September 2nd, 2010. Quidditch Pitch , Hogwarts, Scotland 6:00 PM BST

“I figured when you mentioned brooms you meant something more…magical.” I said flatly, looking at the ratty bundle of sticks strapped to a bigger stick in my hands. It wasn’t just underwhelming, it was like…subwhelming. I literally had never been less whelmed by anything in my life.

Tracey grimaced. “Yeah…school brooms. It’s perfectly safe, mind you, but it can easily support your weight.” Her nearly subvocal murmur of ‘probably’ as she turned around would have escaped a normal person, but it did NOT escape me. Devil hearing, what a double edged sword.

I weighed the thing in my hands. I wasn’t…that worried. I could natively fly. Worst case I fell and then had to catch myself. I could BS it as being some sort of overpowered levitation charm cast on reflex if needed. Glaring up at the brown haired girl, I sighed and looked to where my buddy was standing holding his own ‘broom’.

He looked supremely uncomfortable, but eventually nodded. “I say we give it a go, mate. These things are dodgy as hell, sure, but they’re still brooms. They put in all kinds of features to stop them from dropping you to your death. Plus, I want to try out for the house team, and no way is the bollocks that passes for flying lessons here going to prep us.”

Rolling my eyes, I nodded, and Tracey squealed with joy, bouncing up and down and clapping gleefully. I winced at the high pitched sound, but the sweet faced brunette just flashed me a dimpled grin. “Alright, first step. Put the brooms on the ground and stand above them, we’re going to practice calling.”

I followed her instructions, looking at her quizzically as I stood up. She ignored me. “Now, this particular trick is much more useful than most people know. The teachers here show it off as a kind of parlor trick when teaching firsties, but it can be used for much more. I want you to put your hand up over the broom and say ‘up’. Make sure not to hesitate, just command the broom to your hand.”

Shrugging, I did as she said. “Up.” I said firmly. The broom just sort of…twitched. But I felt the connection. Briefly. Like a tiny filament of spiderweb sticking to my skin but snapping then I moved. Focusing on the sensation, I repeated. “Up.” And to my surprise, it actually worked. The filament connected, and this time I focused on it, pushing my magic through it.

The broom shot up and smacked into my palm in a blur, but after it did…I could still feel the filament of magic connecting us, carrying my intentions to the broom. It was interesting. I was pretty sure most people wouldn’t be able to feel this. All my practice subduing my wild magic had given me a pretty delicate sense of what I was doing when shaping the stuff.

Tracey looked thrilled. “Brilliant! You’re a natural Ryan. Like I said. That little trick is more useful than it seems. It not only lets you call the broom from the ground, but also from the air. Not far, mind you, but if you fall off you can call it to your hand to catch yourself. Most people don’t bother teaching that because if you’ve fallen off your broom you normally aren’t in a state to call anything, but it could save your life someday.”

Nodding absently, I let go of the broom, keeping my filament connected, and let it just…hang. It sat in the air, waiting for me to climb on, and Tracey and Blaise just kind of stared at me in shock. I shrugged. “Guess it likes me.”

This was a magic school so they’d probably seen weirder, though I heard Tracey mutter ‘cheater’, before turning to face me and pasting a smile on her face. “Now, with that out of the way, we can get some flying practice in.” She pointed above us. “Those are quidditch hoops. I want you each to fly through one and then come back.”

Grinning, I swung my leg over the broom as she instructed us how to ride. I felt pretty stable there, and once I mounted, I let myself rise slowly into the air. The broom was still connected to me, and it followed my lead seamlessly, slowly ascending as I stared out over the field.

It was…magical. For lack of a better term. I could see my friends drifting away, see Daphne in the stands looking nervous where she thought she was too far away to be seen (she wasn’t a flyer and had refused to come up, but still decided to join us to watch). I felt...free. Weightless, unbound.

I was so in tune with the broom I barely even had to think to steepen my ascent. I leaned back until I was nearly parallel to the ground, my body adjusting until I was almost standing on the twigs at the bottom. I should probably have felt worried, but I just…couldn’t.

Freedom. Unrestricted and absolute freedom. From gravity, from the world around me. I picked up speed. I heard voices below me, but I tuned them out. What had I been so afraid of before? This wasn’t scary, and my wings wouldn’t be either. I was a devil, and devils were MEANT to defy gravity.

Reaching the apex of my ascent I smoothly adjusted my position until I was leaning against the broom flat out and then leaned forward. My rise began a drop, and I hung effortlessly onto the broom with my demonic strength as I tipped into a nearly vertical plummet.

My heart flew up into my throat as the wind battered me and I watched the ground barrel toward me, and I grinned so wide my face nearly split. I roared in joy, my connection so secure I didn’t need to lean or pull up to swerve up out of the dive at the last second, so close to the gound I felt my shoes brush the fucking grass as I shot off down the pitch, still hollering in exultation.

