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Name: Let the Darkness Take You
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Chapter 1 to 16

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Chapter: 1

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Summary: Harry returns to his sixth year at Hogwarts to find that darkness is very quickly permeating the school. It seems as though the only person to realise this, is Harry. When all seems lost, two people come to him and offer their help. Severus Snape and Draco Malfoy. As the three work together to unravel the mystery that is hovering over them, they each have to fight their own battles and overcome the darkness that is threatening to take them.

A/N: I'm so excited to finally be able to post this new story. I have been working so hard on it while I have had writer's block on my other stories. I am really quite proud of myself for coming up with this plot line. I've never seen anything like it, so I'm hoping that it is original. Please be warned that this story does contain slash, H/D. I've tried to keep it mild so that everybody can read and enjoy, but I'm quite fond of writing the snogging scenes. ::guilty grin:: I also have to add, (THIS IS FOR GOOD REASON!) that a lot of characters will be ooc. It's an important part of the plot as to why they are, so please don't flame me for doing this. Oh, and I also have to thank my wonderful, wonderful beta, Callie. She tells me her opinion on everything and without her, I'd have a whole load of run-on sentences, which I seemed to be doing a lot in these first couple chapters. I'll try harder, I promise! Much loff to you! Anywho, I think I've talked enough, on with the story!

Chapter One

Harry looked into the mirror and gave himself a satisfied smile. He looked good... and he knew it. An emerald green button up shirt draped over his body covering up a black tank-top and form hugging black pants laid perfectly on his hips. It was the exact outfit that got all the girls to do a double take on him when he went out. Of course, there had been very few chances with wearing it over the past year since he had purchased it, what with being at Hogwarts for ten months. But tonight was a good night to wear it. He needed to be dressed up because the Dursleys were hosting a dinner guest that evening. And for once, Harry didn't object. He didn't object because this dinner guest was his godfather, Sirius Black.

When Sirius had seen him in this outfit a year before, he had grinned and called Hermione over

to give him a review. She had done so blushing and barely muttered that it looked good. Harry ran a hand through his already messy hair, knowing it was no use to try to comb it and then smiled again at his reflection. Yes, even without the usual birthday presents from his friends, this was turning out to be a wonderful birthday. Which the lack of birthday presents kind of stumped him. The last time this sort of thing happened, Dobby the house elf had been intercepting his mail. And Harry was sure Dobby didn't have a legitimate reason for doing that this time. Although it seemed like the only logical reason as he hadn't received any word from his friends since the end of term.

Which was also highly unusual. When they had stepped off of the train, Ron and Hermione had promised to write every day asking whether Sirius had come to get him yet. The reason for this was because Sirius had been freed only a week before the end of term by Harry, Ron, and Hermione, of course. Voldemort had made some half-assed plan for Wormtail to capture Harry and bring him to the Dark wizard but the plan was foiled by the intrepid trio as the stuttering fool was no match for them.

So, at the Leaving Feast, Sirius had promised to come and take Harry away from his wretched relatives as soon as he got their new home ready, which happened to be Black Manor. A Manor that was rumoured to be even larger than Malfoy Manor. Harry couldn't help but grin at the thought.

Harry swung the bathroom door open upon hearing the doorbell ring downstairs. He ran happily down the stairs and, with very little composure for a now sixteen year old, ripped the door open. The sight that met his eyes almost made him laugh but he managed to keep it in.

"Sirius! Wow! You look... you look like a Muggle! And a well dressed one at that!" Harry exclaimed dumbly.

Indeed, he did look like a very rich Muggle. He was dressed in what looked like a black Armani suit and his shoulder length black hair was currently pulled back into a ponytail that rested at the base of his neck. Sirius gave a glare at Harry that was worthy of one of Snape's. Harry's large grin was immediately wiped off his face. "That was the idea, Harry. Your relatives are Muggles after all," he replied acidly. "Now, are we eating dinner on this front step or am I allowed to come in?"

Harry searched desperately for that twinkle that was usually situated in his godfather's eyes but found nothing. Surely this was an act for Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia. Sirius gave another glare that made him snap into action and stepped aside for the older man to walk in.

"And what in Merlin's name are you wearing? You look like a bloody ponce!"

Harry shut the door and stared for a moment. "You liked this last year when you saw me in it." Sirius merely raised an eyebrow.

"Nobody likes a liar, Harry. Are you going to show me to your relatives or not? I don't know the way around here, you know."

Harry swallowed and motioned for Sirius to follow him. If this was how Sirius really was, he wasn't sure he liked it at all. He desperately wished for this all to be an act. When they entered the kitchen, the Dursley's jaws dropped to their chest upon the sight of Sirius. Harry smiled. He definitely did a good job at impressing them. "Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia, Dudley, this is my godfather, Sirius Black. Sirius this is Vernon, Petunia, and Dudley Dursley."

Sirius moved forward to shake their hands. Dudley merely whimpered and moved to the corner while holding his bum and biting his tongue. Sirius looked at him with amusement. "I won't do anything to you, Dudley. I haven't anything remotely wizard on me right now. Not even my

wand. I assure you, I will not be enlarging any body parts of yours tonight."
The group then moved into the dining room and began eating dinner. Harry watched with a detached amusement/horror as Sirius conversed amiably with his aunt and uncle. Harry stayed quiet throughout the entire meal after a withering glare was sent his way by Sirius when he had said something. When the dessert had been consumed and the tea served, Sirius fixed his new-found glare on Harry once again.
"What's wrong with you? You've been extremely quiet tonight." Harry bit his lip as he felt his blood pressure rise from anger.
"I guess I don't have much to say tonight, sir." Sir? Where had that come from?
But Sirius just smirked in a satisfied sort of way. "Sir? Keep up that kind of behaviour and I might just let you come live with me after all." Harry's head snapped up and he stared into his godfather's light blue eyes that were currently shining with malevolence.
"Might? But you said at the end of term that you were going to get our new home ready and then come and get me. That's why I thought you were here... to come and get me... I already had my things packed," he added quietly as he looked down at his hands. Sirius let out a hearty laugh and slapped Harry on the back.
"Ah, kids. They are so gullible sometimes. Do you really think I have room for you at the Manor?" Harry opened his mouth to protest that he did think that there was room. "Silence!" snapped Sirius and then turned to Vernon. "Do you think we could go and have a private chat for a few moments?"
"Be my guest," grunted Uncle Vernon.
"Thank you." Sirius roughly pulled Harry from his seat and into the hallway. "What do you think you're doing?"
"What do you think you're doing?" Harry countered. "Since when do you treat me like the dirt on the bottom of your shoe?"
"Since I was freed and became myself again."
"Which I might add, I was the one who freed you! Don't you think you should treat me with more respect than this?"
"You forget, you had help in capturing Wormtail. Don't let your head get too big now. We don't want you floating away. I don't have the time to get you down."
"What happened to you? You weren't like this when you were about to be freed back in my third year. You seemed excited that I wanted to live with you!"
"Things change. People's wants change. I don't want you in my Manor anymore. As I said before, there just isn't room for a fifteen year old boy."
"Sixteen," muttered Harry. "It's my birthday today. I'm sixteen."
"Oh. Congratulations."
"What about mum and dad?"
"What about James and Lily?"
"They trusted you. They named you my guardian because they thought you'd take care of me! Shouldn't you follow through on that promise?"
"As to that, they're dead aren't they? What they don't know, won't hurt them. Now get upstairs and change out of those terrible clothes. People might start thinking you're a homo. I have to go and give your relatives some money for taking you in. It's the least I can do. Well, Harry, I'll see you when I see you then."
Sirius turned around and walked back into the kitchen leaving Harry to stand staring at the closed

door. He hardly noticed when Dudley came and stood next to him and put a porky hand on his shoulder. The only thing he heard was the conversation taking place between his godfather, uncle, and aunt at the moment.
"I'm sorry to leave him here with you hard working folks but you must look at the bright side, he'll only be living here for another three months at the most. I'm sure he'll want to get a place of his own. I'll give him the money for that if he needs it. I want him out of my hair just as much as you do. I can only imagine the trouble he has caused you since you found him on your doorstep."
"We tried all we could. There was nothing we could do. He's a lost case," replied Vernon.
"Yes, there are some like that, I'm afraid. You tried all you could."
The conversation continued but it was now lost on Harry's ears. His blood was boiling and his jaw and fists were clenching and unclenching. Dudley started to speak but that was also lost on him. "Dudley."
"Yeah?"
"I'm thinking that you might want to get upstairs because I'm feeling pretty out of control and I don't want you to get hurt," he said through clenched teeth. Dudley's face lit up in excitement for some reason.
"You mean, you're going to blow somebody up again? That was bloody brilliant! If I could pay to see that again, I would! Especially if it were Aunt Marge!"
Harry turned a confused eye on his gargantuan cousin. "You thought that was funny?"
"Yeah! I mean, I was scared out of my mind but it was funny!" At that moment, a hearty laugh drifted through the door.
"Oh, the kid is hopeless! You should see him at school. He thinks he's so bloody fantastic because his name is famous..."
Dudley must have seen the murderous look on Harry's face because he scampered up the stairs as fast as his chubby legs could carry him. And not a moment too soon. As soon as he got up the stairs, all the glass that was within fifteen feet of Harry exploded and shot all over. He felt his skin being cut by the shards of glass but he didn't register it. All he could feel was the magical energy radiating off of him. The door to the kitchen swung open to reveal a very purple faced Uncle Vernon, a terrified Aunt Petunia and a livid Sirius Black. "Boy! WHAT did you just do?" thundered Uncle Vernon.
"I think that much is obvious," he replied quietly. "My magic has got out of control before this. Why has it come as such a surprise now?"
"There was no damn reason for you to be out of control!" screamed Aunt Petunia as she stared in horror at all the broken vases, picture frames and valuables that were now lying in pieces on the floor.
"Like hell there wasn't!" He screamed and then pointed at Sirius. "That stupid bastard! He's supposed to be my godfather! He's supposed to be my guardian! My parents trusted him with me. What did I ever do to you, Sirius, to deserve this? All I've ever wanted ever since I met you was to live with you. You've been my only hope to get out of here and now you've gone and told me that you don't want me. I thought you cared about me! If I would have known that you would turn out like this, I never would have captured Wormtail for you. I would have let him go. Because from now on, I don't care about you. I *hate* you."
A flash of emotion crossed his godfather's face but before Harry could analyse what it meant, it was gone. "What have you ever done to me, Harry?" Sirius asked in a deadly quiet voice.
"You've caused nothing but destruction everywhere you go. Look at this hall, the living room. I'll

have to go back home to get my wand now to fix it up. And didn't I tell you to go change your clothes? If I come back here and see you, you had better be in something different. Now, go!"
"I hate you," Harry hissed out venomously. "I never want to see you again."
He turned on his heel and ran upstairs, trying to hold back the tears that were forming. He couldn't let them see him cry. When he slammed his door shut, he leaned against it and slid down to sit on the floor, letting silent tears run down his face. He about jumped out of his skin when he heard somebody speak from his bed.
"Harry."
"Dudley, please go. I don't feel like being taunted right now. My day has been bad enough already."
"I wasn't going to taunt you. I was just going to tell you that I'm sorry about your godfather. Despite him being a wizard... I was looking forward to meeting somebody who liked you. It would be a change of pace around here. I didn't expect him to be so cold towards you."
"Me either. He's never been that way. I don't understand what's going on. It's almost as if he were somebody using a Polyjuice potion."
"A poly-what potion?"
"Nothing. Never mind."
"No. I want to know. What is it?"
"But... it's magic. You don't like magic."
"When it's used against me, yeah. Otherwise I wouldn't mind learning more about it. I just pretend to hate it more than I really do in front of mum and dad. So... what potion is this?"
"Er - Polyjuice potion. When a person drinks it, it turns them into somebody else. Say I had some right now and I added your hair to it and I drank it, I would turn into you for about an hour. It's pretty cool actually. I used it once in my second year at Hogwarts."
"Brilliant. So then bad people can use it then for their needs, right?"
"Yes, one of my professors in fourth year was a fraud using it. I'm hoping that that is what is wrong with Sirius. He's never shown any sign of hating me before now. He sounds more like my Potions professor. 'Potter, your head is too big. Why don't you stick a pin in that inflated ego of yours?'" he said, doing a cruelly accurate impression of Snape. Petunia yelled for Dudley from downstairs.
"Oh, I better go and see what she wants. I um... I brought you something as well. It's right there. Happy birthday."
Harry looked to his bedside table where Dudley had pointed and saw a present. "You got me a present?" he asked, surprised.
"Yes. I bought it with some saved up pocket money. I don't know if you'll like it because I didn't know what else to get you."
"I'm sure it'll be great. Thank you, Dudley." Harry stood up from his place at the door and let Dudley out. He closed the door again just as he heard Sirius muttering some spells downstairs, repairing the damage that had been done. He sat down on his bed and took the present in his lap, wondering what had got into his cousin. He opened the paper with care and smiled at the contents. It was a Discman and one CD. He had obviously been saving up a lot of pocket money to get this. The CD looked as if it had been burnt. It was a mix of Dudley's favourite songs; a mixture of rock, rap, R&B, alternative, and pop. It was just too bad that electronics wouldn't work at Hogwarts. Harry put the headphones on his head and laid down to listen to it, falling asleep in the process.

The rest of the summer wasn't all that bad. Dudley, for some reason unknown to Harry, was being extremely nice. Not that Harry was complaining. He needed at least one friend since his friends still hadn't been in touch. When Harry laid in bed at night, he'd laugh at the thought of how excited Dudley would get when Harry would teach him something new about magic. By the time August 31st rolled around, Dudley had already read through two of Harry's old textbooks. Harry had given him two more for the school year with a promise from Dudley that he wouldn't let anybody see them.

Harry was getting ready to go out and call the Knight Bus so that he could go to Diagon Alley when Dudley pulled him back into his room. "I don't know if you'll want to Harry but do you think we could write to each other? Does your school have an address I can send letters to?"

