them.

"Draco!" called a voice.

Turning, curious, the four entering the apartment looked around, to find Blaise Zabini hurrying towards them.

"What are you doing here, Zabini?" Ron snarled.

"Ron!" Harry barked. "Draco and I will decide who's welcome in our rooms," he said sharply.

Draco looked, with some surprise, at his husband; not so much that he'd included him in that declaration, although he was very pleasantly surprised about that as well, but that he'd take that tone with his friend.

Ron's face flushed red, and it was clear he was fighting his temper. "Sorry, Harry," he grated out.

Dropping the matter, Harry turned to Blaise. "After that warning you sent us, it's not that you're not welcome, but how did you find out where we're living?" Harry asked.

"Followed them," Blaise said cheerfully, indicating Harry's friends.

Gazing at his friends, he saw Ron's face was still red, but now with embarrassment, and Hermione had joined him.

"Sorry, Harry," Hermione muttered.

"Are we going to stand around in the hall all day?" Draco snapped. "At this rate, we'll have half of Hogwarts barging in!"

Harry blushed. "It's been a hard day," he said by way of apology for Draco's attitude.

"Quite alright," Blaise responded. "I just wanted to make sure you were okay, Draco." Looking at Harry, he said "As Draco's husband, I suppose I should care about you, too. Truth is, I don't."

"I hope you're planning on changing that, Blaise, or you can forget I exist as well," Draco said dangerously

Zabini's eyebrows went up. "So it really is serious, is it? Okay, I'll make an effort to get along, Potter, if you will."

"We've always got along before now, Blaise," Draco responded drily.

"Wha...? Oh! Sorry; I keep forgetting. You're a Potter now too, aren't you?"

"Don't forget it again, Blaise," the blonde responded, with a smile that was more threat than anything else.

Harry stuck out his hand. "I'm Harry Potter," he said. "And may I present my co-husband, Draco Potter?"

Blaise looked blankly at him for all of a second before grinning and taking the Gryffindor's hand, and then Draco's. "I'm quite pleased to meet you both. My name is Blaise Zabini. I hope we become fast friends, in future. But now, I really must run. Snape's dressing down the House in a few, and I can't be absent."

Draco looked concerned. "Should I...?"

"No," Blaise reassured him. "You two are rather in a no-man's-land where the Houses are concerned. I mean, you belong, but you're outside of them, too. And I really must go. Bye!" He literally ran off, leaving

both Harry and Draco with slightly troubled looks on their faces.

"If you went, I'd have to go too, luv, at least as far as the corridor, and I don't think that would go over well," Harry reminded the Slytherin.

Draco nodded sadly, then visibly tucked those emotions away. "In!" Draco demanded, gesturing at the door.

Everyone sat in front of the fire. Draco sat down on the far side of the couch from Harry; which caused Harry to get up and go sit close beside him. Putting an arm around the blonde, he pulled him in close. "I'm not going to baby Ron," he whispered in his husband's ear. "If he wants to remain friends, he'll have to get used to it."

"Did the bonding give you the ability to read minds, too?" Draco whispered back, trying to suppress a very pleased giggle as he cuddled up.

Harry didn't answer; just gave his husband a gentle kiss - on the cheek, since they had company. Even that, however, seemed to discomfit said company - or maybe it was the whispering.

But now that the young couple's attention was on their guests, they seemed to have run out of things to say.

"Well! Um... So what happened after we left Potions?" Harry asked.

Ron's face brightened. "Oy! You should have seen it, mate!" Ron exclaimed happily. "First Snape layed into those four, then he reamed out the rest of the Slytherins for being too cowardly to report them. And he took four hundred points from his own house! A hundred per attacker!"

"Four hundred points?!" Draco exclamed, dismayed. "Right at the beginning of the school year? That's

negative points! We'll never catch up!"

Harry had other matters on his mind. Raising an eyebrow, and looking directly into Ron's eyes, he said "Mate?" in a very sardonic tone.

Ron blushed deeply. "Well, yeah. That's what I was wanting to talk to you about," the redhead replied. "I was going to apologise after Potions, and then... Well, you know what happened there."

Harry waited. He wasn't about to let Ron off that easily.

The youngest Weasley male squirmed for a couple of seconds, then said "So.. Um... I was 'way out of line, and I'm sorry, Harry."

Harry continued to gaze at his erstwhile friend. "And?"

Ron looked confused. "And what?" he asked.

"I'm not the only one you offended, Ron!" Harry said exasperatedly.

Hermione's expression spoke volumes about what she thought of Ron's thick-headedness, but she bit her tongue, and kept quiet. She'd talked the red-head into setting aside his pride and apologising for the sake of their years-long friendship, but now he was on his own.

Ron's colour deepened. "Oh. Um... Sorry, Malfoy," he reluctantly muttered.

"Ron," the raven-haired young man said, strained patience patently clear in his voice. "Would it be too much of a strain to ask you to remember that Draco and I are married? And you were there when he told us he'd changed his name, weren't you?"

"It's okay, Harry," Draco said, interrupting. "It's Weasley, after all," he sneered.

"You're not helping, love," Harry said quietly. Draco didn't reply, and he didn't move. He just sat there glaring coldly at the red-headed Gryffindor.

Ron got control of his temper before he lost it, and tried again. "Look, I'm trying, alright? It's just bloody difficult!"

"What's difficult, Ron? Seeing me happy?" Harry asked impatiently.

"No! Yes! It's just... Not with him!" Ron finally spouted. "You were supposed to marry Ginny! Or Hermione!"

"I see," Harry said sadly. "It would have been okay if it was a heterosexual relationship. Is that it?"

"No! It's still him," Ron said vehemently, pointing at the blonde Slytherin.

"Even though he makes me happy, Ron? Happier than I've ever been in my life?"

Draco sat up from his position on Harry's shoulder, and looked at him with happy surprise. "Do I really?" he asked Harry softly. Harry looked at him with a slight smile, and nodded, then turned back to the red-head, waiting for an answer. Draco cuddled up to his husband again, and tried to ignore that there were two other people in the room.

Ron ignored the warning looks he was getting from both Hermione and Harry, and plowed on. "He's the same obnoxious git who's been making trouble for us for the last five years, Harry! The same bloody wanker who makes fun of my family, and calls 'Mione a Mudblood, and the same arsehole whose father killed your parents!"

Harry didn't answer Ron right away. Instead, he turned to Hermione. "Would you say Draco is the same person, 'Mione?"

Harry could feel Draco's muscles practically thrumming as he tried not to attack the red-headed Gryffindor. He had plenty of provocation. The green-eyed Gryffindor tightened his grip on his husband slightly. It wasn't to restrain him; merely to remind him that he was there, and that he cared. Draco didn't really relax, but Harry could feel a slight lessening of tension, and knew that for now, the danger point was past.

Hermione had been considering her reply, and now gave it. "In a lot of ways, yes, he's the same person," she said.

"Ha!" Ron barked, triumphantly.

"But in most of the important ways, no, I don't think he is the same," she continued. "I wouldn't say that we're friends, yet, but now I can see that it's possible we could be, in time."

"'Mione!" Ron exlaimed, in hurt surprise.

"He is different, Ron! Stop living in the past!" the young woman remonstrated.

Draco's attitude about the girl softened considerably.

Now Harry addressed the red-head. "Tell me, Ron: Would the old Draco still be sitting here in my arms after everything you just said about him, or would you have been hexed within an inch of your life?"

"If it weren't for Harry, here, you wouldn't have recognized yourself in a mirror, Weasley," Draco growled.

"As for his father," Harry quickly continued, before Ron could open his mouth, "it's his father - not him. Are you responsible for any of your father's accomplishments? So why should Draco be responsible for his father's crimes?"

Ron didn't look convinced, but he didn't argue, either, and Harry saw that as progress.

The emerald-eyed young man sighed. "This isn't the first time you've done this to me, Ron, but when you're ready to give both me and my husband a chance..."

The red-head looked stricken by Harry's reminder. It was true. He'd done this sort of thing before, and been proven in the wrong. Was he wrong this time, too? But it was Malfoy; change of name, or no. "I have lessons to do," he said, as an excuse to leave as he got up and started for the door.

All three of the others knew that Ron avoided doing lessons until the last minute, but none gainsaid him.

"Don't let the door hit you on the way out, Weasley," was the blonde's parting shot.

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Chapter Twelve by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Disclaimer: If you don't recognize it, it's mine. Everything else belongs to the copyright holders. Chapter Twelve

"Well... That was awkward," Hermione said, finally breaking the awkward silence after Ron's departure.
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Draco smirked. "For him, perhaps," he commented.

"Draco..."

It was just his name, but Harry saying it like that made him regret his comment. "I'm sorry, Harry. He is your friend. I just find him so - juvenile."

Harry leaned over and gave him a gentle kiss. "I'm afraid I haven't been much better, luv," he said.

Draco sat up, staring at his husband. "What are you talking about?"

"When we were up in the infirmary, it occurred to me that I'd been letting life just carry me along without planning for the future. I shouldn't have been doing that in the first place. But then we got together, and I was still doing it. It's time I started talking life, and my place in it, more seriously."

"We're sixteen, Harry. You sound like we should act like we're over twenty," Draco objected. "And what of me?" Draco asked tensely.

"You're very smart, and have a deadly wit, luv. I'd love to see you put it to better use than you have in the past. I must admit, though, that you've not been mean to anyone this year."

"And you can't say that Ron didn't deserve what Draco said, Harry," Hermione put in.

"No; you're right. Ron was being a complete and utter prat. No getting around it," Harry admitted.

Draco was looking askance at his husband. "So was I out of line?" he asked defensively.

Harry gave a little frown. "No," he finally decided. "You pushed a couple of times when I didn't think it was necessary, but it showed up Ron's true feelings, so maybe it was for the best. Are you angry with me?"

The blonde studied his husband for a few seconds. "It's been a long day, Harry," he said, avoiding the question, "and we still have a lot to discuss."

"Are you angry with me?" Harry repeated.

"I'm not sure how I feel right now." Draco admitted. "I feel I should be angry with you, anyway."

"I guess I should go, as well," Hermione said. "I'm glad you guys are alright."

"I'm sorry, 'Mione," Harry replied, looking guilty. "We just found out some rather unnerving news, and..."

Draco pinched him, making the Gryffindor yelp and look at him. The blonde shook his head slightly, indicating he didn't want that news out, yet.

"Harry? Draco?" Hermione questioned. "Is there something wrong?"

"Um... No, 'Mione. Not really," Harry replied.

"Just a little condition that's going to take a while to work its' way out. Nothing dangerous, though," Draco put in.

Harry choked. 'Work its' way out?' He tried to stifle his laughter, but was only barely successful.

Looking at her long-time friend strangely, Hermione replied "Oh. Um... Well, I hope it goes away soon."

"It will be at least twelve years," Draco replied gravely, "but we expect it to show up for a few months every year for at least six more after that."

Harry lost it.

He was never sure, afterward, how Draco managed to put her off, but finally they were alone. Harry turned to his husband, and slapped his arm. "I said you had a deadly wit," he said, grinning. "You realize that 'Mione now thinks I'm officially a candidate for St. Mungo's mental ward?"

Draco smirked. "You mean she's finally realized the truth?"

The Gryffindor gaped open-mouthed at his husband, then attacked, tickling him unmercifully until Draco finally begged for mercy. They lay on the floor grinning at each other and gasping for breath for awhile, then as their breathing evened out, the blonde's expression became serious. He cuddled up to Harry, laying his head on his shoulder.

"Harry?"

"Mm-hm?"

"I'm scared."

"We'll take care of your father, love," Harry reassured him.

Draco shook his head. "That's not what I was thinking of," he said, absently worrying at a bit of the

Gryffindor's robes.

"Then what?"

Draco lifted his head and braced himself to look his husband in the eyes. "A lot of things, really, but mostly that we're only sixteen, we're married, we're both boys, and I'm pregnant."

A small, worried frown creased Harry's brow. "Are you unhappy to be with me, or is it mostly the pregnancy?"

The blonde laid his head back down on Harry's chest. "It was all rather fast, but no, I'm not unhappy being with you. Rather the opposite. I wish we could have waited to get married until I was at least sure you loved me, but a baby!" He again moved to look in his husband's eyes. "A baby, Harry! We're barely grown up ourselves. I'm a boy, and I'm pregnant!"

Harry's frown deepened. "I know. I didn't know wizards could get pregnant. Not that I'm unhappy about it, but I wish we could have finished growing up and finished our schooling before we had a child."

"I don't want to be pregnant, Harry," Draco said in a small voice, his head again on Harry's chest.

"What do you want to do about it?" Harry asked gently.

Draco just shook his head. He didn't have an answer to that.

"Do you want an abortion?"

Draco sat up quickly, shocked. "No!" he exclaimed fiercely, in reaction. Until that moment, he wasn't sure about anything about this pregnancy, except that he didn't like being a part of it. But he'd been brought up to believe that family was the most important thing in the world (although his father seemed to have

forgotten that), so it was unthinkable that he'd abort his child. But with the question and his instinctive reaction to it, he fully accepted it. He still wasn't happy about being pregnant, but since he was, he was going to do it, and do it well. He was going to love his - their - child.

Harry closed his eyes and took a deep breath in relief. "Thank Merlin," he breathed. Smiling up at his husband, he gathered the somewhat reluctant blonde to him. "I'm glad. I would have supported you if you did, though."

"Why?" Draco whispered. "It's your baby, too."

"It's not my body, Draco. You're the one who's going to have to carry it, and give birth to it. You're the one who's going to have to deal with everything that goes along with pregnancy."

"You'd best be waiting on me hand and foot, Harry," Draco threatened.

Harry laughed. "I'm going to be there to help you and comfort you as much as I can, but I'm not so sure of the "hand and foot" part," he replied. "We're going to have to start thinking of names for it, you know," he continued, on a different tack.

"Him," Draco said softly.

"What?"

"Him. Wizarding genetics is a little different from muggle genetics. Unless a specific potion or a spell is used to ensure differently, the offspring of two wizards is going to be a boy. Our baby is going to be a boy, so I'd appreciate it if you stopped calling him 'it.'"

Harry suddenly rolled his spouse over so that he was looking down at him, into his surprised, silvery-grey eyes. "Him," he said softly, running the back of an index finger softly along Draco's jaw-line, then leaned down and kissed him. It was a long, soft, gentle, loving kiss. Lifting his head, he saw the same hunger in

those grey eyes that the kiss had kindled in him.

"Bed?" he whispered.

Draco nodded.

They got up, and practically raced each other to the bedroom, where they tried to quickly undress each other. In their haste, they kept getting in each other's way. But finally they fell onto the bed, clawing the last bits of cloth from each other.

Hands, lips and mouths were almost frantically busy as they thrust at each other, then Harry stopped, and waited for Draco to stop too. Then he whispered into one delicate, pale ear; "I want you."

Draco hesitated, then whispered back; "Yes."

Up until now, their sexual explorations of each other after the bonding ritual had been limited to mutual masturbation and frottage. Now Harry moved with new purpose, to arouse and ready his spouse for their second coupling; but only the first as a married couple, and with each knowing the other was doing it with love.

Harry got up and rested on his haunches, taking the opportunity to really study his spouse' body, ignoring the blonde's wryly cocked eyebrow. Then he began to trace every angle, every contour, exploring every hollow and mound, bending down to kiss first one area, then another.

The sensuality of this treatment had Draco straining his body to meet his husband's touch, grasping his forearms, moaning his pleasure. This, he instinctively knew, was being made love to; not the sex acts, although those he'd experienced were pleasurable in the extreme. He gasped as Harry took a nipple in his mouth, rolling it about with his tongue, sucking on it, pinching it lightly with his teeth, then treating the other one the same way. The areas behind his ears came in for attention from that talented mouth, and his neck, the hollow of his throat. Then the Gryffindor experimented with other places; the inside of Draco's wrist and elbow, his ribs, navel, the insides of his thighs while stroking his legs...

Then the dark-haired young man came back to pay some attention to those perfectly formed egg-shapes between his husband's legs. And after laving them and sucking on them, he moved up to licking and mouthing his co-husband's straining erection. The foreskin had slipped back, revealing the red, mushroom-shaped head of his penis, which was leaking generous amounts of pre-cum. On an impulse, Harry took it in his mouth, causing his lover to utter an "Eep!" and jump wildly.

Afer less than a minute of the attention from his husband's mouth, the blonde found himself nearing completion, but Harry chose that moment to stop.

"No lubrication!" Harry said, dismayed.

Draco had hoped that this day would come, so he had prevailed upon Professor Snape, while Harry was otherwise occupied, to procure a smallish bottle of mineral oil for him, on the pretext of maintaining his quidditch gear (although he didn't think the professor was fooled for an instant.) "My bedroom table drawer," he directed helpfully, voice strained with passion. "Bottle of oil."

Harry crawled up the bed, reaching for the drawer. Pulling it open, he found the bottle and pulled it out. Unbeknownst to him, however, this maneuver had brought his own erection within range of the blonde's mouth, and he didn't even hesitate. Harry almost dropped the oil. Setting it down, he brought that hand down, and carressed his husband's face, and combed his fingers through the silver-blonde hair before moving his hand to the back of the blonde head and supporting it, because of the awkward position they were in. When he got close to spilling, he pulled away, retrieving the oil at the same time.

Draco mewled his dissappointment. "I still want you," Harry said softly while moving back down the bed. And, now in a position to be able to kiss his lover, he did so - thoroughly. Opening the oil, he drizzled a little out on the fingers of his right hand. Draco raised his knees, exposing himself, and Harry carefully slipped one finger in, then went back to kissing, licking and suckling on his blonde husband; anywhere and everywhere he could reach. When Draco relaxed, he slipped another finger in. A minute later, a third. Then he removed his fingers, rose, and drizzled some oil on his erection. Draco's hand was there before he'd put the oil down again, rubbing the oil in, making sure he was evenly coated, and then tugging the Gryffindor into position, guiding him in, and then grasping the raven-haired man's arms as he was penetrated.

Remembering their first time, Harry took it slowly, taking his cue from Draco. When he was fully seated, he held his husband close, stroking his face and hair. "I know I've not said it in so many words before, pet, but I love you," he murmered in his husband's ear.

Immediately, Draco felt a hard lump form in his throat, and felt his eyes brim with tears. Harry had often called him "love," but that could have been merely from casual affection. Hearing those three words now, with his love inside of him, meant the world to him. "I love you, too," he whispered, as a single tear slipped down his cheek. "Love me, Harry," he asked softly, gently thrusting his buttocks up at his husband to make his meaning clear.

Their love-making started off soft and gentle, but escalated quickly with their passions, until they were thrusting at each other almost violently. Nor were they quiet about it, offering encouragement, instruction and endearments in almost equal measure, until they screamed each other's name, their seed exploding violently from them at almost the same instant.

Harry started to remove himself when they'd recovered somewhat, but Draco held him still, keeping him in place. They cuddled and kissed tiredly, their sweaty, sticky bodies gleaming in the candle-light. They fell asleep that way.

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Please review.

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Chapter Thirteen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Disclaimer: If you don't recognize it, it's mine. Everything else belongs to the copyright holders. Chapter Thirteen

Harry was awakened the next morning by the sound of persistent knocking on their door. To his surprise, he was still intimately attached to his husband, who was still sound asleep. Gently, he extricated himself. When he was finally out, the blonde made a small sound of complaint, but didn't appear to wake. He carefully climbed out of bed, threw a dressing robe on, and hurried to the door. "Who is it?" he hissed, annoyed with being woken this way.
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"Open up, Potter! We haven't got all day!" the potion master's voice replied.

Harry opened the door. "Why didn't you just use the password?" Harry asked, impatiently. "You could have woken Draco!"

Snape raised one eyebrow. "I don't..."

"We weren't quite sure what we'd find if we did so, dear boy," the headmaster broke in smoothly. "Didn't want to walk in to find the two of you... Well... In a delicate situation?" the old man hinted broadly.

"What do you mean? And what's so urgent? Has there been an attack?"

"No, no attack, but... Well, it's rather embarrassing," Dumbledore hedged.

"The two of you broadcast your - emotions - all over the school last night," Snape replied, sneering. "We need to set up some damping spells before it happens again. As it is, we'll be lucky if we don't get a lot more pregnancies now; especially in Hufflepuff! Fortunately for you, they don't know what hit them, or where it came from."

"I don't believe it," Draco said from the bedroom doorway. "Students snog all over Hogwarts every night. Why would we "broadcast," as you put it, when it's never happened before? I think you were snooping, and got embarrassed!" he said with a sneer. He sauntered over, covered in a dressing robe as Harry was, and put an arm around his husband's waist.

Harry had turned a bright red upon hearing Professor Snape's declaration, but Draco's objection was so reasonable, he turned a questioning gaze on the two older men. "He makes a good point," he said to the professors. "Well?"

Snape's face had become livid with anger at having his word questioned, as well as for the implication of his being a 'peeping tom' or similar, but before he could verbally blast "the impertinent child," Professor Dumbledore put a hand on his arm in warning, then spoke.

"Firstly, I assure you that there was no 'snooping' going on. We do have watch-wards on the hall outside your apartment to ensure you remain safe, but there are no such wards inside. Your privacy is intact. Secondly, there is no reason to fabricate such a story. It is fact, and there are a great many very embarrassed students that can attest to it. As to why it happened, I must admit ignorance. However, I must insist on an apology for your accusations, Draco Potter, and on the instant."

As the headmaster spoke, both young men's faces had become rather red, but Draco retained a look of stubborn pride that boded ill for the chances of an apology.

"Draco," Harry said gently, "it was rather rude to accuse them of snooping without proof. And if we are - broadcasting - our feelings, damping wards will have to be put up. That, or we'll have to stop..." He stopped speaking, embarrassed to say any more in front of the two men.

With an almost-hidden look of alarm at that threat, Draco looked at the two men, and with as much dignity as he could muster, said "I do apologise, gentlemen. It was impolitic of me to accuse without proof. However, I do ask that we be kept abreast of any results of the research I'm sure this incident has moved you to implement."

Harry stared at the blonde in amazement, then slowly grinned. Not wishing to embarrass the blonde any more than he had to, he leaned over and whispered in his ear; "You do realize you just sounded as big of a pompous windbag as Fudge?"

Draco blushed violently, dropped his arm from Harry's waist, and glared at his grinning spouse.

Still grinning, the Gryffindor turned to the two men. "I think we can control ourselves until you've had a chance to damp the walls, Professor - Headmaster."

"I can guarantee it," Draco muttered.

"But we need a chance to clean up," Harry continued. "Would you mind coming back in, say, an hour?"

Snape opened his mouth to protest, but the headmaster beat him to it. "You go ahead with your morning ablutions, boys;" he said. "We'll start on this room, then any other you're not occupying. We do have other duties," he gently reminded them.

Draco glared at them, but Harry nodded. "I understand," he said. Taking Draco's hand (and firmly keeping his grip despite the blonde's surreptitious attempt to shake him off), he returned to the bedroom, tugging a reluctant blonde behind him.

Once behind their closed bedroom door, Harry turned to his spouse and said "You may fire when ready, Gridley."

"What?" replied a confused Draco.

"Old quote. What I mean is; you're angry with me, so let's hear it."

Draco wasted no more time. "How dare you embarrass me in front of guests?!"

Harry waited, then said. "Is that all?"

Draco was again off-balance. Harry had a bad habit of doing that to him. "All? It's bloody enough!" he shouted.

"No, I meant: Is that all you're going to say about it? But if you recall, pet, I whispered it in your ear. I didn't say it out loud where it would have humiliated you. And you were acting rather pompously."

"Yes, well... You could have waited until we were alone," Draco said, sulking.

"Would it have made any difference? You'd still have been upset with me, wouldn't you? And you know I'm a bit impulsive; I couldn't help it. It was funny!"

Draco was glaring again. "Embarrassing me?"

"No, love; when it occurred to me that you sounded like Fudge," Harry said soothingly.

Draco was mollified, but only just. He still felt a bit insulted with the comparison.

Harry drew close and put his arms around the sulking blonde, kissing his cheek. "Want to take a shower together?" he asked, suggestively.

The Slytherin sighed. "Not after you embarrassed me," he said, "but the longer we take, the longer they'll be here. And it's not as if we can do anything until the damping is done, anyway. I've half a mind to make you sleep on the couch, tonight," he said, musing out loud.

"You wouldn't!" Harry exclaimed.

Draco nodded. "If it wouldn't be punishing me, too, I would," he said.

Harry grinned, and kissed his sulking husband until they were being returned.

A knock on the door interrupted them. "Are you going to be much longer?" Dumbledore asked through the door.

Harry looked over Draco's shoulder and loudly said "Give us fifteen!"

"You have to be joking, Harry! I can't possibly be ready in fifteen minutes!" the blonde protested.

Harry dragged his husband to the shower, where they quickly washed up, "helping" each other occasionally. But they did make an effort to be quick, and within the promised fifteen minutes, although Draco was certain he still looked a fright despite Harry's assurances otherwise, they were dressed and entering their common room.

"What? No hanky-panky?" Snape sneered.

"Just a bit, but you know newly-weds," Draco quipped cheekily.

Snape blushed, and glared at the blonde.

"Those rooms are free, now," Harry quickly pointed out, "if you'd like to get them done."

"Why don't you and Draco go on to breakfast, Harry?" Dumbledore suggested. "And I'm afraid I'll have to ask some fairly personal questions, later, to help us figure out what might have caused the - ah - incident."

Harry looked at Snape, then back at the headmaster. "Could it be just the three of us, sir? You, Draco, and me? I'm sure it will be rather embarrassing, and it might be better with fewer people present. I'm sure you'll relate whatever information you think important to those who might need to know, anyway."

Dumbledore nodded understandingly. "Of course, Mr. Potter. And I believe the kippers are especially good this morning," he hinted.

"One more thing, sir," Harry said. "Draco and I will be living permanently at Grimauld Place, during summers and after graduation, so it's going to need some work done on it. We need to discuss just what changes, yet, but I don't want to disturb the Order's business, so we'll need to schedule around each other. I just wanted to give you some warning, so you could think about it," the young man explained somewhat apologetically.

The old man's eyes were twinkling madly. "No need to be embarrassed, Harry. It is your property. I'm sure we can work it out. And I'd like to thank you for not just requesting we leave. The place is rather convenient."

Harry blushed slightly, said "You're welcome," and left, blonde in tow.

Hermione was just leaving the Great Hall as they arrived, and seemed quite preoccupied, but not so much so that she didn't give them a speculative look before smiling, waving, and continuing on her way. That worried Harry a little. Knowing her as he did, he thought she was probably trying to track down a mystery. And the big mystery for her right now, was likely Draco's 'medical condition.' Well, it wouldn't be too long before everyone knew, and Hermione would likely confront them before talking to anyone else, so they could ask her to keep it to herself until it couldn't be hidden any longer. So, for now, he dismissed it from his mind.

Once they were seated, Draco asked his husband why he hadn't wanted to take care of placing the damping spells himself. After his display of power and skill at the Dursley's, he was sure Harry was more than capable of doing it. Harry agreed it was likely, but avowed ignorance of the spell involved. Later, the young couple were discussing, over a breakfast of eggs, kippers, sausages and scones, what changes to Grimauld Place might be beneficial, when a nondescript postal owl dropped a Howler on Harry's plate. The raven-haired young man stared in horror at the red envelope.

"Your first Howler, Harry?" Draco asked.

Harry shook his head. "No, but you never want to see one of those things!" he declared.

"Well, best get it over with. It'll only get worse if you wait," Draco said calmly.

The Gryffindor reluctantly picked up the Howler, and opened it.

"HARRY JAMES POTTER!" Molly Weasley's voice rang out. "HOW DARE YOU GET MARRIED AND NOT INVITE YOUR FAMILY?!" It went on in that vein, also touching on their tender years, for what seemed forever to a badly blushing Harry and Draco, ending with firm orders for him to bring his spouse to visit The Burrow over the holidays. But finally it was over, and the missive went up in flames. There was silence for a while, and then most of the student body present burst out laughing and applauding.

"You're related to the Weasel?" Draco asked, horrified, and doing his best to ignore the noise.

"Unofficial adoption," Harry replied. "Molly's like a mother to me. And until he started acting like such a prat, Ron was like a brother. Same with the rest of them - except Percy."

"I hope I'm not like a brother to you," came a female voice from their right.

Looking up, Harry saw Ginny Weasley standing close by. "H'lo, Sis!" he greeted her, saucily. "Would you like to join us? Looks like we may not be pariahs any longer!"

Ginny blushed, but took a seat. "I'm sorry about that," she said. "I really didn't want to avoid you, but I do have to live with my brother, and he's been very vocal about you - and Draco."

"I understand, but that really didn't make it any easier to take," Harry replied, with just a hint of a forgiving smile on his face.

"How did she find out?" Draco wanted to know of Mrs. Weasley.

"Ginny?" Harry said, questioningly.

The girl shrugged. "Could have been the letter I wrote, or maybe Ron's," she replied. "I know Ron got quite an earful about his attitude when Mum heard. That's why I'm ignoring him, now." For the first time, she turned and addressed Draco directly. "I know our families have a history, but I haven't had too much trouble from you, so I'm willing to try to get along, if you are."

"We can try," Draco said cautiously. "But your brother..." He left the sentence unfinished, shaking his head doubtfully.

"If we're going to The Burrow over the holidays, you'll need to try, love," Harry reminded his husband.

Draco pulled a sour face, but nodded. "If he apologises, and tries to be pleasant," he conceded. He wasn't in the least looking forward to being in a house full of red-heads, but he rather liked Molly Weasley's spirit, despite the fact that the howler had made him want to sink into the floor. Okay, it hadn't been directed to him, but the subject had certainly involved him. But the caring shown by it was rather intriguing.

Strangely enough, the Howler Harry had received broke the barrier of unease that had existed between the couple and most of the rest of the school. They were met with friendly grins and greetings of compassion the rest of the day.

They had their meeting with Professor Dumbledore just before supper, and it was just as humiliatingly embarrassing as Harry had surmised it might be, but the headmaster still claimed ignorance afterward. "But I do assure you both that we will keep working on the problem. It could rather restrict your, um, love life, to be restricted to spell-damped rooms," the headmaster had added understandingly, his eyes twinkling madly.

"I'd swear the old git was twitting us, Harry," Draco had commented afterward.

That evening, Hermione paid them another visit; this time, alone.

"Hello, Hermione!" Harry said in feigned pleased surprise. Actually, he had all too good an idea why she was visiting again so soon, and was rather dreading it. "Come in! Can I get you something?"

Hermione looked surprised. "You have a kitchen?"

"Um... No," Harry replied, embarrassed by his gaffe. "Draco?" Harry yelled to the blonde in the other room. "'Mione is here."

The girl allowed the subject to be dropped.

"We were just doing our lessons," Harry explained, as Draco came into the common room.

"Ancient Runes," the Slytherin said, expanding on the subject. "Harry's terrible at it."

"I just started this year, pet!" Harry complained, defending himself; then blushed that he'd used the pet name in front of company.

"Harry," Draco growled quietly in his husband's ear, "you calling me that is only for when we're private! I might not like it, but another slip, and one of us will sleep on the couch - for a week!" He then went back to his original subject in a normal tone of voice. "Weren't you going to get Granger to help tutor you?" he asked pointedly.

"It's not as though I've had a chance to even ask, yet. We've been rather busy!" the green-eyed young man protested, while he sent an apologetic look Draco's way for his slip.

"Yes," Hermione said, smirking, and taking advantage of the opening. "I'd rather think you have been, if last night was any indication."

"And just what is that supposed to mean, Granger?" Draco asked, a dangerous glint in his eye.

"Oh, please! You did tell Ron and I about the burst of magic during your bonding ritual; did you think I wouldn't figure out that last night's rather sustained..." She stopped, and swallowed, evidently moved by the memory, then continued, "Um... 'Leakage,' was similar, and where it had to have come from?"

"It won't happen again," Harry said, before Draco could deny the charge. "Dumbledore put damping spells on the walls."

The blonde rolled his eyes at his husband's lack of dissembling skills. But since the cat was now out of the proverbial bag, he put in his two knut's worth. "And the floors, and the ceilings..."

"You won't tell anyone?" Harry asked, worriedly. "Only we just this morning got off the pariah list, and it would be nice to stay off for awhile."

