Title: The Last Act of Desperation

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Pairing(s): Harry/Draco

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Summary: It is five hours until the end of the world, and Draco has decided to go in search of Harry Potter.

Warnings: Kinda sorta AU-ish from the end of the Battle of Hogwarts on

Author's Notes: Dear [info]sugareey, I had originally intended to write you something much smuttier with more of your kinks in it; plot ended up getting in the way. I hope nevertheless you still enjoy this. This was very heavily inspired by the film Last Night, so please forgive the similarities between the fic and the film. They are intended as an homage.

It is five hours until the end of the world, and Draco has decided to go in search of Harry Potter. One would think it would be easy enough to find the bastard, since this whole mess is his fault, but no one seems to know where he is. Draco has even swallowed his pride and Flooed the Weasley hovel, not really expecting anyone to tell him anything but needing to exhaust every resource. Surprisingly the only ones there had been the dragon tamer and the twin that didn't die, and they were so drunk they didn't seem to know who Draco was. Despite this fortunate state of events, they hadn't known where Potter had taken himself away to, and so Draco had been left back at square one.

"Why do you even care so much?" Blaise asked when Draco announced his intentions. He, Blaise, had been packing a small case with the remaining liquor his mother had left, and making ready to hit the road with Theodore. Draco hadn't bothered to answer the question, and Blaise hadn't pushed it. They said their goodbyes quickly, without tears, and Draco watched as the two of them climbed into that Muggle contraption Theodore called a car. As they drove away, Draco had found Blaise's wand lying on the veranda. He almost ran after them to let them know, but then he thought better of it. It didn't really matter anymore, anyway.

In the end it is Mother who comes through, as always. Draco had never known that she had a magic mirror, and had he found out before now he probably would have laughed at it, imagining her standing in front of it asking where someone fairer than her was hiding out in the land and setting out to kill him, or her, or it. Now, though, it is everything he needs, providing of course that it works like it's supposed to, which is always an uncertainty these days with any magic thing, and that Potter hasn't done something stupid like going someplace Unplottable or hidden.

He tries to thank her, but she just twists her lips in that curious smile she's had since the day Father didn't come home, and Draco knows that saying 'thank you' would just break her apart.

"Are you sure you don't want me to stay?" he asks her, hoping dreadfully that she won't change her mind and keep him there with her. He's been dreading this since they found out, dreading having to be there with her at the end and watch her break down as the hours dwindle away to nothing. It would be too much for them both, but she might not know that and he can't bear to tell her no if she desperately wants a yes.

"No," she says simply, taking his hand in hers and kissing the palm. "Your aunt is here. That will be enough for us both." Andromeda places a gentle hand on Mother's shoulder, and Draco knows now that he'd be in the way if he stayed. Andromeda can't bear to look at children anymore, even grown-up ones like Draco, and he supposes he can't blame her.

He walks away from them with the mirror tucked under one arm, knowing that Mother is watching him go. He has never realized how much he would miss the night until now, when he has no cover of darkness to slip away in.

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It is four hours until the end of the world, and Draco still hasn't found Harry Potter. This is rather vexing, considering he went through the whole rigmarole of setting up the mirror and trying to phrase the question, "Where the bloody hell is Harry Potter?" in a sing-song rhyme. Magic mirrors were finicky bastards even when working correctly, and wouldn't tell you a damn thing unless you acted like you were in a fairy story.

"Sorry love," his reflection says when he is finally done demanding the presence of the scar-headed git in iambic pentameter. The reflection picks at its nails and looks exceedingly bored with the request, and it takes all of Draco's will not to smash the thing to shards. "Either he's not in the land or he's hiding somewhere I can't see. You ought to have tried an Oriel's Omniscient Oracular Ocular Device or something."

Five minutes of heavy cursing and a threat with a hammer later, Draco is able to at least find out where the Weasel and Mudblood are, and that's something. Luckily they aren't too far away from where he is now by Floo, so he won't have to risk Apparition. He takes the last of the green powder that remains in the dish by the Manor's fireplace and casts into the flames, heading through to the old Diggory place. Ever since old Amos disappeared the house had been used as a public Floo port, especially since so many people were meeting with family around the wizard villages now.