Once I'd gone far enough to bleed off the speed I just let myself roll off lazily, hitting the ground from only about a foot up and tumbling sideways for a few feet, laughing like a maniac. "That." I panted breathlessly to my friends as they ran over. "Was fucking AMAZING."

Daphne was right behind them, and she ran up, saw me laughing and hauled back to kick me in the ribs. I felt bad that they looked so freaked, but not that bad, and I rolled aside effortlessly, still laughing.

"You bloody lunatic!" Shouted Blaise, his eyes wide with terror. "You could have died? What kind of nutter does something like that the first time he gets on a broom? HOW did you even do that?" He looked at Tracey. "Can you control a broom that well?"

She shook her head in amazement. "No. That was…I don't know what the bloody hell that was."

"It was STUPID." Hissed Daphne. "That's what it was.You almost broke your fool neck. What were you thinking?" She looked…scared. Which kind of popped my adrenaline bubble. I didn't mean to upset anyone. I was just having fun.

I put both hands up. "Sorry guys. Really. That was my bad. I just got carried away." I was careful not to say it wouldn't happen again, because it DEFINITELY would. That had been amazing.

She glared at me, blue eyes boring into me, before finally sighing in resignation. "Alright. It's done now. But you aren't getting back on that scrapheap again tonight. You'll be sitting in the stands with me."

"Aww, but mom." I whined mockingly. "I wanna play with my friends and fly on brooms like all the cool kids."

Raising an eyebrow, she said imperiously. "I may not be your mother, but you can bet your arse I'll owl her if I catch you doing something that insane again." I felt my mouth flop open in shocked betrayal, but she just crossed her arms and glared. "I won't have you killing yourself the first day of classes. I've still got uses for you."

I winked at her. "Awww. I love you too princess." She blushed, but didn't dignify that with a response, turning to storm off to the stands, obviously expecting to be followed. I shrugged at my two smirking friends, who were clearly more amused by me obeying the gorgeous tyrant than my almost death, flipped them both off for good measure, and then turned to tag along.

Flopping down next to her on the benches, I groaned and let myself relax. I felt very chill after that flight, it was like drinking a nice cup of spiced rum before bed. "So." I said as I let my head lean back. "If you're not going to be flying what are you going to do for a hobby? You can't just spend all your time plotting world domination."

Daphne, seeming to be calming down with me here next to her, sniffed. “I quite enjoy chinese tea ceremony. I find it soothing. I’m also quite fond of dueling. My mother trained me as a girl, and I’ve grown fond of the exercise. I may seek out some sort of combat club or elective if such a thing exists. Well, and attempt to make connections in preparation for leaving this place.”

“Connection?” I snorted. “At school? You buy into that politics shit too much. What can a bunch of teenagers offer?”

“Quite a few things.” She said solemnly. “There’s a rather flourishing black market run through the school. The ministry has less say here than most places, and so it’s easier to smuggle forbidden and restricted goods to trade. Dumbledore doesn’t police the student body very thoroughly, especially outside the castle.”

I blinked at that. “Really?” That sounded interesting. “You’re saying there’s like…smugglers on campus?” That actually sounded fucking awesome to me.

“Oh, quite a few of them.” She shrugged. “My family deals in rare potions ingredients, I brought a decent selection along with me to trade or sell. It’s a good way to setup arrangements for the future. There are…other organizations as well. Why do you think the Dark Lord had such an easy time recruiting when he made his Death Eaters last time. Cults, clubs, secret societies, Hogwarts has quite the underground.”

Thinking about my own powerful recruiting tools, I couldn’t help but grin as I thought about starting my own society. I wouldn’t rush it, I had seven years here, but this sounded like something to look into. I’d uncover more of Hogwarts secrets, and perhaps it would lead me to people that would be suitable for my peerage.

Not that I was going to leave my friends hanging out to dry, but as for what piece I’d give them…well, a pawn was still a devil. I’d pick the people best suited for the roles rather than trying to force a good fit. Daphne kept talking, going on about her family business, and I half listened as I decided on my next move.

I would continue my classes, look to see who stood out. Not just in terms of talent or brains, but personality. I didn’t want to be stuck with an anal retentive rules lawyer like Hermione for eternity, no matter how good studious she was. No, there was no rush. I could watch, could wait, and I’d find the perfect peerage members.

Though not all of them had to be at Hogwarts. I’d look over the summers too. I leaned back and closed my eyes for the hour we had left in the free period. As I did I smiled at how much fun I was already having in this place. It had been a damn good day, even if it was only my first, I couldn’t wait to see what the next ones had in store for me.