"Er- no. We'd have to use owl post."

"I don't mind. But I don't know how to handle Hedwig."

"I can teach you really quick. Just as long as you don't rough handle her, you'll be fine."

Harry gave him a crash course in the treatment of owls and gave him an extra bag of owl treats and was out the door. His day was spent in Diagon Alley where he surprisingly didn't meet any of his friends. He went to bed that night in the Leaky Cauldron thinking that he would at least see them on the train the next day. So the next morning, Tom the innkeeper hailed a Muggle taxi for Harry and helped him with his trunk. By a quarter to eleven, Harry was loading his trunk onto the train. The raven hair boy strained his neck trying to catch a glimpse of some red hair that would be the tell tale sign of a Weasley. Hopefully his best friend, Ron Weasley, or the bushy brown hair girl who was also known as Hermione Granger. The platform was quickly emptying onto the train so he climbed aboard and started another search of the compartments. When the end of the train was in sight, Harry heard the voice of Hermione telling Ron off for not doing his potions homework. He smiled broadly and opened the compartment. "Hey, strangers. I haven't heard from you two all summer!"

Harry furrowed his brow when Ron rolled his eyes and looked at Hermione with a look that clearly said, 'now what do we do with him?' "And for good reason," Ron muttered darkly while looking at the floor. Harry plopped down in the seat next to his friend and looked at him concerned.

"Care to enlighten me? Nothing serious happened, did it?"

"No, nothing serious happened," replied Hermione. "But Harry... I don't think you should be in this compartment."

Harry blinked. "Why not? I always sit with you two on the way to school." But his question was answered as the compartment door slid open to reveal a very happy Sirius Black.

"Ron! Hermione! How smashing it is to see you!"

Ron smiled and laughed. "You act as if you didn't just see us this morning, Padfoot," Ron said cheerfully.

Sirius laughed and sat down next to Hermione, across from Harry and put an arm around her. "Well, I can never get enough of my two favourite people, now can I?" Harry stared at his godfather in shock. That glimmer of laughter and happiness that he had so desperately looked for at his birthday was definitely back in his eyes. Maybe it had all been his imagination. Maybe it had all been an act. But then Sirius caught sight of Harry for the first time and the glimmer disappeared.

"Oh. Couldn't get rid of him, I see? The bugger just doesn't know when he's not wanted, does he?" Harry opened and closed his mouth like a goldfish for a few moments before he managed to

get something out.
"What are you doing here?"
"Oh, nobody told you? I'm your new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. I decided to ride the train to Hogwarts to have some good old fashioned fun with my two friends here."
"Oh," Harry replied quietly while looking down at his feet.
"You should just go, Harry. None of us have anything more to say to you," said Ron.
"Ron... what did I do?"
"Don't make it harder than it already is for yourself, Harry. Just go," said Hermione sternly.
"The kids make a good point."
"Fine. I'll go."
Harry got up dejectedly, wondering what he had done to deserve this treatment. They had all parted on good terms and, as far as he knew, he had never done anything behind their backs that would have made them angry had they found out. So he left in search of the other sixth year boys or girls. He was in luck when he found Dean, Seamus, Neville and a Hufflepuff boy that Neville had become friends with the past year. There were still two empty seats. Harry stuck his head in and smiled at them. "Do you mind if I sit in here with you guys?"
"Well, actually we're full. I'm sure that there is an empty compartment elsewhere," replied Seamus. "Or somebody willing to take you in."
"But there are two empty seats..."
"We're full," said Dean firmly and got up and closed the door on Harry's face. Harry shook his head confused. What was going on? If this kept up, he'd have to sit in the hall... or bathroom. The search continued but with no luck. Every compartment was full. But the last one he checked only had three people in it. Harry steeled himself and opened the door, trying desperately to put a pleasant face on himself.
"Er - every other compartment is full. Do you guys mind if I sit with you?"
"Potter," Draco Malfoy scoffed. "Don't you have your stupid Gryffindor friends to sit with? Surely they'll take you in?"
"No... I, um, got here late and they were completely full already. Some Hufflepuff friend of Neville's took up the last place. Look, I really need a place to sit. I won't bother you, you won't bother me. You can go about talking about whatever stupid thing you were talking about before and I won't listen because frankly, I don't care what you have to talk about. I have other things on my mind."
Malfoy raised an eyebrow and looked Harry up and down and then looked him intently in the face. "What's got you in such a tight knot, Potter?"
"None of your business, Malfoy."
"Well, if you're going to sit with Crabbe, Goyle, and me, you're going to have to tell us what stupid problem you have."
"Why do you even care? Isn't it below a Slytherin to give a rat's ass about a Gryffindor's problems?"
"Truthfully... I don't care. I'm just extremely bored. We actually weren't talking at all before you came in. Might do well to have some sort of conversation going. Well... are you going to just stand there like the idiot that you are, or are you going to come in here?"
"Oh, sorry. I didn't know you were actually inviting me."
"Right. Close the door. We don't need some lost Hufflepuff wandering in."
Harry closed the door with a soft click and moved to the empty seat across from Malfoy and next

to the window. "So, spill it Potter. Give me some entertainment. Maybe this will give me a good laugh. These two dunderheads haven't got anything remotely witty to say." Crabbe answered in a deep grunt but then turned back to the game of chess that he was currently having with Goyle. Harry snorted in laughter but didn't say anything for a few moments.
"Actually, Malfoy... I really don't know what I can tell you because I can't even make sense of what's going on. And besides, I don't feel like talking right now. Maybe later."
Malfoy rolled his eyes and then announced that he was going for a walk down the train to see if he could get a rise out of anybody. Apparently, it was better than doing nothing. So, Harry took to watching the scenery roll by for the next half hour until Goyle yelled out, 'Checkmate!' and then left a few minutes afterward, both discussing what they would get from the lady who pushed the food cart. Malfoy came in a moment later shaking his head.
"Those two never stop eating! I just hope you won't have the dishonour of seeing them eat. Hopefully they'll take it into another compartment."
Harry nodded his head noncommittally. "Have fun torturing people, Malfoy?"
"Quite entertaining actually. Longbottom fell off his seat when he saw me come in. The stupid oaf."
"Why did you feel the need to go and torture people when you've got your favourite victim in the same compartment as you?" Malfoy shrugged and finally took his previous seat across from Harry.
"When you're here willingly it's not as fun. I knew you'd just take it in stride without the Weasel and Mudblood with you."
"Hmm... I suppose you're right."
"See? Even then! I just called your best friends by their favourite nicknames and you didn't even flinch!"
"Well... what can you do?" The blonde boy studied his nemesis for a few moments, biting his lip. "Funny thing though," he said finally. "When I found your Gryffindor friends, they were in two different compartments. Four in one and three in the other. I couldn't exactly torment Weasley and Granger for too long since Black was in there. New professor and all that. So... why aren't you sitting with them? Was this some sort of bet or something? See how long you can sit with the insufferable Slytherin or something?"
"Hmm. Something like that."
"Okay, what is it really? You wouldn't have just agreed with me if it were."
"I don't know, Malfoy. I can't tell you anything because I don't know. So just drop it, please."
To Harry's great surprise, the Slytherin actually listened to his request. The two sat in a relatively comfortable silence for the next hour until Malfoy got extremely restless and whined Harry into a couple games of Exploding Snap! that Malfoy lost miserably in. Apparently, the game wasn't his strong point.
"You owe me three galleons, Malfoy. Pay up."
Malfoy grumbled incoherently but rummaged in his pocket, pulled out his money sack and extracted three galleons. Harry smiled smugly as he put the money away. "Nice doing business with you, Malfoy. Perhaps you'd like to get together some other time and lose spectacularly again. I could use the extra money."
"What, is it charity for the Weasel? The state of his robes get worse every year."
Harry chose to ignore that comment and looked at his watch. "Speaking of robes, we better change into ours. We'll be there in about fifteen minutes."

"I'm not changing in the same compartment as you, Potter." Harry rolled his eyes as he pulled his own robes out.
"If it bothers you that much, you can go into another compartment. I wasn't planning on looking at you. Seeing you naked wasn't on my agenda today."
Grudgingly, Malfoy took out his robes and they both turned their backs, careful not to look behind them in fear of seeing more skin than was necessary. And then, sure enough, ten minutes after they were done changing, the train pulled to a stop at the train station in Hogsmeade and the Hogwarts students disembarked. Harry got separated from Malfoy along the way but somehow, when he climbed aboard a carriage, he found Malfoy sitting across from two Hufflepuffs. The trademark scowl was placed on his face and Harry could tell that he was about to say something cutting to the two unsuspecting second years.
"I suggest you keep your mouth shut, Malfoy. I do have the power to take away house points you know," Harry said, pointing to his prefect badge.
"So do I," retorted Malfoy, also gesturing to his silver badge. "I was just about to take away house points from Hufflepuff for their inane chatter. It's giving me a headache."
"Live with it. You're the one who sat in this carriage."
"They're the ones who followed me in. Which is exactly what you did. My lucky day, sitting in a cramped carriage with two Hufflepuffs and my oh-so-favourite Gryffindor. Pinch me, the excitement is too much."
"Can't say I'm any more excited, Malfoy. I already had to spend all day with you."
"Oh, Merlin. You're right. This is going to be one of those years," Malfoy groaned.
"What do you mean?"
"When I can't get away from you. It's already started. I don't think I can take the pain anymore!"
"When have you never been able to get away from me?"
"Every year except for fourth year. That year I didn't have to face you in Quidditch. Granted, there were all those articles about you... but I suppose that was quite fun to torment you with. Everywhere I go, you're there. I walk into the Great Hall... oh look! There's Potter! I go into the bathroom and oh look! There's Potter again! I go into the library and oh look again! There's Potter, oh and Granger! And then I go to class and oh joy! Potter!"
Harry rolled his eyes and leaned back in his seat as the carriage started moving along the bumpy road. "I don't think that little speech could have been dripping with more sarcasm if you tried. It's not like it's any better on my side. Everywhere I go, you're there trying to make my life a living hell."
"Well, if you tried for one measly second to not be somewhere I am, then we wouldn't have this problem so much. I think you should work on it."
"Oh, and it's not your fault at all. Only mine. I'm sorry, Malfoy. I'll be sure to peek around corners to see if you're coming. And I'll ask Madam Pince if you've come into the library. For meals, you'll eat right away and I'll come in half way through. And when Snape walks into the Potions dungeon wearing a bright pink tutu and tights with his hair in bows is the day we get to completely avoid each other in classes that we have together."
"I agree with you on the classes. But for meals, I'd like to be the one who is fashionably late. You can be early for meals. But other than that, the plan will work fantastically. I have to say- wonderful idea, Potter."
"Merlin, Malfoy! You can't actually think I was serious! There is no avoiding it. And I think you're over exaggerating just a little bit. We don't always see each other. I think you'll just have

to live with it."
Malfoy opened his mouth to protest but the carriages stopped and Harry quickly jumped out.
"I'm not listening!" he called over his shoulder.
"I hate you, Potter!"
"Believe me, the feeling is mutual!"
Harry quickly ran into the Great Hall and found that all his 'friends' were clumped together and that there was virtually no room for him. "Oi! Harry! Come sit by us!" yelled a familiar voice. Harry whirled around and saw little Colin Creevey waving him over. Even for being a Fifth Year now, the boy had not grown five inches since his first year and was still extremely skinny. And for once, Harry was relieved to see him. He wasn't looking forward to the outright staring, but he was looking forward to speaking with somebody who liked him. Harry smiled and hurried over to him and his small group of friends.
"Hello! How was your summer, Colin, Dennis?"
"Oh, it was wonderful! Dad took some time off and took us to New York City! It was absolutely fascinating. You should have seen all the older women hitting on my dad, Harry! They said that they loved his accent. It was so funny!" exclaimed Colin. "Would you be interested in seeing the pictures later? I have five rolls and I developed them the wizard way. Dad was ecstatic to see them. He loves everything wizard!"
Colin continued in his inane chatter while Harry's attention started to wander. Every once in a while he'd omit a laugh when Colin would laugh and a 'mmm.' At one point, Harry caught Malfoy's eyes on accident and the Slytherin boy sent him a questioning look and looked pointedly at the Gryffindor Sixth Years where Harry should have been sitting. Harry shrugged, shook his head, and went about his observation of the Great Hall. Just before the Sorting started, however, both the raven hair Gryffindor and platinum hair Slytherin caught the looks of hatred sent to Harry by his 'friends.' Harry took on a sad look in his eyes and bit his lip.
As the First Years filed in behind Professor McGonagall, Harry's eyes once again caught Malfoy's. He was looking at Harry thoughtfully and, when he saw Harry looking, he looked at the Sixth Year Gryffindors with a look of wonderment and contempt. Harry then paid false attention to the sorting, for the first time that night, completely oblivious to the stare the blonde hair Slytherin was giving him.
A/N: Love it? Hate it? Tell me! Please remember not to flame me for the OOC's. I promise that it is all for good reason. I'm also sorry for not making up a better story for why Sirius was free, but I'm just so sick of making up that story that I decided to do a half-assed job on it. It'll have to do.
Next Chapter: Harry finds a friend in Ginny. Lupin makes a return and a mysterious man is at Hogwarts. Mysterious to *you* anyway. ::wink::

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Chapter: 2

Disclaimer: I do not own anything related to Harry Potter. It is owned by J.K. Rowling, the WB, Bloomsbury, Scholastic, and any other book publisher that I don't know about. Don't sue me. I'm poor enough as it is.

A/N: Special thanks to my beta Callie. Much loff to you. Thanks to my reviewers are on the bottom.

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Two

Harry fell into step beside Ginny Weasley on the way up to Gryffindor tower. She was a new prefect this year and was leading the first years up to their new dormitory. Harry's heart leapt as she gave him a warm smile and linked her arm through his.