Draco walks for a mile from the Floo towards the little tower he can see on the hillside, and is struck by how much it looks like a rook piece from a chess set. It seems to be surrounded by an army of pawns, which Draco upon drawing closer realizes is a tent village that has sprung upon around the Lovegood tower. A group of twenty, maybe thirty people are gathered in a small clearing just next to the door, and Draco is incredibly unimpressed to see that they're holding hands and singing some mindless Muggle-sounding song.

He can't see a head of either disgustingly red or freakishly bushy hair, so it doesn't appear that either of Potter's minions are in the circle, but then a small blonde girl raises up a hand for silence.

"Friends," she says, and Draco realizes that it's the Lovegood girl herself. "Another soul has come to join us. Draco, it's good to see you."

"Where are Granger and Weasley?" he asks quickly, hoping to forestall a bout of undoubtedly inane conversation.

Lovegood smiles and reaches out as though to touch Draco's cheek, but pulls her hand back when he recoils. "Don't you want to be part of the circle, Draco?" she asks. "We're waiting for the Etherious Thwimsies to come and take us all away before the end. They're attracted to large groups of people

singing, you know, and my father always said that they'd be here at the end to lift the veil for us."

"Where are Granger and Weasley?" Draco repeats a little more forcefully.

That infuriating smile is still on her face as she nods towards the top of the tower. Just as he is about to go in the door, she calls out after him, "You'd better hurry if you want to catch Harry. It won't be long now."

Draco freezes and glances back at her over his shoulder, but Lovegood has already melded back into the circle and begun singing that Muggle song again. The strangely melancholy sound of her voice follows him up the stairs, and he wonders why he should feel so sad about the lack of pies made by Americans.

At the top of the tower is a room open to the sky. It looks to Draco as though the roof had been blasted off by a rather large explosion, but as it hasn't rained for months it doesn't seem to have really made any negative impact on the place. Once it might have been a cozy little sitting room, but now almost every conceivable surface is covered in books and scrolls and loose pieces of paper held down by random items masquerading as paperweights. Scurrying around through the storm of parchment is Granger, her hair flying about her as she zips between one book and another, muttering notes to a Quick Quotes Quill that shakily jots lines down in a floating notebook.

"Malfoy?" Draco turns around to see Weasley sitting in an armchair in the corner. There's an open book in his lap, but from the fact that it's upside down Draco assumes that Weasley hasn't actually been reading it. "What are you doing here?"

Granger whips around at the sound of Weasley's voice, brushing hair out of her eyes. "Malfoy!" she exclaims, drawing close to him. Her eyes are surrounded by circles so dark they look almost like kohl, and they're covered in a glaze of red. "Have you come to help?" she asks.

"Help?" he echoes.

With a tiny snarl of frustration she runs her hands through her hair, pulling it behind her head and taking something out of one of her pockets to tie it back. "Solving the problem!" she snaps. "Everyone is

wasting all their time, acting like everything that can be done has been, when they should be trying to find a way to stop this from happening!" The quill continues to jerkily write down every word she says. "There must be an answer somewhere, and I am going to find it, but it would certainly be easier if someone other than Ronald were helping."

Draco glances at Weasley and is shocked when he realizes that they are sharing a look. He never expected to share anything with Weasley.

Granger shoves an old scroll into Draco's hands and starts to leaf through one of the books again. "I took all of these from the Hogwarts library," she remarks, "since they weren't going to do any good under a pile of rock. There are some interesting references in a collection of prophecies by a witch named Pythia, but I can't seem to -" She cuts herself off with a sudden gesture at the quill, which takes about five extra seconds to stop scribbling, and then seizes Draco by his shirt. "What about your father's library?" she demands. "Is it still all there at your house? Can you bring it to me?"

Draco is about to slap her hand aside and tell her where to put her filthy Mudblood fingers when Weasley comes forward and gently wraps his hand around her wrist. "Hermione," he says softly. "I don't think Malfoy's here for that. Why don't you go back to your book?"