Hermione blushed. "I won't tell, but you two gave me a rather difficult time, as well."

Harry's eyes went wide. "Did you and Ron...?"

"Harry! I thought you knew that Ron and I are just friends?! Although with the electricity you two were sending out, that might not have made much difference... But as it happens, no." Her blush deepened. "I was talking to Zabini when it started. Um... I wanted to know if he knew anything about Draco's 'condition.' Fortunately, he was a gentleman; we only shared a few - " she paused for a quick in-and-out breath that revealed more than she probably thought it did. "Um... A few - kisses."

"I think I sense another Gryffindor-Slytherin romance in the making, Harry," Draco said, smirking.

"No! It's not anything like that," Hermione denied. "But we have agreed to go to Hogsmeade together,

next free weekend," she admitted. "But while we're talking secrets..."

"We won't tell, 'Mione," Harry reassured her.

"Speak for yourself, Harry," Draco said gleefully, "this is too juicy!"

"I don't think you will - Draco," the girl replied threateningly. "There's your other little secret as well; the one that's going to be around for twelve years before it goes to school, then home during the summers for the next six years? Have you picked out a name, yet?"

Harry stared at Hermione, while Draco just looked very disgruntled.

"Always said you were too smart for your own good, Granger," Draco admitted. "Although I don't see how you figured it out purely from that."

"I didn't," Hermione admitted cheerfully, "although it put me on the track. I'm afraid I tricked Madam Pomfrey into thinking I knew more than I did. I was bluffing, of course, but it worked, and she spilled."

Draco shook his head in admiration. "Very Slytherin of you, Granger," he said.

"From you, I'll take that as a compliment, Mal- Draco," she said, grinning. "But I'll keep your secrets; and no spilling my little secret either - agreed?"

"You rather have us over a barrel, Granger," Draco mourned. "Agreed."

"Wouldn't have anyway, 'Mione," Harry affirmed.

"Good!" Hermione said excitedly, pulling her legs up under her on the couch. "Now, tell me all about it!"

Just as they were finishing filling her in on all the details (she wouldn't settle for anything less), another knock was heard at their door. After ascertaining the identity of their caller, Draco let Blaise Zabini enter, and closely watched Hermione for her reactions. It was worth it. Her blush vanished below the neckline of her robes, and she turned a wonderful shade of red. She ducked her head, and became inordinately interested in her hands, then peeked at Blaise - back to her hands - back to Blaise.

"Oh, for goodness' sake, Granger," Draco said in an exasperated voice, grinning broadly all the while, "kiss him, already!"

Harry hadn't thought it was possible, but Hermione's blush deepened. However, she wasn't so far gone as to not be able to give his husband a death glare.

Blaise solved the problem by leaning over the back of the couch, wrapping his arms around her, and, to her pleased surprise, kissing her soundly.

"Get a room!" Draco drawled, humour evident in his voice.

"Draco!" Harry protested.

"What brings you to our humble abode anyway, Blaise?" Draco asked, ignoring Harry's outburst.

"The little lady," Blaise admitted. "I finally got someone in Gryffindor Tower to admit she'd gone to visit Harry, here, so here I am!"

Draco put on a fake pout. "Oh. And here I stand, thinking you might still be concerned with my well-being!"

They all laughed.

"Take a seat, Cassanova," Draco invited. "I'm sure we can scrounge some refreshments; or conjure some."

Blaise looked doubtful. "You? Conjuring food and drinks? It might be easier to just drink the poison!"

"What calumny!" Draco protested, over the laughter. "But I might be able to get a house elf to bring us something."

As it happened, Harry had to talk the house elf they finally managed to find into bringing them crisps, sour cream with minced spring onions as a dip, and pumpkin juice. The house elf absolutely refused to break "Dumbly's" rule against alcoholic beverages; even butterbeer, which was only intoxicating to house elves. But they had an enjoyable evening, and at the end of it, Blaise and Hermione left together. Harry and Draco still had lessons to finish, though, so were up another couple of hours before they were able to retire, too tired to do anything more than cuddle.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Author's Note~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I've had some questions concerning Draco's pregnancy put to me, so I thought I'd let the rest of you in on my reasoning.

Muggles (us) have XX chromosomes (female) and XY chromosomes (male), as you probably know. The 'Y' chromosome, I recently read, only has 20 genes to it, as opposed to the 'X' chromosome, which has 23. So the chance of two males having a viable offspring would be more slender. Theoretically, two females could only have female offspring. Two males, if it were possible, could have either male or female offspring, but, having two 'Y' chromosomes between them, have less chance for viable offspring - YY being non-viable. That isn't even beginning to take into account all the variations the human species is capable of.

To make it more democratic, I propose that wizarding male/female couples have the same chance of having male or female offspring as muggles. With a regular pregnancy potion, witch couples can have only female children, and wizard couples can have only male children - all with the same chance to be
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healthy, of course (questions of inbreeding aside). Otherwise, it seems to me, the wizarding world would have relatively few males, and that doesn't seem to be the case. Also, in this AU world, pregnancies with same-sex couples without a pregnancy potion or spell is extremely rare, unless the couple involved are, magically, quite powerful (and again, the child would be the same sex as the couple).

(A note of interest: Male pregnancy experiments are being done in China, but not with male/male source material.)

Thanks to Sak for helping me correct the scientific portion of this note.

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Review

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Chapter Fourteen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Disclaimer: If you don't recognize it, it's mine. Everything else belongs to the copyright holders. Chapter Fourteen

Life was much more pleasant after that. People were talking to them again, and they had friends again, although only Blaise and Hermione were allowed to visit them in their apartment. Ron's attitude still hadn't come around, but it seemed he might be wavering. His support from his fellow Gryffindors was, for the most part, gone, and his family's censure of his attitude towards his "brother" and Draco, as Harry's spouse, was a potent argument, as well.

But the boys received a fairly pleasant surprise two days after the howler.

"Draco?" and then, reluctantly, "Harry? May I sit down?"

Looking up, the young men were surprised to find Pansy Parkinson standing there. Not saying a word, Draco pulled out a chair for her, then sat back down. After her previous angry outburst, neither were eager to trigger another by breaking the silence, so they sat waiting for what she had to say, looking at
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her with curiosity.

After the blonde girl sat, she could be seen gathering her nerve while she played with her fingers. "I... I owe you an apology," she said, not looking up to identify to whom she was speaking.

"Why?" Draco asked.

"The... The scene I caused, the other day," she replied. "You're - really gay?" she asked, finally looking at Draco. "Well! Of course you are," she said, flustered. "After all, you're - married - to..." she stopped, and looked at Harry. "Sorry. I should go," she said, but made no move to get up.

"Pansy, I told you the other day that, well..." Draco sighed, and started over again. "Even if Harry and I hadn't gotten together, you and I would never have had a happy marriage. I am gay. Always have been. You know what Lucius is like. I had to get away. And when I did, I went to Harry for help, and we fell in love." Turning his head to look at Harry, he smiled. He couldn't tell her the real story, but he could tell her another truth. "It turned out that all I had to do was stop being... Well, stop acting like my father." Turning back to the girl, he noticed she was quietly crying. "I can't say I'm sorry it didn't work out between us, Pansy, because as far as I was concerned, there never was an 'us.' But I am sorry that you've been hurt. Lucius' plans always seem to wind up hurting someone."

Pansy nodded. "I was so angry; so hurt when I found out you were with someone else. I swore to myself that I'd get even with you for breaking your promise to marry me. But... Over the past few days I've gone over every conversation we ever had," she said quietly. "I can't ever remember you talking about marriage. Your father talked about it quite often, and your mother made plans with me, but you... You never talked about it. We talked about a lot of things, but you always changed the subject when I talked about our wedding, or our future together."

"I didn't want to lie to you, Pansy," Draco replied.

The girl nodded again. "I finally figured that out," she said, then looked up with a teary smile. "I've always been very good at painting the world the way I wanted it, and working to make it that way. That's my Slytherin side; my ambition - to make the world the way I want it. I'll bet you never knew that Slytherins could be dreamers, did you?" She didn't wait for an answer. "You woke me up, Draco," she

said, putting her hand on top of his. "Harry's lucky to have you."

"I think so," Harry said softly to her. "Thank you."

She smiled tremulously at him, then at Draco. She squeezed Draco's hand once, then got up and left.

The boys sat there quietly for awhile. "I wish I could think of something we could do for her," Harry said, voicing what both were thinking.

"She's stronger than I thought she was," Draco mused. "I think she'll be alright."

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'Boy Who Lived' Homosexual See story, page 13

Harry had, that same afternoon, finally got around to taking Draco to visit Hagrid, to prove to the nervous blonde how nice a fellow the "Creatures" professor and grounds-keeper truly was. While the half-giant was clearing off seats for them, Harry had caught sight of the large-print story-line on a copy of "The Daily Prophet" that was uncovered during the activity. Snatching the paper up, he started looking for page thirteen.

"Now, 'Arry," Hagrid said worriedly when he noticed a couple of seconds later, "yeh don' really want teh be a-readin' of that. Dumbledore'll 'ave me 'ead, and..."

"When did this come out, Hagrid?" Harry asked of his friend, restrained anger evident in his voice.

"It's nothin' teh be worryin' yer 'ead about, 'Arry," the big man said imploringly. "Jes' gossip, tha's all it is."
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"Hagrid?" Harry said, somewhat threateningly.

The half-giant sat down carefully, and sighed. "'Bout three-four days ago, I reckon," he admitted. "But 'Arry..."

"Thank you, Hagrid," the Gryffindor said with finality, then with a couple more page-turns, he found the story and started reading, Draco looking over his shoulder.

The Daily Prophet Gossip Column Byline: Gilda Gabfest Grab your handkerchiefs, girls. It turns out that our favourite young man, the famous "Boy Who Lived," has not only married, but was never available to us in the first place. According to sources close to him, Harry Potter married Draco Malfoy, the son of the Ministry of Magic's Lucius Malfoy, in a private ceremony last week to which not even family was invited. According to our source...

Harry's face was red with rage, just staring at the article, and Draco noticed things moving - things that shouldn't be moving on their own. And since when did the wind blow indoors? "Harry?" Draco said, trying to get his attention. "Love?" Still nothing, and the effects were intensifying. "Harry!" he finally yelled, alarmed, when a wicker basket flew past his head.

Harry looked up and saw the frightened look on his husband's face. Suddenly the wind died down, and everything that was moving about stopped or fell, but the Gryffindor was oblivious, his attention focused solely on his pale husband. "Draco!" he exclaimed, moving to take the Slytherin into his arms. "What's wrong, love?!"

Draco was trembling, and didn't answer; he just wrapped himself around his husband.

"Yer magic got away from yeh, lad," Hagrid explained, then looked around ruefully. "Ah'm afraid I'll ha' quite the job, straight'nin' this lot up."

Now Harry noticed the mess the cabin was in, and coloured. "I'll help you, Hagrid," he said apologetically. "Sorry."

"Nah, nah... 'T'is a'right, 'Arry. Yeh did'n' mean it," the half-giant protested.

Harry's face got stubborn. "I insist," he said.

Half an hour later, they finally had the cabin back in good shape. Better, since Draco had used a magical organization spell to take care of the various papers, magazines, and books the big man had previously only stacked on his table and a couple of chairs. After Draco explained the system to him, they'd left, Hagrid's profuse gratitude still ringing in their ears.

"Well, I made rather a hash of that visit," Harry commented sadly.

"But you proved your point, love," Draco said, taking his husband's hand. "He's nice. I don't think I know another person who would have been so forgiving." Their eyes met, and the blonde smiled. "And I think that's the first time I've ever seen a manifestation of wild magic," he teased. Then he sobered. "You must be the most powerful wizard in Britain, right now. It certainly proved that you have more power than you know how to handle, at the moment. It frightened me," he admitted. Harry was the only one he'd ever admit such feelings to.

"If I were that powerful, people wouldn't keep dying around me," Harry said bitterly, "but I'm sorry I scared you, pet." His voice softened as he said that, and he moved close, to put an arm around his husband's waist.

Draco smiled. "You know I'd never make you sleep on the couch, don't you?" he asked softly.

"Glad to hear it," the raven-haired young man replied, a small smile appearing on his face.

"Of course, that doesn't mean you'd still get bedtime privileges," the blonde said with a smirk.

"You are such a bitch," Harry said lovingly.

Draco almost missed it. He hesitated, thought about it, then decided it was to his advantage. "And don't you ever forget it!" he said flippantly.

Harry laughed, stopped, and swung the blonde into his arms, kissing him soundly. "You are the best thing I've ever had in my life. What would I ever do without you?" he said, when their lips parted.

"Don't ever try to find out," Draco replied softly. Then their lips met again.

This time when their lips parted, Harry had a small frown on his face. "Who do you suppose their source was?" he asked, referring to the gossip column.

"If I had to put money on it? Creevey, I'd think," the blonde replied, putting his head on Harry's shoulder.

"Collin?"

"Mm-hm..."

"I wish I could know for sure," the Gryffindor said.

"I could always sic Blaise on him," Draco suggested.

"No. No strong-arm stuff. Not until I'm certain; and then I want to take care of it myself."

"Not to worry, love. Blaise isn't the strong-arm type. That was Crabbe and Goyle."

"What about them, anyway?" Harry asked, curious.

"I don't know. Death Eater material, I suppose."

"Are you sure?"

Draco lifted his head from Harry's shoulder, and they resumed their walk back to the castle, hand in hand. "They're not much in the brains department, Harry. Not stupid, exactly, but followers, both of them. But 'sure?' No. We didn't discuss things like that, much. When we did, it was like listening to their fathers. Not an original thought between them."

Harry filed that away for later thought, and returned to their previous conversation. "Colin won't get hurt?"

Well, his Harry had a nimble mind anyway, jumping back and forth, Draco thought. "Not unless he does something stupid," he replied.

"Okay. Let's do it," Harry decided.

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In an already event-filled day, there was one more shock to come. That evening, Professor Dumbledore asked them to his office.

Worried that Hagrid may have reported the incident in his cabin, the couple arrived at the gargoyle guarding Dumbledore's office, only to realize they didn't have the password.
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"He did it again!" Harry griped.

"Did what?"

"He's always neglecting to tell me the password," Harry said. "I think he gets a kick out of having me stand out here guessing."

"You can guess his passwords?" Draco asked in amazement.

Harry shrugged. "It's not all that difficult. It's always some kind of sweet. It's usually his favourite of the week, but it never repeats."

Draco's forehead creased in thought. "He's been eating a lot of differently-coloured pill-like things this week," he said. "Sometimes he screws up his face when he takes one, as if it was sour; like after dessert the other night."

Running through the few candies he knew that might fit that description, there was only one that stood out; but it was a muggle candy. "Sweet-Tarts?"

Draco's face grew confused. "Wha-?" He didn't finish the question, because the gargoyle had just jumped aside, startling him.

"I guess that was it!" Harry said, happy that it hadn't taken any longer than that.

Stepping on the revolving staircase, they were soon at the headmaster's door. Harry knocked, and they were bid to enter.

"Sit down boys," Dumbledore invited. "Tea? Scone? Sweet-Tart?" he asked, gesturing to a tray on his

desk.

The bowl of Sweet-Tarts made the boys share a grin. "No, but thank you, sir," Draco replied for them both.

The headmaster leaned back in his chair. "I have three pieces of news for you," he said. "The good news is that we think we might know what caused - um... - the - incident the other night."

"Yes?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore nodded. "It's just a theory, mind you, but we think that you two might have linked your magic together, for that time. We'll have to test that theory, of course."

Harry and Draco looked at the old man in horror. "You can't mean to have us... In front of you?!" Harry finally said, aghast.

"Oh my goodness, no!" Albus replied, his cheeks tinting.

The young couple relaxed, relief evident in their faces, although neither would have acceded to such a request. "Then what?" the Gryffindor asked.

"I believe Professor Snape taught you some Legilimency?" the headmaster asked Harry.

Harry nodded.

"Have you tried it with Draco?"

"No. I didn't want to invade his privacy."

Draco was looking at his husband with a growing sense of wonder. He remembered, on one occasion, Harry asking him if he expected him to read his mind, but he'd thought it merely a rhetorical question. Maybe it had been; but that he could actually do it, and hadn't? His respect for his lover grew even more.

"That's the experiment I propose," Dumbledore said. "I don't mean actually reading his mind; just making a link, then trying a bit of first-year's magic to see the result." The magic first-year's learned was mostly harmless stuff, meant to teach them control of their magic. "If you're amenable, Mr. Potter?" he asked Draco.

"I trust Harry," the Slytherin replied.

Harry silently took Draco's hand, raised it, and kissed the knuckles, then held it as he looked into his husband's silvery eyes. "Legilimens," he incanted.

Immediately, their minds were thrown together. Draco was lost in wonder at the contact, while Harry fought to limit the link. Finally successful, the Gryffindor looked at his husband with wonder and remorse. "Sorry, p - Draco. It's never done that, before."

The headmaster, having monitored what just happened, was sitting there, one eyebrow cocked rather high. Those who knew him well, knew that meant that the old man was more than a little gobsmacked. However, he merely reached into a desk drawer, and withdrew a large, white feather. Setting it on the desktop, he said "Would you mind levitating the feather, Harry, while maintaining the link?"

Harry drew his wand, drawing attention to the fact that he'd not had it out before now, and with the proper wave of it, casually incanted "Wingardium Leviosa." The feather shot up to the ceiling, stopping abruptly upon contact.

All three of them stared as the feather floated slowly to the floor, where it could be seen that the shaft had been completely flattened. The headmaster cleared his throat. "Ah... Yes... Well, I think that fairly

well proves the theory," Dumbledore said carefully. "I think you may want to end the link now, Harry."

Voice shaky, Harry incanted "Finite," ending the spell, and the link.

"What just happened?" Draco demanded, his voice weak.

"More mysteries, I'm afraid," Albus replied, "but it appears that, as strong as the two you are as wizards separately, linked, you're quite a bit stronger."

"You mean I could do that, too?" Draco asked in wonder.

"If you don't mind, I'd like to leave that experiment to another day, Mr. Potter," the headmaster said. "I have some other things I need to tell the both of you. You, Draco, due to your pregnancy, are banned from mixing potions, but to keep from falling completely behind, you are still required to study them; their properties, and the theory behind both the potion that the rest of your class is studying at the time, and the properties of the ingredients that go in it. The story is that you've become allergic to a couple of common potions ingredients due to a potions accident, and the cure will take most of the year to affect. You'll be in the next room over, to avoid any fumes that might endanger your - condition, and to stay close to Harry. And due to your relatively short bond tether, I'm sure you've realized that you'll both have to quit your positions on your respective quidditch teams?"

From the looks on their faces, Albus could see that no, that hadn't occured to them, yet. "I am sorry. You two have provided some of the most exciting quidditch this school has ever seen. But even if your bond tether were ten times its length, there are some who would claim a conflict of interest when your teams were playing against each other. I would have had to ask you to resign, anyway."

The headmaster didn't say it, but both young men knew that Draco's pregnancy would have also been a factor, if the bond tether hadn't negated any reason for that to be considered.

"There is one more bit of news, and I'm not quite sure how to relay it," Dumbledore said, hesitantly. Taking a deep breath, he continued. "It seems that another newly-wed couple were on an outing,

yesterday, and found a barely recognizable body."

"My... Lucius," Draco guessed.

The old man nodded. "I'm afraid he'd been quite badly tortured before he was killed."

"No more than he deserved," the blonde said coldly. "It's what he would have had me subjected to, with rape thrown into the bargain."

Harry got up, sat on the arm of Draco's chair, and put an arm around him, drawing him into an embrace, which Draco gratefully accepted.

"The funeral is in two days," the old man added.

"He could rot on the plains of Salisbury, for all I care," Draco replied. But his voice wasn't as strong as it had been.

That rather ended the visit. The young couple returned to their apartment. Draco was very quiet the rest of the evening, and Harry respected that, sitting in front of the fire doing his lessons, and occasionally cuddling the blonde on his lap. When they went to bed, Draco snuggled up to him.

"Harry?" Draco said, a short time later, turning to face him.

"Yes, pet?"

"Make love to me?"

Harry leaned forward, moving Draco over onto his back, kissing him gently at the same time. They had stopped wearing anything to bed right after their first real love-making, preferring to feel each other's skin, rather than having layers of cloth between them, even if just cuddling.

They slowly explored each other's bodies, reaffirming their love and their interest in each other.

"Now, Harry," Draco said softly.

The Gryffindor gently prepared the blonde, and just as gently, entered him. Harry moved slowly; a stately dance of love, rather than their usual love-making, in which each tried to give the other maximum pleasure. There was pleasure in this as well, but it was more low-key, reassuring each other of their love and commitment. Lips met, hands caressed each others' face and combed through hair, reveling in the fact of the other's presence. They found their love-making lasting far longer than it had ever done before. Harry finally adjusted their positions so he could grasp his husband's hardness, caressing it as well, trying to make sure that Draco would orgasm when he did. It was only during the last few seconds that their movements sped up, the need of their bodies for release forcing a last flurry of activity.

"I love you so much, Draco," Harry finally said, a lone tear trailing down his cheek.

"I feel the same way, my lion," the blonde replied, with a kiss.

They tenderly held each other, exchanging the occasional kiss or caress, until they drifted off to sleep.

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Please Review Review

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Chapter Fifteen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Characters/locations belong to JKR, et al. Story is mine. Chapter Fifteen
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Harry woke much earlier than usual. Normally he slept in, and Draco had to prod him awake. This morning, as early as it was, he still felt completely rested and refreshed. But instead of getting out of bed, he elected to stay snuggled up to his husband, his hard cock nestled between the blonde's ass cheeks, and watch him sleep. And as he watched, he thought about their relationship. All in all, he thought, it was going well. But he rather felt he was getting the best of the deal, especially in the sex department. Draco had given every sign of liking their sexual relationship just as it was, but he was always the receptive partner, and Harry felt he was being selfish. He wasn't sure about letting his husband top him, but he wanted to at least try to reciprocate - once in a while. If he found himself liking it, maybe more often.

But first he had to wake Draco up, and elected to do it in a way he'd never tried before - after some preparations. He carefully reached for the bottle of oil on the bedside table, trying to move as little as possible. Once in hand, he poured a little on his fingers, reached behind himself, and started rubbing it in. It felt - strange, but kind of good, as well. Slipping a finger inside of himself... Description was difficult. There were some fairly nice sensations, but he was fighting strong muscles, and it didn't feel quite right. Having to be careful to not wake his husband made it rather more difficult as well. But maybe, like masturbation, it felt better if someone else was doing it to you - although that felt good, anyway. But he persevered until he had three fingers inside himself, and the muscles had loosened enough that he wasn't really fighting it any more. Then he oiled his half-softened cock, slowly masturbating until he was hard again, made sure Draco was lubed, and slipped into him.

At the intrusion, Draco woke. "Harry..." he sleepily drawled.

"Like your wake-up call?" the Gryffindor inquired.

"Mmm... Not sure. Love having you in me, but the foreplay is half the fun," Draco replied lazily, still half-asleep. "But don't stop; it feels good."

"Does it?" Harry asked casually, with a sudden thrust.

"Oh! Oh, yeah," Draco said, much more awake, now.

"Then you've been a little selfish, haven't you?" the Gryffindor asked, rhetorically.

"What?" Draco asked, confused.

"If it feels that good, and you haven't let me experience it?"

"Harry, stop," Draco ordered.

The raven-haired young man did, but did so by burying himself deep in his husband, before stopping.

"That's not what I meant. I want to look at you," the blonde instructed.

"I know," Harry said in a teasing voice, before becoming just a smidgeon more serious, "but I was rather having you on. It's me that I think has been selfish. I want to try having you in me."

"You haven't been selfish, Harry," Draco replied. "I like it, and I haven't felt in the least slighted that we haven't exchanged roles. But I am curious what it feels like to you when you're... um... in me. But aren't we in the wrong position for that?"he asked. But when he felt his husband starting to withdraw, he had a change of heart. "Wait!" he said, hastily.

"What?"

"Ah... Could you - finish, first?" the blonde asked, blushing.

"What do you want me to do, pet?" Harry asked. He knew quite well what his husband wanted; but he felt the need to hear it.

"You know very well, what," Draco said, half-shy, and half-irritated.

"Yes, I do. But I want to hear you say it."

"Why?!"

"Call it kinky, but I always fantasized that when we made love, we'd talk more to each other. It's always good anyway, but I think it would be even better if you told me what you wanted, and I told you."

"We've been doing that," Draco protested.

"During our love-making, yes. But you never tell me what you want before-hand," Harry replied. "I'm always making the decisions about what we do and how. I'm sure you've had some ideas of things you'd like to try. So tell me what you want?"

"Well right now, you're filling me, and not moving," Draco complained.

"Say it, love," Harry whispered in his ear.

"You are so evil," the blonde moaned. "Fuck me, Harry," he said, in frustrated need. The intensity with which his request was met surprised and gratified him, and left him completely satiated.

After a few minutes of resting, during which Harry kissed and bit gently on his husband's neck, he withdrew. Draco turned to face him, moving into his arms. A couple of long, tender kisses later, Harry quietly said "My turn. I took your virginity. I want you to take mine."

Draco looked at his husband, concern in his eyes. "Are you sure?"

The Gryffindor nodded reassuringly, with a small smile. "I prepared myself before I woke you," he revealed.

"I don't want to rush, love. Do we have time before classes?"

"It doesn't matter. Dumbledore said we could skip classes today."

"Why?" Draco asked, confused.

"The news?"

Draco smirked. "It's about time something Lucius did worked in my favour," the blonde growled sexily as he moved up over his lover.

Draco's lack of reaction to his father's gruesome death bothered Harry a little, although the only other thing about Lucius' death that bothered the green-eyed young man was that he hadn't had a hand in it.. He didn't approve of torture, but from what he'd learned of the things the elder Malfoy had done to Draco, he rather wished he'd at least been able to see the death. But Draco's mouth was doing sinful things to him, and distracted him from delving further into that line of thought.

When the blonde finally moved to penetrate him, after first making sure that Harry was, indeed, loosened up and lubed enough, the Gryffindor thought he knew what to expect (and it had felt better with his husband and lover doing it). What he hadn't expected, even with Draco's soft instructions, warnings, and encouragements, was the incredible feeling of fullness - almost uncomfortably so. When he mentioned it, the blonde told him it was only temporary - that he'd soon feel more comfortable. Since Draco had all the experience in this area, Harry had to believe him. And after less than a minute, he found it so; especially after his husband started moving in him, starting a slow stroking rhythm. The intimacy and the feeling of being filled, then emptied, over and over again, plus the friction of skin against skin was pleasant, but for the life of him, he couldn't see why his husband loved it so much. And

then his prostate was hit, and he got a glimmer. "Oh!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

Draco had been playing with dildos since he was twelve years old, and had always enjoyed them, but Harry had added dimensions that couldn't be accounted for merely by it being a live cock in him. Harry had, from the very first, massaged and pounded his prostate with nearly every thrust. It was like they were born to fit together that way. But even when his green-eyed lover didn't get anywhere near his prostate, there was - something... Something indefinable that ran through him - almost like a very low-voltage electricity, but with an entirely different effect, that made the experience mind-blowingly enjoyable.

He could tell that the same energy wasn't happening with him in the raven-haired Gryffindor, so he was happy that he'd finally located his husband's prostate. At least he could give him some pleasure. He concentrated on trying to hit that spot on a more regular basis.

It was feeling quite good for him, too. The warm, almost hot wetness surrounding him, squeezing his length more tightly and evenly than any hand could, the friction on the sensitive underside of his glans... All the proper physical sensation were there, but the warm sense of belonging he had when his Harry claimed him was missing. He appreciated his husband's gesture, and the intimacy, but his curiosity was satisfied. This might be nice for a change of pace, but unless Harry wanted it more often, he'd prefer to return to their previous arrangement.

And then his orgasm was upon him, and he came, thrusting deep into his husband's warmth.

Harry had found a modicum of enjoyment from Draco's ministrations, especially after that one spot had started getting hit quite often. Even so, when the blonde came, he wasn't disappointed that it was over. He'd do it again, and often, if Draco wanted it, but the experience had him wondering if maybe he should stop fucking Draco. The blonde seemed to enjoy it, but he was such a good actor...

Draco slipped out of his husband, and lay there with him as they kissed each other. Harry hadn't come again, and although the prostate ministrations had kept his husband erect during the experiment, he was already flaccid again. "Harry?" he said, tentatively.

"Yes, love?" the Gryffindor asked, stroking the blonde's hair.

"Thank you. It felt good."

Harry heard the hesitation in his husband's voice. "But?" he said, prompting the blonde.

"Did you like it?"

"It felt alright, after the initial discomfort was gone."

"But you didn't really enjoy it?"

"I love you, Draco. I love being intimate with you, in every way," Harry said, hedging a bit.

Draco wasn't a Slytherin for nothing. He was very experienced with people, and could usually tell when someone wasn't being completely truthful, so he felt better about making his own admission, first. "I might like to do this with you once in a while, but I think I like it better the other way," he said.

"Really?" Harry said, surprised. "I was just thinking I should stop bothering you."

Draco rapidly propped himself up, alarmed. "No!"

"You really like it?" the Gryffindor asked, doubtfully.

Draco blushed, but determinedly said "Yes!" It was going to be very embarrassing, but he had to convince Harry of that, so he decided to tell of the 'experience' he'd teased his husband with, once. "Do you remember when I told you that you'd have to give me your best? That just because I hadn't slept

around, didn't mean I hadn't had other experiences?" His face was burning, now, but when Harry nodded, he took a deep breath, and continued. "I've been buggering myself with dildos since I was twelve, Harry. I like it. And having you in me is so much better!" He couldn't look his husband in the eye; he was looking at his chest, instead.

At this obviously embarrassing admission, Harry's heart felt as though it would burst with his love for the Slytherin. He reached up, and pulled his husband into a tight, but not crushing, hug; the kind that said "I want to meld with you," but was in no way overtly sexual.

"How did you find out you like it?" Harry asked, curious.

Draco shook his head a little. "I don't know, really. The sensations I got when cleaning myself in the bath and the shower, and after...the toilet. Then playing with it in the shower... You know - fingers and soap?"

"Who bought you the dildo?"

"Nobody!" Draco said, looking the Gryffindor in the eyes, in alarm. "Merlin, Harry; if anyone had ever found out, a Cruciatus would have been mild in comparison! I - I..." He laid his head back down, closed his eyes, gathered his courage, and quietly confessed "I used carrots, then fed them to the animals. Then when I learned how, I experimented until I could transform things into what I needed, then back again afterward." With a mercurial shift in mood, he propped himself up again, glaring at his husband. "And if you ever tell anyone...!"

Harry chuckled, then leaned up and kissed the glaring blonde on the tip of his nose. "Never, pet. I swear on all I hold most dear. That's you, you know," he murmured softly.

Draco's glare melted at that declaration - and his stomach growled, causing him to blush yet again.

Harry laughed, softly. "I think it's time for breakfast!" With that declaration, he rolled a surprised Draco over onto his back, kissed him soundly, then leapt out of bed, holding his hand out to his husband. "I think we should shower first, don't you?" he asked.

With a grin, Draco took his hand, allowing Harry to help him out of bed. "It'd better be a fast shower, because I'm famished!" he declared. Even with the best of intentions, it wasn't a fast shower.

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It was midway between breakfast and lunch, so they had to trek down to the kitchens to get something to eat; but the house elves were happy to oblige "the great Harry Potter."

"Is Dobby around?" Harry asked one elf as she bustled by.

"Dobby be making beds today, Mister Harry Potter, sir," she replied.

"Could you tell him, please, that I'd like to speak to him, when he has time?"

The elf stared at the Gryffindor, unused to having anyone say 'please' to her, being more used to unthinking orders, but she nodded. "Yes, sir, Mr. Harry Potter, sir," she replied, eyes wide. "Is it being okay for Notsey to go, now?"

"Yes it is, Notsey; and thank you," the Gryffindor replied.

Wide-eyed, the elf curtseyed quickly, and hurried off on her task, passing the word along to another elf as she did.

"You're going to spoil those elves, Harry," Draco commented. "They'll start to think they're as good as humans."