"All right, Harry? I noticed that your friends were kind of giving you the cold shoulder."

"Hmm. That's a bit of an understatement, Gin."

"What happened? I was under the impression that there was nothing wrong."

"You and me both. I have no idea. First it was Sirius..." He looked down at his feet for a moment, swallowing the lump that rose in his throat at the thought of his godfather. "Then it was everybody else. I was worried that you would be angry at me as well."

"Why should I be? I have no reason to. Oh, the Fat Lady is coming up. Are you up for a talk after I show the first year girls to their dormitory?"

"Yes, that would be nice. Thank you."

Ginny smiled again and unlinked her arm. "First years! The entrance to Gryffindor tower is right here at the portrait of the Fat Lady. The new password is perseverence!"

The portrait swung open to reveal the portrait hole that served as the entrance to Gryffindor tower. Harry smiled warmly at Ginny as she stepped aside and let all the first years through. She stepped in with Harry close behind. "I'll be right back," she whispered with a small squeeze of his hand and disappeared up the girls staircase with the first year girls. Harry chose a seat in a darkened corner of the common room and watched patiently as the room started to empty out as people wandered off to bed. He bit back a wave of anger as Ron and Hermione glared at him before retreating to bed. The only people left was Katie Bell, who was now in her last year and another girl in her year that Harry didn't know too well. A couple moments later, Ginny came down the stairs in her pajamas and slippers on her bare feet.

"Oh, Harry. I'm freezing. Let's sit by the fire. There's nobody else down here besides them. They won't bother us."

Harry obeyed and sat next to the red hair girl on the couch in front of the fireplace. "So, tell me everything, Harry. Did you say that Sirius is treating you the same way as Ron, Hermione and everybody else is?"

Harry swallowed and started twiddling his thumbs. "Yes. Only it seems worse when it comes from him. I don't even know who he is anymore. Now it seems like... like he *hates* me. And I mean *really* hates me."

"What would make you think that though? He seemed to really geninuely love you at the Leaving Feast last term."

"He did. Or so I thought. I... he told me this summer that he didn't want me, that there isn't room for a boy my age at his manor. He didn't even seem to think twice about what my parents would think if they knew he was treating me this way. His exact words were, 'well they're dead aren't they? What they don't know, won't hurt them.' Something has happened to him. I just don't know what."

"Is there anybody that would know? That has seen him change?"

"I don't..." A dawning comprehension came over him and he grinned. "Remus," he muttered.

"Remus might know about Sirius. As for the rest of them... well, I'll find out something."
"I'll help you. I don't want you working on this alone."
"Thank you, Gin. I'm going to go and get some parchment and a quill to write to him."
"Okay. Do you want me to stay with you?" she asked through a large yawn.
Harry smiled and pulled her standing up with him and wrapped her in a warm embrace. "No, that's fine. You should get some sleep. I'll see you in the morning." He kissed her cheek which he noticed turned a brilliant shade of red afterwards.
"Goodnight, Harry."
"Night," he replied and watched her go and then ran quietly as he could upstairs to his trunk. By the light of his wand, he pulled out an ink bottle, quill, and a new piece of parchment and then started back downstairs again. Once situated at a table, he began to write.
Dear Remus,
Hello! How are you doing? I hope Hedwig and this letter finds you well. I'm writing this in hopes that you haven't turned against me as well. I need to ask somebody this question and you are the first that came to mind. I would have asked Sirius... but since that's basically out of the question since my question is about him. I'm stalling.
Anyway... I was just wondering if you had seen Sirius between the end of term and my birthday this summer. It was extremely strange when I saw him again, and to be honest, it isn't getting any better. You may or may not have heard but Sirius doesn't want me to live with him anymore. He's said some things that I never thought would come out of him before. I won't lie and say that the things didn't hurt me. They did.. and badly.
I have to know, Remus. Does he really not love me? Did I really do something to deserve this? Was it all an act before he was freed? Please write back. I... I feel lost. I need somebody.
Harry
Harry folded up the letter and ran out of the tower towards the owlery, hoping that Hedwig had not gone hunting. After a close escape from Filch, he made it and found his snowy owl sleeping on a low perch. He poked her gently awake and tied the letter to her. "Take this to Remus Lupin, Hedwig. It's urgent." The owl hooted her understanding and flew out the open window. Harry watched her go until she was barely a dot in the sky and turned back around to make the long trip to Gryffindor tower.
Remus Lupin lifted his head groggily from his pillow, wondering what had woken him from his pleasant dream. The sun was only just coming up! What in Merlin's good name was he doing up already? But then the steady tap, tap, tap from his bedroom window made him look over to see a beautiful snowy owl with a letter tapping on the window. "Hold on, Hedwig. I'm coming."
Remus wondered why Harry's owl was delivering a letter to him. Sure the two had become good friends the past year, but they rarely ever sent letters unless something had happened...
"Oh no!" Remus exclaimed quietly and ran for the window and threw it open. He took the letter from the majestic bird and unfolded it with shaking hands. By the time his eyes reached the bottom, his jaw had dropped down to his chest in shock. Just to be sure his tired eyes were reading correctly, he read it over three more times before dropping down onto his bed.
"Sirius. What the hell have you done to that poor boy?"
A tired hoot came from the owl and brought Remus out of his trance. "Oh, go and have a bit of a rest. I'll need you later to bring a letter to Harry." The bird hooted and flew out the window and onto a large tree. Remus wasted no time in starting the reply to Harry, he figured he should as long as he was up. He wouldn't be able to sleep now that he knew of this. Whatever this was. It

certainly didn't sound like Sirius. And this certainly didn't sound like Harry. Whatever Sirius had done to Harry, it had made a scar more painful than the one on Harry's head. Only this one wasn't visible. And his 'nephew' needed somebody.

Harry,

I am truly at a loss for words. What you have told me in your letter does not sound like my old friend, Padfoot at all. I can say that I did see Sirius a week after the end of term and there didn't seem to be anything wrong with him. In fact, I was having a time of it keeping him from breaking through the walls. He was like a little puppy again, practically bouncing off of everything. He couldn't stop talking about how much fun you two were going to have at the manor. I've never seen him more excited. This news of him not wanting you has come as a real shock, Harry. I'd like to tell you what happened to him but I honestly don't know. What I do know is that no matter what, he does love you with all his heart. He always has. Even if it doesn't seem like it now... he does.

That was the last time I saw him. Every time I asked him to do something with me, he'd say he was busy with some prior engagement. Which in itself is odd. He always used to have time for fun. I don't know what else to say to you right now, Harry. I don't know everything as I'm quite certain you didn't mention everything in your letter. I just want you to know that I will be here for you no matter what, okay? Owl me, or get to a fire place so that we can fire talk. If need be, I'll come to Hogwarts, okay? Remember that. Don't let your hopes get down. There is somebody here for you always.

Remus

Harry trudged into the Great Hall after his last class of the day. To say the least, it had been an extremely long day. Things had gone from bad to worse. It seemed as though all his professors had taken to hating him now as well. Professors Flitwick, Sprout, and Trelawny had taken ten house points from Harry for doing absolutely nothing. Which was the absolute truth since he had not spoken a word in any of his classes and kept to himself all day. It hadn't been hard, everybody was ignoring him anyway. Everybody in Gryffindor that is. Harry had never paid close attention to the Hufflepuffs in Herbology before this and it seemed as though they were ready to return the favour again this year. The Ravenclaws rarely spoke to anybody during class, so that was out of the question in Charms. And the Gryffindors were alone in Divination. Which made things a whole lot worse.

Harry sighed deeply and sat at the edge of Gryffindor table and started piling food onto his plate.

"Need some company, Harry?" asked a sweet voice. He looked up from his food and saw Ginny smiling down at him.

"Sure," he replied tiredly.

"Long day?"

"Like you wouldn't believe. The professors have it in for me as well. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to Defense Against the Dark Arts. I'll probably end up losing twice as many points there. And it'll probably be for something like breathing too loud. And then not to mention Potions, which has always been an ordeal. I couldn't imagine Snape hating me anymore than he already does."

"Well, you can't say that all the teachers will have it in for you. You haven't had McGonagall yet. Or Hagrid! He's always been your good friend. I'm sure he'll be fine."

"I hope so."

Harry looked up as he heard an owl hoot from above. Hedwig came soaring down through the

window and flew towards Harry. Harry's heart lifted as he saw a letter tied to her that was undoubtedly from Remus. Maybe there would be some answers within it. As he fumbled with opening the letter, Ginny looked on interestedly. "Is that from who I think it is?"
"Yes. I didn't expect a reply so soon." He read the letter over three times before sighing loudly and handing it over to Ginny. The only thing Remus's reply did was get more questions in Harry's head. Sirius truly wasn't acting like himself and whatever had happened to him, had happened in the three weeks time when nobody had seen him. What had happened to make Sirius change his mind about Harry? Harry was so caught up in his thoughts that he didn't notice when excited chatter started going on around him. He was startled out of his morbid thoughts of Sirius when a hand was placed on his shoulder and a gentle voice spoke in his ear.
"Harry... are you done eating?"
He jerked his head up and found himself looking at Remus Lupin. "Remus! What are you doing here?"
"I thought my letter would be enough to calm myself about this but I decided that I needed to see you. Can we go somewhere to talk?"
"Yeah. I'm not all that hungry anyway."
Harry stood up and walked for the door while Remus stopped and looked up at the Head table. Remus was visibly surprised at seeing his friend sitting there, and with no less than open hostility on his face. Remus raised an eyebrow at him and turned to follow Harry out the door. A couple 'bye, Professor Lupin's!' followed him out the door and he waved. Remus wrapped an arm around Harry's shoulders and the boy leaned into the embrace and sighed. "Thank you for coming, Moony," he said quietly. "Ginny and Colin Creevey are the only ones who have been nice to me. Even the professors hate me now."
"Don't think twice about it. I'd do anything for you. I hope you know that."
"I do now."
"Good. Let's go to the tower. There shouldn't be anybody there for a while yet."
The two walked to the Gryffindor common room in comfortable silence. Harry said the password and they both climbed in and sat on the couch in front of the fire. "Tell me everything that has happened from when you saw Sirius this summer up until now." Harry sighed and started in on the long story. Remus looked genuinely upset at some parts of the story and even stood up and paced when Harry told him what Sirius had said about his parents. After he was done talking, Remus stood looking down at Harry with concern in his eyes and anger towards the thoughts that were going through his head about his friend. The portrait opened and emitted some giggling third year girls. Remus sighed and ran a hand through his hair and then sat next to Harry again.
"I don't know what to say. This definetly isn't Sirius that we are talking about here. Even the brief glimpse that I saw of him, I could tell that he was different. He outright glared at me. I don't think he's ever given me that look or anybody for that matter."
"He has to me. Many times in fact now."
"Harry... something is going on here. There has to be for this many people to just up and start hating you one day..." More Gryffindors started piling into the common room and were sending the pair on the couch odd looks, and some even looks of hatred towards Harry. "We probably shouldn't talk anymore right here. I'm going to go talk to Dumbledore about this, alright? I'll come tell you what he said afterwards if it's not too late. Otherwise, I'll talk to you tomorrow."
"Okay, thank you."
"No problem." Remus took Harry in a firm hug which was gladly returned. "Everything will turn

out okay," he whispered into Harry's messy hair. He ruffled it as he stood and made for the portrait hole. Harry smiled a little at his retreating back, feeling better about things already.
Remus walked quickly down the hallway, intent on getting to the stone gargoyle that blocked the entrance to Dumbledore's office, as quickly as he could. He ran a hand through his hair for the fiftieth time since leaving Harry and then gave out a cry of surprise as a hand reached out and grabbed his elbow.
"Hello, Remus."
"Hi. Don't do that! You scared me!"
"Sorry. I'll try harder next time. Where are you off to in such a hurry?"
"I was going to speak to Dumbledore," he replied suspiciously. "Why do you care?"
"Just wondering. I have some things that I need to speak to you about. Come down to the kitchens with me and we'll have some tea. It won't take long, I promise."
Remus sighed and grudgingly agreed. "Fine. But this had better not take long. I have something important that needs tending to."
The man smiled and started walking down the stairs in the direction of the kitchens. After Remus tickled the pear, he turned the knob and walked in. Immediately, house elves were surrounding them, asking what they could help with. "Oh, could you get us two cups of tea? The kind that I like so much?" asked the man. Remus sat uncomfortably on a stool and looked at his companion.
"What are you doing here anyway? Are you just here for a visit?"
"Oh... I have some business to attend to here. I'll be staying for a while."
"Here are sirs tea!" squeaked a tiny elf.
"Thank you," replied Remus politely and drank from his cup. He swallowed and looked down at the contents. "That's some... interesting beverage you've made here. What kind of tea is this?"
"I made it up. It does have an interesting taste doesn't it?"
"What's the secret then?"
"Oh, this will interest you. It's blood."
Remus choked and blew the tea out of his mouth. "What? Are you crazy? You're not a vampire!"
"I know. It makes for interesting... side effects."
"And what... side effects are those precisely?" Remus asked warily as he started to feel light headed and dizzy with acute cotton mouth.
"Light headedness, dizzyness, cotton mouth, loss of good judgement, etc., etc." Remus swayed on his chair and fell off in a dead faint. "Oh, and sometimes you faint," the man added with a sadistic grin. "And sometimes you start hating people. Let's see here, what was that spell again? Oh yes, *exosus, Harry Potter*"
Harry wearily climbed out of the portrait hole the next morning. The only thought that kept him going was Remus. He was helping. There was somebody helping him. Him and Dumbledore must have been talking late into the night because he had never come back to see Harry. So Harry was on the look out for the older man with Ginny by his side.
"He left, didn't he?" exclaimed Harry on the verge of hysteria.
"Harry, calm down. I'm sure he's still asleep. He might be in the Great Hall for all we know. Remus will do anything for you. He wouldn't just up and leave for no good reason. And I'm sure he would tell you if he was leaving."
"I suppose you're right."
It still didn't help to calm Harry's nerves. There was an ominous feeling in the air and he didn't like it at all. When the two got the top of the marble staircase, Remus could be seen near the