Granger shakes Weasley's hand off of her, but she does let go of Draco. "Don't patronize me, Ron," she says. "Malfoy, if you're not here to lend a hand, then what do you want?"

"I'm looking for Potter."

She laughs, a short barking sound. "Harry?" she says incredulously. "What do you want with him? Isn't it a little late in the game for you to still be obsessing on him, Malfoy?"

Draco bites back a sharp retort, knowing that these two are his last chance in finding Potter. "I just need to find him," he grinds out.

Sniffing once in derision, Granger returns to her work. "If he doesn't want to spend his last hours with his friends, I don't see why he'd want to see your pasty face. Sod off already, Malfoy. You're wasting my

time."

Weasley steps between Draco and Granger. "Come on, Malfoy," he says quietly. "You heard her." He gestures for Draco to follow him and heads down the stairs. Granger doesn't even look at either of them, still muttering under her breath as she tears through the pages of a flimsy old book. The floating quill keeps writing away, its movements already more erratic than they'd been when Draco had come into the room.

"What do you want with Harry?" Weasley asks him when they're on the next level. Draco is surprised that there's no hostility in his voice, just mild curiosity.

"Does it really matter? It's just want I want right now. To find him."

Weasley sighs and rubs at his eyes. They're just as red as Granger's, but there's no faraway glaze covering them, just a look of weary quiet. "I guess it doesn't," he says, and then he laughs a little. "It's funny. I always thought that if I ever saw you again all I'd do was punch you in the face for everything you did to us, but I don't really want to now, you know? I don't think there's much point in getting in people's way now." He looks up the stairs, the smallest hint of a smile on his lips. "People have to do what they have to do, right? Not much point in making a fuss over it."

Draco shuffles his feet, resolutely not looking at Weasley's face. "Do you know where he is or not, Weasley?"

"Where do you think he is, Malfoy? Your first guess will be right."

Of course. Draco mutters a curse under his breath. There really would be only one place that Potter would go at a time like this, and Draco should have known that from the start. "Hogwarts," he says aloud.

Weasley nods and starts to go back up the stairs, but then stops and faces Draco again. "I forgive you," he blurts out.

"Forgive me?" The words taste foreign on Draco's lips.

Another nod. "For everything. I don't want to hold on to all that anymore, you know? Like I said, not much point."

Weasley begins to climb the stairs again then, and Draco watches him ascend. He hears Granger's voice ask a sharp question, and Weasley's voice replying mildly, soothingly. Draco shakes his head and heads for the door of the tower, hoping that the Floo point in Hogsmeade is still functional.

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It is two hours until the end of the world, and Draco is on the trail of Harry Potter. The Three Broomsticks is still open and is, in fact, so crowded that Draco finds it hard to actually get from the fireplace to the door. Drunken witches and wizards fill almost every space in the pub, some singing, some dancing, some attempting to do both. Others are weeping, their heads cradled in their arms on the bar or against the wall, and still others are calmly reading books or magazines. More than a few couples are furiously kissing or even rutting against each other, not a care for who sees them. No one seems to mind, at any rate.

"Two more hours!" shouts Madam Rosmerta from behind the bar, her voice booming so loud that Draco is sure it can be heard for miles around. Most of her stock seems to be gone, but she keeps pulling more bottles out from seemingly nowhere to pass to people. "Only two more hours!"

Draco keeps his head low, not wanting to recognize anyone else, and makes it outside. While the pub is still booming, the rest of the town seems long deserted. The main street, normally kept pristine, is strewn with rubbish. A ginger cat with a smashed face comes around the corner of the building and stares up at Draco. It blinks once and then seems to nod at him before it turns away and heads across the street.

Alongside the path up to the ruins of the school Draco sees the Knight Bus, its doors open wide. Two people are sitting inside, but he can't make out who they are. No voices emerge from them, and they

just seem to be waiting. Draco hurries past it, heading up to the castle.

The gates of Hogwarts are gone, a gaping hole leading into the wreck of the courtyard. Draco hasn't been back here since the battle, and he didn't realize until now just how ruined the place is. He makes his way inside and wanders up and down the remnants of the corridors, calling out Potter's name. Some of the portraits are still hanging on the walls, and their occupants shush him indignantly, demanding if he knows what time of night it is. None of them seem to be aware of what's happened, and Draco doesn't want to bother explaining it to them.