Instead of automatically getting angry with Draco's attitude as he would have in the past, he asked a
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question. "Why aren't they?"

"They're house elves, Harry," the Slytherin replied.

"Yes, they are. But they are also thinking, feeling beings; not mindless drones. So what makes them less than humans?"

"They're just servants," Draco said, dismissively.

"There are human servants, too. Are you saying that they are less than human?"

"That's different!"

"How?"

Draco was feeling as though he were under attack; but all Harry was doing was asking him quite logical questions. Questions about attitudes he'd grown up with, and never questioned, himself.

Harry saw his husband getting very uncomfortable, and sought to ease that somewhat. "I love you, pet, and I don't want to make you uncomfortable. I know Lucius treated house elves as less than obedient furniture, and I've seen how most wizards and witches take them for granted, but if you think about it, other than being a different species, they're a lot like us. They have thoughts, feelings, and loyalties; and I'm sure in private they have loves. And somewhere there must be elf children, although I've never seen or heard of them."

These were all things that Draco had never thought of before, and the thought of elf children...! Of course house elves had to come from somewhere, but it had never occurred to him to wonder about it; nor had he ever heard anyone else ever mention anything of the sort. Occasionally a house elf would show up looking for a placement, but the only decision to be made was whether or not you needed

another one, and to find out if it was a hard worker if you did.

Then breakfast arrived. Fresh fruit wrapped in crepes, smothered in a blueberry brandy sauce, dusted with powdered sugar, and garnished with fresh mint leaves as the main course, with sausage and ham on the side, and coffee made with freshly-ground beans.

The young couple stared at their plates. Food like this was never served at Hogwarts - at least, not the main course. Attracting the attention of the elf that had placed the plates before them, Harry asked "What's the occasion?"

The elf screwed its face up in confusion. "What is Mister Harry Potter meaning?"

Harry waved at their plates. "This is - wonderful food, but it's not what I..." Looking at Draco, Harry amended that. "What we - were expecting. This looks like something that's served for a very special occasion!"

The elf's face contorted into a huge grin. "Mister Harry Potter likes?"

"Yes," the Gryffindor replied, "but Mister Harry Potter is also very confused!"

"Mister Harry honours house elves by bringing bride with him! Kitchen elves wish to celebrate, and honour the occasion!" the elf replied.

Harry choked, then fought not to laugh at the use of the word "bride." Draco wouldn't like it, and the elves might be offended. His 'bride' had turned red, and looked like he didn't know whether to berate the elves or sink into the floor in embarrassment. Considering their conversation of just moments ago, it appeared that he'd not do anything rash, however. Harry had turned red as well, but he said "Thank you. It is a beautiful breakfast, and I'm sure we'll quite enjoy it." Draco kicked him under the table. Evidently he hadn't hidden his reaction well enough.

But it was very delicious, and they both finished every scrap. Draco even unbent enough to thank the elves for such a nice meal, on their way out. Harry didn't draw attention to it; he just hugged the blonde's shoulder for a moment, showing his approval.

They went outside and flew their brooms for a while. They accidentally came close to their boundaries a few times, but although it was frustrating, they soon adjusted to it, and had a grand time doing stunts and racing each other. And then, although neither was yet hungry, they went to lunch; mainly in order to grab a few things for a mid-afternoon snack, so they wouldn't be quite so hungry come supper time. Of course, being teenagers, and having just had quite a bit of exercise, they had room for a bite or two.

They hadn't counted on Hermione cornering them.

She walked rapidly over to them as soon as she entered the Great Hall and saw them at their table. "Harry! Draco! Where have you been all morning? Are you alright? There's nothing - wrong, is there?" With that last question, she lowered her voice quite drastically, darting her eyes about to see who might be in listening range; rather like a spy out of a poorly-written novel. This caused quite a bit of amusement in both boys.

"Sit down - Hermione," Draco invited, using her given name for the first time. "And do stop looking like a spy from a bad play," he added, smirking. Harry grinned at the teasing.

Hermione blushed, and sat down, but persisted. "Well? Where have you been?" she asked, looking at Harry, with whom she felt more at ease grilling.

Harry gestured, simultaneously directing her attention to his co-husband, and letting him know that it was up to him to answer.

"What do you want to know, Granger?" Draco asked, grinning mischievously. "The morning sex, the long shower together afterward, the late breakfast...?"

"Draco!" Harry admonished, as Hermione blushed to her roots. "She wants to know why we weren't in

class; not our personal details."

The Slytherin's grin didn't falter. "Then she should have asked that, shouldn't she? Although, come to think of it, that would have likely garnered the same answer," he replied unrepentantly.

"Dumbledore gave us the day off," Harry told the girl, ignoring his husband.

"Why?" Hermione asked, a puzzled frown on her face.

"It seems there was a death in the family, and the old coot thought I might need some time to grieve," Draco replied. "Harry would have to be there to comfort me, of course." The fact that he and Harry couldn't be too far apart anyway, didn't need to be repeated.

"Well, you don't look all that broken up about it," she replied, somewhat acerbically. "Who was it?"

Draco remained silent. Until just before he'd run away to bond with Harry, his history with his father, although not really good, hadn't been all bad, either. Yes, he had always been just a little bit afraid when he was around the man, and hated him for what he'd been about to do to him, but Lucius had been his father - family - and the importance of family had been ingrained in him, so he wasn't quite as unaffected he was letting on. "Lucius," Harry replied for his husband. "Murdered. Likely by Death Eaters," he said, trying to forestall further questions.

"But..."

"Please, 'Mione..." Harry said, interrupting. "Some other time?"

She nodded, understanding. Looking at Draco, she said "I know it's really none of my business, but..."

"You're right, Granger," the blonde said, also interrupting her. "But you're trying to be a friend, so I'm

going to be nice and just ask you to drop it. Okay?"

The girl nodded again. "Okay. See you two at supper?" she asked, looking from one to the other.

"Probably," Harry replied. "Thank you, 'Mione - for understanding, and for being a friend."

She smiled at him, got up, laid her hand on Draco's shoulder in a sympathetic gesture, and went to the Gryffindor House table to eat.

For their part, Harry and Draco gathered a few snackable items for later, and retired to their rooms. The mood was spoiled, though, so they attended afternoon classes, then went to the library to do their lessons.

Late in the afternoon, a messenger from the headmaster found them and delivered a summons to go to his office. They had a visitor.

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Chapter Sixteen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr Characters/locations belong to JKR, et al. Story is mine. Chapter Sixteen

Again they had to guess Dumbledore's password. The professor's snacks this week kept trying to crawl away from him. Unfortunately, there were many wizard candies that were enchanted to move; but about five minutes of guessing later, they hit on it - "Juby-worms" - a mixed-fruit-flavoured jelly worm with a sour watermelon dusting.

Upon entering the headmaster's office, they saw a slight, hooded figure sitting in front of the
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headmaster's desk. Hearing them enter, it turned to face them.

Draco froze. "Mum?" he said.

"Come in, boys!" Dumbledore greeted them heartily, "Have a seat! Would you like some tea?"

Narcissa Malfoy smiled as she rose in greeting, removing her hooded cloak, and draping it over the back of her chair in the process. "Hello, son," she said, as she accepted a kiss on the cheek from the blonde boy. Looking over at Harry, she asked "Are you going to introduce me to your friend?"

Harry looked over at the headmaster, frowning, as they sat, and Draco's mother re-took her seat. Dumbledore had told Draco's father before they met in the office; why hadn't he told his mother?

Harry declined the tea, but noticed that the woman had a cup on the small table beside her.

Draco had been acting out of habit, his mind racing. After he took his seat, he just sat there, petrified; not with fear, but with indecision, trying to decide how best to handle the situation.

Harry didn't know why his husband hadn't responded to his mother, but he tried to distract her attention from the blonde. He smiled at the woman as he said "We met once at a quidditch game, Mrs. Malfoy. I'm Harry Potter. It's nice to see you again." Harry held out his hand to her, but the woman just glanced at him, then looked back to her son.

That bit of rudeness broke the young blonde man's stasis. He knew what his mother expected of him. "Mother," Draco stated quite formally, "may I present my husband, Harry Potter?"

Narcissa looked at Professor Dumbledore, then back again. "Albus told me you'd married, but I wanted to hear it from your own lips," the woman said. She said it matter-of-factly, giving no clue to her own thoughts or feelings on the matter.

She having been married to Lucius Malfoy, Harry could understand that. She must have had a lot of practice. But it didn't help either him or his husband in deciding how to act - or react - with her.

Professor Dumbledore conjured tea and biscuits for the trio, and called a house elf to bring an assortment of finger sandwiches. "You have a lot of catching up to do, as well as getting acquainted," he said, "so I'll just leave you to it, then. There are refreshments if you wish them. Do just help yourselves." He didn't know if Narcissa Malfoy was a Death Eater or not, nor with whom her sympathies laid, so sat back to observe and be as unobtrusive as possible.

They thanked him, then Narcissa Malfoy turned back to her son. "And what of a Malfoy heir?" she asked.

Draco looked decidedly uncomfortable, and unconsciously leaned closer to Harry, who moved his chair closer, and put an arm around him. "We can make sure you have grandchildren, Mother," Draco replied, "but there will be no Malfoys from me," he said as gently as he could. "Our children will be Potters. I took Harry's last name."

That last bit of news was something of a shock, but Narcissa noted the body language, and it was to that, that she addressed herself. "Is it a love match, then?"

Draco looked at his husband with a fond smile, then back to his mother. "It didn't start out to be, but yes, it is."

Looking at the two of them, she found she had a lot of questions; among them, was if her son's new husband was expecting to live off of them. "You have a lot to explain," she stated, settling in for a long conversation.

It turned out that Narcissa Malfoy was a lot stronger than anyone suspected. She hadn't known of Lucius' plan for her son, but once she learned, her anger was something to behold. It blazed from her eyes like a beacon as she stared into space, and swore quietly at her dead husband. One would never think a woman of such breeding would know such words, let alone use them. Once she'd vented, she collected herself, and resumed their conversation as though the episode had never happened. Although

she gently berated him for not taking her into his confidence, in the end, she thanked Draco for taking matters into his own hands. She was less than happy about her son being the 'wife' of Harry Potter, but it was better than him being Voldemort's sexual torture toy, or her sitting in Azkaban for spousal murder.

Draco related an abbreviated version of what had happened since he'd 'escaped' from Malfoy Manor, Harry inserting a comment or neglected fact he thought important enough to relate, from time to time. They did keep a few facts from her, however. They didn't tell her about the bonding, Draco just saying he'd gone to Harry for help, or that she was already well on the way to being a grandmother. Nor was Professor Snape's name mentioned at any time. They hadn't talked about it, but both felt that there had been enough shocks already. She didn't need to know about the bonding, the revelation of Draco's pregnancy could wait until their next visit with her, and Snape's involvement needed to remain secret.

The visit had reminded Draco of the good times she and he had shared, and how close they had been at one time. He made a decision. "I've changed my mind about something, Mum," Draco said, sending an apologetic look to his husband. "I'll go to Lucius' funeral with you; not for his sake, but for yours."

Harry started making the necessary emotional adjustments to allow his husband this. He wasn't looking forward to being around the kind of people who would hold Lucius Malfoy in enough esteem to attend his funeral, but for Draco's sake, he would do so; even if it meant them being under an invisibility cloak the whole time. But he was also going to have a talk with his spouse about making decisions that affected them both, without talking it over, first. Especially one which involved such potential danger. It would have taken very little for them to have stepped out of the room for a few moments.

"That's why I came to visit in the first place, my darling dragon," she said fondly, "but with what I now know, it wouldn't be a good idea for you to attend. A lot of your father's 'associates' will be there. If that red-eyed bastard is after you - and your husband," she added after a pause, "then they will be expecting you to appear at Lucius' funeral - which may have been one of the reasons they killed him. Cosmic justice, that the man who used and killed so many, should be used in such a manner."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Malfoy," a rather puzzled Harry said, "but you don't seem to be very upset about your husband's death."

Narcissa looked at Harry a bit distantly, and said "You're family now, Mr. Potter. You may call me 'Mother.' But even as family, what my relationship with Lucius was, is none of your business. Let us just say that it

was not a loving one."

Harry's face flushed. He had only been curious about why she was so calm. He hadn't asked what her relationship with Lucius was, and wasn't interested in knowing. But if this was what she was going to be like, he was happy he - they - had Grimmauld place, and they didn't have to depend on her.

"Mother! There is no reason to treat Harry so coldly!" Draco remonstrated with his mother.

The woman ignored her son, electing to concentrate on his spouse. "You're wearing very nice clothing," she commented. "Much better than the last time we met. Those, I believe, were little better than rags. Did you enjoy getting Draco to buy them for you?"

Both young men stared at her, then Harry's face flushed at the implied insult. Draco smirked.

"What is so funny, young man?!" Draco's mother demanded to know.

"I made the same mistake, Mum," Draco said, grinning. "Harry's an orphan, and he used to wear hand-me-down clothing that was at least ten sizes too large for him; so you think he's without resources, right?"

"It stands to reason," she replied, defensive and curious about what was going on.

"Sorry to disabuse you of your notions, Mother. Harry's parents left him quite a tidy sum in their vaults. And our cousin, Sirius Black, was his godfather. Do you remember him?"

Draco noticed a sad expression settle on Harry's face at the mention of the dead man, and since his mother had been less than accepting of his husband, got up and sat in Harry's lap to make a point, putting his arms around him, trying to comfort him. His mother had nodded in reply to his question, so after his move, he continued. "When he died, he left the majority of his estate to him. Since then," he told his mother, "Harry has made some investments that are bringing in very good returns." He suddenly

grinned at his husband, then looked back to his mother. "As for the clothes - Harry bought my wardrobe."

"I did depend on his fashion sense, though," Harry interjected.

" I assume that Lucius' did cut off my funds after I left?" Draco inquired.

"I really don't know, but it would be like him to do so," she replied, somewhat sadly.

"I did get a decent sum upon my emancipation, even if I didn't need it," the blonde replied, giving Harry a quick squeeze of appreciation.

"It does seem as though I owe you an apology, Mr. Potter," a very chagrined Narcissa Malfoy said, with great dignity. Yet the apology itself was not forthcoming. Apparently the acknowledgement that one was owed was deemed enough. "So. I shall see you over the holidays, then," she went on, again acting as though the embarrassing episode hadn't happened.

Harry coloured. "I'm afraid the Weasley's have already demanded our presence," he said apologetically. "They've become a substitute family for me over the last few years. And I'm sure Voldemort will still be after us, so they'll likely be watching Malfoy Manor. I don't want to promise anything, but we can try to arrange to spend a few days with you - somewhere other than the Manor."

"Thank you, love," Draco said, kissing Harry's cheek. Then turning his head to the platinum-blonde woman, he told her "I'm sorry, Mum, but he's right. But you should have heard the Howler Mrs. Weasley sent him!" he said, grinning.

"What did you do to deserve a Howler, Mr. Potter?" she wanted to know.

Harry's blush deepened. "I married your son without inviting them to the wedding," he admitted. "And

please call me 'Harry.'"

For the first time since they'd entered Dumbledore's office, a smile passed over Narcissa's face.

"We did have good reason for not inviting anyone, Mrs. Malfoy - Mother," Harry explained apologetically. "At the time, we were just beginning to get to know each other, and the marriage was more of a way to give Draco more legal protection from Lucius than his emancipation might give him - and we didn't want to have to argue with anyone about it." Turning his head to whisper into his husband's ear, he asked "Is it just me, or did that sound entirely childish?"

"Not entirely childish," Draco murmured back, "just the last bit."

When Harry looked at him, the blonde was smirking. "You've nothing to smirk about, love," he said, "You were right there with me at the time, so you're in the same pot."

"Heh-hem." Narcissa cleared her throat to regain their attention, but her smile was a bit larger. "I sympathise with your 'adoptive mother,' Harry. I admit that if it weren't for my unlamented husband being the cause of it, I'd be tempted to do some 'howling' of my own."

Harry's blush deepened, and Draco looked a bit chagrined.

"We actually plan to have another wedding, Mother, when we feel we would have wished to marry on our own," Draco informed her.

"And you're not at that point, yet?" she asked, raising one well-shaped brow slightly.

The couple looked each other in the eyes for a few seconds, then Harry replied. "I'm sure the love is there, Mrs. - Mother, but we're still getting to know each other." He kissed Draco chastely on the lips. Then, looking deep into his silvery eyes, said "If it weren't for that, I'd escort Draco to the altar of every

religion, every day, until we were wed at all of them."

"That won't be necessary. When the both of you are ready, come to me," she replied, mysteriously. Then she abruptly changed the subject, forestalling questions. "Well! I've taken up enough of your valuable study time, and I believe your supper is being served about now. Draco, you know how to contact me without interception. Let me know if you can free a few days for me, and I'll be thinking of safe places we can have our time together, if so." She was a mother; she knew the art of the subtle guilt trip.

Her leave-taking took precedence in Draco's mind over her curious instructions regarding their relationship, at least for the moment. Harry let it pass in favour of giving his husband a last few moments with his mother. As she arose from her chair, Draco got up from Harry's lap; incidentally giving the Gryffindor some relief from the pressure on the erection he'd gained soon after Draco inhabited it. Fortunately, Draco had been the only one aware of it, and his subtle little shifts in position had proven that, without doubt - the little tease! He rose as well, to show respect for his mother-in-law, thankful that his robes concealed his condition from observers.

Or so he thought. After Draco had said his goodbye's, he gave Narcissa a loose hug, standing far enough away to be polite, yet near enough not to be stand-offish, and murmured "I'm glad we cleared up our misunderstandings, and hope we can become friends, Mother."

"I think it's possible," she replied, just as quietly. "And I'm sure your husband will take care of your little problem." With that, thanking Dumbledore for his hospitality, and another quick peck on her son's cheek, she swept out of the room, leaving a stunned and very red-faced young son-in-law behind her.

They took their leave of the headmaster, and headed to the Great Hall for supper. As they walked, Harry told Draco what his mother had said to him.

Draco coloured. "Nobody can see through robes without a spell, Harry, and Mother wouldn't have," he said. "It must have been my teasing that gave it away." Taking Harry's hand, and stopping so he could look the Gryffindor in the eyes, he asked "Forgive me?"

"I'll think about it," Harry teased. "Right now I'm too hungry to think of anything else!" Grinning to show that the blonde was forgiven, he started again for the Great Hall, tugging his husband to come along.

"But teasing me in front of your mother! It was all I could do to ignore it. And you called me evil!"

"Payback, love," Draco said, with a grin.

Harry had the sudden urge to spank his husband, but although it was deserved for the teasing Draco had done, this wasn't the place for it. He'd keep it in mind for another time, though.

Although they had meant their little table to be merely a temporary measure, they had become rather fond of it. By unspoken agreement they had decided to wait until they were invited to sit at a House table, to do so. Tonight was to be that night. They had no sooner sat down at their table, than Hermione walked up to them. "Join us, Hermione!" Harry invited, with a wide smile.

"Actually, Harry, Draco, I'm here to invite you to sit at the Gryffindor table," she replied, with a wide smile of her own at being able to deliver such good news.

The boys looked at each other, Harry giving a questioning look to his husband, and Draco answering with a slight, if hesitant, nod. Looking back at his friend, he asked "Is this a personal invitation, or from the House?" Even if Draco was willing, he wanted to be sure there would be no unpleasantness.

"All of our year, anyway," she replied.

"All of them?" Draco asked, eyebrow raised.

"Even Ron," she replied, nodding.

"In that case, we'd be happy to," the green-eyed young man replied. Standing, he took Draco's hand to give reassurance, and they walked with her the few steps to the spaces saved for them.

Everyone close by smiled at them in welcome as they sat. Ron's was a bit nervous, but that was

understandable.

"About time you two got tired of sitting alone!" Seamus Finnegan said, welcoming them in his own inimitable style.

"What's the matter, Seamus? Get lonely?" Harry replied, grinning. Everyone laughed.

"Me? Harry, you cut me to the quick! I have to beat them off with a bat!" the Irishman replied, a hurt look on his face.

"More likely knock them out, so they don't run away!" Dean Thomas put in.

"Well, Harry won't be having to worry about any of that," Hermione chimed in. "Welcome to the madhouse, Draco."

The blonde smiled, and was putting up a very bold front, but Harry could tell that the Slytherin was tense. Naturally, he thought, Draco felt out of his element, so he touched him often, putting an arm around his waist for a quick hug,.stroking his back, etc, whenever it felt natural to do so. He even, despite catcalls, kissed his husband on the cheek a couple of times.

At their own table, they would have been at least a little more demonstrative, so Draco couldn't claim Harry was babying him in this new environment, but the public affection where people were paying such close attention to it - and teasing - was something he could have done without, even though the touching did make him feel better. He didn't know what he wanted more - the reassurance, or less for their table-mates to tease them about. As a result, he didn't do anything, and let things continue as they were; but his frustration with their childishness, and his resultant tension, grew. He would have dearly loved to verbally blast the lot of them for it, but restrained himself for Harry's sake.

Most of the students in the vicinity went out of their way to make Draco feel welcome at one time or another throughout supper. Ron, as could be expected, was pretty quiet, although he laughed a bit hesitantly a few times at a joke or someone's antics, and sent shy smiles in the couple's direction once in a while. None of this escaped the notice of either boy, and Harry expected that Ron would again try to

make up with him sometime soon; possibly that very evening. He was fully prepared to throw it back in his face, if the redhead didn't include Draco in that.

"Harry Potter, sir?"

Looking around, the raven-haired young man saw Dobby, and remembered that he'd asked that the elf contact him when he could. "Hello, Dobby," he said, kindly.

"Dobby is being sorry not to find you sooner. Dobby is having to do work for Dumbly. Should Dobby punish himself?" he asked, worriedly.

"No, Dobby, it's quite alright. Professor Dumbledore is your employer, so you definitely should do as he asks of you. But we can't talk here. Could you come to our rooms in about an hour?" Harry replied.

"Mister Harry wants to talk to Dobby?"

"Yes, I do."

"Is Dobby being in trouble?"

"No, no trouble."

"Then Dobby be coming to visit the great Harry Potter, later," the elf declared, then disappeared with a *pop.*

Harry fended off their tablemate's questions with the vague explanation of "housekeeping questions," then turned the conversation to catching up with what had been happening with his year-mates over the summer. When asked about his own, he said "Dursley's," in a sour tone, and then enthusiastically added "and then marriage!" giving Draco a short, one-armed hug in illustration of his happiness; and,

incidentally, making Draco quite red in embarrassment.

Asking Draco the same question would have been redundant, but of course someone did.

"Quidditch practice, and visiting with friends, mostly," he replied. "Oh, yes; somewhere in there I wooed and won the great Harry Potter," he added off-handedly, with a drawl.

Even Harry laughed, but then said, with a grin "That's not exactly how I remember it, love, but you can have your fantasies if you wish." When asked how he remembered it, he just laughed and said "None of your business, you snoops!" No matter how they badgered, he just grinned and insisted it was none of their business.

He could tell that Ron was at least slightly tempted to tell, but unless he wanted to completely ruin any chance of a reconciliation, he wouldn't betray the confidence that had been placed in him. Hermione played the part of being as much in the dark as the others, but didn't join in the questioning.

Later, in their rooms, Draco expressed his displeasure. "I wish you'd stop embarrassing me, Harry! I know you have a brain, but you seem to act without thinking!" he fumed. "As long as your friends are going to act so childish, I'd appreciate you not being quite so demonstrative around them," he he said, severely. Seeing the surprised look on his husband's face, he softened, regretting the harshness of his words. It wasn't Harry's fault his friends were such arses. Putting his arms around his green-eyed lover and kissing him softly on the lips, he softly said "Really, Harry; I love you, and I love the way you act with me. It's just their incessant teasing I can't stand. It's not your fault; but may we return to our own table?"

Harry shook his head. "I undertand, love, it's just... They were teasing me, too. Most of it's just good-natured ribbing, you know, and the rest is because they're wanting a similar relationship with someone. A little jealousy." He sighed. "Of course we can return to our table," he told the boy in his arms.

Draco smiled, putting his arms around the Gryffindor's neck. "Teasing from your friends is one thing, love; but I only know them from the other side of a pointed wand," he reminded his husband, then kissed him. They were just beginning to get very involved with that, when there was a soft *pop*.

Looking around, they saw Dobby standing there, a very contrite expression on his face.

"Dobby sorry to be interrupting. Should Dobby come back later?" the elf said apologetically.

Turning back to give his husband one last, quick kiss, Harry gave his attention to the elf. "No, Dobby; that's alright. Please sit down."

Dobby's eyes grew large, but he did as he was bid, perching on the edge of a stool.

The Gryffindor got straight to the point. "Draco and I are wanting to make some changes to Grimmauld Place, a property I have. Unfortunately, we can't have strange people coming in to do the work, and nobody who knows of the place has the skills needed. At the moment, there is only one old, slightly insane, and mostly useless house elf there, named Kreacher." At Dobby's nod of understanding, Harry continued. "We figure we'll need about four more house elves; hard workers, who can do the renovations, and then stay on to do the other work needed around such a large place. Do you know of any elves who need a position that would fit those qualifications?"

"Mister Harry Potter once told Dobby that he was not to help him," the elf said, hesitantly.

Harry grinned. "At the time, you had come very close to killing me, on several occasions, while trying to 'help' me," he reminded the elf. "But what I actually said was not to save my life, again. But if you think you can avoid anything that might put me, or Draco, in harm's way, I believe we can forget all that. What do you think?"

Dobby grinned, his mouth almost bisecting his head. "Dobby think he helps Mister Harry Potter and his bride the best he can!" he declared.

Harry almost snickered again at the elf's use of 'bride' to describe his husband, but seeing the blonde tense up, he controlled that, and said "Draco is my co-husband, Dobby, not my bride, but thank you. And we will depend on you to find good workers for us, but we'll want to talk to anyone you find that you think will fit our needs. Okay?"

"Very okay, Harry Potter," the elf replied, but he was looking puzzled. "Is it being allowed for Dobby to ask a question?"

"Of course," Harry replied.

"When you marry Master Draco, house elves are there. They hear Master Draco say he is bride. Yes?"

"I said I was in the position of the bride, you stupid elf, not that I was the bride!" Draco snapped.

The elf quailed, then jumped to his feet and started banging his head against the fireplace stones. "Dobby sorry Master Draco! Dobby won't do it again - don't hit Dobby - Dobby punishing himself..."

"Dobby!" Harry shouted, running to pull the elf from his self-punishment.

"Draco!" Harry reprimanded gently, after calming the trembling elf. "He used to belong to your father. They have feelings, remember?"

Draco was still upset, but didn't like even the extremely vague and indirect connection of him with Lucius, and mumbled a barely audible "Sorry."

"It was an understandable confusion, love," the raven-haired young man explained. Then he turned back to the still-cowering elf. "It's okay, Dobby. I understand that same-sex marriage among humans might be a little strange to you, but to us, the word 'bride' is reserved to a female that is in the process of getting, or has just recently gotten married. Draco is offended to be referred to as a female."

Dobby nodded, wide-eyed, but not very reassured, still glancing in apprehension at the blonde every few seconds. "Dobby is being sorry to have offended Harry Potter's love," he ventured softly.

"Draco?" Harry prompted softly, when it appeared the blonde would ignore the apology.

"Oh, all right! Forgiven!" the Slytherin snapped, petulantly.

"Perhaps we could talk of this another time?" Harry suggested to the elf. "I'm confident you will find us the best house elves you can."

Dobby nodded, slightly more confident, now. "Dobby is doing his best," he replied, and with a *pop,* he was gone.

"After seeing that, how can you doubt they have feelings?" Harry asked his husband.

The blonde felt slightly guilty, but his pride wouldn't let him apologise any more than he already had. He kept quiet, and sulked.

Harry wasn't going to have any of that, however. "No sulking, pet," he said seductively, kneeling on the couch next to the blonde. "You wouldn't want to force me into another tickle attack, would you?"

Draco looked up in alarm. "If you do, Harry, you'll sleep alone tonight, I swear! I'll sleep out here!"

Harry gave a low laugh, acted as though he were about to initiate a 'tickle attack,' and fell on the blonde, who naturally fell backwards, trying to escape - just what Harry was hoping for. Instead of the tickle attack, he instead attacked Draco's pale throat with kisses, licking, and nipping.

After an initial startled squeal, the only sound the blonde was able to make was the occasional moan, or "Oh, Harry..."

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Review please

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Chapter Seventeen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Seventeen

The next morning when they sat at the small table, they received not a few puzzled frowns. Seamus shouted "Hey, mate; over here!"

"I'll just be a minute, love," Harry said, then walked over to the Gryffindor table and sat on the bench in a skewed fashion, so that he could talk to everyone, yet make it clear that he wasn't staying. He'd lain awake for a couple of hours after Draco had drifted off last night, going over in his mind what had happened that night at supper, and trying to see it from his husband's perspective. He was forced to come to the conclusion that the blonde was right: most of the Gryffindor boys, other than Neville and Ron (who was trying to get back in Harry's good graces), and a few of the girls, had been rude, crude, and uncivilised. He'd always taken the teasing in stride, before, but now it occurred to him that this teasing had been slighting - insulting - treating their relationship as though it were worthless.

"Hey, Harry, the wife convince you we weren't worth sitting with?" the Irishman said, grinning.

"No, the behaviour at this table last night did that," Harry rebutted calmly. "I love Draco. He's my co-husband - not my wife - and you treated our relationship like dirt."

"Here, now! How did we do that, Harry?" an offended Seamus inquired.

Harry raised an eyebrow at him. "You honestly can't guess?" he asked, skeptically.

Seamus and a few others had the grace to blush, but the Irish boy defended himself, saying "You were
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laughing as well, Harry."

"Until I figured out, after supper, what bothered me about it, yes," Harry said. He wasn't about to implicate Draco in this. It would not only weaken his position, but create hard feelings for his husband. He needed to keep the blame where it belonged. He didn't give them time to try to defend themselves. As far as he was concerned, it would have been wasted effort on their part - there was no defence for their behaviour.

"Hermione, you're always welcome at our table. Those of you who were polite to us: if you want to, although there's only room for two at a time... Ron. Well, Ron, you know what it's going to take; and there aren't any guarantees." Ron's face reddened, embarrassed to have been singled out, and his mistakes pointed up, if only by reference. "The rest of you..." Harry continued. "Well, when you're ready to accept my marriage to Draco with dignity, we might try again." He unhurriedly got up and returned to their table, a few mumbled apologies being offered to his back.

As he rejoined his husband at their table, he greeted the blonde with a kiss; not only because he wanted to, but to make a point with his House-mates, whom he was sure were watching. This time, there were no comments or rude sounds. Seconds after seating himself, he heard Hermione start to harangue the others, and grinned.

A few of the Gryffindors who'd gleefully joined in the teasing last night stopped by their table on their way out of the Great Hall, later, and tendered their apologies. Seamus was among the first. Although brash and often unthinking in his play, the Irishman was a good sort, and wouldn't knowingly offend a friend - while being in the forefront to insult and berate an enemy, of course.

When it appeared that the flow of visitors to the little table had stopped, they had one more.

"What was that all about?" Blaise asked, by way of greeting.

"Sit down, Zabini," Harry said with a smile, just beating his husband to it.

"We were invited to the Gryffindor table last night," Draco said, sourly.

"I saw that. Wankers, eh?" Zabini ventured, guessing from the blonde's expression.

"Their teasing was bit rude," Harry corrected.

"And this morning?"

"Harry told them off," Draco said, proudly.

"It took you this long, Potter?" the brunette Slytherin teased.

"When living among swine, one must pretend to be a pig," Harry replied off-handedly, to the great amusement of the other two. He was still upset about his marriage being denigrated as it had been, even in "fun."

When the laughter died, Blaise asked "So are you regretting being a Gryffindor then, Potter?"

The Gryffindor sighed. "Not really... Well, perhaps on occasion. For the most part, they're great people, though."

"May I tell him, Harry?" Draco requested, leaning over to whisper in his husband's ear.

Harry looked doubtful for a moment, then shrugged and nodded. "As long he doesn't spread it about," he replied.

Draco caught Blaise' eye. "I need you to swear by Salazar Slytherin, your honour, and your gods, that

what is about to be revealed to you goes no further than between the three of us," he said.