entrance of the great hall speaking amiably with Ron Weasley. "Oh, Merlin," Harry muttered under his breath. He didn't like the looks of this at all.
"Don't worry. They were friends too," Ginny soothed. Harry ran quickly to Remus with a tentative grin on his face.
"Good morning, Remus."
Ron snorted in laughter. "Good luck getting rid of him, Remus. He never goes away."
"Shut up, Ron. You're terrible. Just wait until I owl mum and tell her how you're treating Harry. She'll send you ten howlers!"
"Stupid prat deserves it," Ron muttered and then walked into the Great Hall.
"So, Remus... did you speak with Professor Dumbledore about you know what?"
"Actually Harry, I didn't. Some other things came up that were frankly more important and needed to be seen to first. I think I may have been overreacting anyway. It's nothing. If you'll excuse me. I'll just be going to eat breakfast. I need to get going after that."
"But Remus!" Harry called after his retreating back. "Then why..."
"Oh, Harry, you're too paranoid. Not everybody is out to get you! I really don't want to hear about it anymore. Stop wasting my time with your petty problems that mean nothing!"
Harry stared shell shocked after his friend who he considered family... his uncle perhaps. "That didn't just happen, did it?" Harry asked Ginny miserably.
"I'm afraid it did."
"I can't handle another person who hates me. I don't get what's going on!" he said desperately.
"Neither do I. But we'll figure it out."
The next two weeks went by with Harry and Ginny finding absolutely nothing out. And things were progressively getting worse. One by one, more people started to show just how much they hated Harry Potter. The only people that were still on Harry's side was Ginny and Colin. There were people that would whisper to Harry in the hallways that they still liked him but then days afterward, they too would fall to whatever was doing this. Harry was getting geninuely concerned for Ginny and Colin. He didn't know what kind of dark magic was doing this, he just hoped that it didn't involve any pain. He didn't want any more people going through it.
It was Friday of the second week of school, when the Gryffindors and Slytherins had their third potions class together. So far, Snape had been tolerable. Even the Slytherins were more tolerable than his own housemates. Though they made sure to laugh whenever the Gryffindors would make cutting remarks sent in Harry's direction. So when he walked into the dungeons, he was completely dreading it. It had been a pleasant sort of day in the way of nasty remarks went. There was the ominous feeling in the air again. And the last time Harry had felt that, Remus had made it known how crazy he thought Harry was for thinking that everybody was against him.
As usual, the Gryffindors sat in the back of the classroom while the Slytherins sat in the front. Harry was stuck in the middle row where there was nobody. Snape made his usual dramatic entrance and began speaking right away. "Today, we will be learning a simple knocking out potion, or the Semi Vivus potion. It is mainly used in hospitals but there are the occasions when people use it for practical jokes. The reason for this is because of a side effect of the potion. It makes people more susceptible to curses, hexes, and spells. Example: I put a curse on Mr. Crabbe to make him think and act like a chicken, the spell will last for approximately five minutes. But... if I administer the potion to Mr. Crabbe; he would pass out and I would then place the curse on him. When he wakes, he won't be able to speak, all he'll do is squak like a chicken and flap his 'wings' for about two hours."

"I'd like to see that!" said Malfoy loudly.
"Yes, I'm sure we all would Malfoy. Anyway, it all depends on the curse. It has been used in the Dark Lord's reign for the Cruciatus. People have been placed in St. Mungo's after they have been administered this potion and the Cruciatus has been placed on them. Therefore, if you feel the need to use this, please keep within the law. You know the rules." Snape glared about the room. "What are you waiting for? Me to make it for you? Get moving!" The students scrambled about, getting their ingredients and cauldrons out.
Harry was halfway through making the potion, marvelling in the fact that no one had said so much as a word to him. Snape had even made his rounds and had said nothing. But he had thought too soon. At that moment, a large slimy slug came flying at him and hit him on his cheek and stuck. The room exploded in laughter and Harry peeled it off while looking around to see who had done it. But Snape answered the question for him.
"Weasley! Twenty points from Gryffindor! And detention!" The room continued to roar with laughter. "SILENCE!" Snape roared and everybody shut up, though everybody still had a smirk held in place. "One thing that I dislike more than anything Weasley, is when a person turns on one of their own. You will be scrubbing down my dungeon with a toothbrush. Maybe that will teach you to fling slugs at your housemates." He growled menacingly and swept back to his desk. Harry bent his head and continued to work on his potion, ignoring the snickers that were still going on. He could ignore them but when it came to the eyes penetrating into his skull, he had to look up.
What he found was the last pair of eyes that he expected to see. They were grey with silver specks mixed in. And his eyes weren't laughing at Harry like they usually were. In fact, his were the only eyes in the room that weren't laughing at him. His were asking something, and Harry stared for a couple moments to figure out what it was.
With a jolt, Harry understood. *'Are you okay?'* Harry blinked. He licked his lips and nodded his head slightly and then averted his gaze from the penetrating eyes.
After class was over, Harry started looking everywhere for his two remaining friends. He looked everywhere he could think that they had ever met. He finally gave up and went to the Great Hall for dinner. There were only a few seats left at the Gryffindor table and unfortunetly, Ginny and Colin were not there. He made to sit down next to a seventh year but her hand shot out and she looked at Harry. "Seat's taken." Every other seat was the same except he got a ruder remark with each seat he tried to take. Harry sighed, considering trying another table when a hand was laid on his shoulder.
"Perhaps you should just leave, Harry. It's obvious that nobody wants you sitting next to them." Harry turned around and found himself looking into Professor Dumbledore's no longer twinkling blue eyes.
"But Professor, this is my table too. I should be able to sit here."
"You should but you can't. Just leave Harry. You might want to start eating your meals when not so many students are around. I don't want you upsetting people."
"Oh, Merlin. Not you too, Professor."
"What are you talking about?"
"You hate me too."
"Ah, Remus Lupin told me you've been a little paranoid about that. Professor Black as well. I think you should get more sleep and food."
"How can I get food if you won't let me sit?" he exploded. "What's wrong with you? What's

wrong with everybody here?" Dumbledore's eyes took on a menacing look and he pointed at the door.
"Go back to your dormitory. Now," he said firmly.
"Fine." Harry turned on his heel, muttering darkly under his breath, completely aware of the stares and glares that were directed at his back. He was too busy looking at his feet to notice the almost imperceptible nod that Snape sent. He didn't notice a certain Slytherin nod back and hurrying to his feet. As Harry was almost to the top of the grand staircase, someone called out to him.
"Hey, Potter! Wait up!"
"What is it Malfoy? I'm really not in the mood."
"Don't get your knickers in a bunch. I just want to talk," he said quietly as he neared Harry.
"Come on. Let's go into a classroom." Malfoy grabbed Harry's arm and led him to a classroom that looked as though it hadn't been used in years. Harry sat upon the teacher's desk as Malfoy put up a few silencing and locking charms on the room.
"What are you planning to do? Kill me, drug me or then bring me to the Dark Lord?" Harry asked dryly.
"Oh please, Potter. Don't you think I'd come up with something more exciting than this? I wouldn't want to look back on my greatest moment in life and regret it because I did something wrong."
Malfoy hopped onto the desk beside Harry and sat cross legged. "So... why are we here then? I don't have any memory of you pulling me into a deserted classroom before this. You're not planning on having your wicked way with me, are you?"
"God, no. If I did, we'd be down to skin by now. I wouldn't have wasted any time after those charms."
"Good to know."
"Hungry?" Malfoy asked suddenly. Harry rolled his eyes as his stomach gave a huge growl.
"Well, considering Dumbledore kicked me out of the Great Hall.. Yes, I am. So you're here to rub it in, aren't you?"
Malfoy ignored him and started rummaging in his robes. He pulled out two things that were so small, Harry couldn't even make out what they were. The Slytherin boy enlarged them and Harry saw that they were too goblets with pumpkin juice. Next, he pulled another small item out and enlarged that as well. It was a plate, piled high with food. "What's this?"
"Our dinner you dimwit."
"*Our* dinner?"
"That's what I said." Malfoy picked up a chicken leg and bit into it. After swallowing, Harry was still staring at him as if he were some sort of alien. "What? I didn't poison it obviously if I'm eating it."
"That's not what I was thinking."
"Well, then what were you thinking?"
"You were just nice to me."
"Of course I wasn't."
"You... you brought me food. That was nice, Malfoy."
Malfoy's cheeks turned a slight shade of pink but he just shrugged. "Snape made me do it. It wasn't my idea." Harry's mouth now dropped down to his chest.
"Snape?" he asked incredulously. "Are we speaking about the same Snape here? The Potions

Master who has greasy black hair and simply loathes everything about me. Especially the fact that I'm my father's son?"
"If that's the reason why he hates you, then yeah. We're speaking about the same Potions master here."
"But... but he.."
"Hates you? Yes. He does and so do I. Don't forget it either."
"Then why would you even agree to do this? Whatever this is, besides bringing me food."
"I don't know. I like Snape. Actually, I wasn't bringing food just for you. I had just sat down to eat when you came in. I was still hungry and thought that I might as well bring enough for two of us."
Harry looked down at the plate. "Or five of us."
Again, Malfoy shrugged. "I eat a lot. I brought three helpings for me and two for you I suppose."
Harry took a chicken leg and looked at Malfoy. "But still... it was nice. You could have just let me watch you eat, but you didn't. You thought of me." Malfoy wrinkled his nose.
"Damn. I missed a chance to aggravate you. I hate it when I do that," he said in all seriousness, but Harry laughed.
"I think you're losing your touch, Malfoy."
"I'm not!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I've still got it! I can aggravate you with the best of them."
"Prove it."
"Eh," he replied with a shrug of his shoulders. "I'm too hungry to. Would you just shut up and eat already? Food is getting cold." Harry smiled and dug into the delicious meal that Malfoy had provided for him. Somehow, that made it taste all that much better.

Tosses chocolate frog to all reviewers!
Thank you to Zarah, Avada Kedevra, KawaiiKowaiKoneko, Rinoa Eclipse, JungAnya, nightwing, Hippy Flower, and Aria! I'm glad you all enjoyed the first chapter! I hope you enjoyed this chapter as well! The next chapter is with my betas! Feb.21, 20

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Chapter: 3

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Three
Harry watched Draco Malfoy walk down the deserted hallways back to his dormitory, with a mixture of wonderment and happiness in his eyes. Not only was there another person who didn't hate him... well, okay, so Malfoy hated Harry but he was being civil, at least. It couldn't be said about Harry's own housemates and teachers, for that matter. But this person was also the last that Harry had expected to be nice. Malfoy should be taking this chance to milk Harry's troubles for all that they were worth. But he wasn't; he was helping. Even in his own odd way, he was helping. And another odd thing... so was Snape. He had told Malfoy to find Harry. There was a wonder.
Harry turned around to walk back to Gryffindor tower with a broad smile on his face. The day

hadn't been all that bad. Sure, the slug had been a bit of a setback but dinner more than made up for it. Now all Harry had to do was find Ginny and Colin. He quickened his footsteps and was at the portrait hole sooner than he expected to be. "Perseverance," he said impatiently. The Portrait swung open and he climbed in. A few people laughed when he entered.
"Have a nice dinner, Potter?" yelled Ron.
"It was very good. Thanks for asking, Ronniekins."
Harry smirked as Ron scowled and went back to whatever conversation he was having with Hermione. "Harry!" He turned and saw Ginny sitting in a darkened corner of the room. He smiled and ran to her.
"Hello! I've been looking for you and Colin since after class. What happened to you?"
"Sorry. I was actually looking for Colin. I still haven't seen him, as a matter of fact."
"Oh, well I'm sure he'll show up sooner or later. I hope I don't have to take away house points from him."
"Don't! Everybody will hate you more for taking points away from Gryffindor!"
"I was kidding, Gin."
Ginny smiled shyly, and then her face turned serious. "I heard what happened at dinner. Dumbledore actually kicked you out of the Great Hall?"
"Yes. I couldn't believe it either. I have such a bad feeling about this if he's been duped as well. Now there is really nobody to help me but you and Colin."
"I'm sure we'll find somebody who is on our side. So, did you eat at all?"
"Um... well, actually, not eating had been the original plan but somebody brought me food," he said evasively.
"Who, Harry? Maybe we can talk them into helping us."
"Hmm... The day Malfoy helps me is the day I start to like going to Potions."
"It was *Malfoy*?" she asked incredulously. "Malfoy brought you food? Has he gone insane?"
"Apparently. I guess Snape told him to go and find me. It was Draco's own doing that brought the food."
"Okay, stop. Now Snape is telling him to go and find you. Do you think they've been affected by this?"
"Probably not. Unless if something different is happening to them to make them like me. But I really can't really see any point in that."
"Well, I can't see any point in making people hate you."
"Neither can I, but I'm sure there's a good reason for it."
"Oh! Colin!" Ginny yelled suddenly. "Come here! Where have you been? I've been looking all over for you for hours now."
Harry looked up and saw Colin closing the Portrait of the Fat Lady. He had a strange, dazed expression on his face and he smiled at Ginny before walking over to them. His gaze then settled on Harry; and he stopped and the smile faded. "Ginny... why are you talking to him?"
"Because... he's my friend. And he's yours as well."
"Why would I ever want to be friends with the likes of him? All he wants is attention because his parents died. That's why he's in the paper so much. He's deceiving. I don't want him deceiving you too, Ginny."
"He's not deceiving me, Colin! You're the one who has been deceived! You liked Harry when we were in Defense today. You even stood up for him when Professor Black said something cutting about him!"