He tries to break into the Gryffindor tower, but that insufferable Fat Lady is still there, guarding the door. "Password?" she says lazily, blinking down at him. He tries at least fifty different combinations of words, trying to think like a Gryffindor, but none of them seem to work at all. "My dear, I'm sure you're not allowed in here," the Lady remarks. "Why don't you toddle off back to your dungeon, there's a good lad."

"Where is Harry Potter?" Draco yells at her, but she ignores him, slipping out of her portrait and into a pastoral scene nearby. He curses loudly and heads back outside. Emerging from the shadows of the ruins he shields his eyes against the bright light, wondering idly what that colour of the sky was. It isn't any colour he recognizes, something without a name.

As he squints, he can just barely make out the image of a small boat floating on the lake, and so he runs towards the shore, waving his arm and calling out. The boat slowly draws near to him, and he is disappointed to see that its occupant is not Potter after all, but merely Professor McGonagall.

"Mr. Malfoy," she greets him, her voice as terse as ever. "Whatever are you doing here?"

"What are you doing in a boat?" he asks, astounded to see the aged woman out of her tartan robes and wearing light summer clothes, clutching the two paddles of the rowboat with her gnarled hands.

McGonagall smiles, a bitter twist of her thin lips. "I suppose all students imagine their teachers do nothing but teach, living in their offices and waiting for another class to begin," she says. "None of you ever took the time to realize that we were human too."

Draco feels like he's eleven again, and resists the urge to stare at his feet. "I'd have thought you'd be helping Granger try to fix all this," he mutters.

She shakes her head. "You children. You always think the world is yours to save, that you deserve it all to be laid out for you like some kind of feast. When they told us that the world was ending, none of you cared about what I was losing, everything I spent years on. I fought for so long for this place, and you always assumed it was so it would be here for you." She looks up at the sky, her eyes drinking in the light. "You don't know what you're losing. I do."

Before she can start to row away, Draco comes forward and grabs the side of her boat. "Where's Harry Potter, Professor?"

"Where he always is," she tells him. "With the dead." She raps at his knuckles and then pulls away, rowing back out towards the center of the lake. Draco rubs absently at his fingers and then heads towards Dumbledore's grave.

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It is one hour until the end of the world, and Draco has finally found Harry Potter. Harry is lying on his back atop the white tomb, looking up at the cloudless sky, and he doesn't seem to notice Draco's approach. Draco stands off to the side for a long moment, just staring up at Harry, almost not believing that he's managed to find him before the end.

"What do you want, Malfoy?" Harry doesn't turn his head at all as he acknowledges Draco, still just staring into the sky.

"You're a hard man to track down, Potter," Draco says. "Hiding here, away from all your friends. What's the matter?" He wants to taunt Harry, say something witty or sarcastic to goad him off the tomb, but for the life of him he can't think of anything appropriate to say now.

Harry turns onto his side, facing away from Draco. "Will you just go away, please?" he whispers, his voice

carrying on the still air.

"No." Not after all this, not after Draco has left everyone else behind to find Harry, after he has spent four of the last five hours ever in tracking him down. "No," he repeats again. "I'm not going anywhere. Get down here."

"Fuck off."

Draco snarls and strides forward, his hands scrabbling at the smooth sides of the tomb, looking for some purchase to let him climb. His fingers dig against the etched carvings that adorn it, and slowly he begins to fight his way up.

Harry finally turns to look down at him then. "Malfoy, what the hell are you doing?" Draco doesn't answer and continues to pull himself up inch by inch, finding handholds in seemingly impossible places. "Alright, here, let me help you at least," snaps Harry after watching him for a minute, and he extends his arm down to Draco.

For a moment Draco is tempted to push the helping hand aside, but he can't afford to alienate Harry now, so he wraps his hand around Harry's forearm and allows himself to be hoisted up to the roof of the tomb.

"So you're up here now," Harry says, wrapping his arms around himself and sitting at the edge, his legs dangling. "Tell me what you want already and then leave. There isn't a lot of time left."