Blaise looked intrigued. "Okay," he said.

"I'm a Slytherin too, Blaise," Draco reminded the boy, with a slight smile.

Caught, the brunette grinned. "I solemnly swear by Salazar Slytherin, my honour, my gods, and all I hold sacred and dear, that I will repeat to no-one what is about to be revealed to me."

"Much better," the blonde said, returning the grin.

Harry looked confused for a moment, then his face cleared as he, too, grinned. The first time, Blaise had only acknowledged that Draco wanted him to swear - he hadn't actually sworn to anything.

"The Sorting Hat wanted to put Harry in Slytherin!" Draco quietly revealed, with glee.

Shocked, Blaise gazed at the Gryffindor, who nodded in affirmation. "Then why..."

"He talked the bloody thing out of it!" the blonde interrupted, the slightest trace of awe in his voice.

The brunette suddenly sat back, limp and staring, in his chair. Harry had to be the ultimate Slytherin, to be able to talk the Sorting Hat into changing his placement. His respect for the raven-haired boy grew by leaps and bounds. Sure, there was the insult to his House, to have been rejected, but that paled in comparison. "Potter, you ruddy... You may have rejected us, but to be able to do that...! You have my respect, and I'd be proud to call you friend - if you'll have me?"

A doubtful look crossed Harry's face. "I don't know... You are a Slytherin... But then, I'm married to one, so why not?!" He grinned, to show he'd been teasing, and stuck out his hand.

Blaise smiled, then very solemnly took that hand, and shook it. "Slytherins don't offer friendship lightly, Potter," he said, gently rebuking the Gryffindor. "You've learned some bad habits from that crowd you've been hanging around with." But he said it with a wry smile, to take the sting out of it.

The Gryffindor shot a rather shame-faced, apologetic look in his husband's direction, but recovered quickly.

Blaise noticed, but knew their history from Draco, so he politely ignored it. "However, curiosity isn't all that drove me to your company," he revealed. "I've been investigating Creevey, and some other likely suspects who might have been responsible for that gossip column in the "Prophet," and managed to whittle down the possible culprits to three; Creevey, Bulstrode and, believe it or not, Filch."

"Filch??" was Harry's disbelieving reply.

The Slytherin nodded. "He's always been a nasty piece of work, but it seems he likes to pick up an extra galleon or two by selling to the gossipmongers."

"So you think it's him, then?" the Gryffindor replied, in a tone of voice that boded ill for the man.

Blaise shook his head. "I don't know. He's just one of the possible culprits, so far."

Harry subsided, grumbling. "Let me know when you know something for sure, will you? I'll pay your expenses, and a reasonable fee, if you like," Harry offered.

"I was doing it as a favour for Draco, and I'm rather having a blast, tracking this down, but I'll take you up on that," Blaise replied, with a grin. At the look Draco sent him, he relented. "I'm a Slytherin, Draco! What did you expect? But okay - gratis."

"Expenses, at least? Itemized," Harry added, when Draco tried the same look on him. The blonde sighed, and nodded.

The brunette grinned. "Done!" he said. And then, as he was about to rise from the table, added "Oh! You have another friend in Slytherin."

Cocking his head, the Gryffindor asked "Who?"

"Pansy," Blaise revealed, then grinned at their expressions of surprise. "Seems she's decided to adopt you two, and is campaigning to get the House to accept you. Still, I'd be chary of any offers of friendship. Too many of them have parents who are Death Eaters, or are sympathetic to their cause."

"Aren't your parents, as well?" Harry asked, as the brunette rose to his feet.

Blaise shrugged. "You accepted my friendship, Potter. You have nothing to fear from me."

"If we're friends, Zabini, you should call me 'Harry,'" was the reply.

The brunette Slytherin grinned. "Blaise," he instructed.

"Can I trust him?" Harry asked his husband, after the brunette had taken his leave.

"I've known Blaise most of my life," Draco replied, thoughtfully. "For the most part, I'd say 'yes;' but not with your life. He's still a Slytherin, and if circumstances forced him to it - a choice between his life, his family's, or yours, for instance... But he'll do everything he can to avoid betraying you, anyway."

Harry nodded his understanding. "Under those circumstances, almost anyone would be a risk," he acknowledged.

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Harry had been waiting with deadly patience for this day; the boys who had participated in the attack on Draco were finally free of detention. Of course, he'd have to be patient in taking his revenge, as well. If something happened to all of them at once, the blame would immediately fall at his and/or Draco's door, and this time, he meant to avoid blame, if at all possible. He meant to let loose his Slytherin side. Usually he was a very forgiving person, but they hadn't only attacked him - they'd also attacked his family; his husband and unborn child. Fortunately for Nott, he'd been given a life sentence in Azkaban for his use of the Cruciatus Curse on a pregnant person. It was only his family's influence and his youth that had kept the young man from receiving the Dementor's Kiss. It was also his family's influence that kept the whole incident out of the newspapers, which had the side benefit of keeping the Potters involvement, and Draco's pregnancy, from the public as well.

Harry had been trying to plan out how to punish the four miscreants that had participated in the attack on him and his husband. But as with most plans that deal with people who don't know about them, little went as planned.

The first didn't go according to plan, at all. In fact, it happened almost without the Gryffindor doing anything. Harry and Draco were headed down the stairs to the dungeons for double potions*, when Harry noticed that one of the other students on the stairs with them was one of the boys that had participated in the attack on his husband. His immediate response was red-hot rage, and an urge to push the boy down the stairs. He didn't, but his magic did, much to his surprise. It wasn't at all what he'd planned for this particular boy, but after the news from the hospital wing reported that he had a broken arm, a twisted knee, and a severe concussion, Harry deemed it almost enough. That evening he went flying with his invisibility cloak, Draco riding behind him. Madam Pomfrey felt quite sorry for the boy that evening, when he got a case of severe diarrhoea, with terrible cramps, on top of everything else that had happened to him.

Harry hadn't wanted to involve his husband in his revenge, but unfortunately the distance boundaries the bond placed on them forced him to take the blonde into his confidence. He had only hoped to get the Slytherin to agree to go along with him while he did the dirty work, but to his surprise (although he really shouldn't have been), Draco was coldly enthusiastic about the project. The blonde had been one of the targets, so of course wanted his revenge, as well. He mightn't be able to help, but he wanted to be there to see it.

Although the boy swore up and down that someone had pushed him, everyone who had been close to
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him on the stairs, Slytherin and Gryffindor both, testified that nobody had; nor had anyone seen a wand out; so it was assumed he was making up a story to cover for his own clumsiness.

While each House had its own quidditch team, only seven people from each House could be on it. That being the case, you could be sure that whenever the quidditch pitch wasn't being used by those teams, extemporaneous games would pop up. And two of Harry's targets played in these as often as possible. All he had to do was become a spectator - presumably trying to find Seeker replacements for Gryffindor and Slytherin.* Their presence, with their excuse of trying to spot potential replacements, spurred the players on to some rather outstanding plays - and risky moves. Eventually, a bludger came close enough to one of the targets so when Harry gave it a slight 'push' with his magic, it knocked him off his broom. The report from the hospital wing reported severe bruising, several broken bones, including three ribs, and a neck injury that would take some time to heal.. The couple did continue going to these games, and did make honest recommendations to their respective teams until after the tryouts, where their positions were filled.

The third managed to avoid two 'accidents,' before getting bitten by a poisonous snake Harry had chatted up. The adder had been quite friendly, although Draco kept a good distance away during their conversation, despite Harry's reassurances. "We, too, carry the mark of the lightning," it said. And it was true. Down the whole length of the adder's back was a long, thick, dark brown zig-zag mark that looked remarkably like a lightning bolt. That, plus Harry's ability to talk to her, and the reason for his request, convinced the normally shy snake to bite the boy Harry pointed out. He made sure she got away unhurt, and thanked her. Murder wasn't Harry's goal, however - only pain - so he also made sure someone was close by before he gave the signal to the snake, so they could get the boy to the hospital wing.

Finding another way to create an accident for number four, a rather nice-looking brunette, was harder. That, and Harry was losing his appetite for this revenge. He didn't like hurting people. After three, his anger was assuaged; but would it be justice to leave this one alone? Regretfully, he decided it wouldn't, and he knew his husband probably wouldn't be satisfied with anything less, anyway. That being the case... He sighed, resigned to the task, and set about trying to find a suitable punishment for the boy.

It was during Herbology that the idea came to him. Bubotuber puss. The liquid, when it comes in contact with bare skin, causes extremely painful boils that aren't easy to treat.

It wasn't hard to get into the hothouse where the tubers were grown that night, but harvesting the pus was a tricky process, and Draco wound up having to perform the job. The Slytherin insisted on it, despite Harry's protestations over possible danger to his pregnancy, when he found out his husband had never

harvested the puss from the tubers before. (It turned out Draco had harvested the stuff before, for a similar revenge. He'd given the rest of it to a 2nd-year to dilute and sell to complexion-challenged students. [The boy had needed book money, and knew not to reveal his source.]) However, the blonde did take precautions, donning protective gear kept in a locker in the building, and the fluid was harvested without incident. The tubers were then replanted, and the protective gear put back where it belonged, leaving little to no evidence of their having been there.

Not having rubber balloons, they put the bubotuber pus in a paper-thin, balloon-like structure be-spelled not to leak. They then put an invisibility spell on the bag, and planned to magically suspend it above the door of one of the boys toilets, with a recognition spell built into the trap, to cause it to break when their target walked under it. (The location was chosen because a toilet was the only door where one would likely be alone, when walking through it.) It merely awaited the appearance of the last miscreant. Harry and Draco could be on the other side of the castle, in Hogsmeade, or on the other side of the world, and it would still work. And when someone went looking for the culprit, Peeves would likely be given the blame, since he was infamous for similar, if less painful, pranks - and what could they do to a poltergeist?

There were a few close calls as they set up the trap, as a student or teacher came by, but they'd had the foresight to do the work from under Harry's invisibility cloak. As awkward and frustrating as that was, it did keep them from being discovered, and finally the bubotuber puss filled bag was in place. It was two days before the boy used that particular loo, but he was then in the hospital wing for three days before the boils were cured.

Harry was just relieved that it was all over, and hoped that he'd never have to anything like that again. Well, there was that little problem of the person who had talked to "The Daily Prophet." That was a different kind of situation altogether. Since that was a matter of privacy, instead of immediate endangerment, humiliation of the gossip would do.

Three days after their revenge on the attackers was complete, Blaise finally had proof of the identity of the person who'd talked to "The Daily Prophet," prompting that article in the gossip section. As usual when he wasn't with Hermione, he visited them at their small table in the Great Hall towards the end of supper.

"I've finally tracked down the culprit," Blaise revealed.

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*A/N: I've rewritten part of chapter fourteen to cover some of the restrictions Draco's pregnancy and the boys' bond has put on them.

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Chapter Eighteen by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Eighteen

"Come in, boys! Come in!" Dumbledore invited, jovially. "Sit down! May I offer you some coffee? Tea? Biscuits?"

"Um... No, thank you, Professor," Harry answered for them both. "May I ask why you called us here?" There were so many possibilities - not the least of which was their spree of retribution, which still weighed a bit on Harry's mind. He kept telling himself it was justified, but some part of him doubted that.

"I'd think the question would be why I haven't called you in before now," the old man said.

A feeling of dread settled in Harry's stomach. He reached for his husband's hand, and the blonde's damp palm told him that, despite his calm and collected exterior, Draco was nervous as well. Still, he had learned a few tricks from being around the Slytherin, so he only showed curiosity to the headmaster.

Harry was happy that the headmaster couldn't read his mind. The old man might be very experienced with legilimency, but Harry had practiced long and hard with his occlumency, to block out Voldemort. It was second nature to him, now. He doubted Professor Dumbledore could get through without a link, when Voldemort couldn't, with one. He hoped Draco's bastard of a father had taught it to him.

Draco was hoping the professor wouldn't use legilimency on his husband, and was thanking his gods that his sire had pounded - almost literally - occlumency into him. By the gods, but that bastard had tortured him until he was good at it!

Albus' next words first intensified, and then relieved their fears.

"Professors McGonagall, Snape, and I, have been discussing what we should do about you two. We all agree that you, Harry, will need some intensive training to handle the power your bond with Draco gives you, and you, Draco, need to be tested in controlled circumstances, in order to find out what, if anything, this bond has done with your abilities and magical power. To that end, you are to spend Sundays and two hours every weeknight in training. A training room will be expanded off of your apartment, and one or more of us will be there at those times. Saturdays you will have to yourselves."

Harry's mouth was agape with shock. Then what had been said sank in, and he closed his mouth with a snap. He didn't need to look at his husband to know that he, also, was angry. "It may have escaped your attention, Headmaster," Harry said, emphasizing the man's title sarcastically, "but we are not experimental animals, little children, or slaves for you to order about. Yes, we are students, but that does not mean we have lost all of our rights. If you want cooperation, you will ask for it - not order it. I expect you to treat us as thinking, feeling, and free adults. I expect us to be informed and included in any planning concerning ourselves, and we will have a say about any training!"

Draco was shocked, but in an admiring way. He'd been about to verbally blast the presumptuous old fool himself, but Harry was doing it handsomely. He decided to let him handle the situation, unless he was needed.

A brief look of shock could also be seen briefly on the old man's face, as though a pet bunny had suddenly sprouted fangs and devoured the wolf stalking it. Then a look of determination replaced the shock. "If you can't control your power, Mr. Potter, you are a danger to this school. I would hate to have you expelled."

Harry stood, Draco following his lead. "Threats, now? If you'll recall my words, Professor, I did not refuse training. But you want to expel us? Do. We have the resources to go to any wizarding school on the planet. Should you manage to somehow blackball us from them, we can hire tutors, and take our N.E.W.T.s at the Ministry. If you reconsider, we'll be in our rooms, packing. We will not be indebted to you

for anything, including our lodging."

The headmaster sat there, stunned, as they strode out of his office. For years, he'd had the boy eating of the palm of his hand, doing anything asked of him. Was this that Slytherin, Draco's, doing? A tempting solution, but perhaps not. He had noticed Harry changing since the two had bonded, but it was towards being at least somewhat more responsible. Surely a good thing? The boy had seemed to mature, but for him to have lost all control over the dark-haired Gryffindor? Somewhere over the past weeks, Harry Potter had, if not grown up, then certainly found a self-confidence, pride, and decisiveness he'd never had before.

Outside, in the halls leading to their apartment, Draco had some questions; mainly about his husband's sanity.

"Have you gone totally bonkers, Harry?" Draco asked. "Packing?? You had me cheering you, until you said that. Where are we supposed to go? Your still-sorry excuse for a mansion?"

"Our 'still-sorry excuse for a mansion,' love," Harry said, correcting his husband. "But no. For now, an inn room in Hogsmeade. If we're allowed to continue going to school here, we'll buy or build a small cottage there. If not, we'll go to Grimmauld Place until we find another school. It'll probably mean studying every waking hour to catch up, but..." He shrugged. "Training is a good idea, but I won't have him dictating our lives to us. If we're expelled, we can give them one month to find another meeting place; but I don't think we will be." Harry smirked. "He's expecting me to save their arses from Voldemort."

Draco grabbed Harry's wrist, braced his feet, and leaned back, bringing his husband to a jolting halt. When the Gryffindor looked around at the blonde, with an angrily questioning look on his face, Draco grabbed his head, and firmly kissed him.

It was a very off-balance, and confused Harry that emerged from that kiss. "What...?"

"I love you, you git," Draco said, grinning. "Now, let's go get packed."

. . .

"Harry, what about Vol... 'He Who Must Not Be Named?' And Creevy?" the blonde asked, as everything was packing itself.

"They can find their own lodgings," Harry joked.

"Harry!"

The green-eyed young man sobered. "I think, between us, we can ward against Voldemort; especially if we do it while linked. Creevy is another matter."

Blaise' revelation that the gossip culprit was, indeed, Colin Creevy, had come as no surprise, though Harry would have much preferred it to be Filch. With the news, 'Colin' had lost his given-name status with the scarred Gryffindor. His private life had been made public - grist for the gossip mill - one too many times; and this time, it had also involved someone he cared deeply for. But they hadn't had time to so much as plan a suitable retribution for the boy, before Dumbledore's summons.

"Is everything packed?" the Gryffindor asked.

Looking around, Draco finally nodded. "Almost everything," he said.

"Then let's see if we can find Creevy."

Draco smirked. "I swear, Harry; you're beginning to think and act more like a Slytherin every day."

Harry raised an eyebrow at his husband. "Was that supposed to be a compliment?" he teased, then clutched his upper arm, laughing, after his husband backhanded him there.

At this hour of the evening, Colin should be in the Gryffindor common room, so that's where they headed. As they walked, they were thinking, suggesting various punishments for the gossip, each of which the other found some fault with; for being too vicious, too forgiving, et cetera. "How about 'Pisceum Veridicus'?" Harry asked.

Draco started laughing. "Brilliant!" he opined.

Harry grinned.

Since Harry didn't live in Gryffindor Tower any longer, he hadn't asked for the password, and nobody had thought to give it to him; but he was enthusiastically greeted when someone answered his knock. Draco was greeted civilly, but was only reluctantly granted entrance when 'The Boy Who Lived' made it plain they were a package deal. Being accepting of Harry Potter's spouse in the common areas of the school was one thing; allowing a Slytherin, even one married to a Gryffindor, into Gryffindor Tower, was another.

"Is Colin around?" Harry asked the second-year that had admitted them.

Although he'd tried to ask the question casually, saying Creevy's given name had stressed his ability to keep his temper, and the tension had shown in his voice, causing the girl to look askance at him. Still, she figured it was none of her business what upper-classmen got up to. "I think I saw him around; I'll see if I can find him for you, Harry," she said, taking liberties with his name.

Draco had also noted Harry's slip, and took his lover's hand, giving it a squeeze. When Harry looked at him, the blonde gave him a smile, hoping to calm him down enough to regain control. Moving into his husband's arms, and ignoring the curious stares of the other people in the room, he whispered "The Chinese have a saying, love; 'Revenge is a dish best served cold.' Keep calm. He won't know what hit him." Leaning back a bit to look into his husband's amazing green eyes, he smiled again. Upon Harry's return smile, he gave him a small kiss, then again moved to his spouse' side.

When Colin showed up a minute later, he was almost bouncing with excitement. Harry Potter had come looking for him! Usually the raven-haired Gryffindor assiduously avoided him. But that was understandable, of course. Harry was brave, but he was also very modest. It was up to people like him,

Colin Creevy, to make sure the world knew how great Harry truly was. "Hi, Harry!" he enthused, with a grin. "What can I do for you?" He thought the contrast of the couple - the pale-skinned, white-blonde, silver-eyed young man next to the black-haired, emerald-green eyed, lightly-tanned 'Boy Who Lived,' made a wonderful picture. His ever-present camera was hung around his neck, and he automatically reached for it.

"Touch that camera, Creevy, and know what pain is," Draco said coldly, wand suddenly in hand.

Colin's hands stopped in mid-reach. His eyes widened as he looked at Harry's co-husband, then looked to his hero for succour. When he saw those normally warm green eyes looking at him, as hard as the gem used to describe their colour, he sighed in defeat, and dropped his hands to his side. "But you make such a beautiful couple," he complained.

Draco looked slightly pleased for a moment, before he blanked all expression. Harry ignored the compliment. "Do you remember talking to "The Daily Prophet" about a month ago, Creevy?" he asked.

Colin frowned; but not only because Harry had addressed him by his last name. "They put it in the gossip column!" he fumed, ignoring the frantic hand-waving some of his friends were doing. "Your marriage should have been on the front page!" Those same friends slumped back in defeat; some briefly covering their faces, others looking on in horror, wondering what was going to happen next.

Colin's innocent enthusiam, and honest reactions, made Harry decide to give the boy a chance. "You're the president of..." He paused, a look of distaste on his face. "...my fan club, correct?" He retained a pained expression, at having to acknowledge its existence.

Colin brightened. "We've got over fifty members, just here in Hogwarts!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

The raven-haired boy, preparing to lay the next brick of logic to his argument, was arrested in mid-breath. "That implies there are more elsewhere?" Harry said hesitantly, dreading what he might hear next.

Creevy nodded happily. "Six hundred and ninety-seven throughout England, so far," he declared proudly.

The slightest trace of a snicker escaped Draco's control, caused by his husband's obvious discomfort with this evidence of his fame.

Harry shot the blonde a dark look, then turned back to the gossip. "Regardless. Do you believe that gives you some right to my life?"

A confused look came over the short boy's face. "What are you talking about, Harry?"

"I would appreciate it if you would stop using my given name. Why do you think it's perfectly alright to tell the world what is going on in my life?"

Colin was now very perplexed. "What have I done? You're the symbol of hope for the whole wizarding world. Everyone wants to know what's happening to you."

"And what of my right to privacy?"

"What? But they have the right to know!" a very confused Colin Creevy protested.

"He's not going to understand, Harry," Draco said.

The raven-haired young man nodded, reluctantly. "Pisceum Veridicus!" he incanted, sharply.

Everyone was watching Colin, waiting to see what Harry's spell would do to the boy.

"Harry! Your wand!" Draco whispered to him, urgently.

Harry froze for a split-second, then casually dropped his hand to his side. When his hand again came into sight, it had his wand in it.

"Wha-" Colin started to say, but suddenly something was exiting his mouth. A smallish fish. A carp, to be precise, but it was far from fresh. The smell of spoiled fish permeated the air.

"Colin sleeps starkers," it said, as it finally slipped free.

"What have you done to me?" Colin asked, a betrayed look on his red face.

"That spell will last for six full hours," Harry informed him. "A fish every three minutes, more or less, each one telling something about your life. Let's see how you deal with everyone knowing your private business."

"Why?" Colin gasped.

"If I want something known, I will tell it. My business is my own!" As he spoke, another fish had started to emerge from the mousy-haired boy's mouth. As it slipped free, it spoke.

"Colin likes Parvati Patil," it said.

With that, Harry turned, and swept out of the common room, Draco close behind him, leaving a lot of very shocked students, most holding their noses, behind him.

. . .

"It's a bit of a dump," Draco said, commenting on the room they'd rented in Hogsmeade.

"It was either this, or the Shrieking Shack, pet. And it's only for tonight, I'm sure. We should know something by tomorrow, and then we'll know what to do about finding a nicer, more permanent residence."

Draco came up to him, nestling into his husband's chest and nuzzling into the crook of his neck. "I think you may have been just a bit impulsive, love," he murmured.

"You think?" Harry said, with a slightly sarcastic lilt to the words.

Draco lifted his head and looked at his spouse. "If you realized that, then why...?" The blonde let the question drift off, knowing his husband would know what he meant.

"Stubborn Gryffindor pride, of course," Harry admitted, wryly. "I have learned some bad habits in that tower - or maybe it's just Ron that rubbed off on me, after all this time."

Draco's face twisted in distaste at mention of the red-head. 'The Weasel,' as he still privately thought of him, had apologised, and very prettily, just a couple of days after their distasteful meal at the Gryffindor table, but the friendship with his Harry was still strained, even though he'd done his best not to interfere. "Then there's no need to stay here, is there?" he asked, wanting their own bed back at Hogwarts.

"Let's have supper out, tonight," the Gryffindor suggested. "If nobody comes to fetch us before morning, we'll go back, and I'll kiss the old man's arse, alright?" It galled him to even think of apologising to the manipulative old man, but Hogwarts was far safer for Draco and his unborn child, if only because there were more people around to help protect them.

Draco kissed him. "Those lips better not kiss any other arse than mine, Mr. Potter," he said. "No need to grovel, either. I can see I still have a lot to teach you about how to handle people."

"You don't like how I handle you?" Harry teased.

Draco blushed, and hid his face against his husband's neck. "I love how you handle me, you git," he admitted, shyly.

Harry caressed the blonde head on his shoulder, his expression sobering. "Draco, pet..."

The Slytherin was luxuriating in his husband's touch. "Hm?"

"When were you going to tell me you've been throwing up, mornings?"

Draco stilled. "How did you find out?" he asked, quietly.

"I'm not deaf, love," Harry replied, gently. "Morning sickness?"

Draco nodded against his husband's shoulder. "I'm sorry. I didn't want to spoil things for you."

The Gryffindor took hold of his husband's shoulders, and gently pushed him just far enough away that he could comfortably look into his silvery eyes. "It might not be pleasant, my own, but the only thing that could spoil this for me, is if you shut me out," he said, earnestly.

The Slytherin felt his heart rise into his throat, and his eyes brightened with unshed tears. He reached up, and cradled Harry's dark head in his hands, then drew him close, and kissed him, fervently. "I'm not going to wake you up to watch me hurl, Harry," he whispered, when he broke the kiss, "but I won't chase you out if you follow me."

"If we're allowed back, we need to go see Madam Pomfrey; if not, we'll go to St. Mungo's. We still need to make sure the baby is alright, and... Actually, love, why didn't you get an anti-nausea potion from Professor Snape?"

"If you haven't noticed, Harry, he's been treating me almost as coldly as he treats you."

Harry frowned. Actually, he hadn't noticed. Draco wasn't in the classroom with him, so he didn't see them interact except when he and his husband were together; and then he'd put Snape's attitude down to his usual reticence with him. "Then Madam Pomfrey?"

Draco's cheeks tinted. "She would have told you, and I thought you'd start worrying about me," he admitted, toying with Harry's collar.

The Gryffindor tilted his lover's chin up until their eyes met. "And if I did? You're strong, Draco, but you needn't be that strong. I want to help, and if I worry a little, it just means I love you, and I'm concerned about you. Alright?"

Draco nodded, a tear slipping down one cheek as he hid his face on Harry's shoulder again, the Gryffindor's robe drying his face. He had thought he'd stopped struggling against their bond and his affections for the green-eyed boy long ago, but this conversation proved him wrong, as he felt himself slipping further into his husband's spell - a spell woven only of love and caring. But he still didn't want Harry to see him crying; not even tears of happiness. The day might come when he wouldn't mind, but not yet.

"I'm feeling a bit peckish," Harry said, to change the subject to something lighter. "Are you about ready for supper?"

Grateful for the diversion, Draco smiled at his husband, and nodded.

"Where do you recommend?" the raven-haired boy asked.

"The 'Café de Paris,' on the Cote D'Azure," Draco suggested facetiously, "but I suppose we should probably order something sent here. We might be spotted by a Death Eater in the inn, or any other place

we could go in Hogsmeade."

"Mm..." Harry hummed, in agreement. "But someday, we'll all visit those places."

Draco was confused. "All?"

In answer, Harry gently put his hand on the blonde's abdomen. "All three of us," he elaborated.

Draco blushed, embarrassed. He was the one pregnant, and he hadn't caught that?

. . .

They were relaxing after a specially ordered, delicious supper of char-broiled sirloin steak, cooked rare, buttered asparagus tips that were still slightly firm, potatoes au gratin, and a mixed leaf and fruit salad with a balsamic vinegar dressing, when there was a knock on the door.

Belatedly throwing up several protective wards, Harry went to the door.

"Death Eaters wouldn't have knocked, love," Draco said, grinning.

"Who's there?" Harry asked loudly, blushing. His husband was right, of course.

"It's me, Harry," said a much-beloved voice.

"Remus?!" Harry exclaimed, throwing open the door.

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Chapter 19 by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr, aka Phoenix For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Nineteen

"Remus, what-" Harry interrupted himself, when he saw his old friend wasn't alone. "Oh. Hello, Professor Snape. Won't you both come in?"

For once, the potions master didn't make a snide comment.

"How are you doing, Harry?" the werewolf inquired, just as they entered. Business could wait.

"I've been doing much better, lately," Harry said, with a mischievous grin. "I don't recall - have you met you my husband, the former Draco Malfoy?"

Remus stopped dead in his tracks, consternation playing freely on his face. "Husband? Malfoy?" With a visible effort, he pulled himself together. "Why are you with a Malfoy? What game are you playing at, Harry?"

"Oh, it's no game, Lupin," Snape remarked dryly. "I had the misfortune of being at their wedding."

During this by-play, Draco had joined his husband, and Harry had drawn him into his arms. The Slytherin wasn't sure he liked being shown off like that, but he would have been uncomfortable with the werewolf in any case, so he let it be. He felt a little safer, with Harry holding him.

"It's true, Moony. It began as just a means of providing Draco with more legal protection from his father, but I couldn't be happier," the dark-haired lad explained. "But as glad as I am to see you, what are you doing here?"

"I've been re-hired as the DADA instructor," the bewildered man said. "Dumbledore said you'd left the grounds with another student, and sent Snape and I..." He turned to the potions professor. "You knew!" he accused. "You knew, and you didn't inform me! Why?"

"I thought it would be amusing," Snape drawled, with a smirk. "And it has been,"

"Why, you..." Remus started snarling, but remembering the presence of students, and his newly-acquired position, he controlled himself.

"Why don't you sit down, Moony?" Harry invited, again. "Or should I call you 'Professor,' now?"

"I am here in an official capacity, Harry," the former Marauder replied, then turned to sit the only empty chair in the room; Snape occupying the other one. "But I want to know more about this - this relationship."

Harry moved to the bed, leading Draco by the hand, and they made themselves comfortable, Harry leaning back against the headboard, with Draco sitting very closely, and leaning on him. Wrapping an arm around the blonde's waist, the green-eyed young man asked "What would you like to know?"

The former Gryffindor took in how comfortable the two young men were with each other; the kind of ease that only comes from being with a trusted lover. "How did this all come about?" he inquired

With minimal prompting from Harry, Draco again told his edited tale, and unlike the last time, got through most of it before his husband had to take over.

"And that's pretty much it in a nutshell, Remus," Harry summarised, with a shrug.

The werewolf's eyes narrowed with suspicion. Since he had senses quite a bit sharper than normal

humans, he could hear minor tones in a voice, smell odours, and detect minor muscle movements that others might miss - and he knew how to read them. "You're hiding something, Harry," he accused.

"A few things," Harry admitted, uneasily, "but we're not ready to talk about them, yet. What we've told you is the truth; the rest..."

"The rest really isn't any of your business, Lupin," Snape interrupted, coming to their rescue. Both boys looked at him, in some surprise.

The werewolf rounded on the man, and was about to retort, when Harry intervened. "I'm sorry, Remus, but it really is better if you don't know, both for your safety, and ours," he said. "As far as I know, only two other people know the whole story; Professor Snape, and the headmaster."

Snape nodded, in confirmation.

Lupin growled, but subsided, and turned back to the boys on the bed. "And - your husband? His smell is off. If I didn't know..."

Draco paled, his hands clutching Harry's.

The werewolf, noting the reaction to his words, just nodded. "Not here," he said.

Harry let out a breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding, and noted that his husband had gone a bit limp in relief. Their relief was short-lived, however.

"And you are not at the school because?" Professor Lupin asked.

Harry noticed the change in tone and demeanour, but it was Draco, whose body had stiffened with the question, who replied, with some indignation. "Because a certain old bearded gent, who bears a

remarkable likeness to a billy goat, decided he could order our lives, and our time, outside of school hours, without consultation or reference to the general behaviour of polite society; to whit: asking for our cooperation."

"So Professor Dumbledore told you to do something, instead of asking, and you decided to run away from home?" the werewolf summarised.

It sounded so childish, the way Remus put it. "Almost," Harry said, casting a hopeless, but pleading eye at the potions master for help. But since the man hadn't been a witness to the headmaster's cavalier ordering of their lives... "But..."

The professor of potions interrupted yet again, to Harry's great surprise, and relief. "If I know our esteemed headmaster, he likely made plans that included these two-" he sneered "lovebirds, and told them what they were going to do, without talking to them about it."

"Exactly!" Harry exclaimed, at the same time as Draco's clipped "Quite."

"And this excuses your leaving school grounds because...?"

The werewolf was relentless!

"When we - I - demanded that we be treated with more respect, he threatened to expel us," Harry said. "That made me angry, and I told him if he wanted to do that, then he should just do it; that we could go to another school, or hire tutors." He blushed as he then admitted "Then I told him we weren't going to be indebted to him, even for our lodgings, so we packed, and left."

A strange sound came from the potion master's direction.

Upon looking at the man, Harry noticed that he had his head bowed, one hand held to his forelock, hiding his face. His shoulders were shaking, and strange, choked-off sounds kept coming from him. "Sir?"

he ventured. All three of them were looking at the dark-haired man with concern. "Professor Snape? Are you okay?"