"I wasn't thinking clearly. I didn't feel good at the time."
Ginny opened her mouth to retort but Harry put a hand on her knee and shook his head. "There's no changing his mind, Gin. Just let it go."
"Ginny, I think you should come sit by Dennis and me. Ron won't like you sitting by him."
"I don't care what Ron thinks, Colin! If you don't want to be friends with Harry anymore, fine! Just leave us be. I'll talk to you again when you come to your senses."
Colin's eyes flashed angrily, and he turned and stalked away.
Ginny turned on Harry, her eyes flashing dangerously. "How can you just take this like a grain of sand? I don't understand!"
Harry sighed deeply and ran a hand through his hair. "I'm not saying that it isn't hard... it is hard to have everybody you care about suddenly hate you for no apparent reason, but for now, there isn't anything I can do about it. I just have to accept it like it is for the time being. I'm sure that we'll find something."
"You're right. I'm sorry I overreacted. This is just getting to me so badly. None of it makes any sense."
"I know. Let's just try not to think about it right now. I'm going to write to Dudley. You should do homework."
"So should you," Ginny replied smiling.
"And I will, Miss Weasley. I said I'd write to him when I got to school and I haven't done so yet."
Harry smiled and reached down into his bag and pulled out a piece of parchment, quill and ink and began to write.
As Harry wrote, he found himself writing about his weeks at Hogwarts and how everybody hated him now. He smiled a little. *So much for not thinking about it.* After writing almost two pages of his problems, he decided to ask Dudley how he was doing and if he wanted more books to read. The letter was three pieces of parchment before he finally put it into an envelope and wrote his cousin's name on the front. "Need to go to the owlery now?" Ginny asked suddenly.
"Yeah. You want to come?"
"Yes. Homework is giving me a headache right now."
Harry held out his hand and Ginny took it as she stood up. They linked arms and walked out of the Common room, ignoring the hisses that followed them. Ginny squeezed his arm to her in a comforting gesture. Harry smiled and wrapped his arm around her and pulled her to him. Her head fit perfectly where his shoulder and neck met and he breathed in the sweet scent of her shampoo. They reluctantly let go of each other when they came to the owlery. Harry called Hedwig to him and tied the letter to her. "Take this to Dudley at his school. Wait there for him to write back. He knows to reply right away." The snowy owl hooted and took off out of the window.
Harry turned to Ginny and found her looking out the window, watching Hedwig fly away. The moonlight shone brightly on her face and gave her an angelic appearance. Harry's heart fluttered in his chest and before he knew what he was doing, he was walking towards her and wrapping her in an embrace from behind. He kissed her cheek and whispered into her ear. "I'm so grateful to you, Ginny. I don't know what I'd do without you here."
She giggled softly, almost a shy sort of laugh. "I'm glad I could be of service. You know I'd do anything for you."
Harry turned her around and gently tucked a piece of hair behind her ear. "Yeah," he whispered,. "I know." They stood just staring at each other for a few moments.

"Do you know how beautiful you are?" he found himself saying. He blushed when he realised just what he had said. Harry thought that it was strange that he had said that, since he had never had the thought before in his life. Sure, he had noticed that she was a pretty girl, but never beautiful. There was just something pulling inside of him that had to tell her that. A part of him that wanted to stare into her big brown eyes all night;. And then another part that wanted to kiss her. But, he wasn't about to go about kissing his only remaining friend. That might complicate things a little.

But before he could step away from her, Ginny stepped up on her toes and made their lips meet in a soft lingering kiss. When they pulled away, the same thing was running through his head, over and over. *Wow. That was my first kiss. Wow, it was... nice.* Harry didn't know if it was only supposed to be nice, or if it was supposed to be fireworks, but all he knew was that he liked being kissed. He smiled at Ginny, who was now looking extremely nervous. After a moment's indecision, he leaned down and kissed her again before pulling her into a hug.

Ginny gave an almost imperceptible sigh and let her body be cradled in Harry's. They stood like that for a long time until they heard the sound of Mrs. Norris meowing outside the door.

"We better get back," Harry whispered. "It's late."

"It is."

They wrapped their arms around each other again and stuck their heads out of the door to see if the bothersome cat was gone. Luckily, her tail was just swishing around the corner and out of sight. They smiled in relief and started the long journey back to the Gryffindor Common room. The room was completely empty when they arrived back and the fire was already dying. Harry kissed Ginny's cheek and bid her goodnight.

Harry woke the next morning in an extremely good mood. At first, he couldn't remember why he should be... but then it hit him. Ginny. There was nobody else as wonderful as her in his eyes. As far as he was concerned, she was the most loyal friend that he had. It was a nice feeling to know that somebody cared. Harry practically skipped down the stairs and thankfully, was greeted by a smiling Ginny. "Well... you sure are chipper this morning," she said brightly.

"I slept well," he replied with a grin on his face that suggested that that wasn't the reason at all.

"Good. So did I, actually."

Harry smiled and took her hand. "Let's go to breakfast then. I'm starving." Ginny laughed and tried the best she could to keep up with Harry's long strides. While they were eating, they kept grinning stupidly at each other, not caring if anybody saw how they were behaving. Harry sighed contentedly into his goblet of orange juice as he looked at Ginny eating. Yes... Ginny certainly was a good friend to have at times like these. Harry's thoughts then took a darker turn.

Colin had been a good friend as well. A really good friend when Ginny hadn't been able to help. But now he had fallen to whatever evil was permeating the school. It was really only a matter of time until Ginny was gone from him as well. Harry sighed again, but this time for another reason. This one sigh, Ginny took notice of and looked at Harry in concern.

"What's wrong?"

"We need to go and at least try to figure out what's going on. Want to go to the library after we're done eating?"

"Yeah." She took a couple furtive glances around the Great Hall. "And I suggest we wrap our meal up right about now. We're not very popular right now."

And indeed, when Harry looked around, more Gryffindors were filing into the Great Hall and some were even whispering amongst each other that they should complain to Dumbledore.

"Right," Harry said crisply and stood up. "Let's go. Good thing we were done." He took Ginny's hand again and led her away into the library. Madam Pince greeted Ginny warmly but merely glared at Harry, who sighed for what seemed like the millionth time in the past couple weeks. Ginny looked over at him as they began to peruse the Dark Arts section.
"You seem to be doing that a lot lately," she said, voicing Harry's thoughts.
"What? Sighing?"
"Yes. I'd much rather hear you laugh again. That's a rare occurrence nowadays."
"Can you blame me? I don't have much to laugh about anymore. Ron and I..." A lump formed in his throat and he found that he couldn't go on speaking.
Ever since the train ride, he found that it was easiest to just not think about Ron or Hermione. It was much too painful. This mention was the first he had made since their 'falling out.'
"I'm sorry. I know you must miss him."
"I do," he admitted. "This is worse than fourth year when he got mad at me for the tournament. I knew what was bothering him then. This time... I don't think anything I did even made him stop liking me. It's just not easy to think about if everybody has hated me and it's now just coming out."
"Oh, really, Harry. All of these people don't hate you. I won't let you think that way. There is something strange going on. I can't say for certain that it is Dark magic but I'm willing to bet everything I own that it is. Now, come on. These books here look promising."
As she had been speaking, she had been handing book upon book to Harry and even had about five large tomes stacked in her arms. They headed over to the most private table that they would be able to find, and laid the books quietly on the table so as not to bother Madam Pince. By the time Harry had been through his second book, Ginny finally spoke up in a tone that suggested that she was an idiot.
"Harry..… have you ever thought about the Imperius?"
He thought about this for a couple moments before answering. "Imperius is used to make people do things. Not to make them feel something towards a person."
"But that's just it! Somebody could have cast the Imperius on everybody to make them *act* like they hate you! It makes perfect sense."
"It does... but somehow, it's just too easy. I can see it on a couple people, but if this were the work of Voldemort, he would have gone a way that was more cunning. He was a Slytherin after all. But... I suppose we can't rule it out. It just seems like a lot of work to cast the Imperius on a thousand students."
"Not quite a thousand. I doubt they would have to cast it on the Slytherins."
"Still. That's still about 750 students... plus the teachers. Let's keep looking."
The two stayed in the library all morning and all afternoon, skipping lunch. They both decided that facing the whole school in the Great Hall could wait until dinner. The search had come up with basically nothing. Harry was rubbing his eyes by the time dinner was nearing. They were blurry and felt all grainy. He closed the book he was reading with a large bang and immediately winced as Madam Pince sent him a glare.
"That's about all I can do today without passing out, Gin. Let's return these and find a couple more to check out just in case we feel insane enough to do some more research tonight."
The two went their separate ways and started returning the books. Harry decided to go into the potion section to read about different kinds of mind-altering potions. There was always the slim chance that a potion was being used. Apparently, Ginny had had the same idea as Harry; as she

rushed around the corner that Harry had just turned, they collided into each other and both fell on the floor. They looked at one another, surprised for a moment before bursting into laughter. Before the angry librarian could come storming over, they covered their mouths so that the only sounds emitting from them were small snorts when they tried to breathe. Finally, Harry gained his composure, and got up and offered his hand to his female companion.
"Sorry about that, miss. I wasn't watching where I was going."
"It's quite alright, sir."
They both smiled shyly and turned to the shelf, with Harry's hand placed gently in the small of Ginny's back. Harry pretended to be looking at the titles of the books but he was really studying Ginny.
"If you keep staring at me like that, Mr. Potter, somebody may get the idea that you fancy me," Ginny said suddenly, still looking at the books.
"And what's so bad about that?" he asked slyly.
"Well, if you don't care that people know... then I guess it's okay."
Feeling very brave, indeed, Harry grinned and spun her around to face him so that their faces were only centimetres apart. "Does it say anywhere in here that it's against the rules to kiss beautiful girls while in the library?"
"I don't recall. I think you'll just have to risk it. That's if you can find a beautiful girl in here."
Harry smiled. "I found her." He tilted her chin up and brought their lips together in a soft kiss. Within moments, their mouths had fallen open and the kiss deepened. Harry's hands found a spot in Ginny's long red hair and lodged themselves there, all the while, he wondered if he was even doing this correctly. Just as Ginny was really getting into it and bringing her arms around Harry's neck, he pulled away and looked around.
"What are you doing?" Ginny asked breathlessly.
"Did you hear that?"
"No. There wasn't anything. Maybe another student?"
"Okay..." he said slowly but then smiled apologetically. Her eyes showed him that it was okay. They started kissing again, but this time, it was more deliberate. Not gentle, or searching, exploring, like the other had been. Both were really getting into it when not so gentle hands pulled Harry from Ginny by his collar, almost strangling him.
"Merlin, Potter. Are you really that dense? If you're going to snog, go somewhere private. Forty points from Gryffindor and you'll be serving a detention with me."
"But Professor Black! It was my fault. I'm the one who kissed him!" exclaimed Ginny.
Sirius gave her a withering glare that under which she faltered. "Do not second guess me, Miss Weasley. I know what I saw. I was there the whole time."
"Oh, so now you're a voyeur?" Harry asked angrily.
"I don't think anybody else would call me that, Potter. We are in a public place, after all."
"Why were you even watching me in the first place? Why don't you just stay out of my business? I don't need you, just as much as you don't want me!" Sirius approached his godson menacingly.
"I was not watching you out of duty as your godfather. I was watching you because I am your professor and it is my duty to keep you out of trouble."
"Funny. I thought a professor's job was teach students."
"That's not all of being a teacher. Especially when you teach at a boarding school. Somebody needs to keep invalids like you from snogging girls wherever you please. As much as you'd like to think it so, people do not like seeing you all the time. And people most especially do not like

seeing you snog your girlfriends."
"I've never thought that. You know that."
"I beg to differ. All you want is attention. Look at you with this story with 'everybody hates me Remus!' God, could you be anymore of a child?"
"That's the thing, Sirius. I am a child."
"It's Professor Black to you, Potter."
"I'll call you whatever I damn well please, *Black*." Harry turned and snatched up the first book he saw and started walking past Sirius, but he grabbed Harry's arm.
"You might want to watch how you speak to your professors. You might just find that I have the power to bring about your expulsion from this school."
"Well, I'm not speaking to you as a professor. I'm speaking to you strictly godson to godfather. And you know what? *I hate you*. Mum and dad should have known better than to trust you. You were probably in on it with Wormtail. You were just lying to me when you said you were innocent; waiting for me to free you; gaining my trust. Then once you're free, you turned against me again. When are you going to announce what you are?"
"And what would I announce?"
"That you're a Death Eater. I'll be waiting for it." Sirius' grip tightened on Harry's arm and a look as cold as steel crossed his eyes.
"That shows how much you know me."
Harry's eyes watered as his godfather's grip steadily tightened. "Give me a reason to think otherwise, then."
"I don't have to prove myself to you."
"Then nothing changes. I still don't need you and I still hate you, Sirius. Let go of my arm." Sirius complied and Harry immediately took Ginny's hand. "See you later, Professor," he said, as if nothing had happened at all.
Harry checked out his book, and left the library. Ginny followed as he walked slowly and quietly to the Great Hall for dinner, where they ate quickly so as not to 'upset' anybody. Harry was quite aware of the looks that Sirius sent him while they ate, but he did his best to ignore them. Ginny kept sending worried looks to him but didn't say anything until they got reached to the common room. "Harry... do you really think it was fair to accuse him of being a Death Eater?"
"Do you really think it's fair for him to treat me this way?"
"Well, no. But Harry, do you really think he is? After all he's been through. I really can't see it."
Harry flopped unceremoniously onto the couch and looked at Ginny. "Actually, I don't know what to think anymore. I know that it doesn't seem like him to be one... but you never know. For the time being, I'll just keep telling myself that he's not one."
"I think you're reading into it too much. Whatever is getting to everybody else, has got to Sirius as well. I think he really does love you. Did you see his face when you told him that you still hated him? He looked devastated."
"No, he didn't."
"That's because you were blinded by your anger towards him. Granted, the look only flashed for a few moments but... he does love you."
"I hope you're right about him."
"I am," she replied confidently and then sat down next to him. "Up for a game of chess? I haven't played since the summer."
"Sure. It'll be good to have something else to do. I'll go get my board."