Draco sits next to him and is quiet for a moment. "Why are you here?" he asks finally. "By yourself, away from everyone that you've always claimed to care about. What is your problem, Potter?"

Harry bites his lower lip and gazes hard at nothing in particular. "I don't see how that's your business."

"Tell me anyway." Harry says nothing. "It's because you feel guilty, isn't it?" Draco knows that he's hit his

mark when Harry flinches, and he digs further, relentless. "You know that this is your fault, that if it hadn't been for you the world would still be spinning on like its supposed to, so you don't feel worthy to be in the presence of anyone who loves you, right?"

"Shut up."

"You keep thinking, 'what if I had done something else, what if I had been stronger, smarter, whatever, what if I had stopped this from happening?' and you just can't bear to see their sad, disappointed faces as the world falls apart around them."

"I told you to shut up."

"So you crawl here to sit with the only person that you can blame for not telling you everything, hoping maybe that you can pass the blame onto a dead man and not have to be responsible for the end of the entire fucking world –"

"Shut the fuck up!" Harry grabs Draco by his shoulders then, screaming at him incoherently and shaking him. Draco seizes Harry's shirt in his hands and tugs them both off the side of the tomb. They land in a heap on the dry ground, bruised but not seriously hurt. Draco starts to laugh and Harry stares at him in shock. "What the hell, Malfoy?" he cries, reaching to put his glasses back on and then cursing when he realizes they've shattered. "Were you trying to get us killed?"

Draco only laughs all the harder at this, and Harry pulls away to sit up and lean against the wall, rubbing at a bruise on his arm. "You're insane," he mutters.

"But I'm right," says Draco, grinning up at him.

Harry hisses out an angry breath. "Yes, alright? You're right. I just wanted to be here alone so I didn't have to see how everyone knew that it was my fault and still forgive me, okay?"

Draco sits up and grabs the front of Harry's shirt again. "Well I don't forgive you," he hisses. "So you owe me."

"I owe you?" Harry trembles, and Draco is unsure whether it's from anger or some other, more difficult emotion.

"Yes."

Harry starts to laugh then, shaking wildly in Draco's grip. "Well whatever you want from me had better be goddamn easy to get," he gasps out, "considering how late it is. You should have told me earlier, it would have given me more time to get to the shops."

Draco tightens his fingers around Harry's collar. "Don't make this a fucking joke, Harry."

"Then what do you want, Draco?"

"I want you to kill me."

Silence. Harry stops shaking and finally meets his gaze without flinching or turning away. "What?" he whispers, his voice hardly loud enough to be heard.

Draco reaches over to where Harry's wand has fallen in the dust and presses it into Harry's hand, closing the limp fingers around it. "I'm not going to let this world take me with it," he murmurs. "Not after everything. Not after I survived the war and Voldemort and Bellatrix and Greyback and all of that. After Crabbe and… and Father. After everything that got thrown at me and I managed to live through it, after all that, I am not going to just lie back and let myself be eaten by this place because it's decided that enough is enough. No. I won't give the world the satisfaction."

Harry looks down at the wand in his hand and back up at Draco. "Draco…" he sighs.

"Come on, Potter," says Draco, his voice rising. "Haven't you always wanted to? I mean, think about it. All the years I was such a bastard to you. I tried to Crucio you. I let the Death Eaters into Hogwarts. I worked for Voldemort. I tried to kill Dumbledore! You always wanted your revenge on me, right? Here's your chance!"

Harry is shaking his head and trying to extricate himself from Draco's fingers. "No, Draco, you don't know what you're saying…"

Draco lets go of Harry's shirt and instead takes Harry's free hand in his. "I'll kill you too," he whispers.

Harry's protests quiet, and his fingers flex in Draco's hand. He opens his mouth to say something and then closes it again, and they sit in silence for what feels like an eternity to Draco. "Why me?" Harry finally asks.

"Because it's always been you," Draco says simply. "It couldn't be anyone else."

Harry nods and swallows, breathing heavily. "What do you want me to do?"