All at once, Snape threw his head back, and the other three were witness to a terrifying sight: Severus Snape had tears of laughter running down his face, as he started howling with mirth. No-one had seen the professor with so much as a genuine smile in years. That he was now almost helpless with laughter seemed, at the very least, to be cause for concern. What could have caused it?

"P- p- perfect D-Dum-Dumbledore - stymied! By a - a child!" the man finally managed to gasp out. Dumbledore had built up such a reputation for knowing everything, having an answer for everything, and being in control of every situation - or at least appearing to be - and in one fell blow, Harry had ruined his record. Harry-bloody-Potter had called the old wizard's bluff, and utterly thwarted him. It deeply appealed to Snape's Slytherin character.

Harry was affronted, and looked it. He might be young, but he was hardly a child! But then the humour of the situation sank in, and a slow smile spread across his face as they all sat there, watching what might well be a once-in-a-lifetime event, and waiting for the man to get himself back under control.

As the potions master's laughter subsided, he noticed everyone looking at him, which prompted him to regain his normal demeanour, and dour expression, quickly. Producing a handkerchief seemingly from nowhere, he dried his face, and his eyes. "If any of you so much as breathe a word of this to anyone..." he threatened.

"Don't worry, professor; we won't ruin your reputation as a sour, humourless bastard," Draco said, smirking. The two Gryffindors looked at him, not believing their ears. "But now that you're here, I do need some assistance with - ah... a few potions."

Ah. Harry understood. Blackmail.

The werewolf looked as though something had been confirmed for him, as well. "Nausea?" he asked the blonde.

Snape ignored them both. "Potter," he began. When both boys looked at him expectantly, he scowled, and began again. "Harry Potter..."

Draco was grateful for the diversion; it allowed him to avoid answering the werewolf's question.

"To avoid confusion, Professor, why don't you just call me 'Harry?'" the green-eyed young man suggested.

Severus gave a short nod, in acknowledgement. "And you may call me 'Professor Snape.' It will make a change from your usual familiarity," he said, dryly.

Harry gave the man a sharp look. Had that been humour?

"As I was saying - Harry - you have redeemed yourself. Anyone who can foil that old fool..." he trailed off, fighting a smile, the corners of his mouth twitching.

Harry looked at the man, astonished. But as the saying went, 'the proof is in the pudding.' There were other matters that needed attending to. "So I take it we haven't been expelled?" he asked.

"I think you know very well, Mr. Potter, that he wouldn't do that," the potions master replied.

Harry smiled, ruefully. "Not while he needs me to be his weapon, anyway." he replied.

Snape's estimation of the boy went up. His wording didn't imply ego, but a feeling of being used. That, plus his face-off with the headmaster, argued an acknowledgement that he was seen as more of a tool, than a person; at least by the headmaster.

"You will need to serve some sort of punishment for leaving school grounds, Harry," Remus said,

rejoining the conversation.

Harry shook his head. "No," he replied.

"Harry's right," Draco affirmed. "What we did was impulsive, but it wasn't wrong."

"Thank you, love, but I was the one who put us in this predicament; not you," Harry replied. Looking back up to the two teachers, he said "But I will not accept a punishment for doing what I felt I needed to do to protect our rights," he continued, interrupting his husband's beginning attempt to argue the point.

Snape nodded. "If the headmaster insists, I will insist on seeing to your punishment, and make sure it's token. However," he continued, riding over the boys' attempts to thank him, "your stunt with young Mr. Creevy will not be so easily handled. Professor McGonagall has some words to say to you two on that subject. I believe your - punishment - of him was quite appropriate, considering the reports of the incident I heard, but I don't recommend you try the same tactics with that woman as you have with us." He allowed a small smile touch his lips. "It was that very Slytherin act that made me agree to come after you two, tonight. Your doing, Mr... Draco?" he inquired.

The blonde shook his head, with a smirk. "All Harry's idea, actually. I wanted to put him in a body bind, turn him red, and run him up a flag pole, starkers. But 'Pisceum Viridicus' was so much more fitting, don't you think?"

The dark-haired professor smirked as well, but didn't answer.

"I'll accept any reasonable punishment for that; I just hope Creevy learned his lesson," Harry said.

Remus had been sitting there, listening to all of this, and not believing his ears. This didn't sound like the Harry he knew, this sounded like another Slytherin. He kept waiting for 'Harry' to make an appearance, and he hadn't. He commented on the fact. "Harry - you've changed."

The dark-haired boy nodded. "I have responsibilities," he replied. "We're a family, now, Draco and I." He smiled at his husband as he added "And, I guess, I stopped being afraid of Slytherin qualities." Looking back to his friend, and now teacher, he continued. "I stopped being afraid of myself at the same time," he added.

Unfortunately, that last statement just confused the werewolf more. "What? Why were you afraid of yourself? You never mentioned anything...?" He was feeling quite lost. He had grown quite fond of this boy, and now he was finding that there were parts of his personality he hadn't even known existed. That didn't change his feelings, but it did make him feel quite adrift.

Harry shrugged. "I'm sure Dumbledore already knows; the Hat probably told him. And I can count on your discretion?" he asked, aiming the question at both men. At Lupin's nod, and Snape's indignant scowl that it could be doubted, he continued. "The Hat wanted to put me in Slytherin. I asked it to put me in any other house - it did."

Snape's face went blank, but the look on Remus' face was priceless, and Draco pressed his face into Harry's shoulder for a few moments to muffle his sniggering, as he tried to regain control. Harry just grinned.

"And your reason for refusing Slytherin House?" the potions master asked, stiffly.

"I'm afraid I was largely responsible for that, Professor," Draco quickly said, sobering. "I'm afraid my attempts to impress Harry were a bit off the mark."

"You were a factor, love," Harry agreed, "but Hagrid made it sound as though only bad people came out of Slytherin." Seeing Snape's scowl, he quickly expanded on his answer. He didn't want this man angry with the friendly half-giant. "That's not exactly what he said," he explained. "He said all the witches and wizards who went bad came from Slytherin. But everyone I talked to said similar things. I know it's wrong now, but I didn't know anything about the wizarding world, then." He groaned, to himself. That wasn't much better, although it was the truth. "Hagrid's really a nice person, just a bit - mixed up, at times," he said, hoping to salvage something.

Snape's face remained a mask, hiding any feelings or reactions. "We'd best be getting back to Hogwarts,"

he said.

Having put his friend in a rather sticky situation, Harry was more humble. "Yes, sir," he replied.

Draco looked at him in some surprise, since they hadn't planned to return until morning. Seeing Harry's expression, he understood, but... "Actually, Professor," he said, "we plan to return in the morning. We've already paid for the room, and would like to make use of it."

"You've damped all the room surfaces, then?" Snape said with a slight smirk.

Draco blushed.

The smirk grew. "So you're planning a platonic evening? Or were you planning to encourage the townsfolk to increase their population?" he asked, flatly.

That remark earned a sharp, quizzical glance from the new DADA professor, but he filed it away to follow up at another time.

"No need to rub it in," the blonde muttered, mutinously.

"Then I suggest you get off that bed, and return to your rooms," Lupin, who had extraordinarily sharp hearing, replied, before the potions master could sling yet another barb.

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They had only been gone an evening, but returning to those rooms felt like putting on a pair of stale y-fronts; uncomfortable, at best. Finding a note from Professor McGonagall on the couch table to report to her first thing in the morning, did nothing to assuage that feeling.
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Harry magicked a fire in the grate to take the edge off the chilly dampness, and Draco expanded their trunks and luggage before they went to bed. They were feeling somewhat defeated, and cuddled to comfort each other.

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The next morning as they were showering, running their hands over each other as they always did, Harry ran his hands over Draco's buttocks. "Have I ever told you what a lovely arse you have, love?" he asked, sexily.

Affecting a bored tone of voice, the blonde drawled "So tell me something I don't know," then couldn't help smirking a bit.

Harry smacked that piece of anatomy.

"Ow! That stung, you brute!"

Harry snickered, while soothing the spot he'd smacked. "Brute? That's so gay, love!"

Draco smirked, nuzzling the Gryffindor's cheek. "Well, in case you haven't noticed..."

Harry held him closer, suckling on his husband's pale throat, the Slytherin arching his head back to give him better access.

The green-eyed young man reached down, grasping his husband's hardness, and slowly stroked it, eliciting a moan from the blonde. With a lightning-quick move, Draco brought his head up, dislodging Harry from his neck, and fastened his teeth lightly on the Gryffindor's neck, alternately suckling, licking, and biting, creating a livid love bite in the process.

Having made his mark, the blonde dropped to his knees, wrapped his arms around Harry's waist, and
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buried his face in his husband's crotch, the hard length of his husband's cock laying up alongside his head, and inhaled deeply. The warm water had washed away most of Harry's scent, but the slightest trace of muskiness remained, igniting a fire in Draco's brain. Opening his mouth, he engulfed Harry's length, then slowly slid it most of the way out, swirling his tongue around the head and under the foreskin, then licking the slit, tasting the slightly salty bitterness that told of leaking pre-cum., then moving his mouth in a twisting movement as he again took in his husband's hardness.

Draco's move had taken Harry entirely by surprise, anticipating his own plans for the blonde. But passion claimed him as his husband's mouth drove him nearly insane from the suction and sensations. They had only tasted each other once before this, so where had Draco learned what he was doing? Right now, he didn't care; but he filed the question away for later.

Draco caressed his lover's thighs as he worked on the hardened flesh that gave him so much pleasure in bed, then cupped Harry's bollocks in his hands, gently rolling them, and tugging on his husband's scrotum. Harry's hands moved from running his fingers through his hair, to his shoulders, and back again.

"Oh, Draco... Gods, that feels - ahhhh... Mm... Yes, love," Harry moaned, encouraging his lover. His husband's ministrations were having the desired effect. He could feel the pressure, the tension, building. Taking Draco's head in his hands, he started thrusting, his husband taking all of him, the blonde swallowing in order to keep from gagging as his length plunged repeatedly into the Slytherin's mouth and throat. "Oh, baby! I'm..." And then he was spurting, flooding his husband's mouth and throat. To his surprise and alarm, considering the expertise he'd shown with his fellatio, Draco started choking and sputtering, fighting to get off Harry's length, to breathe.

Fighting the effects of his orgasm, Harry dropped to his knees, wrapping one arm around his husband as the warm water continued to rain on them, and with the other, lifted the blonde's now-gasping face to his, so he could determine his state. "Baby! Are you alright! Did I hurt you? Gods, I was so stupid! I-"

"Harry, shut up," Draco said, abruptly, his breathing evening out. "I'm okay, I just wasn't expecting - so much! I mean; I've seen you cum before, but I didn't realize..."

A confused frown on his face, Harry carefully said "But surely you've done that before; you couldn't be that good on your first attempt?"

Draco lifted a hand to Harry's cheek, caressing it. "I told you about the dildos? Well,..." his face was blazing.

Harry was also blushing. "And of course, there's no..."

"Exactly."

"I'm sorry," the Gryffindor said.

"I already told you, I just wasn't.."

Harry was shaking his head. "No. Not for that - for thinking you'd... Not that it would have made any difference!"

"What are going you on about?" Draco asked, sitting back on his haunches.

"Well... You know - other guys?"

Draco frowned. "You couldn't know, I suppose."

"We're sixteen; I couldn't have blamed you if you had," Harry said, apologetically.

The blonde's frown deepened. "You?" he asked.

The dark-haired young man shook his head again. "No. I had opportunities, of course, but-"

"So did I, Harry," Draco said, coldly.

Harry gently kissed the cheek that was presented when the lips were turned away. "As beautiful as you are, I'd be surprised if you hadn't," he said gently. "I'm even more surprised that you didn't take advantage of them."

"I'm a pureblood, Harry," Draco said aloofly. "And pure-blood's don't engage in casual sex."

"And that's codswallop, pet," Harry said, amused. "What's the real reason?"

Draco's blush traveled clear down to his sternum. "You do realize that we're having this conversation nude, kneeling in the shower? We're going to miss breakfast and have to go to classes hungry. And we still have to see McGonagall," Draco said, trying to avoid the question.

"Draco...?"

The blonde refused to meet his husband's eyes. He mumbled something that Harry couldn't quite catch, even as close as they were.

"What was that?" the Gryffindor asked.

"I said..." Draco swallowed, then expanded on what he'd been going to say. "You spoiled me for anyone else, Harry. First I wanted you for a friend, then... Then when I realized I wanted you - the other way, nobody else was good enough. No one else measured up." Finally looking his husband in the face, he said "I don't do casual very well, Harry. I just couldn't do it. The furthest I could go was some snogging. And even that didn't feel right," he confessed.

"Parkinson?"

The blonde's face twisted into a mask of disgust. "My - sire's idea of a suitable match," he sneered.

Harry hugged him in sympathy, then got to his feet, reaching down to help his husband up, as well. "You're not showing yet," he noted.

"It's only two months..." A panicked look crossed his face. "Two months, Harry! Pomfrey said she'd be able to tell if..."

Harry gathered the naked, wet young into his arms. "Later today, alright? We've a lot of other things to take care of, as well. McGonagall can wait. You need to eat, and so do I." He gave the blonde a long, lingering kiss, full of promise. "And sometime today, I'm going to try to give you the same pleasure you just gave me," he said, huskily.

Draco shivered. "You're evil, Harry! Now I'm not going to be able to think of anything else!" he complained. "Why don't we skive off Herbology?"

The Gryffindor gave a low laugh. "I think we're already in enough trouble, pet," he said, turning off the water and reaching for the towels.

Draco pouted, hoping to change his husband's mind, but only received a chuckle in reply. "Not going to work today, my love," Harry asserted fondly, but apologetically.

After a rather rushed breakfast, they walked to Professor McGonagall's office. They only had about fifteen minutes before their first class.

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Chapter Twenty by Draeconin
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Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Brenna Starr, aka Phoenix For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty

"Well, gentlemen? Do you have anything to say for yourselves?" the head of Gryffindor House asked.

"As though it would make a difference if we did!" Draco remarked, before his husband could speak up.

Looking over her glasses, Minerva McGonagall replied "I am not an ogre, Mr. Ma - Potter. However, there were several witnesses."

"Did any of them mention why I hexed Creevy?" a rather peeved Harry asked.

"They reported that you seemed to have a problem with publicity," she replied, blandly.

"That's why Dumbledore banned that particular issue of the "Prophet" from Hogwarts, isn't it?" Harry accused, his face slowly becoming flushed as his anger grew.

The Transfiguration professor looked slightly taken aback at his having that knowledge.

"My life is not everyone's business," the Gryffindor said, his voice taut. "Why does it seem that everyone believes they have the right to poke their noses into it, and make decisions for me? At least Slytherins don't get all sanctimonious when they do something to someone! I am so sick of those Gryff-" Harry stopped, shocked with himself. He was shocked that he'd rant at one of his favourite teachers, but especially so for what he'd been about to say. "I- I'm sorry, Professor," he stammered.

Draco looked concerned as he gazed at his husband, and took his hand, giving it a little squeeze.

"I should think so, Mr. Potter!" Minerva said, acerbically. "You are, after all, a Gryffindor yourself!"

Harry slowly shook his head. "I shouldn't have been," he almost whispered. "I really shouldn't have been." He looked at his husband, face pale.

The Slytherin moved behind him, and gently enfolded his green-eyed lover in his arms. Draco wasn't overly fond of initiating overt shows of affection in front of others, although he accepted them from his husband, but he knew when to make an exception.

Harry, comforted somewhat by the loving arms around his waist, and the blonde head lying on his shoulder, looked back to his now somewhat-concerned Head of House. "Just - tell us what our punishment is, please?" he requested, quietly.

Minerva debated with herself about which of various courses of action she should take - not about the punishment for hexing Colin Creevy, but about Harry's behaviour just now. She decided to talk it over with the headmaster. Harry had almost condemned his own House - and his contention afterward that he shouldn't have been placed there, as weak as it had been, had been quite definite, and was quite troubling. And since she was concerned about the boy, she reduced the punishment she'd planned. "A week of detention with Professor Snape, Mr. Potter - for both of you, of course."

Draco gave her a very cold glare.

Harry nodded. "May we go, now? We have Herbology, and not much time to get there."

The professor looked at the two: Harry, looking a little shaken and pale, and Draco (Harry's husband! She still couldn't quite get used to that), trying to comfort him. It still seemed wrong, but it looked - right; natural. But she had a job to do. She couldn't let sentiment sway her too much. "From now on, Mr. Potter, you will bring your grievances to an instructor, or the headmaster, instead of dealing with it on your own," she lectured. "You will both report to Professor Snape for your detentions starting this evening, at eight. Now, you may go."

Once out in the hall, Draco asked "Are you alright, love? You look as though you've seen a dementor -

from too close."

Harry managed a smile. "Yours, you mean?" he weakly joked, referring to the prank Draco and his cronies had tried to pull on him in their third year. Then he shook his head. "Just a bit of an identity crisis, pet," he said, answering the question.

"Perhaps you should ask Dumbledore to re-Sort you?"

The Gryffindor smiled fondly at his husband "What good would that do, Draco? We're not living with our Houses, and can you imagine what the reaction would be? Everyone would blame you - no matter that the Hat only takes into account what's in your personality." He shook his head. "No. It would cause far too many problems. I may be mostly Slytherin in everything but name, but I'm still Gryffindor enough to do what has to be done."

There was nothing Draco could say about that, although the implication of his husband's last sentence - that Slytherins couldn't, or wouldn't, do what had to be done... Well, it stung a bit, but he took his lover's state of mind into account, and let it slide. What Harry had said was logical - and true - so he tried to make a joke of it. "You won't mind, then, if I think of you as my 'undercover Slytherin?'"

Harry laughed, appreciating the blonde's effort, pantomimed a melodrama spy for a few steps, eliciting a laugh from the blonde, and then took his husband's hand.

They walked in silence for a while, during which they neared the hothouses where the Herbology classes were held. "I am rather sorry I lumped them all together like that, though. Just because most of them get on my nerves, is no reason to damn them all. There are a lot of good people in that House," Harry remarked.

Draco shrugged. Harry had said that before, but "I like Granger," he admitted.

"And Ron?" the Gryffindor inquired.

The blonde made a face. "I'll put up with him, for your sake, but I'd rather not have to," he replied honestly.

"Well, with me not being there to help, he's a lot busier training with the quidditch team, and the few times we've seen him, he's talked mostly about that, and some fourth-year Hufflepuff. So it's not like he's around, much."

Draco smirked. He ignored the part about the Hufflepuff. He wasn't the least bit interested in the red-head's love life. "The Slytherin team has been scrambling more than usual, as well," he said. "Blaise says our replacements are pretty good, but still not a spot on what we were."

Harry gave the blonde a quick, one-armed hug as they passed through the hothouse door he held open for him. "I miss it, too," he commiserated.

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At lunch, a note was delivered to their table, directing them to a meeting with the headmaster in the space between their afternoon classes. Harry and Draco had known that such a meeting would be demanded, and had actually expected to be called before the man before they'd be allowed back in a classroom. As things were going, Harry wasn't terribly worried. Insofar as he could see, they had the upper hand - at least until Voldemort was dead. When that day came, if they survived, they'd deal with it.

And if Harry was wrong, and Dumbledore decided to be difficult, they could carry on with some variation of the plans the Gryffindor had impulsively made after he'd first stood up to the old man. But McGonagall's advice now echoed in Harry's mind, and he intended to put it to use. True, it wasn't in the way the Transfigurations professor had in mind, but that was hardly his fault.

"I think we may want help, love," Harry remarked. "Do you think Snape would, if we ask?"
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"Why should we want help?" the blonde asked. "I think you did brilliantly, last time."

The Gryffindor smiled, ruefully. "I did very well; so well that we're back here, with detention, and being called on the carpet. And Dumbledore has had time to research rules and laws, and think of a lot of things we probably don't know anything about." Harry had no idea how the headmaster would act; what pressures he might bring to bear. But if there were witnesses, he may be less inclined to severity. The man had an image to maintain, after all.

Draco frowned, thoughtfully. He didn't think much of the old man, but it was true that he seemed to have ways of knowing things. Harry had some good points. "We should ask, at least," he opined.

Looking up, Harry could see that the potions master wasn't at the faculty table. "He's not here. Shall we take a chance, and see if he's in his office?"

Harry's plate was still half full. "Aren't you going to finish your dinner, Harry?" Draco inquired.

The Gryffindor shook his head. "Not hungry. I've noticed you picking at your meals, lately," Harry replied, neatly turning the subject from himself.

"Haven't really been hungry," the blonde replied, trying to sound casual.

"You weren't going to hide things from me, remember?" Harry reminded his husband, softly. Draco nodded. "Have you had any other symptoms?"

The blonde nodded. "But can we talk about it privately, Harry?" he asked, looking around. The Gryffindor table was too close. Had anyone heard?

The raven-haired teen coloured, slightly. He had almost said too much. "Sorry, love," he apologised. Then he startled. "Merlin! The time! Tempus!" The lightly glowing numbers that appeared in mid-air, already fading, read 12:43. "We have just enough time to see Snape, then make a dash for Muggle Studies,"

Harry said hurriedly, standing.

Draco wrinkled his nose at the mention of their next class, but also rose. "I'm not running, Harry. It's undignified," the Slytherin declared.

"Dignity be damned, Draco!" Harry exclaimed, grabbing his husband's hand. "We need to talk to Snape, and we can't afford to be late to class!"

Harry took off running, forcing Draco to choose between running as well, or being dragged. Being dragged was far more undignified than running - so Draco ran. But he was also seething, resentful of being forced to run - in his condition! When they pulled up in front of Snape's office, Draco snatched his hand from Harry's.

The violence with which Draco snatched his hand back caught the Gryffindor's attention. Looking at his husband, Harry was surprised to see the expression on Draco's face. "Do you dislike running that much?" he asked.

"Harry James Potter; I'm pregnant, in case you've forgotten!" the blonde emoted, trying to keep his voice down.

Harry winced. It seemed the only time anyone used his full name, was because they were royally cheesed off with him. This was the first time Draco had used his full name, and he found he didn't like it one little bit, especially combined with the tone of voice. The fact that - although he hadn't truly forgotten, he also hadn't taken his husband's 'delicate condition' into account, didn't help. "I hadn't forgotten, love," he said, as gently as he could while still trying to catch his breath. "I just didn't think."

"Yes; well, next time, do!" Draco was now fighting to keep back tears. It wasn't that bad, this early in his pregnancy, but Harry forgetting his condition like that hurt. Bloody hormones, anyway; making him so emotional.

Harry sighed. He could see that his husband was still angry, and the tears brightening his silvery-gray eyes would just make him that much less approachable. Still, he tried, reaching out and trying to gather

the blonde to him for a hug. But as he feared, Draco jerked away from him, turning his back. He sighed again, then turned and knocked on the professor's office door. "I don't care if we are late to our next class. We'll walk - okay?" he said while looking at the door. He was unable to watch Draco cry and not do something to try to comfort him; attentions he knew the Slytherin wouldn't welcome in his present state. The next thing he knew, his arms were full of blonde, his robes being moistened by tears.

"Did you come to paw each other in front of me, or did you actually have a purpose?" came the acerbic voice of the potions master. Contrary to his voice, however, there was something about his eyes that bespoke a mild amusement.

Draco ignored the man's presence.

Harry looked up helplessly. "I'm sorry, professor, but he..." He stopped. The situation was obvious, and he was sure the professor wouldn't be impressed with him belabouring it. "We came to ask you to be present for our meeting with the headmaster, at two, if you don't have a class."

The professor didn't have to think about why they may want a witness there, given the events of the day before. He was the only other person who knew of everything involved, and he had also made peace overtures last evening, so it made sense they'd choose him. Truth be told, he felt validated. "I have seventh-year Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw at that time. It's a theory class, so I can put them to work reviewing material, and be there a few minutes later. Would that be satisfactory?"

"Thank you, Professor," Harry said, still feeling at a loss about how to deal with his emotional spouse.

"Now, if you wouldn't mind taking that weepy blonde out of my sight? Distressing public behaviour for a Slytherin!"

"I - I can't - stop!" Draco quietly sobbed.

"Hormones," Harry softly explained to the greasy-haired professor.

"Get him into an empty classroom, then," Snape ordered.

"Bastard," Draco said without emphasis, still crying. "You could invite us in."

"That will be five points from Slytherin, Mr. - Draco, for disrespectful language. However, you are correct. Enter," he invited, standing aside.

Harry was undecided, but only for a heartbeat. "Thank you, Professor Snape," he said quietly, guiding the tear-blinded blonde inside. "It looks like today's going to be our day for losing points," he complained, mildly.

"Oh?" the potions master inquired, motioning them to a small couch.

"Muggle Studies; we're going to be late," the Gryffindor explained, as they sat.

The professor looked as though he were fighting with himself for a moment, and then "If you ever tell anyone I said this, Mr. Potter, I guarantee you'll regret it; but considering the circumstances, and the fact you're already going to be late, you might want to skip that class today," he said.

Harry looked at the man in wonder. He was actually being nice? "Nobody would believe me, anyway," he said, ruefully.

Snape smirked.

Draco giggled, then sniffled. "Have you a handkerchief, Harry?" he asked, from his position on Harry's shoulder.

Harry started searching his robe, then trouser pockets. "Um... No, I don't think so, pet," he replied, looking to the potions master for help.

The professor looked rather disgusted with the whole situation, but drew a linen handkerchief from his breast pocket, and handed it over.

"Thank you," Harry said, taking it and giving it to Draco.

"Just don't give it back, Potter," the man replied.

They actually had a rather civil conversation, ranging from their performance in his class, to the upcoming Halloween Ball. Somewhere in there, Draco dozed off on Harry's shoulder. And then it was time for them to start making their way to the headmaster's office.

"Draco?" Harry called, softly. Then gently nudging the blonde, he said "Come on, love; wake up. It's time to go."

Snape, watching this, was oddly touched. He'd never thought to see this sight - let alone ever approve of it - but it stirred feelings in him he'd thought long dead. For the first time in many years, he felt lonely. "Oh, for Merlin's sake, boy! Wake up!" he said loudly, trying to dispel those feelings.

Draco woke with a start, reaching for his wand. Harry's low laugh reassured him.

"It's okay, love," the emerald-eyed young man crooned. "We just have to leave. It's time for our meeting with Dumbledore."

Turning his attention back to his potions professor, Harry said "Thank you for your hospitality, sir. We'll see you soon?"

"Rest assured, Mr. Potter," Snape replied, formally.

Harry understood. Once they left this room, this interlude would have never happened. It would be business as usual. He nodded, to indicate his acceptance.

They stopped by the boys' toilet on the way, to allow Draco to wash away the evidence of his emotional outburst, and use the facilities. Harry refreshed himself as well, they paused for some light kisses, and then continued on their way.

"We still need to visit Madam Pomfrey, Harry," Draco reminded him.

"I haven't forgotten. Right after classes, okay?"

"We haven't discussed the Halloween Ball, either."

"You were awake for that, were you?"

"I didn't go to sleep; I was just resting my eyes," Draco replied, denying the possibility that he could possibly have napped.

"Whatever you say, love. But what about the Ball?"

"I wasn't sleeping, Harry," Draco insisted.

"Then you make the cutest sounds when you're just resting your eyes," Harry replied, with a teasing grin.

"What sounds?" the indignant blonde inquired.

"You must have heard them, Draco. You were awake the whole time, right?"

Trapped, Draco surrendered. "Right," he said. "Just trying to get rid of a little tickle in my throat," he bluffed.

Harry smirked. "Uh-huh. Now, what about the Ball?"

Draco was quiet for a moment, thinking - but not about the Ball. "I don't really make noises when I sleep; do I, Harry?"

They had arrived outside the headmaster's office. Harry left his husband hanging on that question. "And again he didn't give us the password," he said, frustrated. "I'm not going to play his guessing game, this time. If he wants us, he can bloody well open the door." With that, he sat down against the wall opposite the gargoyle, prepared to wait.

Draco gave a mental shrug, and sat down beside his husband, again laying his head on the Gryffindor's shoulder. It seemed like he was tired all the time, these days. He knew it was because of the pregnancy, but that didn't mean he liked it. Still, he was resigned to it. He was going to put up with whatever it took, in order to have their baby. But there was still something he needed to know.

"Harry... Noises?"

Harry grinned. "No, baby; you don't make noises when you sleep," he lied. Actually, Draco's noises were rather cute. They weren't loud or annoying, at all; just little grizzling noises, purrs, and such. He was rewarded with a short punch to his arm. "Ow! What was that for?" he asked, laughing, though he had a fairly good idea.

"For making me think I'd make noises when I sleep!" the blonde fumed.

"Well, you're the one who wasn't asleep, remember?" his husband teased.

Draco's cheeks tinted, but he refused to rise to the bait. "You've been calling me a lot of pet names lately," he observed, changing the subject.

"Too much?" Harry inquired.

"I like my own name, too," Draco hedged.

"Too much," the Gryffindor affirmed.

"My mother used to call me 'Dragon,'" the Slytherin offered.

It was less 'sweet,' while still being a personal nickname, Harry mused. "Okay," he said, "but don't beat me if I slip from time to time," he said, lightly.

Draco snuggled a bit closer in response, and they settled into a comfortable silence.

A couple of minutes later, the gargoyle jumped aside, and the door to the headmaster's office opened. "Ah, there you are," the headmaster acknowledged. "Did the password stump you, this time?" he asked. He seemed almost disappointed.

"I didn't bother trying," Harry admitted, getting to his feet. "The last time we were here, I asked you to treat us with respect. Forcing me to play guessing games doesn't seem to fit that," he accused mildly, as he assisted Draco to his feet. The blonde didn't really need the help, but he liked doing these little courtesies for him.

The headmaster didn't reply, but seemed a bit saddened.

Once seated in Dumbledore's office, and having refused the old man's customary offer of refreshments and sweets, the headmaster sat back, and looked at them.

During some of their conversations in the two months they'd been together, Draco had taught Harry a little about power plays, so Harry recognised this tactic. The person who spoke first, was put in a less powerful position. Therefore, Harry also sat back, and upped the ante by taking his husband's hand, and kissing it. When a full minute had gone by without a word being said, Harry got to his feet. "It seems this meeting is over, Draco. There's just time to get a snack before our next class."

"Sit down, Mr. Potter," the headmaster said, calmly.

"Ah, the rude man speaks," Draco said, ostensibly to Harry.

"I believe the rudeness occurred last night, Mr. Potter."

"Quite right, Professor. I'm glad to see you've learned the error of your ways," the blond replied, smirking.

"Enough, Draco," Harry said gently, re-taking his seat, and then turning his attention back to Dumbledore. "You were so nice to us when we showed up before start of term," he reminded the old man. "You helped Draco and I so much. But even then, you were telling us what to do, rather than laying choices in front of us. I'm not saying that any of what you told us to do was wrong, and as I said yesterday, I'm not disagreeing with what you think we need to do now. Please let me finish," he hurried to add, when it appeared the headmaster would interrupt his flow of thought. "What I am disagreeing with, is your methods. We need to be included in any planning that affects us. I agree that Draco and I should be tested to see how our bond may have affected our magic, and receive training to control it. But we will decide when, and how often. The schedule you outlined left us little time together - no, headmaster, one day a week is not enough quality time," he said, closing off the possibility of objection from the old man. "We're quite young, yet, and we will likely make mistakes," He ignored Draco's soft snort of dissent, "but we are not so young that we should be denied the right to make our own decisions. Where school matters are concerned, you have the right make all the decisions; but not where

our private time is concerned."

"Actually, Mr. Potter, I do. This is a boarding school. While you are here I am, legally, 'in loco parentis.'"

Snape's voice came from the doorway. "There are signed contracts from the students' parents or guardians which agree to that?" he inquired.

"Severus? I don't recall asking to see you, today - did you need something?"

"We asked Professor Snape to be here, Headmaster," Harry informed him.

"Not that it matters, in this case," the potions master continued, ignoring the byplay.

That statement caught everyone's attention.

"I beg your pardon?" Dumbledore inquired.