Harry stood up to go to his dormitory, secretly wondering if this would be the last night he would be able to spend with Ginny. It was only a matter of time before it got to her as well, and he planned to enjoy every moment with her while he could

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Chapter: 4

Here is the fourth chapter! They should be coming regularly now every Sunday. So, that is when you should check for the next installment. I have it finished, and it is beta'd up until chapter 12. Thanks to my reviewers are on the bottom!

Special thanks go out to my beta, Sirena Black, or Padfoots_Bitch. I still haven't asked which name she wants me to use. Much loff to you! Also, I think this chapter is a little messed up. I recently had some computer failure and I lost the beta'd chapter. Luckily, I still had the revised version from Sirena, but part of it was completely gone, so the beginning of this chapter isn't completely beta'd. I did it myself to the best of my ability however.

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Let the Darkness Take You Chapter Four

Over the next couple days, Ginny could tell that Harry was more uptight than usual. She began to wonder if it was because of what had been happening between them or if the stress of everybody hating him that was really starting to get to him. It couldn't be easy, after all. The only time he seemed like himself was when they'd sneak off somewhere and have a good old-fashioned snogging session. Harry had started to become a bit clingy, too; which Ginny really couldn't blame the boy. She'd probably be the same way if she was on her last friend; which in reality, she kind of was. Nobody else was speaking to her because of her continued friendship with Harry. They could all sod off in her opinion.

She loved Harry and would never turn her back on him.

And that's what scared her about their relationship. Love. Was it the sort of love that her parents had... that James and Lily Potter had? Or, was it the sort of love that good friends had for each other? She had always had a crush on the Boy-Who-Lived. Over time, she started to realise that the Boy-Who-Lived was actually Harry Potter, or then just Harry. Then, she had had a crush on Harry. The boy with round, black glasses, beautiful emerald eyes, stubbornly untidy black hair, and an unfortunate scar on his forehead. Was this boy the boy she was *in love* with, or did she love him?

In all truth, she wanted to be in love with him more than anything. But when she was honest with herself, the love she felt for him wasn't the sort of love Harry so desperately deserved. But if Harry was in love with her... the last thing she wanted to do was break it off with him and break his heart in the process.

Ginny shook these thoughts away as she continued her journey to the expansive library of Hogwarts. She had the last class period of Tuesday off and had promised Harry to go into to the library to do a little more research on their dilemma. The red hair girl shifted her bag on her

shoulder when she noticed an open door a little way ahead of her. A head peeked around the corner and looked at her. Ginny didn't like the looks of this.
"Oh, hello!" exclaimed the man.
"Hi," Ginny said slowly and quietly.
The man gave a booming laugh and stepped out of the room he was in. "Where are you off to? Isn't there a class you should be in right now?"
"No. I have this period free on Tuesdays. Why are you here? Isn't there somewhere you should be?"
"Why, yes. I'm supposed to be right here. I was just making myself some tea, would you care to join me?"
"Actually, I was heading to the library. I have some research to do."
"Oh, yes. I've seen you and that Harry Potter boy doing that a lot lately. Anything in particular?" he asked suspiciously.
"No. Not really. If you don't mind, I'll just be going now."
"Oh, just come in for a quick cup of tea. It won't take long."
"No, thanks."
The man took out his wand and pointed it at Ginny. "What are you doing?" she asked fearfully. She realised what he was doing as her feet disobeyed her mind and started walking into the room after the man.
"I'm just asking you for a small cup of tea. I would just like some company. Is that so much to ask?"
"Um... no. I suppose it's not," she replied hesitantly. She watched with wide eyes as the man poured blood-red tea into two cups and handed one to her.
"Bottoms' up," he said softly.
Ginny looked suspiciously into her cup and, took a drink, and immediately began to splutter. "I'm sorry, but that's terrible."
"That's why I chose not to drink it."
"But then why..." She stopped talking as she started to feel dizzy. She grabbed onto a chair for support, but it was no good; she was down on the floor in a dead faint.
The man put his untouched 'tea' onto a table and walked towards the girl. "That's why, Miss Weasley. *Exosus, Harry Potter.*"
Harry walked out of Transfiguration, completely exhausted. McGonagall had been particularly short with him today, more so than usual. And, the Gryffindors were no better. Hermione had 'accidentally' turned her crab into a blast-ended skrewt just as Harry was getting up to chase after his crab, which had fallen off his desk and was scuttling across the floor. The skrewt had been testy and attacked him; as a result, Harry had several burns on his hands. The healing charms he had placed on himself were very unsatisfactory. They never worked as well when you performed them on oneself. Harry hoped that Ginny was good in that area.
That's why he was now headed straight to the library, where he knew Ginny to be. He figured that he could go to Madam Pomfrey... but he didn't want to risk getting more injuries. He did not know if she still liked him or not. And, frankly, Harry wasn't willing to find out when he was already injured. So, Harry hid his hands from view in case people got the nasty idea to do something even more dreadful to him because of it.
Harry silently slid into the library, taking in the musty smell of books and dust. The room had only half of its torches lit since the setting sun was shining brightly through the windows. There

were a few students working around the tables and they sent nasty glares to Harry when he walked by. He unsuccessfully tried to ignore them and continued on his search of his only friend, Ginny. As he walked, he began to wonder if taking their relationship in the direction he was taking it, was a very good idea.

There was no doubt that Harry was very grateful to her unwavering friendship. He would be forever in her debt as soon as this was all over; that much was certain. What wasn't certain was Harry's feelings for Ginny. There was no denying that she was a beautiful girl; and anybody who said otherwise, was in Harry's opinion, crazy enough to be admitted to St. Mungo's. She was beautiful in the way of looks. With all her fiery red hair that hung in waves down to the middle of her back, her big brown eyes, her smile that seemed to light up a room, her little nose, her body. And she was beautiful in her personality, the way she never strayed from Harry, even though everybody else had. That was loyal. Her sense of humour. Her wit. Smart. Talented. Sweet. She was everything that Harry could ever want in a friend.

…And that was just the thing. In his mind, he kept referring to her as a friend. Not a girlfriend. Their relationship never was that way, and he thought it likely that it never would be that way. No matter how much he lied to himself, he just wasn't in love with her the way she wanted him to be. The last thing he wanted to do was break Ginny's heart by telling her this... but he knew that he had to. He wouldn't be able to go on, leading her on the way he had been. Harry did have to admit... he would miss the snogging sessions. Another quality to her: she was a *great* kisser. Any man will be lucky to have her for a wife. In a way, Harry was sad that he couldn't be the one. But there was no place in his life for Ginny, except as a good friend.

Harry now found himself walking in the deserted corridors, with still no luck in finding Ginny. He thought it to be strange that she hadn't been in the library. She had promised him that she would do more research while she had her free period. "Maybe she had just gone to dinner?" he thought. With that in mind, he turned around and headed in the direction of the Great Hall. Luckily, she was just coming out of the Great Hall as he came down the marble staircase.

"Hey, Ginny! I've been looking all over for you!"

When the Gryffindor girl looked up at him, there was something different in her eyes. Harry's heart clenched. It had got to her, too. She wasn't his friend anymore. He hurried down to her, hoping against hope that it was just his imagination or that something had happened that had pissed her off. She wasn't really directing that hate towards him.… She couldn't be.

"What's wrong, Gin? Did someone do something to get you mad?"

"No," she replied coldly. Harry placed a gentle hand on her elbow but which she very roughly shrugged it away. "Don't touch me," she commented, her voice low and even.

"Oh, no.… Ginny, please don't say it has you, too."

"If you're talking about what I think you're talking about, then just drop it already. Things like that get old really fast. *Nobody* hates you."

"Then why are you talking and looking at me like that?"

"You're imagining things. Go get some rest. You look like shit."

Harry moved closer and tucked a stray piece of hair behind her ears. "Please don't do this. Look at me. Remember who I am. Remember that you don't actually feel this way about me, Gin. I'm your friend. You're my friend. Think. Don't let whatever it is get to you."

"There is nothing! Okay, I admit it. I don't like you. The only thing you were good for was getting in some good snogging time in. I wouldn't have put up with it if you weren't such a good kisser... but we're over. I'm sick of being around you all the time. Now, get over yourself because

nobody here hates you but me."
She leaned up and took him forcefully in a deep kiss. When she pulled away, they were both out of breath.
"I must say... I think I am going to miss that a little," she said, still breathing hard as she turned to walk away.
Harry watched her go sadly. He had wanted to break off their little 'fling' off but not in this way. As she disappeared from view at the top of the stairs, he turned slowly around and looked into the Great Hall. It seemed funny... 1,000 people gathered in this one room, and not one person liked him. He looked mournfully around at the laughing groups at each table until his eyes fell on the group that he should have been with. Ron was currently laughing at something that Seamus said. It was probably another one of his crude jokes. As gross as they were, Harry missed hearing them. Hermione had a disgruntled look on her face which only proved his theory on their conversation. Ron looked at her and threw an arm around her shoulders and kissed her cheek. Hermione looked up at Ron with undisguised adoration in her eyes and returned the kiss to his cheek. Ron blushed profusely as cat calls were made down the table. Harry furrowed his brow. When had that happened? He had seen it coming after the Yule Ball in fourth year, but both had been too cowardly to do anything about it from then on. Obviously, something had happened since their estrangement.
Harry sighed and felt tears welling up in his eyes and a painful wrenching at his heart and stomach. He wanted nothing more than to be with his friends again. At least they were happy... even if he couldn't be. Harry began to blink angrily as he felt the tears in his eyes begin to threaten to spill over. Crying wasn't something that would help the situation. And besides... he was sixteen. Sixteen year old boys didn't cry just because their friends wouldn't talk to them.
As if coming to a decision, Harry turned angrily on his heel and began another trek to the library. He might be virtually alone in the world now... but he'd be damned if he was just going to sit around and take it. He'd get to the bottom of this if it was the last thing he did.
Severus Snape walked into the Great Hall for dinner, acting as if he had the weight of the world on his shoulders. His jobs as spy and Potions Master seemed to be even more trying lately. And, it was all because of one person. Harry Potter. Severus had noticed the odd change in everybody. The cool looks towards the Gryffindor boy, the rude remarks, the slugs being thrown at his face by his so called best friend. All this left Snape to wondering what was going on. It seemed as if he was one of the only people who was wondering.
Just a couple weeks ago, he had tried to evasively ask the Headmaster if he had noticed, but even Dumbledore himself seemed to be affected by whatever was affecting everyone else. His action in sending Potter out of the Great Hall that one night a couple weeks ago was enough to prove Severus' theory. And Potter's reaction to it was certainly enough to confirm that he too was noticing the change. How could he not? Severus had always thought the boy to be quite dense... but nobody in their right mind could possibly be *that* dense. The boy had some brains in him. Potter did know how to talk, after all. Which in itself was quite remarkable.
So, it didn't come as much of a surprise that Potter noticed. Ginny Weasley also seemed to have noticed and was on Potter's side. At least that was something good. But, if one more thing went wrong, Severus would be forced to do something about it. But he really didn't want to have to work with a Potter. Of all things... it had come to that again.
It was only halfway through dinner when the Potions Master noticed the Weasley girl get up from her place at the Gryffindor table. Once outside, he heard Potter call to her and moments

later, he was beside her, giving her a look of concern. They spoke a bit and a scared/angry look crossed Potter's face and the curiosity became too much for Severus. He cast a listening charm on them as discreetly as he could and their voices sounded in his head.
"If you're talking about what I think you're talking about, then just drop it already. Things like that get old really fast. *Nobody* hates you," Ginny's voice said, coldly.
"Then why are you talking and looking at me like that?"
"You're imagining things. Go get some rest. You look like shit."
Severus saw Potter move closer and tuck a stray piece of hair behind Weasley's ears. "Please don't do this. Look at me. Remember who I am. Remember that you don't actually feel this way about me, Gin. I'm your friend. You're my friend. Think. Don't let whatever it is get to you."
"There is nothing! Okay, I admit it. I don't like you. The only thing you were good for was getting in some good snogging time in. I wouldn't have put up with it if you weren't such a good kisser... but we're over. I'm sick of being around you all the time. Now, get over yourself because nobody here hates you but me."
Even Severus winced at the tone of her voice. It was actually only part of why he winced. He could have really lived without the knowledge of what they did in their spare time. Weasley then kissed Potter. And by the looks of it, it wasn't a nice kiss.
"I must say... I think I am going to miss that a little."
Weasley walked to the stairs and disappeared from Severus's sight. Potter, however, stared after her, then slowly turned around and took in the sights of the Great Hall. He looked from the Slytherins, to the Ravenclaws, to the Hufflepuffs, and then finally to the Gryffindors. A sadness the professor had never seen before was settled in Potter's eyes. There was also longing there. Even from this distance, Severus could see his eyes becoming wet with tears. And then all of a sudden, his face furrowed in confusion and the Gryffindors started cat calling. From what Severus could see, it was because of Weasley and Granger. Potter's confusion was probably because he hadn't known about them.
Even he, Severus knew that they had only been together for about two weeks. All the latest gossip got around to the teachers. Not that Severus cared to hear it, but it was hard to avoid when all the female staff would come in and gossip when he was trying to have a quiet time in the teacher's lounge. It really was quite pathetic the life they had to lead if they got all their entertainment from the lives the students led.
Severus turned his attention back to the Potter boy and saw him blinking furiously. A few moments later, a firm resolve had crossed his face and he immediately turned around and left. He sighed, exasperated. Why was he the one that was always pulled into this? And this time, he'd have to deal with Potter *alone*! Of all the things to that could happen! Why did he have to choose the side of the Light? Things seemed to be so much more simple on the Dark side. Torture, kill. Torture, kill. Severus shuddered involuntarily and quickly decided that he liked being on this side. It didn't make it any easier, though. There just had to be a way to ease the situation.
Severus's eyes fell on the Slytherin table. And then on one particular Slytherin, Draco Malfoy. A sadistic grin crossed the professor's face and he stood up and walked to his favourite student.
"Mr. Malfoy."
"Yes, Professor?" Draco asked with a questioning look in his eyes.
"I'm in desperate need of an aide. I've chosen you for the job. Meet me in my office in ten minutes."
At times like these, it was good to have students to pray on. Yes, indeed. Life was sweet.