Draco takes Harry's hand and guides it up so that the tip of his wand is resting against Draco's temple. He then takes his own wand out of his sleeve and touches it to Harry's forehead. "We can cast the spell at the same time," he whispers. "It'll be fast and it won't hurt, I promise."

"How will I know when?" Harry's wand trembles against Draco's head.

"You'll know."

They both draw in sharp, quick breaths, staring into each other's eyes. Draco wishes fervently that there was still such a thing as a sunset, so that there would be a perfect moment in which to leave. Father had

always said that everything should be done with style, that even when things were at their worst a Malfoy would always know how to do things. When the news came that he'd walked into the river, dramatic to the last, Draco decided that he wasn't going to just lie back and die either.

He looks at Harry's careworn eyes and reflects on how green they are, especially in this bizarre bright light. He's looked at Harry so many times, stared him down, but in this moment it feels as though Draco's never truly seen him before. Even after everything, all the strife and fighting and months of knowing that it was all for nothing, there is this look in his eyes like he still cares. Like things matter. Like Draco matters.

At some point over the vast forever they've been waiting their faces have drawn close together, close enough that Draco can feel Harry's shuddering breath against his lips. Harry's eyes form a question, and after a moment Draco breathes, "Yes."

Their lips come together and their wands fall to the side, forgotten. Harry's hands come up to cup Draco's face as they open their mouths to each other, and it seems to Draco as though they don't come up for air but rather share one breath between them. He tugs at Harry's shirt insistently and somehow they manage to get their clothes off without breaking away from each other.

Everything is hard and unfamiliar as they rut against each other in the dust, but Draco doesn't care. The grime coating their bodies doesn't matter, nor the scrapes on his cheek from Harry's stubble, nor the small tight ball of worry that forms in the pit of his stomach as he feels Harry press against him.

"Five more minutes!" Rosmerta's voice cries out over the sound of Harry moaning into Draco's ear, echoing against the hills all around the ruins.

"Hurry, Harry," Draco gasps. He reaches between them and guides Harry into him, not caring about the fiery ache that blossoms as Harry pushes deeper inside. The pain is good, it's real, and it becomes all the better as Harry whispers apologies and presses kiss after kiss against Draco's lips, his face, his chest. Finally Harry's completely inside him, unmoving but fully there, and it's the first time in forever that Draco hasn't felt empty.

For a fleeting moment he wishes he could tell Father that it was alright, that he was going to be okay,

that it didn't matter he had walked into the river. He wishes he could tell Mother not to worry, to smile the way she used to. He wishes he could tell Blaise and Theo and Pansy that he would miss them. He wishes the world wasn't ending.

"Move, please move," he whispers to Harry. "I need to feel it."

Harry lets out a shuddering breath and starts to thrust, his fingers gripping tightly into the flesh of Draco's legs as he holds them over his shoulders.

"I'm sorry," Harry stammers as he pushes in and out of Draco. "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

"One minute!" comes the cry from the village.

"I don't want to go," Harry babbles, losing all rhythm and just rutting into Draco wildly.

Draco reaches up and pulls Harry's face down to his and kisses him fiercely, thrusting his body back against Harry's. He reaches down between them and strokes himself as they kiss, desperately wanting to come before the end does. Harry moans into his mouth and thrusts a final time into Draco, and that last push sends Draco over the edge.

"Thirty seconds!"

They cling tightly to each other as they spasm and twitch, their kiss arrested but their mouths still open to each other, sharing the lack of breath between them.

"Twenty seconds!"

Draco pulls out of the kiss and runs his hands over Harry's face frantically, pushing the damp hair aside to see his eyes, to make sure they can still see him. He wants to make sure that they're both still there. The

light is so bright now, the odd colour lightening so quickly that it's mostly a pale grey, and everything around them is losing all definition and hue except for Harry's eyes.

"Ten seconds!"

"I'm sorry, Draco." Harry holds him tight, breathing heavily. "For everything."

Draco smiles. "It's alright."

"Five!"

"Really?"

"Four!"

"Yes."

"Three!"

"I forgive you."

"Two!"

They kiss again.

"One!"

The light washes everything in white.