"Draco was granted emancipation, which made him, legally, an adult," Snape explained. "He then married Harry Potter - at your insistence, Albus. As I understand it, Harry's legal status was rather vague, to begin with. His legal guardianship was never settled on anyone, muggle or wizard, after his parents' death. But even were guardianship by custom observed, the marriage would have changed Harry's status. He is an adult in his own right. While children are allowed to become engaged in wizarding society, only adults are allowed to marry. You performed the ceremony, with witnesses, and the Ministry accepted, and registered, the wedding contract, which confirmed his legal status as an adult. The marriage has been consummated," Snape continued, with a moue of distaste, "which would make annulment problematic in itself; that there is going to be issue, makes a forced annulment impossible."

Harry's mouth was hanging slightly open at this display, and Draco's eyes were, perhaps, open wider than normally. Professor Dumbledore was looking slightly dismayed.

Harry found his voice first. "How did you...?"

Snape smirked. "Did you think the only thing I knew anything of was potions, Mr. Potter?"

Harry nodded dazedly, caught himself, then shook his head in denial. "I just never really thought about it," he explained, awe showing in his voice.

"I think another time would be best for that discussion," the headmaster interjected. "This puts me in something of a sticky situation, gentlemen, since I am still responsible for everything that happens in this school, regardless."

"I simply don't see the problem, Professor," Draco replied, somewhat sharply. "We are, after all, not asking for special treatment."

"What do you think is a reasonable schedule, Mr Potter?" Professor Dumbledore inquired of Harry, ignoring the reprimand.

The scarred young man, looking at Draco for signs of disagreement as he spoke, replied "I think we can agree to all day on Sundays," Seeing no sign of disagreement from his husband, he continued, "and Tuesday and Thursday evenings?" Draco nodded, and Harry turned back to the headmaster. "That should give us plenty of time to keep up with our lessons, give us time together, and make sure Draco doesn't get overstressed."

At Harry's last point, the blonde's cheeks tinted a bit, but remarkably, he didn't argue the point. His pregnancy was making it difficult for him to handle stress, and he'd sometimes start crying over what he could later admit, if only to himself, were some of the silliest things. If he'd seen someone else acting like this before experiencing it himself, he would have waxed quite sarcastic, indeed. So far, he'd been able to either avoid crying when others were about, or hide it - except from Harry, who seemed to always be able to tell, and also helped by distracting attention from him when necessary.

"Three days a week," Dumbledore mused.

"Eight to twelve hours of instruction per week, plus whatever private practice time Draco and I find time to put into it, should be more than enough time, Professor," Harry said, reinforcing his choice. "Unless you have information on Voldemort's activities that require more strenuous effort?" Harry regretted giving the headmaster the opening, as soon as he'd done it.

Fortunately, the elderly man refused it. "Nothing that I'm aware of at this time, Harry," he replied. His face had been expressing frustration, but now he seemed to become aware of that, and smoothed his features into the more familiar one of good-natured humour. "Very well, Mr. Potter. We'll try things your way for a while, and see what progress we can make."

As the boys made to get up, Dumbledore spoke up again. "Are you unhappy in your placement, Mr. Potter?"

Both boys looked at him, surprised. But since the old man's eyes were on Harry, he assumed the question was for him. "I beg your pardon, sir?" Harry asked.

"Minerva tells me you said you shouldn't have been placed in Gryffindor," Albus said, enlightening him.

Harry settled back in his chair, and sighed.

Draco took his hand in support, and also settled back down.

"We discussed it in my second year, Professor. I assumed the Hat would have told you in first year."

Dumbledore frowned. "After the Chamber incident, yes. I thought we had cleared that up?"

"I was supposed to be put in Slytherin. I begged it to put me anywhere else, because of what I'd been

told about Slytherin; so it put me in Gryffindor. In second year, you made me think that I would have become like Voldemort, had I allowed the Hat to put me in Slytherin. It made me feel better at the time, but it was only putting off the inevitable."

At Draco's look of askance, Harry said "It's a long, complicated story, my Dragon. I'll tell you everything later, okay?"

"I'll hold you to that, Harry," the blonde replied.

"A minute please?" the headmaster requested. He then got up, went over to a large, heavy, aged birch cabinet, made a series of passes over the front of it with his wand, took a large, silver key from an inner pocket, and unlocked it. Once open, he withdrew the Sorting Hat, returned to his chair, and placed it on the desk. This was going to be sticky. He had never questioned Harry's story. There had been a good reason for that. Now he needed to walk a fine line, in order to mainain credibility. Talking to the Hat with them here was a risk, but one he had to take.

"There seems to have been an irregularity in placing a student, Hat."

"Irregularity? I place students where they need to go."

"And Harry Potter?" the headmaster replied.

"Ah, yes; very powerful, that one. You wanted him in Gryffindor - he belonged in Slytherin, but didn't want to go there. So, I put him in Gryffindor."

The headmaster suppressed a frown. It was that information - that he'd wanted Harry sorted into Gryffindor - that he hadn't wanted to come out. "So you placed a student where he didn't belong?" Albus said, trying to gloss it over.

There was a shrug in the Sorting Hat's voice as it replied "I said he was powerful."

"Are you saying he overpowered you?" the headmaster asked, frowning now.

"I am the Sorting Hat; not a wizard. He - convinced me," it replied.

The headmaster sat back in his chair, and stared at the Hat. He had thought the Hat had done it in order to comply with his wishes. "'Convinced' you..." he echoed, almost in a whisper. Then a wry grin twisted his lips.

The young couple had watched and listened to all this without a sound, but Harry, while looking a bit worried, was also looking a bit smug; and Draco's smirk almost wound around his face, it was so big. The blonde had now heard confirmation from the Hat itself, and was very proud, on his husband's behalf.

Nobody thought to look at Snape, but if they had, they would have seen the man's mouth hanging slack before he bethought himself, and pulled himself together. He had more than half-believed the Potter boy, but had never thought to hear confirmation of the story, and was flabbergasted when he did.

"It seems, Mr. Potter, that you've been in the wrong House for several years," the headmaster said. Perhaps if he pretended to make some potentially disastrous decisions, he could get Harry to fall into line, again. "I'll make the announcement at..."

"I don't think that would be wise, sir," Harry interrupted.

"Why would that be, Harry?" Albus asked, surprised to have a student interrupt him.

"It can only cause trouble for us. Gryffindor would blame Draco for it. Slytherin, or at least those sympathetic to Voldemort, would like nothing better than a chance to get their hands on me, and both houses would likely wind up with even more bad feeling between them. And it doesn't really matter

now, anyway. Neither of us is living in House dorms, so..."

"But this way you could move back into House dorms together, Harry," Dumbledore broke in smoothly.

"I won't have my House disrupted, Albus," Snape interjected. "The boy is right; that move could only cause trouble, and would solve nothing."

Dumbledore glowered at his potions master for a moment, then acceded. "You're right, of course, Severus." Turning back to the boys, he said "Very well, then; you may go."

The three of them - Harry, Draco, and Professor Snape - left at the same time. Out in the hall, the potions master had a few last words for them. "I've known Albus Dumbledore for a good many years, gentlemen. I jeopardised my relationship with him by balking him. I do hope you prove worth it." And with a swirl of billowing robes, he set off down the corridor. They didn't see his wide grin.

"Thank you, Professor!" Harry called to his back.

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Chapter Twenty-One by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Phoenix For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty-One

A visit to the Hospital Wing garnered them an appointment at eight that evening, when it was unlikely that any other students would be popping in. A quick fire-call to Professor Snape ensured, after he'd confirmed the facts with the medi-witch, that they could start their detention the next night, rather than that night.

When they arrived after supper, Madame Pomfrey ushered Draco behind a partition, Harry following
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behind. "Now, Mr. Potter," she said briskly, addressing Draco, "if you would be so kind as to remove your robes, open your shirt and loosen your trousers? I need access to your abdomen," she explained, when Draco looked at her as though she'd gone mad.

"And you, Mr. Potter," she said, speaking to Harry and waving her hand vaguely towards the other side of the screens, "may wait out there."

"May Harry stay?" the blonde requested. Being alone with a woman whilst half-naked was a thought that left him very uneasy - one might even say...nervous. And he needed the moral support of Harry's presence while they waited to find out if Nott's use of the Cruciatus on him two months before had caused any harm to their baby.

The medi-witch raised an eyebrow at the blonde, but Harry was allowed to remain during the exam.

The minutes passed as Poppy cast one spell after another, pausing between them to write down the results of each. The fact that she said not a word, made not a sound, was nerve-wracking. Globes of swirling coloured smokes or lights appeared, and were dismissed; runes appeared, and were erased. Other than the muttered spells, the only sound was the scratching of her quill on parchment.

Their eyes were fastened to the woman's face, searching it for any clue to the fate of their child. Draco's grip on Harry's hand tightened more and more as time dragged on without a verdict. Finally, he couldn't stand it any longer. "Bloody hell, woman! Are you trying to kill us with the suspense?" Draco suddenly yelled. He immediately reddened. That was not how he'd been brought up to address a woman; even one as maddening as Madame Pomfrey was being. However, he refused to apologise.

"Draco!" Harry reprimanded, in a quietly urgent voice.

It was a measure of her annoyance and upset that she made the mistake. "Mr. Malfoy-" Poppy began in her 'professional' voice, but was interrupted as both boys corrected her.

"Potter!" Draco snapped. Harry had spoken at the same instant, but in a calmer voice.

"My apologies; but your histrionics are not going to speed up the tests, Mr. Potter," she told Draco.

Draco gaped at her, ignoring Harry's attempts to placate him, as he propped himself up on his elbows. "Histrionics?" he repeated, with mild astonishment that was rapidly growing into frustrated anger. "Histrionics?! You bloody... I'll show you histrionics! We're trying to find out if we have a damaged child or a healthy one, you sanctimonious cow! The least you could do is keep us updated with what your ruddy tests are telling you!" He silently started cursing himself. His bloody hormones were acting up again - his eyes were brimming. He truly felt like drawing his wand and cursing the medi-witch. The only thing stopping him at that moment was that he needed her to finish doing the tests. Well, and he didn't want to upset his husband, but he quickly pushed that thought aside.

Madam Pomfrey ignored the blonde's outburst, having heard similar language from him before, when he was there for quidditch injuries; but she was looking quite uncomfortable with his display of tears. Then she pulled herself together, hiding behind a mask of professionalism. "I assure you, Mr. M- Potter, that I would have told you by now, if I had found anything amiss. However," she continued, as joy lit the young couple's eyes, "it would hardly be appropriate for me to keep saying everything is alright with the results of this test or that, raising your hopes, when the next test might dash them."

That pronouncement sobered both young men.

"Now - may I continue?" she inquired, pinning the blonde with her stare.

A decidedly chastened Draco nodded, and relaxed back into the pillows under his head and shoulders.

Harry leaned over, and kissed the blonde's cheek, squeezing his hand at the same time. Straightening up, he ran his fingers through his gray-eyed husband's hair. Draco pressed his face into the Gryffindor's palm, seeking comfort.

"I'm sure everything is just fine, love," Harry said, glancing up for reassurance from an unresponsive Madam Pomfrey. He sighed, closing his eyes for a moment before again giving the blonde's hand a hopefully-reassuring squeeze. "But I really wish you'd learn to watch your temper."

"You're a fine one to talk," the blonde muttered mutinously.

Harry had to chuckle at the truth of the words, earning a grudging smirk from his husband.

A half-hour later, the medi-witch finally let her hands drop to her sides. Her face relaxed, and the corners of her mouth turned upwards just the tiniest fraction. It was all Draco and Harry needed.

"The babe is unharmed, then?" Harry asked, hopefully.

Madam Pomfrey's smile bloomed, happy to be able to deliver good news. "It is, indeed," she said.

As the boys clutched each other tightly in their joy, she continued. "It seems to be quite a healthy little boy. Have you picked out a name for him, yet?"

Draco looked at his husband. They hadn't really discussed it, but they each knew the other had been thinking of names, in case the child turned out to be hale. "Kael?" Draco offered.

Harry thought it over. "It seems like a wonderful name; I like the sound of it." he opined."What does it mean?" he asked, smiling.

"'Mighty warrior,'" the blonde said, proudly.

Harry face fell, and Draco's smile waned in response.

Harry smiled again, but it was rather tentative. "It's a beautiful name, love, but..." He took a deep breath, then sighed. "I've been fighting all my life; first to survive my relatives' neglect - then there was you, Voldemort, your father - the other Death Eaters... I'd rather not be reminded of fighting every time I say

my son's name - our son's name," he corrected himself. "Do you mind, terribly? How about 'Kane?' It's a Gaelic name meaning 'honour.'"

Draco was rather hurt that his choice had been rejected, but he had to admit that Harry's reasons for doing so were sound. He, himself, had rejected any name that sounded even remotely like his happily deceased sire's, for similar reasons. 'Kane' was close in sound to his choice, and it's meaning - honour - was a good one. He'd had ample time to appreciate that quality; it was what had finally led him to choose Harry as the person to whom he should become bonded. It helped that the name's Celtic meaning was 'beautiful.'

The blonde looked up into his husband's worried eyes, and smiled. "I love it," he said.

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Halloween day dawned bright and clear, frost coating everything in sight, making it appear that the world had, overnight, been painted a bright silver. Today would be a half-day, insofar as classes were concerned. It had been announced that afternoon classes would be cancelled so students would have plenty of time to prepare themselves, and their costumes, for the ball that night.

But right now, Harry and Draco were warm and toasty under the heavy duvet on their bed, wrapped in each other's arms.

Draco stirred, pressure from his bladder waking him. Slowly, he slipped out of Harry's arms, and padded, nude, to the toilet. He carefully cleaned himself afterward, freshened his breath, then returned to his husband.

"'Morning," Harry murmured.

"Did I wake you?"
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"In a way; I missed you," Harry admitted sleepily.

"You woke up because I wasn't here?" Draco asked, amazed and flattered.

Harry nodded on his pillow, reaching for the blonde, and pulled him close.

Draco came to him more than willingly.

They barely made it to their first class, but the morning went by smoothly, despite the fact that the professors seemed to ignore that it was a holy day for most from the older wizarding families, and the rest were thinking more of the ball than of studies. They were even more relentless in their attempts to fit some knowledge into the skulls of their students than usual. But finally mid-day rolled around, and everyone headed to the Great Hall for dinner.

Harry and Draco were quite looking forward to the meal, having missed breakfast. They sat down to their small table just as Neville walked up to them, looking quite nervous.

Draco sneered at the boy, until Harry slapped the blonde's thigh under the table - just hard enough to sting a bit. Draco shot him a disgusted look, then subsided.

"Hello, Neville," Harry greeted, pleasantly. "Would you like to sit?"

The shy Gryffindor shook his head. "No, thank you, Harry. H-hello, Draco," he ventured.

"That's 'Potter' to you, Longbottom," the blonde replied.

"Behave yourself!" Harry hissed at his husband, then relented when, shortly afterward, he saw the blonde's eyes brighten with unshed tears. He took Draco's hand and held it in both of his, then turned

his attention back to Neville.

Neville looked rather startled and unsettled by that exchange, but carried on. "I've been asked to request your presence at the Gryffindor table for the midday repast," he stated, formally.

Harry's eyebrows raised in question at this. "Why?" he asked.

Neville grinned, and shrugged. "Because they thought you wouldn't hex me, if I did the asking," he said.

That brought an answering grin, and a short laugh from the green-eyed young man. "They were right," he reassured Longbottom, "but what I meant was; why are they asking?"

That brought a confused frown to the young man's face. "Because we like you, Harry," he said, plaintively.

"And Draco?" Harry asked.

Neville looked askance at the blonde. "I don't know, now," he admitted, "but we're willing to give him a chance. There must be something there we've missed, if you were willing to marry him."

Draco's cheeks tinted - half because he was sorry, now, that he'd been so snarky, and half because of the implied insult.

"If he's not, maybe you could give us a try, Harry," came Blaise' voice.

Harry looked up. "I'd give a lot to know how you managed to sneak up like that without me seeing you, Blaise," Harry said, grinning. "Is your girlfriend invited as well?"

"Hold on, now, Harry!" Neville protested. "We invited you first!"

The former Gryffindor Seeker looked at the boy, then turned to the Gryffindor table. "'Mione?" he called, loud enough for his voice to carry to her. When she looked up and saw her boyfriend, her face brightened, before she looked to her friend. Harry beckoned to her, then turned back to Neville as she got up and started making her way over to them. "Could you give us a moment, Neville?" he politely requested.

Neville nodded, and walked off a dozen feet or so.

Draco looked curiously at his husband, a question in his eyes, but Harry just smiled at him.

"Blaise, 'Mione - won't you sit down?" Harry invited, when the young woman had arrived.

After they were seated and comfortable, Harry leaned forward. Keeping his voice low so that his words wouldn't travel beyond the table, he asked "Isn't it about time you two went public with your relationship? Inter-House dating isn't forbidden, you know - or even rare. It's quite common."

"But not between Slytherin and Gryffindor, Harry!" Hermione hissed back at him, looking around. The other three just looked at her.

"You may not have noticed, Hermione," Blaise replied, a bit cooly, "but we're sitting at the table of a Slytherin-Gryffindor couple. Are you ashamed of me?"

Hermione blushed - brightly - then had the grace to look ashamed of herself. "I feel such a berk. For someone who's supposed to be so bright, I really stuck my foot in it, didn't I?" She braced herself, looked up and smiled at her impassive boyfriend, stood up, and sat in his lap, putting her arms around his neck, and kissed him quite thoroughly, eliciting gasps and whispers which grew as the word passed, from people all over the Great Hall. When she let up to look at him, he grinned at her, and hugged her firmly.

She was forgiven.

Neville's chin had dropped half-way to his chest, mouth gaping at the sight. Half of Gryffindor House, as well as not a few others from other Houses, was aping him. There were a few scowls from the Slytherin table, but remarkably few. There were even a couple of Slytherins smiling; Pansy being one of them.

"Miss Granger," McGonagall's disappointed voice called from the head table, "that will be one point from Gryffindor. What is tolerated from a married couple,:" she continued, shooting a disapproving glare at Harry and Draco that implied Hermione's behaviour was their fault, "is not appropriate for unmarried young ladies; least of all in public."

Hermione gave an insouciant shrug, hugged her boyfriend again, then got up and primly (more as a mild mockery of the Transfiguration professor, who didn't fail to catch it, but who chose not to comment) resumed her seat in the other chair.

Harry and Draco were both grinning, proud of their friend.

"Well, that almost answers my next question," Harry said. "If we give the Gryffindor table another try, would you like to invite Blaise, as well?"

Hermione shot a worried glance at the table in question, then looked back to her boyfriend. "They can be fairly narrow-minded, to begin with," she said to him. "Do you feel like trying, with me, to widen their minds for them?"

Blaise gave a care-free shrug. "With you? Anywhere, any time," he replied.

Hermione blushed yet again.

Harry looked to his husband. "What do you think, Draco? Are you up to trying again? Maybe we can, all

of us, start pulling down this stupid wall between our Houses."

Draco pulled a face, but shrugged, and nodded.

Harry motioned Neville to return. "If Hermione's boyfriend is invited as well, we'll give it another try," he said.

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Later, in their rooms, Harry commented. "That didn't go nearly as badly as I'd feared," he said.

"I rather felt sorry for Blaise, though, being given the cold shoulder as he was," Draco replied.

"I don't think he minded so much; there was one quite warm shoulder for him, there," Harry said, grinning.

Draco smirked. "They were rather cute, weren't they?"

"Ron surprised me, though. He took it quite well, I thought."

Draco frowned. "That is a bit of a puzzler," he agreed.

This year, for their fancy dress for the ball, they'd decided to go as themselves, plus. Plus what? Well, they were a gay couple, so they'd decided to 'camp it up.' Draco had picked out a clothing combination for each of them that would simply scream 'pouf.' For Harry, there was skin-tight, black, glove-leather, side-laced trousers, a black, glove-leather, lace-up waistcoat that vee'd to just below his breast-bone, black, knee-high, dragon-leather boots with wide, studded tops, a silver-studded, black leather choker, and he'd carry a short whip (Harry had insisted on it, after seeing Draco's outfit. Woe be to any would-be poachers). Draco would wear tight, light pink shorts of the variety Americans called 'hot pants,' a tight,
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lace, long-sleeved, virginal-white shirt that left his midriff bare, short, white, side-zip leather boots, a wide lace choker liberally studded with rose quartz and tiny rubies, and enough make-up to start his own review. Harry would have a little mascara and kohl, and if Draco could talk him into it, a little blush as well, but that would be all. Both would wear feathered domino masks - Harry's black and silver, Draco's white and light pink - and neither would wear underthings, in order to avoid pants lines. A warming spell would keep them from feeling the chill.

Draco had just finished laying out their outfits while Harry drew their bath, when Sir Roxley yelled out "Visitors, lads! Heavy types that claim ye know them."

"Did they give their names, Roxley?" Draco inquired.

"A sea creature and a blemish, from what I can make out, lad. ... ... Ach! Me apologies! Not a boil, after all!"

Draco's heart froze. Crabbe and Goyle? "Harry! We've company," Draco called. "Crabbe and Goyle, if Roxley's to be believed."

Harry came out of the bath, face concerned. "You've your wand?" he asked, rhetorically, as he could clearly see it in his husband's hand. "Where's mine?" He hadn't, after all, taken it in to bathe with. Not good for the wood.

Draco silently picked it up from the side table, along with his glasses, and handed them to him. "Really, Harry; you really should get your eyes fixed," he opined.

"Later. Let's see what your former goons want."

Standing to one side of the door, Draco on the other, Harry opened it - to a sudden lack of flying curses. Carefully peering around the frame, wand at the ready to cast a deflection spell, Harry was treated to the sight of a slightly amused, but mostly chagrined, and unarmed, Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle.

"May we come in?" Vincent requested, hesitantly.

"And why should we do that, Crabbe?" Draco asked, stepping into the doorway.

"I would think, Draco, that five years of loyal service would at least get us a hearing," Gregory replied.

That was unusual enough to get both boys' attention. Not what was said, but how it was said. It was intelligent!

Harry looked at his husband. "Polyjuice?" he suggested.

"Has to be," the blonde replied.

But even now the two still standing in the hall made no move to reach for their wands. "We would really rather explain where we're less likely to to be seen," Vincent hinted strongly.

Exchanging looks, and coming to a silent agreement, Harry and Draco stood away from the doorway, but kept their wands out and at the ready.

"There really is no need for those," Vincent complained, mildly.

"I'm sure you won't mind our being cautious until we've been convinced of that, Crabbe," Harry replied, civilly enough. Glancing at his husband, he could see that Draco was just as confused and cautious as he was.

"May we sit?" Gregory asked.

Harry nodded, and motioned to the couch. The - solid - Slytherins moved to the piece of furniture indicated, while Draco went to one of the chairs. While everyone's attention was thus occupied, Harry cast a powerful protection charm on his husband, then went to stand behind him. The blonde took his hand, and gave it a squeeze, letting him know that Draco knew what he'd done. Both boys were surprised to see Crabbe and Goyle reach for, and hold, each other's hand.

"Alright, then - explain," Draco demanded, ignoring, for the moment, the intimacy displayed by the two Slytherins. "You may start by explaining who you are."

Vincent and Gregory smirked at each other. "I suppose we have rather flummoxed you, Draco," Gregory said. "I'm rather surprised that we were able to delude you all these years, however."

"If you're through congratulating yourselves, perhaps you'd like to get on with the explanations?" Draco growled, miffed.

"It's quite simple, really," Vincent replied. "It all has to do with who our fathers are - including yours, Draque."

Startled by the nick-name, Harry repeated "Drake?"

Draco looked up at him with a small smile. "No, love - Draque. Dee-ar-ay-cue-you-ee."

Harry couldn't hear the difference, but evidently his husband could.

Draco turned back to his former cronies. "Our fathers are Death Eaters - or was, in the case of mine. So?"

Vincent and Gregory exchanged solemn looks. "We heard what happened. And why. Our fathers are a bit dim," he admitted. "Fortunately, our mothers aren't. They tease everything out of them, sooner or later.

That's how we found out. We're glad you got away," Vincent said. Then, looking sidelong at Harry, said "But..." He thought better of whatever he'd been about to say, and just shrugged. "We're just glad you're okay."

Harry couldn't reign in his curiousity any longer. "You both seem to have become... Well, quite a bit more intelligent," he commented.

The boys laughed. "Yes, well, it was a necessary deception," Gregory replied. "If our fathers knew we had more gray matter, they'd expect us to help more with their 'lord's' cause."

Two words struck the lone Gryffindor in the room. 'Their lord.' "I take it you don't support Voldemort, then?" he asked.

The two on the couch flinched at the sound of the name. Harry was proud of the fact that his husband hadn't.

"No, we don't," Gregory replied. "But we hadn't dared come forth with it. Not sure we should, even now."

"And - that?" Draco inquired, gesturing to the boys' still-linked hands.

Crabbe and Goyle tinted a bit. "We've been together since third year," Vincent replied, retreiving his hand. "Didn't think you'd mind."

"We don't," Harry reassured them. Draco glanced back at him, annoyed, in this case, in front of his former bodyguards, to be spoken for.

Gregory reclaimed his boyfriend's hand.

"You knew I was - inclined the same way; why didn't you ever say? Not that I'd ever be interested in either of you." Draco tinted at the unintended rudeness of that last remark. "No offense intended," he added.

"And no offense intended here, either, Draco, but you were just a bit too obvious. And with your temper, we just didn't trust you not to blurt something out where others could hear."

Harry clamped a hand over the now angrily red-faced blonde's mouth. "Now, love, you do have a bit of a temper; as witness your present reaction?"

Draco ripped his husband's hand from his face. Twisting to face him, he said "I'm well aware of my short-comings, Potter."

Harry merely raised a skeptical eyebrow.

Draco's face turned from the red of anger, to that of embarrassment as he ducked his head, trying to hide his face. He should have known better. His husband knew him too well, even as short a time as they'd been together.

Harry gave a low laugh, leaned over, wrapped his arms around his husband from behind, and soundly kissed the blonde's neck.

A laugh from the couch brought their attention back to their visitors.

"Looks as though the 'Prince of Slytherin' has been tamed, Greg," Vince said, grinning, and leaning over to give his boyfriend a kiss. The two would never grace the cover of 'Wizard GQ,' and the sight was - just...wrong. But who could gainsay love?

Angry again, Draco was glad of an excuse to leave his embarrassment behind. "You still haven't said why

you've graced us with your presence," he snarled.

Raising his eyebrows, 'Greg' remarked, to no one in particular, "Maybe not so tamed, after all." Addressing the blonde, he continued. "When it became obvious that you two were going to last, we decided to let you know that you have friends; friends that will back you, if there's ever any trouble."

"And Vol- 'He Who Isn't Named?'" Harry asked.

Vince shrugged. "As long as we're not expected to kill? There, as well. We won't take the chance of killing our fathers," he explained.

That was the final proof, for Harry. They were being genuine. He was still rather floored, however, that these two were so much more intelligent than anyone had known. He'd rather suspected that something strange was up with them, that day they'd visited Hagrid, and talked about the duo. And that they were a couple! An involuntary picture of the two shagging, caused him to shudder.

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Chapter 22 by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: Phoenix For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty-Two

When Harry and Draco walked - no, almost promenaded - into the Great Hall which had been transformed, for this night, into a ballroom, movement slowly ground to a halt. Although the music continued to play, the sight of the young couple had everyone, male and female, gay, straight, and otherwise, transfixed with the sight. There was no gainsaying it; they were striking, if a bit...fey?

Harry faltered with all the attention, but Draco had expected it, and gently steered his consort to the middle of the dance floor. Once moving in the dance, Harry was fine. Action was his forte, after all, and concentrating on the dance steps helped keep his mind off everything else, as other couples joined them
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on the floor. Well, almost everything else. He was all too aware of the attention his partner was getting.

Draco knew he was being watched. After all, he looked good, and knew it. He also knew Harry was getting at least as much ogling as he was. His husband might not realize just how hot he was, but Draco was now regretting dressing him so sexily. The whip in his black-leather-clad partner's hand seemed to be keeping the wolves at bay, though. Suddenly, he was glad Harry had insisted on having it as part of his ensemble. It might get in the way of some of the more intricate dance moves, but the psychological factor was very comforting. With that in mind, he let himself relax and move, getting lost in the music, and his dance partner.

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In Hogsmeade, Peter Pettigrew had gotten an early start on the holiday, and was already totally pissed. Drunk enough, in fact, to ignore the fact that he was baiting and insulting quite a large group of people, without backup. When the hexes started flying, he was caught unawares, and was hit with several of them before he recollected himself enough to change to his animagus form and run for cover.

Eventually, he found himself in the tavern's sub-cellar; a dank, moldy, long-abandoned level that used to store beer and hams, but now housed nothing but empty, rotting, wooden crates. Wormtail frantically lost himself in these, panting and gasping for breath as his panic slowly waned. The adrenalin rush had, for the most part, sobered him. He transformed back to human, and started trying to heal the results of the hexes he'd been the recipient of, cursing the patrons who'd inflicted them on him. He was a favourite of Voldemort, damnit, and they'd had the temerity to disrespect him this way? And simply for telling the truth, too! Years of fear, horror, and pain in service to a cruel master had left him more than a little insane; no matter that he had gone to the then-man (now, it was hard to tell) out of spiteful jealousy and ambition, and still functioned, to some degree.

After taking care of the worst of his injuries, those he was capable of influencing, he sat and listened, trying to determine if it might be safe to climb to the main floor and leave the establishment. He slowly became aware of brief traces of fresh air infrequently wafting past his nostrils. Down here? By chance, he had chosen a rotting crate next to a crack in the wall, and the fresh air seemed to be coming through it. This close to Hogwarts, it might just be... He remembered the tunnel they, the Marauders, had used from Hogwarts to Honeyduke's basement.
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Changing back into his rat form, he explored the opening. It was too tight to get through at floor level, so he slowly climbed it. At about eighteen inches up the wall, the crack widened just a bit; just enough for him to squeeze through. Once through the wall, he found himself in a narrow, low tunnel. As small as his human form was, he would still be ducking to keep from hitting his head. So he kept to his rat form, and pattered down the tunnel.

He hadn't gone far; less than a couple dozen metres, when he found why he didn't remember this tunnel. It was blocked. Collapsed, in fact. And it was an old cave-in. Exploring the mass he found, however, that there were still gaps between some of the stones just wide enough for a rat to get through. But he hadn't gone but another 20 metres before even that disappeared. Still, it was enough distance altogether to let him know that the tunnel did, indeed, run in the direction of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. And insofar as he could sense - no wards. His master would be quite interested, indeed, he thought.

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After two dances, Draco needed a rest, so they made their way to one of the small tables that had been set up along the walls, close to the stage.

"Maybe we should only dance the slow ones?" Harry suggested, worried that his pregnant husband might be overdoing it. Before Draco could answer, Harry felt a hand on his bum - and it wasn't his husband's.

"Have a death wish, Finch-Fletchly?" Draco's cold voice spoke in Harry's ear. The blonde's arm extending past him so he couldn't see, but he assumed his lover had his wand in hand at the end of it. Careful not to obstruct Draco's vision, he moved out of the way, then turned so he could see exactly what was going on.

It seemed Finch-Fletchley had been standing at the punch bowl too long; and as always, someone always spiked it; sometimes with alcohol, and sometimes with potions, but spiked nonetheless. No, strike that - he had to have been drinking long before the ball started. There hadn't been enough time for him to get this pissed since it started. His face was flushed, he was swaying slightly on his feet, he was wearing a stupid grin, and he obviously had no idea of the danger he was in.
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"Boo'ful boizh. Boo'ful. Nishe arshe- arshes. Too boo'ful. Couldn' be- not real. But- Are!" Justin said, astonishment clear in his slurred voice.

"Sobrietus!" Draco incanted, viciously.

As the curly-haired lad's eyes focused, and his stance steadied, he took in the scene before him, and the memory of recent events stood out in stark relief in his mind. "Oh, bugger," he said faintly, eyes wide. "Tell me I didn't do what I remember doing - please?"

"Draco - nothing rash. He was drunk," Harry cautioned.

"I suggest you stay sober, Hufflepuff. Because even being drunk won't keep your hands attached to your arms if you ever touch my husband again," Draco promised, coldly.

The boy started shaking in reaction to his close call; he nodded, eyes wide, in agreement. "I - I'd never - ever - do something like that if I were sober!" he protested. "Never, ever again. I promise!"

As the Hufflepuff turned and started to walk away, Harry grabbed the whip he'd brought, and snapped it on the boy's arse, causing him to yelp loudly, and start running. "And the same goes for Draco, from me!" he called after him.

"Mis-ter Potter!" he heard, a couple of seconds later, and sighed as he turned to face the source of that voice.

"Yes, Professor McGonagall?" he inquired.

"Five points, Mr. Potter!" the woman replied. "And you will give me that implement, forthwith!"

"We're not allowed to protest sexual harassment, then?" Draco asked, innocently.

Harry shot a suspicious look at his husband.

"To what are you referring, Mr. Potter?" Minerva inquired frostily.

"Finch-Fletchly had his hands all over Harry's bum," the blonde replied, eyes wide in mock astonishment that the professor wasn't aware of this.

"That is no excuse for such uncivilised behaviour. You bring-"

"At one time, Professor," Draco interrupted coldly, "that would have had his hands off, or a public flogging in the stocks. You can thank Harry that I didn't do anything! He wouldn't have got off so lightly."

Looking more than a bit taken aback, the transfigurations professor replied "These aren't those times, Mr. Potter, and you would do well to remember that," before turning and walking away.

"Draco... You wouldn't have, would you?" Harry asked.

Cold gray eyes met emerald before thawing. "You're mine, Potter," the blonde said quietly. "Don't ever forget it."

A small smile touched Harry's lips. "Wouldn't want to," he replied, leaning in for a quick kiss.

"And she forgot the whip," Draco said, slyly.

Harry almost fell off his chair, laughing.

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It had been a lovely evening. They hadn't stayed completely to the slow songs - Draco wouldn't have it. But they did take frequent breaks between dances, and all in all had wound up having a wonderful time. True, they'd both received more than their fair share of staring from lustful teenagers, but they had just ignored the attention as best they could. And the word had gone 'round about what had almost happened to Justin Finch-Fletchly, and the barely-disguised threats made about him to Professor McGonagall, so even the most sorely tempted minded their manners.

After the portrait closed behind them, Harry put up a couple of extra wards, 'just in case,' they took a quick shower to wash off the sweat, and went to bed, too pleasantly tired to do more than cuddle up and snog a bit before they drifted off to sleep.

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"A tunnel, you say?"

"Yes, master," Wormtail said, groveling on the floor at his master's feet. "It wants clearing, but I couldn't find any wards on it. With a little effort from some of your other loyal-"

"Quiet, Pettigrew," Voldemort hissed. "You have done well."

Within a few days, the work had started, to shore and clear the tunnel. It had to be done manually to avoid notice from such wizards as Dumbledore, so it would be slow going, but finally the Dark Lord had found a way into Hogwarts.

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The day after the ball, Professor Dumbledore had shown up with Professor Snape, knocking up the young couple from their sleep.

"I know this is your school, Professor," Harry complained peevishly, "but would it hurt to make an appointment with us, so we'd know when to expect you?"

"Sorry, my boy," Dumbledore said, eyes twinkling, and not looking in the least sorry. If Harry didn't know better, he'd think the headmaster wanted to catch them in flagrante delicto.

"And if you don't mind, Potter," the potions master grated out, "a sheet is not exactly considered 'attired.'"

"So sorry, Professor," the Gryffindor said in sarcasm-laced humility. "I'll remember that you'd prefer to be kept waiting while I attire myself. I thought your yelling "Open this door now, Potter," meant you truly wished me to be as quick as possible. How stupid of me."

"Watch your cheek, Potter, I-"

"He has a point, Severus," a clearly amused headmaster said, interrupting. "You truly can't have it both ways."

Snape glared at the raven-haired youth, but... Was that a spark of humour in his eyes?

"Harryyyyy..." Draco whined from the bedroom. "Who was it? Did you get rid of them? Come back to bed! I'm cold, and I want you!"

Harry blushed. "If you'll excuse me, I'll go put something on...?" He then turned, and practically ran back into the bedroom.

When he emerged about ten minutes later, a very pink and reluctant blonde in tow, Harry found both men casting spells at the walls. They would cast the spell, study the stone wall for a few seconds, step sidewise a few feet, then cast it again. "Um... May I ask what you're doing, professors?" he asked.

"Ascertaining the best place to put your training room, my boy!" Albus replied, between spells.

"Ah! Right. You won't mind, then, if we go to have some breakfast?" the Gryffindor asked.

"You may even attend classes," Snape interjected, snidely.

"I'm sure Severus and I can handle things here, boys," the headmaster said. "We should be finished before noon."

"Haven't a word for your head of house, Mr. ...Potter?" Snape said, addressing Draco.

Draco had been trying to hide behind Harry while not seeming to. Upon being called on his rudeness in not greeting him, the blonde straightened, and put on his 'aristocrat' expression, to talk to the potions master. The effect was somewhat compromised by his red face. "Um... Hello, Professor."

Snape's eyebrow arched. "'Hello?'"

Draco attempted to stand a little taller. "I regret not greeting you earlier, I was..."

"Propositioning your husband while you had guests?" the potions master asked, interrupting.

Draco's face was blazing, now. The fact that his husband had started to snicker at him wasn't helping, either. It didn't matter that Harry was trying to smother it; he was still enjoying his predicament far too

much. "Harry!" he hissed. "Stop laughing at me, and help me!"

"Stop teasing the boy, Severus," a smiling Dumbledore interjected.

Harry gathered his totally embarrassed husband into his arms.

Draco pretended to struggle a bit, then hid his red face against Harry's neck.

When the Gryffindor looked over at the men, he surprised Snape in a small smile, which promptly disappeared behind a supercilious sneer.

"Don't you two ever stop pawing at each other?" he inquired, demeaningly.

Harry wasn't fooled; not any longer. He grinned unrepentantly at the man.

"Go to your breakfast!" the greasy-haired professor snarled. "And don't be late for my class this afternoon!"

"Yes, Professor," Harry said, smirking. Draco looked confused, but also made compliant noises.

"Snape's not so bad," Harry remarked. "But he probably needs a partner. Do you know if he prefers males, or females?"

"What? Why would I know something like that?" Draco asked.

Harry shrugged. "Being your head of house, I thought maybe you'd have seen or heard something that might give you a clue. I'm sure Slytherins see more of him than the rest of us."

"I really wasn't interested in his private life, Harry. I don't know - for sure."

Harry's ears pricked up. "Suspicions will do, for a start," he said, delightedly.

Draco looked at his husband with suspicion. "You're not just doing this out of the goodness of your heart, are you." It wasn't a question.

"You know me so well, snookums," the Gryffindor smirked.

Draco stopped dead in his tracks, mouth agape. "You didn't!" he said, accusingly.

"I didn't what?" Harry said, innocently.

"You didn't just call me 'snookums.'" the blonde said, dangerously.

"Now, would I do that?" Harry said, grinning widely.

Draco growled, and lunged, but his grinning husband was already running towards the Great Hall. The blonde raced after him, intent on revenge, but he wasn't as fast as he would otherwise have been. Even at just a shade over two months along, his energy and stamina wasn't what it had been, so Harry outdistanced him, and he lost sight of the dark head as the Gryffindor rounded a corner. When he rounded the same corner, he was grabbed, and wrapped in powerful arms, making him panic momentarily, until he recognised his husband's feel. But he wasn't going to be distracted that easily. He started pinching the Griffindor, grinning, and emphasising his words as he repeated, over and over "Snookums, huh? Snookums?"

The pinches hurt, but they weren't vicious, and Harry kept laughing as he tried to fend off his offended lover. Finally, he grabbed Draco's hands and held them behind the blonde's back. In response, the

Slytherin started nipping at him, until Harry finally captured his vengeful mate's lips with his own. It didn't take long until the kiss was being fervently returned, so he released his lover's arms, which came around him, pressing them close together. "Mmm... Damn Snape and Dumbledore," he said.

Puzzled, Draco pulled his head back, so he could see Harry's face. "Why?"

"They're in our rooms. We can't go back to bed!"

Draco blushed. "We need to eat!" he said, slapping Harry's arm. He started back down the corridor towards the Great Hall, Harry walking beside him. His mischievous side wouldn't let the 'snookums' nickname go. He reached out, and pinched the Gryffindor again. "Snookums..." he said, again.

Harry sidled quickly away. "Draque," he drawled warningly, with a grin, "you don't want to start that again."

The blonde smirked. "Or what? You'll spank me?" he said, facetiously.

"It could happen," Harry warned, thinking of the times he'd wanted to bring a flush to those perfect globes.

"You wouldn't dare," Draco said, with a superior grin, and pinched his husband again.

"I mean it, love," Harry said, green eyes flashing with annoyance.

The blonde advanced, a superior smirk on his face, fingers darting in to pinch, first here, then there; high, then low. He was beyond surprised when he found his wrist in an unbreakable grip, being dragged towards a door.

"You asked for it," the green-eyed youth informed him, dragging him into an empty conference room.

"Harry! You wouldn't!" Draco said, alarmed. "I'm pregnant. It'll hurt the baby!"

"Your bum isn't anywhere near where I could hurt the baby, love. That's not going to save you," Harry said, seating himself in a large, leather-bound chair, and hauling his husband over his knee.

"I was just playing!" a panicked Draco protested, squirming, and trying to get free.

Harry raised a hand, took careful aim, and let fly. smack!

Draco's eyes went wide as the stinging, open-handed blow fell. "Harryyyy...." he protested.

The Gryffindor soothingly rubbed the spot he'd slapped, then repeated the process a couple more times before asking "Have you learned your lesson, love?"

"What lesson? That you can be a brute?!" was the reply, as Draco struggled to get away.

smack! Another blow, and soothing strokes. "I can keep this up all day, you know," the green-eyed boy told his husband.

"What - you've done this before?"

smack! And more rubbing. "Be polite, love of my life."

"Some love, if you're going to beat me!" the blonde replied, defiantly.

smack! "You know better, love. We've fought in the past, and you know what it's like when I beat you," was the response, as the blonde's cloth-covered bum was petted.

"Harry, stop!" Draco begged. "This isn't funny!"

smack! "It isn't meant to be funny. But I can feel that you're enjoying it," Harry said, petting the warming flesh.

"I am not!" the blonde denied, but his erection was making a liar of him. "Is that why you're doing it?" he accused. But his defiance was waning.

smack! "I'm doing it, because you were acting like a superior prat, again," his husband replied.

"I'm sorry!" Draco cried.

Suddenly, he was no longer trapped on his husband's lap, but in his arms, his lips being crushed by the Gryffindor's - a much better arrangement. Their passion was aroused, but "Harry, we can't!" Draco warned, as his husband's clever fingers unfastened his trousers. "It's not warded, here!" When that didn't slow his husband down, and those long, tanned fingers wrapped around his hardness, he hoarsely whispered "The other students, love. If we set them off again..."

"That only happened when we shagged," Harry growled low in his ear.

Draco had no more fight in him, and reached blindly for his husband's length as his mouth was again being ravished.

A few minutes, and a few cleansing and grooming spells later, they were again on their way to breakfast.

It was now an almost every-day occurance for them to sit at the Gryffindor tables, most of the rest of the time at their own small table. But every once in a while they'd sit at one end of the Slytherin table with Blaise, Pansy, Hermione, and a few of the friendlier, or less antagonistic Slytherins. They'd arranged that this morning they would eat with the Slytherins. One look from their table-mates, and everyone assumed they'd been shagging. When Draco squirmed uncomfortably a few times, they were sure of it.

"Passionate morning, eh, Draco?" Blaise said, smirking.

Draco blushed, and glared at him. "What do you mean?" he asked, distantly.

"Swollen lips, can't sit still?" his friend implied.

Harry smirked, but remained quiet, and kept eating.

"That's not why-" Draco started to protest, then stopped. "I don't have to explain anything to you," he muttered.

Pansy looked at him, amused. "Your husband quite the stud, Draco?" she asked, smirking.

"If you must know," the blonde said haughtily, sitting straighter, "Harry beat me," and enjoyed the shocked looks on their faces for all of two seconds.

"I spanked him," Harry corrected quietly, not pausing in buttering his toast.

Draco blushed spectacularly.

"He's-" Hermione started to say, in an indignant tone. "Why would you do that?!" she said, trying to

cover the fact that she'd almost slipped and mentioned the blonde's pregnancy.

"Attitude adjustment," the green-eyed young man replied calmly.

"Harry!" Draco was mortified.

Everyone in hearing, mostly the 'friendlies,' although they sent small smirks Draco's way, relaxed. They'd all been on the wrong end of Draco's attitude at one time or another, and were amused and gratified to know that he was no longer getting away with it.

"You were a bad boy, then, Draco?" Blaise inquired, teasingly.

"Excuse me," Draco said, standing. "I think I prefer my own company."

Harry reached out and grabbed his husband's wrist, pulled him down into his lap, and wrapped his arms around him. "You accused me of beating you, love," he whispered softly in the blonde's ear. "You lied," his tone dangerously low. "Don't blame me for that."

Draco shivered, then melted into Harry's embrace. "I'm sorry," he whispered back. Yes, he had his pride, but he rather liked this side of his husband - as long as it didn't get out of hand.

"So am I," Harry said, nuzzling the his husband's ear. "But I won't lie by telling you I didn't enjoy it. You have a lovely arse."

Although still thoroughly embarrassed, this time Draco's blush was a pleased one, and his body was reacting. It hadn't been that long since their mutual release, but...

"I'd tell you to get a room, but you already have one," Blaise cut in, smirking.

Harry stuck his tongue out at the boy.

"Stop that!" Draco said, lightly smacking his husband upside the head. "Haven't you embarrassed me enough?" The Gryffindor's chuckles were as music to his ears.

Hermione, observing all this, could no longer resist. She grabbed her boyfriend's head and pulled him into a fierce kiss.

When she let him go, Blaise looked at her, a bit dazed, then to Harry and Draco. "If that's how she's going to react, please - carry on!" he remarked, to Hermione's chagrin, and the great amusement of those within hearing.

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Your thoughts?

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Chapter 23 by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: SeparatriX For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty-Three

The training room was huge. At leas it appeared so, at ten metres wide, forty metres long, and with an eight-metre-high ceiling; but when asked how so much room could be hollowed out in such a short time as a morning, even with magic, Professor Dumbledore informed them that the actual, physical space taken up by the room was only three feet wide, eight feet long, and six feet tall. Magic added the extra dimension. Additionally, the floors and walls, although they were stone, felt as though they were deeply padded. Harry was almost willing to bet the ceiling would be spelled the same way.

The headmaster had also informed them that the room was spelled so that no spell cast in it could be permanently detrimental, and the accompanying pain levels of any given spell or curse cast would only be one-third of what it would be otherwise. Pain was a good teacher, encouraging faster reaction times
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and fewer mistakes, but it needn't be torturous to do that job.

Along one wall were racks and cases of weapons, both muggle and magical, ranging from contact poisons (meant to incapacitate, rather than kill) to blades, staves, and other lightweight, albeit more exotic, weapons.

"Harry... I can't use any of those."

"I don't know how to use any of them either, love."

"That's not what I meant. I could miscarry if I were to be as active as using those would require me to be."

"How? It's not as though you have a vagina...thank the gods. I like what you have."

Draco gently blushed. "I like what I have too, thank you." he said, with a bit of asperity. "But just because I couldn't naturally abort doesn't mean it couldn't kill the baby."

Harry paled. "Then we definitely won't be using them!"

"No, you won't, Harry," came a familiar voice from behind.

A big grin sprang to the Gryffindor's face as he spun about. "Remus!" He almost ran to the werewolf before throwing his arms around him in a fierce hug. "Where've you been hiding away? The only time I've been able to see you is in class!"

The short, auburn-haired man seemed to become a bit uncomfortable. "Ah... That is, Harry... Well...I've taken a new mate."

Surprised, Harry held his friend and DADA professor at arms length, looking at him. "Well, that would keep you busy. Who is he? Or she?"

"Harry. I thought you knew me better than that! He, of course," the werewolf teased.

"So? Are you going to tell me, or am I going to have to... No, on second thought, that might not be such a good idea," Harry said, backtracking, as a light growl came from the werewolf. Harry might be a powerful wizard, but no-one wanted a werewolf angry with them. "Oh, please, Remus!" the Gryffindor begged. "Who is he?"

"My supplier," Remus replied, smirking.

Harry was puzzled. "Supplier? But you don't..." His eyes widened as an awful suspicion grew in his mind. He backed away, rudely pointing at the man. "You... You wouldn't... You couldn't have. You two have been at each other's throats for years!" He felt his husband's arms slip around his waist.

"It does rather explain why he was so much more edgy and snarky for a while," Draco murmured in his husband's ear. "He wouldn't have given in easily."

"He didn't," Remus said, grinning, his sharper-than-normal hearing easily picking up on the quiet words, "but I won him over, eventually. Didn't have any free time before that happened, of course."

"But Snape?" Harry's brow furrowed in confused distaste, as he shook his head, his mind boggling at the idea.

Lupin shrugged, his grin fading a bit. "The heart flies where it will, dragging the rest of the body along behind it," he said lightly.

Harry sagged. He knew that all too well. "You're right. I'm sorry for overreacting. It's just... Forget it. As long as you're happy together."

"That's alright, Harry. But about those weapons? They're for the both of you to practice defending yourself against, using magic. Before that happens, of course, we'll have to find the parameters of the strength of your bonded magic, and have you practicing spell-casting while linked until it becomes second nature. Tomorrow night alright to start?"

"Anything we have to do tomorrow night, love?" Harry asked.

After a moment, the blonde replied. "No, I don't believe so. We might want to let Blaise and Hermione know that we'll be busy, though."

"I just wanted to drop in to see what you thought of the new addition," Remus remarked.

The green-eyed youth grinned. "I've been in the wizarding world for five years, and I'm still amazed by some of the things magic can do. All of this in a space little bigger than a gr..." Harry's grin faltered, and faded, as he finished his sentence. "Little bigger than a grave."

The werewolf pretended not to notice, and shrugged, trying to pass it off. "With spells of expanding, you first need to have a space you can expand. For a room this size, those were approximately the dimensions that were needed. And with the magic that's likely to be flying around, a large space was needed."

"Ah... Professor? Not to pry, but I thought wolves mated for life?"

"That's quite true, Draco, but I'm a werewolf. We mate for life as well, but if we lose our mate, we are able to pursue the task of acquiring a new one." Looking at Harry, he said "It was quite difficult for me as well, Harry, when Sirius - was lost. But a good friend reminded me that he wouldn't have wanted me to pine the rest of my life away over him. Sirius loved life, and he'd have abhorred our wasting it."

Looking back to Draco, he said "You've been good for him, boy; as much as that surprised me." When the blonde bristled at the words, he apologised. "That wasn't how I meant it, Draco. Actually, I'm not quite sure how to say it, but know that I appreciate the happiness you've given my godson."

"Wha-! Godson? I thought Sirius was my godfather?!" Harry exclaimed.

"He was my mate, Harry. We couldn't marry because I'm listed as a Dark Creature rather than as a man, but as my mate, we shared responsibilities. He was your godfather, so when... At any rate, I accepted the responsibility."

Harry's mind was working at a feverish rate. "So if you're my godfather because Sirius was, and you're now mated with Snape... Please. No. Draco, stop snickering! It's not funny!"

Remus was nodding, a quirk to the corners of his lips.

The blonde burst out into full-fledged laughter. "Yes! It is! How do you think he's going to accept the news!"

That caused the Gryffindor's lips to quirk, but... "But... Oh, Remus! How could you! Having you as my godfather would be - is - wonderful. But Snape?"

Remus was enjoying a full belly laugh now, as well. Looking from one to the other, Harry threw up his hands, and walked rapidly to the living portion of their rooms, and sat down for a good sulk. It only took a minute, though, before the irony of the situation hit him, and he started to grin. Pale arms came around his neck from behind.

"Okay now, pet?" Draco asked.

Looking up and around, he saw Remus standing a few feet away, a hesitant smile on his face. "Sit down, dear godfather," he invited with mock sarcasm, before looking up into his husband's eyes. "Yes, love; I'm fine. Bit of a shock, though. Now come 'round here and keep me warm, before I pull you over the couch-back." He grinned impishly, to show he didn't mean it.

The blonde leaned over and gave his husband an upside-down kiss before complying. "Don't get used to giving out orders, Scarhead," he said affectionately.

Harry noticed that his godfather still hadn't seated himself. "Remus?"

"As I said, Harry, I'd just stopped by to see how you liked your new training area. Sev is waiting for me," he explained.

The raven-locked teen stood and walked over to him, giving him another hug before stepping back and putting an arm around Draco, who had followed him. "You - and your new mate, I suppose - are welcome back any time, Remus. Just...try to give us some notice? I'm not sure Snape-" With the sharp look his newly-discovered godfather gave him, he amended his words. "Professor Snape, could stand seeing either of us in dishabille again."

Remus raised his eyebrows in question.

"He has a bad habit of knocking us up* early in the morning," Draco informed him.

The werewolf grinned. "Probably purposefully," he said. "You're not, either of you, hard on the eyes. I'll have to have a word with him about that," he said, a slightly feral tone to his voice, before he mellowed again. "We're all related, now, after all."

Draco paled. "Bloody hell," he breathed, in realisation.

"Language, young man!" Professor Lupin remonstrated, with a grin. "I won't take points this time,

however."

Harry was having a hard time keeping his enjoyment of having the tables turned on his husband from turning into full-fledged laughter, but even his wide grin earned him a short punch to his shoulder when the blonde noticed.

"I'll see you both tomorrow," Remus said, as he exited.

"Tomorrow, Professor," Harry replied with a wave, still grinning.

Draco moved around to face his husband, Harry automatically bringing him into an embrace. "Harryyy..." Draco whined, lightly and hitting his husband's shoulders repeatedly with both fists, "I don't want those two for godfathers! A werewolf and the grumpiest git on the planet? No...!"

"Well, I'll agree with you about Snape, love, but Remus is a decent sort. He's always fair to everyone in his classes, isn't he? And what's with the whinging? Isn't that a little undignified?"

Draco cuddled in close, and pouted. "I'm not allowed to relax in private with my husband?" he complained.

Harry's grin was very tender as he answered. "Of course you can. I think you're adorable like this."

The blonde looked at him suspiciously, but when he saw no mockery or teasing in his husband's eyes, relaxed back into his embrace. "That's good. Because I am adorable, you know," he remarked smugly.

The green-eyed teen smacked his husband's bum in warning, causing Draco to jump into him, slightly. "What was that for?" he asked, a slight edge to his voice.

"The pleasure of feeling your arse - and your front," Harry said, teasing. "And your front is definitely

telling me you like it."

"That has nothing to do with you - spanking me!" he declared. "That just has to do with you."

Harry was rubbing the spot he'd slapped. "Admit it, love. You find it just as hot as I do."

"Perv."

"And?"

"Maybe... But not as hard as you were doing it," Draco admitted, reluctantly.

Harry lifted his husband's chin and kissed him deeply. "Bedtime," he said huskily.

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Training turned out to be just a bit grueling. It was determined that Draco's magic was indeed enhanced by their link, but not to the extent Harry's was. The consensus, although it was only guesswork, was that it was due to Harry being the dominant in their bond. Since Draco's magic ability had never been measured against Harry's before the bond, it was possible that the Gryffindor's magic had been more than a bit stronger in the first place. But as already stated, it was all speculation, and did nothing to explain Draco's smaller victories against the raven-haired boy in the duelling club during their second year, even though Harry had eventually won each match.

Draco soon learned when he needed to stop any active participation in the training, to sit back and relax. During those times, he merely became Harry's 'booster', lending his support from the sidelines. The first time he'd felt a slightly nauseous roiling in his abdomen, he'd assumed it was just 'morning sickness', although that term had turned out to be a misnomer. The nausea and vomiting could and had happened at all hours of the day. That first time in practice, however, that hadn't been the case. He'd wound up cramping, and was rushed, protesting and complaining all the way, to the hospital by his very anxious

and worried husband. Madam Pomfrey had diagnosed natal stress, and laid down the law - no more strenuous training.

It was also during this time that Dobby had started bringing in those elves he felt were best suited to 'Mister Harry and Master Draco.' When asked if the candidates had been hard to find, Dobby confessed to having talked to every currently unattached house elf in the country before settling on the twenty he eventually wound up introducing to 'the masters.' That effectively explained the long delay.

The elves were not introduced all at once, however. Knowing that the young couple were very busy, Dobby had arranged for no more than three to show up on each of the three weekday evenings the boys had free for the next two weeks. Draco, having been more exposed to the species, did most of the selecting, but Harry was by no means passive in the process. At the end of that two weeks, they had decided on the small crew they needed. There was Juky, whose primary duties would be in the kitchen, Pokan, who would take care of laundry and the bedrooms, Forkal and Dirny would act as general-purpose servants and were skilled in other areas as well; among them, carpentry, weaving, and tailoring. All four of them would work to keep the house repaired, vermin free, and spotless.

Harry talked to Dumbledore to find out how Dobby's pay was handled, then deposited a hundred and fifty galleons in Dobby's Gringott's account (originally set up by Professor Dumbledore) without telling the house elf exactly how much it was - just that he'd put a small gift in the account for his help. He knew if he had disclosed the details, Dobby would have over-reacted in one way or another, and he wasn't quite sure he could take a year or more of whichever reaction it was. Even so, Dobby's protests and eventual effusive gratitude was almost too much.

It took a few week-end visits to 'the Place' to show the new house-elves what needed to be done, and to have them correct errors, but eventually the small mansion was looking sharp and lived in once again; a distinct difference from its former shabby, run-down, deserted appearance.

By that time, the solstice holidays were almost upon them, and shopping trips to the wizarding quarters in France were insisted upon.

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"The tunnel is more than two-thirds cleared, my lord," Pettigrew reported.

"It is stable, now?"

"Yes, master."

"No more deaths, then?"

"No, my lord, just the three; although Rimbough had to have a hand regrown last week."

"How much longer, then?"

"I don't know, my lord Voldemort. It depends on upon how much more of the tunnel is collapsed; and as you know, master, we cannot use magic to find out that information."

"I grow impatient, Worm. Crucio!"

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Finding the 'perfect' Yule present for Draco presented a problem. He knew exactly what he wanted to get his husband. The problem was trying to get it ordered and keep it a secret; especially since Draco had already sensed that he was trying to keep something from him.

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*A/N: To be "knocked up," in Britain, means to have someone knocking on your door, contrary to American usage.

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Your thoughts?

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Chapter 24 by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

Beta: For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty-Four

"My gods, Draco! You're huge!"

"Nobody asked your bloody opinion, Weasley," Draco growled. "Shut it!"

"Draco!" Harry remonstrated.

"Well, what do you expect, Harry?" Draco demanded irritatedly. "I'm pregnant - more than half-way along - it's your fault, and your bloody best friend, whom I've never been fond of, by the way, is making insulting remarks!"

Harry was quiet while he absorbed that short speech. "You know, you're right." Looking at Ron, who had been smirking, and now looked mildly apprehensive, he said "That really was rather a personal remark, Ron. Perhaps an apology is in order?"

It was Draco's turn to smirk.

Ron's face reddened, and for a moment, he looked as though he might refuse. Then he deflated, and turned to the pregnant young man. "Sorry to have commented...Draco." He looked as though he'd just had his mouth washed out with soap.

Draco wasn't happy with the apology. The redhead hadn't taken back the sentiment - only apologised for saying it. But he realised it was probably the best he would get. He put it down to lack of breeding, and dropped the subject. That didn't mean he forgave the youngest Weasley male, however.

"Well?" he asked, exasperatedly. "Aren't you going to offer us a seat, and refreshments?"

"Ronald Billious Weasley!" came Molly Weasley's voice, as she entered the room. "Don't you dare tell me you've forgotten the manners I took so long to knock into your head!"

"I knew there had to be a reason for it," Draco muttered irreverently, under his breath. "Too many hits to the head!"

Harry elbowed him, but was thinking 'Billious?'

Draco glared at his husband. "What was that for?"

"Don't you two be quarrelling, now," Molly injected, saving Harry from having to answer. "Come on into the lounge. Everyone's here; we're just getting ready to decorate the tree."

Her apologetic tone for that last sentence was explained as they stepped into the large common area. In one corner stood a Muggle store-bought 'Christmas tree'; all tin and wire branches, and plastic needles. Arthur's doing, no doubt. Nobody else seemed especially pleased or impressed, although they were trying to put a good face on it.

"Oh, bloody hell!" Draco exclaimed, upon seeing it. "Arthur Weasley; I knew you were barmy for Muggle things, but this is going just too bloody far!"

Arthur's face flushed in irritation. "Listen here,..." Nobody found out what he would have said next, as

Draco interrupted.

"No, you listen! Yule is about the renewing the hope for life, bringing the sun comes back! That - parody of a tree has nothing to do with either hope or life!"

Mr. Weasley found he couldn't very well argue the fact; especially after he discovered everyone in the room looking at him with hope in their eyes, that different arrangements would be made. But he wouldn't go down without a fight. "I suppose you believe that killing a tree is better?" he sneered.

Draco was on firm ground, and confidently replied. "Of course not; that wouldn't be in the proper spirit, either. But cutting a bough or two each from several trees does no lasting harm. Drape them in appropriate places in the room, and use your decorations on them!" he said, triumphantly.

Arthur was entranced by the elegant solution (having, apparently, forgotten that the 'Christmas' tree was a relatively new custom, having only been introduced in the late 1800's), albeit a bit disappointed that his precious muggle 'tree' had been so ill received by family and friends alike. Nobody had said anything, but though he'd tried to ignore it, he'd noticed the all-too-frequent unhappy looks aimed at his artificial tree since he'd dragged it out of the box, and started putting it together.

Mr. Weasley wasn't the only one pleased with Draco's suggestion, and soon most of the males in the room had made their way to the mud room, bundled up, and gone off to find saws, hatchets, and trees from which to harvest limbs.

Harry and Draco, since they'd just arrived (and in Draco's case, because of his 'delicate condition'), were deemed exempt; they were left to lounge by the fire, sipping mulled, spiced cider, and chat with the women when those worthies weren't busy in the kitchen. Ginny was the exception. She'd insisted that the men-folk wouldn't get it right unless she was there to keep an eye on them.

It wasn't but a couple of hours later before everyone was back, arms laden with evergreen boughs.

Yule with the Weasley's was, as always, an affair of seemingly chaotic confusion. But it was full of fun and laughter, and everything got done, as miraculous as that seemed, albeit not without a few pranks being

pulled by the twins.

There was a little tension at first, as everyone tried to adjust to Draco's presence, but eventually it eased up, although it never entirely went away. Part of that was due to Draco's penchant for sarcasm when he was ill-at-ease, and little comments that, while quite unintended as such, made it appear he considered himself above everyone there. Of course he did, but he didn't mean to task anyone else with that attitude, and he managed to charm his way out of most of those incidents - usually by passing it off as hormonal surges due to his pregnancy. Those who knew him, knew better, but they could see he was trying, so didn't give him the piss too often.

Finally the sun set, and it was Yule.*

"Presents!" gleefully shouted the twins, George and Fred, simultaneously.

"After the celebration, boys. You know that!" their father remonstrated with them.

They adjourned to the study which, for this night only, had been bespelled to three times its normal size. There, they found a simple wooden altar laden with the foods of the season; root vegetables, grains, apples, and a joint of beef. A small bottle of wine and a largish goblet also graced the altar-top. Unlike the muggle version of this and other seasonal celebrations, there were no mystic symbols, no special clothing, and no arcane music. They had retrieved a few coals from the fireplace and put them into an earth-filled pot, and upon which Arthur now threw a small amount of mixed, dry herbs and resins. These gave off a light, pleasing scent that had those present feeling relaxed and at ease.

Arthur acted as the celebrant, assisted by his wife. He poured some wine into the goblet, and Molly gave from it a sip to each person present. "We are met in peace," Arthur intoned formally, when the last person had supped, and the last of the wine poured upon the ground as tribute to the gods.

He then turned to the altar, and proceeded to thank his gods for the last year's bounty, the sacrifice of the Summer King, and their fervent wishes and prayers that the sun come back and bring life for yet another year. Although Arthur had his private doubts that the gods had much, if anything, to do with the seasons and the workings of the universe, he had no doubts about their existence, having met one,

once, and he had no desire to incur their displeasure by ignoring these rituals.

When the short ritual was over, and a bit of each of the foodstuffs had been sacrificed to the fire, they retired to the lounge.

"Presents now?" the twins again asked in unison.

"How do they do that?" Draco quietly whispered to Harry.

Harry just grinned and shrugged, having long ago given up on trying to figure out that particular puzzle.

"Since you two are so eager," Mr. Weasley stated, "you can act the Yule elves."

Fred and George pouted at him. It wasn't that they were unwilling, but that they would be unable to open their own gifts until everyone else had theirs. Still, sooner begun, sooner finished, so they set to with a will, and soon everyone had a small pile of packages in front of them.

The usual Molly Weasley jumpers made their appearance, including one for Draco. He put a brave face upon it, though, and thanked the kindly woman with grace, and as much sincerity as he could muster for the forest-green article. In deference to Draco's more refined tastes, Molly had made the finely stitched silver 'D' quite small by her usual standards, and moved it from the centre of the chest, towards the left shoulder; the same for Harry's, which was in the same colours.

The twins gave everyone an assortment of pranks from their shop. Books, jewellery, clothing, and various other things rounded out the gifts given and received.

Later, everyone was surprised when Molly slipped a finely-chopped Canary Cream into the Waldorf salad. There was immediate confusion as everyone immediately accused 'Gred' and 'Forge' of the prank, while they vociferously protested their innocence. There was so little of the confection in the salad per person that nobody had a complete transformation, but the feathers tickled. No one thought to think

that both of the twins had also broken out in feathers. And Molly had a grand laugh at everyone's expense, especially upon seeing the looks of astonishment on everyone's faces after she confessed to the prank.

"The twins had to get it from somewhere, didn't they?" she crowed.

By the end of their visit, Draco had become almost comfortable with the family, and they with him. But finally it was time to go spend a few days with Draco's mother.

The trip to Switzerland was uneventful, as was the sleigh ride to the chalet. From the outside, it was only slightly more impressive than the others in the area, but indoors, it very much lived up to the usual ostentatious Malfoy standards. Although not as coldly gracious as the manor, the fine woods, fur rugs, and fine art, still screamed 'wealth'.

Set high in the foothills, it, in itself, was a work of art. And the view out the lounge windows was breathtaking. A thick coat of fresh snow covered everything in sight. The boughs of the various sorts of evergreen trees drooped beneath its weight, but stood strong; a fitting symbol of the boys' own lives, had they only thought of it.

Narcissa's greeting was anything but cold, however. In fact, it stopped just short of effusive. Once divested of their outdoor garments, and seated in front of the cheerily blazing fireplace, with hot chocolate laced with cinnamon and rum, she demanded, and received, a thorough account of their lives since her last visit, and even unbent enough to laugh at the retelling of the Weasley twins' antics, and Molly's prank.

Supper was a gourmet's delight. Brioche was in a linen-lined basket in the middle of the table. The meal started with a shrimp bisque, served with a delicate white wine, followed by lime sorbet, and then the main course - a wienerschnitzel that was larger than the plate, served with lemon wedges, an asparagus and wild mushroom ragout, wild rice, and a fine riesling. A small caesar salad rounded out the meal, followed by a rich, full-bodied dessert coffee made from freshly ground beans.

"Next year, when Draco isn't with child, we'll have a nice Napoleon brandy, as well," Narcissa commented, making Draco's cheeks pink up. He was going to protest, but she ignored his reaction, and

rode over whatever he might have been going to say. "And now, perhaps, we should adjourn to the sitting room, and open gifts?"

Harry could see Draco's frustration, but it only amused him. He rather wished he had a mother to torment him gently, like that. And he was in no doubt whatsoever that Narcissa had deliberately poked at her son; he'd seen the sparkle in her eyes as she'd said it.

Most of the presents from Narcissa were baby related, of course, including a very finely made, and wonderfully carved Swiss cradle, but there were some very thoughtful personal items, as well; and both young men were appropriately, and verbally, thankful.

Harry had pondered and worried long and hard over his gift for his mother-in-law. His worries were put to rest at the look of genuine pleasure upon her face as she first unwrapped, and then studied the miniature. It was a silver swan, finely detailed down to the last etched feather, and enchanted to fly, and even stay afloat should it be put to swimming, and so beautiful and graceful that it was hard to tear one's eyes from it. The legs had been cleverly crafted so that it could walk about, but could also act as a cloak pin, or brooch.

"I hope you like it," Harry said to her ingenuously, although he could plainly see she did. "It reminded me of you."

The compliment brought a glow of pleasure to her eyes; not because of the compliment itself, as she had heard many of those in her life, but because she could tell he meant it. Most compliments she had received were because she was 'Mrs. Lucius Malfoy', and the person uttering it had hoped to ingratiate him- or herself, and by doing so, reap some benefit. Harry wanted nothing of her but, perhaps, her blessing of his relationship with her son.

Finally, Harry and Draco brought out their special presents to each other.

Harry gave Draco his present to him, first. It was another miniature; this one, a dragon, and done with the same impeccable attention to detail. Yes, it was a bit predictable, but Harry had been at a loss. His husband had been, after all, über-riche; trying to find something new and interesting for the boy who'd

had everything had turned out to be more than he could handle.

"It's enspelled to protect you, as well," Harry told him. "It'll breathe fire, and the legs transform into mini-stilettos, when needed."

He turned again to his mother-in-law. "Yours, too, Mrs. Malfoy, it-"

"Narcissa, dear," she interrupted, correcting him.

Harry took it graciously. "Narcissa. I'm sorry. But while the swan won't breathe fire, it will sound a rather loud alarm while its attacking the danger. And, if necessary, it can act as a portkey. You'll have to set a password to activate it, but it will take you to Hogwarts' gates. The castle's warded against portkeys to get into it, or I'd have had it set for Dumbledore's office."

Narcissa looked quite pleased, with that. "That was quite thoughtful of you, although I'm not so sure that any area outside the castle would be so safe for a portkey destination."

At her son's and son-in-law's quizzical looks, she said "If the castle were besieged, for example. I rather expect that You-Know-Who has the school as one of his prime targets - wouldn't you think?"

Harry nodded. "I hadn't thought of that," he admitted. "I'm sure you can have it reset for another destination, then."

He continued to look pensive.

"Harry?" Draco asked, concerned. "What is it?"

"Your mother's right," Harry replied. "With Dumbledore and me there, and his history with Hogwarts... I'm sure he'll attack it sometime or other. He's made small forays, but they've all failed. An all-out attack,

though... " He looked Draco in the eyes. "I don't want you going back there."

"Don't be silly, Harry! Of course I'm going back! We still have NEWTS to take," Draco said, dismissively.

Harry shook his head, stubbornly. "It's not just you, now, Draco; there's the baby, too."

"You're not going back there alone." Draco's tone brooked no argument.

"You know that I have to be there!" Harry replied, forgetting, in his worry, that their bond wouldn't let them separate.

Draco nodded. "Yes. I do."

"But...!" Harry looked to Narcissa, seeking support.

"Draco, love, be reasonable," she started.

'Bad. Very bad,' Harry thought, his heart sinking. 'That's the best way to ensure he won't be reasonable.' Draco didn't interrupt his mother, but Harry could see his jaw setting stubbornly. He'd continue to let Mrs. Malfoy talk, on the off-chance that it would do any good, but he already knew that he'd lost this particular battle. Any argument forceful enough to let him win it now, would likely damage their relationship.

"You know that..." She kept talking, trying to persuade her son to stay somewhere safe, and Harry listened, and watched his husband; watched the polite, but completely closed expression on his face.

When she was finished, Harry said "You're going to go back, aren't you?"

Draco looked at him levelly. "If that's where you're going to be, then yes. We have bond limit, remember?"

Harry grimaced at his memory slip, sighed, then gave Narcissa a wry grin. "It was a good try, Mrs. - Narcissa. Thank you."

"Now," Draco said, decisively, "if the two of you are quite through, may I give Harry my gift?" He didn't wait for a reply, as he reached down beside his chair, then handed Harry a silver-wrapped package tied with a green and gold ribbon.

"What? No red?" Harry quipped, seeing three of their House colours on the box.

Draco smirked. "Well, go on! Open it!" he said, grinning.

When he had, he understood Draco's grin. There, in perfect miniature replica, was a tiny phoenix, in red and black, with green eyes. It immediately flew up and perched on his shoulder, trilling all the while.

"It's beautiful!" Harry exclaimed.

"It's almost indestructible," Draco said, with quiet pride. "And it becomes a flying ball of flame, if you're threatened."

Harry grinned. "Great minds think alike, eh?"

"You wish," Draco replied flippantly, echoing one of Harry's frequent rejoinders. They both laughed, while Narcissa looked on, a strange look on her face. Harry noticed.

"Narcissa? I something wrong?"

"No, Harry. I was just..." She took a deep breath, and straightened her posture. "My little boy is a man, and has chosen a very good life partner, for himself," she announced, a little unnecessarily. "I was recalling him as a small child," she admitted. "Nostalgia. The refuge of the aged, and hopeless."

"Nonsense, mother!" Draco reproved her. "You are by no means, hopeless!" He had a look of deviltry in his eyes, as he deliberately said nothing about her being agèd.

"I can still enchant a switch to spank you, you know," she replied, with fake indignation.

"Mother! In my condition?" he replied, an equally fake look of shock on his face.

"Why not?" Harry replied, joining the fun. "I do it all the time!"

Immediately, Narcissa's demeanour grew serious. "You take switches to him?" Her voice was low, and dangerous.

"Of course not!" Harry replied, indignantly. "I use my hand! It's more fun for both of us, that way."

"Harry!" Draco's voice was shocked, that he'd share that with his mother, and his face was beet red. The admission had left Harry's face flushed, as well, but he was enjoying the shock he'd caused.

Narcissa's hand was covering her mouth; in shock, or to hide her amusement, he couldn't quite tell, but if the sparkle in her eyes were any indication, he wasn't in trouble. He thought he'd judged her correctly, and was feeling a bit smug about it.

"As a proper British witch," she finally replied, "I cannot, of course, condone that behaviour." Her voice was just bit distant, but her next words made Draco's blush even brighter. "Do be careful of his condition,

won't you?"

With that stamp of approval, Harry's grin widened. "Of course, Mother," the means of address falling easily from his lips for the first time.

Draco hit him.

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* Days used to be counted from sunset to sunset in this part of the world, and the wizarding world has kept this tradition for holidays - at least, in this story.

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Your thoughts?

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Chapter 25 - End by Draeconin

Bound! by Draeconin

For story details and disclaimer, please see chapter one. Chapter Twenty-Five

It was hard to get back into the routine of classes again, after such an enjoyable holiday. And Draco was, of necessity, slowing down, so getting to class on time was getting to be a problem as well. Knowing his husband, though, Harry was reluctant to approach Professor Dumbledore for special dispensation for them to be late. Draco would use it, abuse it, and if Harry let him, wind up not going to classes at all, depending instead on notes taken by their mutual friends. But he knew it was only a matter of time before he'd have to. And not much time, at that.

"Harry, my back hurts," Draco complained in a low voice, in the middle of Transfigurations.

"Sh... Pay attention." But he reached over with one hand and rubbed Draco's lower back, doing his best to apply enough gentle pressure to help relax the muscles.

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"We're starting to hear echoes, my lord," Wormtail reported. "We can't tell if the tunnel is completely clear ahead, but it shouldn't be too much further before we're clear of the densely packed area, and then we'll be able to move faster."

Voldemort leaned back, steepled his fingers under his chin, and smiled, causing the rat animagus to shudder, although he was careful not to let his master see his reaction.

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Their advanced training was going on apace. True, Draco's participation was very limited, but he was there, and he was at least learning the theory, if not always the practice. And Harry no longer had to cast Legilimens to connect to Draco; there was a light connection at all times, needing only concentration on either young man's part, to deepen.

One of the spells Harry was learning, was 'sùgh'; a spell used in battle to renew your magical energy by draining your enemy's. As might be expected, this spell was not well publicised. In fact, it was a spell held by only a few top wizards in Britain, although the spell itself had come from Gaul. This was not so much because of the secrecy, although that was certainly a factor, but because it took a certain level of innate power to be able to use the spell, and those not able to use it looked upon it with more than a little suspicion.

As with all spells, practice makes perfect. Harry kept practicing, at first getting not much more than constant correction from the headmaster - day after day, for almost two weeks. It was one particularly emotionally trying day (Draco had woken up grumpy and demanding, Snape had been out of sorts in Potions and chose Harry as his target more often than not, friends and acquaintances had been too inquisitive and demanding of his time, etc) when he finally got the spell right - and almost killed Dumbledore.

They had been practicing for about an hour, and Harry's patience, already tried by the events of the day, was at the breaking point. But he was determined to succeed. He needed this spell, if the battle were to go on for any length of time, at all.

Dumbledore sighed, after yet another failed attempt. "You need to flip the tip of your wand just a little faster, Harry. Maybe tomorrow," he said.

That was the last straw. Harry threw his wand down, staring the headmaster in the eye, and almost daring the old man to reprimand him for his temper tantrum. "I know I can do this damned spell! All it is, is a stupid word! Sùgh!" To his surprise, he felt a sudden influx of energy.

Dumbledore's eyes flew wide in surprise as well, as he felt his magic draining from him. "Harry! Stop!" he exclaimed.

"How?" Harry exclaimed, panicking. He knew he was supposed to lower his wand; but he wasn't using a wand.

"Break the connection!"

"How?" Harry exclaimed, again.

The old man was on his knees. "Look away..." he said weakly, just before he collapsed.

Harry tore his eyes away from the old man, even though he wanted to see if he was alright. To his relief, the influx of power halted. He hesitated, unsure whether or not it would now be alright to look back to see if the headmaster needed help. He decided to go for help instead, just in case he accidentally renewed the drain on the headmaster's magic.

He ran quickly to the fireplace in their rooms.

"Harry?" Draco said, alarmed. "What's wrong?"

"The headmaster!" Harry said, as he grabbed a bit of floor powder from the canister on the mantle. Throwing it in the fire, he stuck his head in, and yelled "Infirmary!" The mediwitch wasn't in her office. "Snape's quarters!" he yelled, trying again. Not there. He was getting dizzy from the floos that kept flying past when he called a destination. "Snape's office!"

"Potter! Why have you decided to inflict-"

"Albus is hurt!" Harry yelled, interrupting him. "Get help! Quickly!"

Snape didn't waste any more words in questioning the young man. "Get out of the way, Potter! I'm coming through!"

In no time, Harry was rushing along behind the greasy-haired professor as they made they way towards the headmaster's limp body, Draco following as quickly as he was able.

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Soon after the three men left the Potters' apartment, towing the stretcher holding Dumbledore's body, a flagstone in a dark corner of the sitting room slowly settled back into place. Peter Pettigrew was beside himself with glee. His master would be pleased.

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"Yes, Master; the tunnel comes up into a suite of rooms. They seem to be the apartment Potter and the

young Malfoy are inhabiting. Malfoy was quite pregnant, my lord."

"Was he?" Voldemort snarled, enraged. "You have done well, Wormtail," he said with a triumphant leer

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"Is he going to be alright?"

"I believe so, yes," Madam Pomfrey replied, trying to reassure Harry.

"Are you sure?"

"Really, Mr. Potter; we're just going to have to wait, to see."

"Sit down, Potter!" Snape snapped.

"I already am," Draco replied.

"This is no time for insolence, young man," the potions master replied.

Harry sat beside his husband. Draco shrugged, then ignored the professor. "Rub my back, Harry?" he requested.

"Draco, I may have killed the headmaster!" Harry said, even as he reached over to do as he'd been asked.

"And?"

"I may hate the manipulating git, but I don't wish to be the one who kills him," Harry said, in reply to his husband.

One of Snape's eyebrows rose slowly, as though being levitated. His hand rose slightly faster, to cover his mouth, but a twinkle in his eye gave him away. Neither young man felt brave enough to call him on it, however.

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A week went by, and Albus Dumbledore, while still not up to his usual standards, had again taken over the reigns of the school. Oddly, he never mentioned the incident. Nor had he mentioned renewing Harry's training with him, or with anyone else. Unknown to him, however, it was going on apace, with Snape and Lupin as the instructors.

Harry was getting quite nimble as he dodged, rolled, and dived out of the path of weapons, and out of the way of those spells and curses he wasn't quite fast enough to block or negate. His own blade work, while a bit unorthodox, was good enough to protect him most of the time, and often caught his opponent by surprise, which could have had dire consequences, as Harry wasn't good enough to be able to pull the force of his blows. Fortunately, the edges of the weapons were dulled, so they only caused bruises, which were quickly healed.

The draining spell, however, was not a part of the curriculum. That Harry practiced alone on manikins, late at night. What he'd done to the headmaster had shaken him, but it had also proven the spell's efficacy. And it was war. He'd found that 'sùgh' didn't work for him when he tried to use his wand. The intricate wand movement needed was too much of a distraction for him. But with wandless magic, and for this spell, he didn't even need to point at the target - just look at it.

He'd tried to find out why, but Remus had said it must just be a quirk of his mind. Snape had to enlarge on that comment of course, making it an insult. Surprisingly, Remus had only to give a slight glare at the greasy professor, and the man had subsided. Harry didn't ask. He didn't think he wanted to know the

answer to that question.

It happened a couple of nights later. Harry was in the shower alone - a rare occurrence. Draco had bathed earlier, having had a long, hot soak while Harry had been in training - begging off being there himself because his back hurt, his legs were swollen, and the list of complaints went on, and on.

He heard Draco yell, but that had become a common occurrence, of late. With his advancing pregnancy and the accompanying aches, pains, and physical limitations, Draco had become increasingly short tempered and irritable. Fortunately, his temper tantrums were usually fairly short lived. Harry had become used to them. Draco had probably been unable to reach something over his expanding stomach. He'd reach it down for him, whatever it was, as soon as he'd finished his shower.

He finished drying himself and walked, nude, into the bedroom, drying his hair, which had grown quite a bit in the past few months. "What were you-"

He was interrupted by a strangely familiar - and hated - voice. "Incarcerous!" Ropes wrapped him and immobilised him, even to pulling his arms to his sides, but doing little to hide his nudity. In the next instant, hands grabbed him, and threw him into the wall. His head hit the stone hard, and he dropped to the ground, stunned. Through his now-blurred vision, all he could see was approaching black robes, and then boots began impacting his body; jolt after jolt of pain preventing him from thinking of anything but escape or fighting back - both of which were prevented by the ropes.

"That's enough, Wormtail," came Voldemort's cold, sibilant voice, a mercifully short while later. "He's much prettier than I thought," the Dark Lord mused with a leer, studying Harry's nude form. "Perhaps, after I'm through with his little whore, I'll have a taste of him as well, before I finish this little game."

Wormtail pulled reluctantly away from his activity, knowing that even one more kick would see him writhing on the ground from the effects of the Cruciatus Curse. "Yes, Master."

"Sit him up, Pettigrew; I wish him to see me take this little traitor."

Peter Pettigrew did as he was directed, getting a face full of spittle for his trouble. He backhanded Harry.

When he drew his hand back for another blow, Voldemort again curtailed him.

"Enough, rat."

Pettigrew backed away, trembling in his desire to do more damage.

Harry's eyes darted about, looking for Draco, and found him on the bed, apparently unharmed, and apparently in the grips of 'Petrificus Totalis'. Momentarily relieved, and since he couldn't do more than try to distract these two (where were Voldemort's entourage?) while hoping for help to arrive, he turned back to the Marauder's traitor, and smirked at him through his pain. "So much for Life Debts, eh, Wormtail?"

"What's this?" Voldemort demanded.

Pettigrew paled as Harry replied. "He didn't tell you? I prevented my godfather from killing him, once."

Voldemort laughed. "And now he's the instrument of your downfall! How ironic." All the same, he turned a jaundiced eye on his puppet. Someone without enough honour to honour a life debt, was someone to keep a close eye on, indeed. But there was vengeance to be extracted. He turned to the heavily pregnant boy on the bed.

"As for you..." Voldemort said, his voice coldly murderous. "You were to come to me untouched. But you will be mine, nonetheless." His thin, bony fingers began unfastening Draco's robes; trousers having long been put aside due to his size.

"Leave him alone, you monster! He's pregnant!" Harry shouted, inanely. He could see Draco's mouth moving as the blonde struggled against his bonds, but no sound issued forth. A silencing spell, Harry assumed. Where were their protective 'toys'? Ah. There. On the floor, frozen in place. Broken? He didn't know.

Voldemort didn't reply as he yanked down Draco's pants, exposing the blonde's pale genitals, then started unfastening his own robes.

"Your fight is with me, not with him!" Harry argued, desperately trying to distract the - man? - from what he was doing. He had fought against his bonds so violently, that his skin was raw and bleeding slightly, in places.

"This was mine, boy, and you stole him from me," the snake-featured being replied, maliciously. "You will see me reclaim him. Then I will have you, before you die."

Wormtail was over in a corner of the room watching, and rubbing his hands in a washing movement. Conflicted emotions were evident on his face; fear, gloating, guilt, lust, and more. If anyone had been watching, they'd have been able to see the man was insane.

Harry felt the connection with Draco firm. His co-husband had initiated a deeper power bond. Why? He didn't have his wand!

Snake-like he might have been, but Voldemort was still in possession of his penis. It was ugly; heavily veined, slightly scaled, and with sores on it here and there, but it still worked, standing out erect in front of him as he rolled Draco over, exposing the Slytherin's delectable arse. Harry's eyes bugged out in panicked desperation as the wizarding world's would-be ruler poised himself at Draco's opening.

Ah! Harry had it! "Sùgh!" Harry shouted, and immediately felt the power flooding him as he started draining the Dark Lord.

Hearing the word, and feeling his power drain, Voldemort straightened from his attempted rape and whirled, facing Harry. "Where did you learn that? Stop it!"

Harry didn't say a word, concentrating on keeping the two connections firm.

Voldemort reached for his wand, but already his power was low enough that the curses he hurled did little more than cause relatively minor injuries. Harry flinched with each one, but his determination and concentration didn't waver.

"Wormtail...!" Voldemort called, just as he collapsed.

Pettigrew started when he was called upon, but before he got halfway across the room to come to his master's aid, Voldemort crumbled to dust - just as the manikins Harry had practiced on, had. He stopped, staring at the small pile of dust, then at Harry. Finally, he dived for the still-open hole in the floor, transforming into his animagus form as he did so.

Harry howled his rage at the animagus once again escaping him. But then he remembered his husband; his life-bonded love. "Draco!" he called, urgently. "Are you alright?"

Harry's heart nearly dropped through his stomach when Draco didn't respond right away, but then the blonde started wriggling, and managed to roll over - just as the magical bonds Voldemort had put on them started to dissipate, their power source now gone.

Harry was by his side just as soon as he could break the bonds, wincing from the pain of his wounds as he moved. He helped Draco to a sitting position, helping him arrange his robes as he did so. "Are you okay?" he asked, again.

Draco clutched at Harry, and started to shake in reaction to what he'd just gone through, but he nodded. "I... I think so," he replied.

"Did he..."

Harry's hesitant question, though unfinished, was perfectly understood. Draco shook his head. "No," he whispered hoarsely, gripping Harry's arms fiercely, "but I don't ever want to be that close to that, again. Where's Vol... Where is...it?"

"Dead," Harry replied, with fierce satisfaction.

Draco relaxed into Harry's side. He had been almost certain of it anyway, but the vocal declaration was reassuring.

There was a pounding on the entrance to their rooms, causing both young men to start violently. "Potter! Draco! Are you alright?"

They relaxed. Snape. Harry gave Draco a quick kiss on the cheek in reassurance, then got up to open the door. He hadn't taken two steps before Professors Snape, McGonagall, Dumbledore, and Flitwick came rushing through their bedroom door, before coming to an abrupt stop.

The scene before them looked entirely ordinary, except for the shaken expressions on the young couple's faces, and the wounds on Harry's body.

"What happened here, Potter?" Snape demanded.

"Gently, Severus," Dumbledore reprimanded, softly.

Snape shot the old man an irritated glance, before looking back at Harry, expectantly.

"Voldemort," Harry said simply, pointing to the pile of dust.

"That...dust - is supposed to be the Dark Lord?" Snape inquired, with only a slight sneer. "How?"

"Sùgh," Harry replied, monosyllabically.

All four professors stared. Hagrid chose that moment to lumber in. "'Arry! Is me 'Arry al..." he trailed off, as his eyes answered his question, but, "Air yeh alright, 'Arry? An' Draco, too?"

Harry smiled up at the worried half-giant. He might not be sure of the motives of the others, but he knew Hagrid really cared. He went over, and hugged the big man. "Yes, Hagrid. A little worse for the wear, but alright." Suddenly, he realized he was still nude. "Oh, Merlin!" he exclaimed, mortified. He turned and dashed for the bathroom, and came back a moment later, wrapped in a bathrobe.

He glared at Snape. "How could you stand there and question me without...?"

The potions professor turned to Dumbledore. "He'll do," he said dryly, eliciting various degrees of humour from the others.

"How did they get in?" Snape asked, continuing the interrogation. "How many were there?"

"Over there," Harry said, pointing. "Only Voldemort and Wormtail."

Before he'd finished speaking, all five of the teaching staff had surrounded the formerly hidden tunnel entrance, wands out - for four of them, at least. And just in time, as three heads poked up out of the hole. Before the Death Eaters could say or do anything, they were hit with stunning and immobilization spells.

A muffled yell of "That's stuffed it! They've got reinforcements!" came from the hole.

Another voice said "Fuck this for a lark! We can't get through fast enough; they'll pick us off!" And then there was the sound of retreating feet.

"This tunnel must come out somewhere between here and Hogsmeade," Minerva said urgently. "If we

send..." She stopped herself as she saw Professor Dumbledore shaking his head.

"We can't get enough people quickly enough to find the other end," the headmaster said. "They don't have any strong leaders remaining. I don't expect them to give up, but they should make enough mistakes to be able to catch most of them, anyway."

He looked around at them. "We need to seal this tunnel, for now."

Dumbledore then turned and spoke to Harry. "I suggest you dress, and get Draco and yourself up to the infirmary. Don't disturb anything. We'll call in the Aurors to take care of - the remains. They'll want to do tests."

Harry had been thinking of the headmaster's statement about their leaders. "Bellatrix Lestrange," he said.

Dumbledore looked confused. "I beg your pardon?"

"Leaders. Bellatrix Lestrange could take over," Harry explained.

Dumbledore shook his head. "Old aristocracy, Harry," he said, "they won't follow a woman."

"She still needs to be taken care of," Harry replied, stubbornly. He rather thought the now-leaderless group would follow anyone strong enough to take up the reins. And that bitch was capable of it.

"I don't believe so, Mr. Potter," Professor Flitwick said, from where the three Death Eaters had collapsed. The little man had removed the masks of the captured Death Eaters. "Seems we've caught Mrs. Lestrange, as well as the senior misters Goyle and Crabbe."

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Two weeks later, physically healed, both young men were starting to recover from their ordeal. In retrospect, the defeat of Voldemort almost seemed anticlimactic. But at the time... Harry still had nightmares about what had almost happened that night. Nor was he alone in that. It was a toss-up which one would have a nightmare - if both didn't. But with mutual support and a mental health councilor, they were dealing with it.

When the furor finally died down, Harry had asked how they'd known to come help. He was remembering Dumbledore's statement that there were no monitoring wards inside the apartment, and wondering if he'd been lied to yet again. As it happened, Dumbledore had felt the surge in ambient magic in the castle when Harry had cast the draining spell on Voldemort, and sent out an emergency signal to all members of the Order of the Phoenix in the vicinity.

Since Madam Lestrange, and the elder Misters Crabbe and Goyle had been caught in the act, and taking into account their history, the trial had been short. Crabbe and Goyle had been sentenced to life in Azkaban, and Bellatrix to the Kiss, which was administered that same day.

Vincent and Gregory were much saddened, of course, but they had known that something like this was bound to happen sooner or later, provided their fathers weren't killed outright. They were seen holding hands as they left the Ministry building.

"Draco?" Harry said thoughtfully, as they cuddled in bed that night.

Draco was smoothing Harry's hair with one hand. It had become much longer - almost shoulder length - and only needed a trim to look absolutely stunning on his partner. "Hm?"

"I think it's time."

"Time for what?" the blonde asked, idly.

Harry arranged himself so he could look Draco in the eyes, taking the blonde's ring hand in his hands. "Will you marry me? For us, this time?"

Draco studied Harry's face, trying to determine if there were reasons other than love for the question. Did his husband feel guilty for what had almost happened to him? Was this an attempt to make up for that night? Try as he might, even through their bond, he couldn't discern any other motive than love; although Harry was starting to look concerned. Draco leant forward and kissed him, then pulled back to meet those wonderful emerald eyes, again. "Yes," he said, simply.

Joy lit the Gryffindor's face, then a slight frown took its place.

"What's wrong?" Draco asked.

"I just remembered," Harry replied, with a reassuring smile; "your mother wanted us to come to her for our next wedding."

"Can't be that bad, can it?"

"She's your mother, Draco," Harry replied. "You tell me."

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Narcissa had insisted that they wait until after the child's 'birth' - a magically enhanced Cesarean procedure which posed no shock to the baby, nor left a scar upon the 'mother'. At eight and a half months, Draco gave birth. The child, named Joshua Damian, had rich, auburn hair, and blue eyes; a legacy strongly influenced by Harry's mother. But the hair colour would almost certainly change as he got older, and it was possible that over the next few weeks or months, the eye colour would, as well.

Draco was up the next day. Madam Pomfrey had then administered a potion/spell combination that took care of the slack muscles, and stretch marks on Draco's skin, leaving him looking much as he had before the pregnancy. Narcissa's ritual would take place a week later. Hermione and Madam Pomfrey would watch over the newborn for the couple for the duration of it.

Not wishing a repeat of Mrs. Weasley's Howler, a small group of people were invited to attend: the Weasley's of course, Hermione and Madam Pomfrey with their tiny charge, Blaise, his arm usually around Hermione's waist, and Professor Snape, with Remus' arm around his waist. The potion master's sour expression told what he thought of this public display, but he didn't try to end it. A bubble of energy surrounded the small group, ensuring that the ritual would be uninterrupted by either noise or action.

As the ritual went on, the room, carved out of native rock, and beautifully decorated to begin with, took on the appearance of a beautiful, natural garden inside a crystal cave.

Narcissa picked up the tiny, exquisitely formed silver knife. Carefully drilled on what was expected and needed during this ceremony, Harry held out his bare right arm. In fact, both young men were clad only in silvery-white kilts. Narcissa grasped his wrist, and carefully made a cut three inches above that wrist, then set down the knife, and picked up a small, undecorated silver bowl in which she caught the flowing blood. When she had about two ounces, she muttered a spell to heal the cut. She proceeded to do the same thing with Draco.

The blonde woman, dressed in white roe-skin, picked up a long, slender crystal, and stirred the blood, incanting Pictic spells over it, then using that same crystal, and their mixed blood, to draw symbols on their bodies - first on Harry, then on Draco. Each symbol, as it's twin was completed, glowing silver. As the last symbol, drawn on their feet, was completed, Narcissa stepped back, and uttered one more spell over them. The symbols glowed brightly, the glow spreading from each symbol to meet and join, until each boy was glowing brightly, then gently drawing the two young men together, until there was only one glow - one light. As that occurred, Narcissa smiled, pleased.

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"Damn it, Mother," Harry said fiercely, a year later, "things like that shouldn't be kept secret!"

Narcissa calmly sipped her tea. "I don't see what you're so upset about, Harry," she replied. "It's an Eternal Bond, just as I told you."

"But you didn't mention that Draco would be able to get pregnant much more easily, did you?" Harry accused.

Narcissa raised her eyebrows, as though mildly surprised. "Didn't I?"

"Oh, Mum, how could you? To your own son?" Draco moaned, into his second week of morning sickness.

"Well, dear," Narcissa replied, going over to sit with and comfort her son, "I was a Slytherin too, remember. And I've always fancied having a brood of grandchildren."

End

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