Harry was currently sitting at a table in the library, swamped in books. He idly wondered what book he had taken out the day himself and Ginny had been caught kissing by Sirius in-between the book cases. He had forgotten about the book as soon as he had checked it out, even though it was still in his possession. Now he wondered if it would help him any. He made a decision to look for it as soon as he got back to his dormitory. He started to flip through a book on legal Dark curses when he heard softly arguing voices. One sounded like Professor Snape and the other sounded like Draco Malfoy. Harry shook his head in exasperation and continued to bury his face in his reading.

Two shadows fell over him and he could barely read what was written. He looked up irritably into the faces of said people. "Oh, please. I don't need this right now."

"It's a wonder nobody likes you anymore, Potter," Snape whispered softly. "With an attitude like that, I'm surprised you kept your friends for as long as you did."

Harry clenched his jaw. "That's none of your business. Please just leave me alone. I have research to do now."

"Actually... you'll have to consider doing that at a later date and time. Our Potions professor has decided to give us detention for something that only he knows about," Draco drawled.

"Detention?" Harry said loudly.

"Shut up! Do you want Pince over here?" hissed Snape.

"Why are you giving me detention? Black is already giving me a detention this weekend but only because he was spying on me. I never did anything!"

"Just shut your mouth and follow us to my office. I have a few things I need to speak to you two about before you clean my dungeon."

"Fine! But let me put my books away first."

"Let the librarian do it."

"Oh, and then she'll want me back here," he said sarcastically. "She already hates me too much."

"Then I'll tell her that I need you for detention and that it's my fault for you not clearing your books up. She'll be mad at me then. You're insufferable."

"You would be too if you were me," Harry mumbled.

Snape rolled his eyes and motioned for the two students to follow him. They stopped briefly beside Madam Pince so Snape could explain why Harry couldn't put the books away and then quickly left. Harry angrily followed behind Snape and Malfoy, wondering what had got up Snape's arse to give them detention for no reason. Harry stood stiffly in his professor's office as he closed the door. "Well... sit down!" he snapped and the two boys jumped and immediately sat. Harry sent Snape a confused glance when he put up a locking and silencing charm. "We don't want people in here," he said irritably as he saw Harry's questioning gaze.

"But.. why? I thought this was about detention?"

"Merlin, Potter. That was just so people didn't actually think I was trying to be nice to you."

"Okay..." he said slowly. "And why wouldn't you want anybody to think that?"

"For a number of reasons. Anyway, as you may or may not have guessed, which I'm guessing you haven't, I'm not really giving you a detention..."

"I figured it out. I'm not completely dumb."

"Hmm," Snape said in a tone of wonderment. Harry glared.

"Indeed. Well, believe it or not, I'm trying to help you. Correction: we're trying to help you. Draco is a little reluctant of course. As am I, but this is for a good cause."

"I don't need your charity," Harry said bitterly.

"Oh, it seems you do. Because it seems to us that you are without a single friend in this entire school, possibly in this entire world for all we know. But we don't know, so we won't assume that."
"How would you know what goes on in my life?"
"Oh, come on, Potter!" exclaimed Malfoy. "It's kind of hard *not* to notice that nobody likes you anymore. You're never with the Weasel and Granger anymore, only with the Weasley girl. Which I just heard that you two just had a falling out."
"Again, how would you know that?"
"I heard it," replied Snape.
"Ah! What is it with teachers spying on me?"
"I thought that it was for the best. You might want to try being a little more grateful here. I'm trying to help your dire situation. Which normally, I couldn't care less about but if this spreads even more... I'm afraid to think of the consequences. They could possibly be catastrophic."
"Then... you two know that there is something going on? I'm not completely crazy?"
"I wouldn't go that far. But yes, there is something going on. I haven't figured out what but for me to even begin figuring... as much as I hate to say it, we need to work together."
"Actually, I don't understand why I'm here. I mean, I'm glad that I don't actually have to be your aide and everything... but it still doesn't make sense,." Draco commented.
"Do you need an answer for everything?"
"Quite frankly? Yes, I need one and I demand one now."
"You expect me to work with this?" Harry asked in disgust.
"Yes! And if you two fight, I don't want to hear it!"
"Answers!" needled Draco.
"I'm never going to survive this," Snape muttered under his breath. "Draco, you are here because you are the only one that I know of that doesn't have a complete hatred towards Potter, and one of the only people I know of who isn't under the spell, or whatever it may be. I trust you the most out of anybody anyone in Slytherin house. I know where your loyalties lie. And I need all the people I can get to help. Which it looks like this is all we're getting. No one else is trustworthy anymore. As much as I hate to say it, Dumbledore isn't either."
"He really isn't?" Harry asked fearfully. "I was afraid of that. So... what's happened to the Order of the Phoenix. Who do you report to now? Do you still report to him at all?"
"The Order is still running smoothly from what I can tell. Dumbledore is still against Voldemort but there are things that have changed, like his feelings towards you. I am still reporting to him... I'm just being a bit more careful about it."
Harry felt doomed. If even Snape had lost his faith in Dumbledore... This was really bad. As far as Harry knew, Dumbledore was the only person Snape showed respect to and now that he was outright defying him, it was all Harry could do to stop himself from having a nervous breakdown. Things were worse than he thought. The Dark side was slowly infiltrating Hogwarts, with next to no one here to stop it from happening. It was now up to Harry and two Slytherins. Slytherins, of all people. Hagrid had most definitely been wrong about all Dark wizards coming out of that house.
"Report to Dumbledore? What do you mean?" asked Draco.
"I guess you better know as well. Just as long as you don't tell anybody. I'm a spy for Dumbledore. I'm in Voldemort's inner circle. I would have thought Lucius has let something slip when he's drunk or something of the sort."

"No. He's careful. Really careful. I know nothing because he doesn't trust me. And for good reason."
Harry turned and studied his nemesis. "You're on the Light side?" Malfoy gave him a withering look.
"Yes. Don't get too excited. It's not like you converted me or anything."
"I wasn't. I'm just a little surprised is all..." An evil smirk crossed his face. "And you *don't* hate me?" Suddenly remembering Snape's words. They had completely gone through one ear and out the other at the time, but now they were coming back. Malfoy scowled.
"You did it now, Severus."
The professor smirked evilly. "I purposely did that."
"I hate you."
"You really don't hate me?" Harry asked, now completely surprised that it could be true.
"... Well... not completely. No questions. I'm done on this subject," Draco said hastily.
"Not to worry, Potter. He still dislikes you, he just doesn't hate you. That'll never change, I'm sure. You are and always will be just like your father... an insufferable prat."
"Says you. I may be like my father but that doesn't make me an insufferable prat. That was just your opinion of him. It's not my fault you didn't like him. You were probably hoping when I came here that I'd be more like my mother."
Snape's face paled and he looked down at his hands. "Well... who would blame me? Your mother was a wonderful person." Harry blinked.
"Huh? You liked her?"
"Yes. We were friends," he said evasively.
"Do I... do I remind you of her at all?" he asked nervously. Snape closed his eyes tightly and looked back at Harry with firm resolve on his face.
"Sometimes, yes. When you're quiet. She wasn't rowdy like James was. And when you start things, you always finish them. Your honesty as well. James lied through his teeth all the time. Especially to me..." He fell silent and Harry stared down at his hands for a bit.
"Thank you," Harry finally said, quietly.
"For what?" Snape asked, clearly startled.
"For telling me about her, even just a little bit. Everybody only tells me about dad. I don't know anything about mum."
Snape raised an eyebrow. "Your aunt doesn't tell you any stories?"
Harry snorted. "That'd be the day. The only time she ever mentioned her without me asking her was when Hagrid came to get me on my eleventh birthday. That was the first time I heard the real story of how they died. She always told me they died in a car crash."
"Stupid Muggles," Malfoy whispered under his breath. "No wonder you looked so lost in Madam Malkin's. You really had no idea what I was talking about when I was talking about houses and Quidditch... did you?"
"No. I didn't. I had to ask Hagrid afterwards." He reached up and scratched his head and was about to speak again when Snape gasped.
"Good lord. What happened to your hands?" he exclaimed.
"Oh... um.. well, a blast-ended skrewt happened." His hands really weren't looking well. They were slightly swollen and incredibly red with white patches on them. "I tried healing them myself but it doesn't work too well when you do it to yourself."
"No kidding. Why were you around a skrewt? We didn't have Care of Magical Creatures today!"

exclaimed Draco.
"I was in Transfiguration."
"And..."
"Well... my crab got away from me and was running across the floor. And well, Hermione turned hers into a skrewt when I went by her. It attacked me."
"Minerva wouldn't help out?" asked Snape.
"No, she told me to handle it myself. She looked like she was having quite the time trying to hold in her laughter."
"That's not like her."
"Who is acting like themselves?" Harry asked bitterly. "Certainly not you two," he added as an afterthought.
"Same cause, Potter. We have to be civil or it won't work. Let me heal your hands," Snape said, as he pulled out his wand.
Harry held out his hands as Snape muttered a few spells that made the swelling go down and then he retrieved a tube of some sort of gel that was cool when it was smoothed over his burns. He then conjured up some gauze and magically wrapped Harry's hands up, for the finishing touch.
"Thanks."
"You'll have to wash the gel off before you go to bed, but then put it back on with some new gauze. Do the same in the morning. They should be better in about three days. Now... we have to talk about what we're going to do. First of all, I'll start trying to get some information out of Voldemort without being too obvious. Potter, you keep doing what you're doing. Research. Draco, see if you can make friends with Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Ask them why they hate him. You can even compare notes on why you hate Potter. It'll be more believable."
"Oh, I'd just love to be there for that!" Harry said sarcastically.
"But, Sev! I don't want to make friends with them!"
"Do not take that whiny voice with me, Draco! You know I don't put up with it. You will do whatever it takes to help us. You will at least attempt to make friends with them. And if anybody asks why, say because you three hate Potter, might as well take advantage of it. If need be, make fun of him with them. You don't want to lose your image. You've been a bit soft on him lately."
"Well, it's not fun when so many people are doing it already," Draco pouted.
"It almost seems like you come in here to plan my humiliation all the time."
"Oh, but we do, Potter!" said Malfoy with an evil smirk.
"Yeah, and Sev?" Harry asked laughing.
"Don't you dare," Snape said menacingly. "Draco is not supposed to call me that and he knows it."
"And he's allowed to call you by your first name?"
"I'm friends with his father, and have been for a long time. I've known Draco since he was a baby, I was at his birth, actually. So, I allow him to call me Severus when we're alone. Don't you think of it, Potter. I still don't like you."
"I wouldn't even dream about it, Sevy Pooh."
Snape growled and Harry and Malfoy laughed. "Anyway," the professor said loudly. "You'll do well not to call me that, Potter. And Draco... whenever possible, you'll help him with the research. Probably not together since it'd be best if we are never seen working together. We'll have to keep acting as though we loathe each other. Which I can tell you that I won't have a

problem with." Harry rolled his eyes. "If we need to contact each other, send word by owl. We won't use names even though the owls will most likely be going short distances. No obvious displays of comradeship. Is that clear?"
"I don't think that will be a problem, Professor," said Harry, through a laugh.
"I'm glad to hear it. Now get out of my office, I have people to contact now."
"Good night, Severus," replied Malfoy has he stood up.
"Good night, Professor."
"Good night. Get out!"
Harry smiled a little as he followed Malfoy out of the potion dungeons. They walked along side-by-side for a bit, with Harry sneaking side glances at Malfoy's profile. "So, Malfoy... why don't you hate me anymore?" he asked, genuinely curious.
"Not now, Potter. I have homework as I'm sure you do as well. And we're not to be seen together now. If you want to talk later, then owl me a note or just a place and time and I'll be there. Good night."
"Okay. Good night," Harry said softly as Malfoy rounded the corner to the left and out of sight. It was nice. He wasn't alone after all, and Malfoy liked him.

Thanks to my reviewers: **slytherin-git,***yes, the story will be slash.* **Gemma, FireChild3, Jacquie, H, Avada Kedavra, Rinoa Eclipse,***is one chapter a week fast enough for you? ^_^,* **xikum,***Actually, this will get resolved in about chapter fourteen. Fourteen and fifteen and I think sixteen are basically the climax of the story. This is basically the plot, and a few other things to mix it up a little, but it won't happen until later.* **MaizeySugah, Xelos,***So, you want Draco to get in Harry's pants huh? ^_^ I don't mean to disappoint, but nothing too racy happens. There are some sexual situations soon, but nothing graphic. I just began a sequel to this though... and I can tell you, the first chapter does go a little further than this story will! ^_~* **Keeta Maxwell** *I couldn't agree with you more. I used to be a H/G shipper but I'm not so much anymore. Don't worry, plenty of Harry/Draco coming soon.* **Someone who didn't sign in and refuses to because she's too lazy. Hah.** *First of all, nice name! :) You're going to stalk me? Ack! Should I be scared? ^_^* **FireChild3(again! Thanks!), Sailor Grape, frizzy, Chips Challenge,** *Interesting theory. I won't say more.* **barbarataku** Thanks so much to everybody! Your reviews are awesome and keeps me going! Thanks so much. Look for the next chapter in exactly a week

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Chapter: 5

Disclaimer: If I owned this, I wouldn't be writing fan fiction, now would I?
A/N: Special thanks to my beta, Sirena Black(Padfoots_Bitch) More thanks to my reviewers at the end of this chapter. Look for new chapters every Sunday. You may also click on my author name above and take a looksie at my bio to find out what is going on with my stories. I try to update where I am at as often as I can. So check back there!
Warnings: A bit of slash starts up in this chapter. So for those of you who aren't slash fans out there but I have gotten this far, I suggest you turn back now. Though I don't know why you

would have gone this far already... I've put plenty of warnings up. At least I think I did.

Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Five

The rest of the week passed with no major incidents. Harry continued going to classes, doing homework, and most important of all, researching. He hadn't been in contact with Professor Snape or Draco Malfoy all week, but was planning to owl Malfoy. It was starting to be quite lonely being alone all the time. It would be good to have somebody to talk to. So, Harry went to breakfast on Saturday morning, with the intent of writing to Malfoy after he was done. But his plans were quickly dashed as the Gryffindor's Quidditch team came in and seemed to be looking around for somebody. He was extremely surprised when Katie Bell's eyes landed on him.

"Potter!" she yelled. "We have Quidditch try-outs today and we're deciding on a Captain. Come to the pitch with us."

Harry steeled himself for the worse and slowly followed them, catching Malfoy's eye on the way out. He was looking curious and stood up as soon as Harry's head turned. On the way out to the pitch, the rest of the team members were ignoring Harry as best as they could. Not that he minded. He'd rather be ignored than insulted. As soon as he stepped onto the field, he was happy. It was definitely great to be out here again; where he felt was the only place he felt he truly belonged.

He watched listlessly as Katie Bell took charge and started getting all the hopefuls in order. Harry thought that she should probably be made Captain since she was taking charge. She was also good at being bossy. The try-outs were being held for the two Beater positions, as Fred and George had graduated, and the two (remaining) Chaser positions. It seemed as though Katie wanted a reserve to train in for next year when she would be gone. Harry thought that that would be a good idea for him to do next year when he became a seventh year. Last year, Ron Weasley had become the Keeper, taking Oliver Wood's place. He was no Wood, but he did play really well. So nobody on the team could actually complain about his placement. Harry tuned in to the last part of Katie's speech to the hopefuls; what she said next shocked Harry, to say the least.

"There has been a slight change in the try-outs. We will not be looking for a new Seeker. The team and I have decided that replacing Potter would be a dreadful decision for the team, as he has only lost us one game. As much as we'd like him off..." Here- she sent him a disdainful look- "We we can't afford it. So, if any of you have come to try out as Seeker, maybe you'd like to try out for something else? Sorry, but maybe Potter will want a reserve next year."

A group of two boys and one girl started grumbling and cast Harry looks full of hatred and stomped off the field. "You were going to replace me?" Harry said loudly. "You really hate me that much?"

"Was it that obvious?" Ron asked sarcastically.

Harry scowled at his former friend and went to sit by himself in the Quidditch stands. Soon the team joined him but they made sure not to sit right next to him. Every once in a while, he would agree or disagree with something they were saying about the players and tried not to care when they said they didn't want his opinion, and that he should keep his mouth shut if he wanted to keep his spot on the team. So, for the better part of two hours, Harry sat quietly and was secretly glad when the decisions were made.

Seamus Finnigan and a burly fifth year by the name of Tom were made new Beaters. Lavender Brown and Ginny Weasley were the new Chasers. Harry was pretty surprised with Ginny. Ginny

had never told him that she would be trying out for the team. They could have practiced together when they were friends. Harry hurried out of the stands while Katie yelled after him that the first practice would take place Monday evening. He didn't answer but congratulated the new team members and hurried off to the castle for lunch.
Halfway through a hurried lunch so nobody would throw food at him again like they had the day before, a large, regal owl flew to him and dropped a note on his plate and quickly flew off again.
Do not open at the table!
It said on the front in an elegant scrawl that Harry did not recognise. He left the table and hurried out of the Great Hall to the library where hopefully nobody would be in his favourite spot. Luckily, it was unoccupied and he hid himself behind a couple books before opening the letter.
P,
How did try outs go? You seemed to be a little worried when you left. They didn't kick you off the team, did they? They better not have. You're my only challenge on the field.
I'm surprised you haven't written to me sooner than this. At our last meeting, you seemed a little more eager to talk to somebody. Meet me in the same classroom we went to in before? Midnight. Don't get caught.
D
Harry didn't need to think for more than a second before he remembered what classroom Malfoy was talking about. He was speaking about the classroom that Malfoy had brought Harry dinner in last time. Harry quickly took out the piece of parchment and quill he had brought with him to breakfast that morning and started a reply.
M,
I'll tell you about try-outs later. I am still on the team though, so you don't need to worry about not getting your arse kicked at least once this year!
I actually meant to write to you sooner than today but I've been busy with classes, homework and my extra research 'project.' I was going to write to you after breakfast... but then Katie called to me. But anyway... I'll see you at midnight tonight. Maybe you should be telling yourself not to get caught. I won't get caught. I'm invisible by night.
H
Harry smirked and as he folded up his the letter, and quickly ran off to the owlery to send the note by school owl, since Hedwig had yet to return from her trip to Dudley's school, Smeltings. After the owl flew down to the bottom windows of the castle, Harry turned around and went back to his dormitory to finally look at the book he had checked out when Ginny was still helping him research. As he was walking through the entrance hall, somebody ploughed him from behind. Professor Snape stopped for a moment and sneered. "Five points from Gryffindor. Stop standing in the middle of the hallway. Get a move on." With that, Snape continued on his way. Snape seemed to be clutching his inner left wrist. The professor ran out the door and towards Hogsmeade, leaving a worried Harry in his wake. The Dark Lord was obviously calling for him.
Harry dragged himself up the many flights of stairs, and to his bed, and pulled the curtains closed around him, and pulled out the book. It was titled, *Useless Potions*. 'Oh, great!' Harry thought, exasperated. How was a book of useless potions going to help him?. That was really spectacular. He threw the book to the foot of the bed and lay down. His eyelids began to become heavy with sleep and soon he had drifted off into the world of dreams.
Harry walked into a well-lit, cavernous room. Every sound that was made, echoed through it. It

was very extravagantly decorated with a large dark green carpet and a large candelabra hanging from the ceiling. There were books lining one wall and large portraits lining another wall that also held one of the two doors to the chamber; a wooden door. One of two in the room. The second was the one Harry, himself had just entered. Sitting in a throne-like chair, was a being that made Harry's stomach writhe in disgust.
Lord Voldemort.
"Bring him in!" he yelled.
Harry found himself looking towards the door that he had not come in through. Two hooded Death Eaters with their hoods pulled up, were dragging a man in between them. He too, had a hood pulled over his head so that Harry couldn't identify him. "And why has he been brought to me today?"
"He has been fighting the Imperius, my Lord. He has been trying to go to somebody for help."
"Well... are you really that incompetent? Why not put it back on him instead of wasting my time? Crucio!"
The Death Eater that had spoken fell to the ground, writhing in pain. The curse was lifted and was recast on the second Death Eater, where he too, fell to the ground, screaming.
"And as for you, young sir. You dare to fight me even while under the Imperius? You will pay. Crucio!" The man that was already on the floor, began screaming in pain. Faintly, Harry felt his scar begin to burn. The curse was lifted from the man and Harry cringed at the look Voldemort was giving the prisoner.
"Imperio. Now... will you obey my orders from now on?"
"Yes, my Lord," the man stated automatically.
"Will you serve me for as long as I see fit?"
"Yes, my Lord. I am but your humble servant."
Harry screwed up his eyes in confusion. That voice... it sounded so familiar. But who was it? Take your hood down! Take your hood down! *He chanted inside his head. But his command was not listened to. The Death Eaters laboriously got up from the floor and dragged the man back out. Merely seconds after they left, Snape walked in, looking extremely calm, despite the situation. He bowed before Voldemort and kissed the hem of his robes.*
"My Lord. You have summoned me?"
"Yes. And you'll do well to get here faster this time."
Harry saw Snape cringe a little, as if waiting for the Cruciatus. "Please forgive me, Master. I was in the middle of watching over a detention of a Hufflepuff when you summoned me. It's hard to get rid of the little buggers. And as I have to go quite a ways to get to the Apparition field in Hogsmeade... it took longer than I should have. But I'll try harder next time, my Lord."
"Yes. See that you do. I'll let it go this time, Severus. I do know how insufferable Hufflepuffs are. You're just lucky that it wasn't a Gryffindor. It probably would have been even more difficult."
"It would have," Snape agreed. Harry silently disagreed. Any Gryffindor in their right mind would have been out of that room faster than Snape could have taken away points. Nobody he knew would want to be in the same room alone with Snape. Except perhaps Malfoy. But he was different. Most definitely different.
"I called you here to see how things are going at Hogwarts. I hear that young Potter is having a time of it, most of all. How are his friends, anyhow?"
"They have completely cut ties with Potter. They seem to hate him with almost the same ferocity that you do, sir. As does do the rest of the school."

"Quite. Then the plan is going perfect so far. I assume he has absolutely no one to turn to now?"
"As far as I know, my Lord. I do not pay much attention to the boy."
"Yes, yes. That's right. You never got along with his father either, did you, Severus? It was because of his Mudblood wife? Was it not?" he asked maliciously. Again, Snape cringed. Harry could only guess why.
"James Potter was an insufferable, know-it-all prat. I couldn't stand looking at his face. It had nothing to do with Evans."
"Then... you didn't love her?" Snape's Adam's apple bobbed up and down a couple times.
"No, my Lord. I could never love a low-life Mudblood."
Voldemort studied him and stood up. "You may get up now, Severus. You know I do not need you to bow to me for so long. And... you better be telling me the truth. I have very valuable resources that tell me that you loved her. For your own sake, are you telling the truth?"
A slight pause. "Yes."
"Very well. I want you to keep a closer watch on Potter. If there is anybody helping him... be sure to inform me."
"Yes, Master. If I may ask, what exactly are you doing to everybody at Hogwarts? It has worked amazingly well. Even Dumbledore is showing signs of hating Potter."
"Indeed? Well, that shows how a little trust can get you into so much trouble. Well, Severus... I can tell you that I have gained a new follower and he is stationed inside Hogwarts. This time it is working even better."
"Who is it?" Snape asked with a little too much curiosity in his voice. Voldemort looked down on him with suspiciousness.
"Too many questions, Severus. Crucio!"
Snape fell to the floor in pain. The Dark Lord finally lifted the curse. "I changed my mind. Next time, you will not take so long in getting to me. Crucio!" Again, Snape started screaming while the pain in Harry's scar became more intense. "And just for a reminder as to who you are working for... Crucio!" Harry felt himself screaming as this last curse was held longer and with more power holding it. When the curse was lifted, Snape was left panting and ashen-faced on the floor. Voldemort stepped over him and walked out of the room.
Harry sat bolt upright in bed, breathing hard, and with his scar burning in with intense pain. His curtains flew open and a bewildered Ron, Seamus, Dean, and Neville were looking at him.
"Oh, it was only you. Too bad nobody was killing you," said Seamus.
"Shut up, Seamus!" Harry exploded. "For all you know, I could have just Seen somebody dying. Death isn't funny. You guys are complete morons. Get out of my way!"
Harry quickly got up and rummaged in his trunk for his invisibility cloak. By the looks of the sky outside, he had missed dinner and it was probably after curfew. The other boys had gone back down to the Common room by this time so Harry pulled his Invisibility cloak out and wrapped it around himself. He ran out of the Portrait Hole, not caring if anybody saw it opening and closing by itself. He ran all the way to the dungeons and into Snape's office. Malfoy looked up, startled, as the door seemingly opened up by it's own volition.
"What the..." he said startled.
Harry pulled the cloak from around himself, still panting from his run and put his hands on his knees. "It's me," he panted.
"What are you doing here? It's only ten. And why weren't you at dinner?"
"Fell asleep. You're here because you know where he went, don't you?"

"Yes. How do you know?"
"I saw him leave and then... I just Saw him."
"What? Where? Is he okay?"
"No, Malfoy. I *Saw* him. I don't know where he is right now."
A look of comprehension flitted across his face. "You're... a Seer?"
"Only when it comes to Voldemort. I See it as it's happening, usually while I'm asleep."
Malfoy stepped forward and shook Harry's shoulders roughly. "What did you See? Tell me! Is he all right?"
"Stop it! I think so. I don't know. Voldemort put the Cruciatus on him three times."
A look of undisguised horror crossed Malfoy's face. He immediately ran to Snape's stores and took out a bottle of deep blue potion. Harry thought that this was the most emotion the boy had ever displayed in front of him before. He hadn't known Malfoy was capable of it. "Potter... go into Severus's chambers and get some blankets and warm wet cloths."
"But, I don't know where his chambers are." Malfoy walked impatiently to the back of the office and spread his hand on a spot in the wall and pushed. His hand seemed to sink into the stone, as if it was made out of goo. He then spoke a password that Harry couldn't make out. The wall opened and revealed a sitting room in Slytherin colours. After being pushed by Malfoy, Harry hurried in and gathered three heavy blankets and charmed three cloths to stay warm and wet. Malfoy immediately took the blankets from him into the sitting room and made the couch into a bed. There, the two sat in silence.
"So... what do we do now?" Harry asked after a few moments.
"We wait."
"Right. I hate this part."
"So, do I. Potter... how do I know I can trust you with this? You're not just winding me up are you?"
"How do I know I can trust *you?*" Harry shot back.
"Touchée."
"That's what I thought. Did you want to meet me tonight just to talk about nothing or to talk about what we're doing?"
"Whichever way the conversation went, I suppose. I did want to ask you about the try-outs, though."
"Oh... well, apparently, they had been talking about replacing me, but then they decided that I was too good to lose, so they decided to just stick with me. Nice of them, huh?" he asked sarcastically.
"Quite. So you're certain that nobody else likes you?"
"Positive. The only person I know of is... you." Harry smirked as Malfoy groaned and leaned back into the couch.
"Get off it, Potter."
"Oh come on! You really aren't harbouring some deep, undying love for me? You don't want to be my friend? You don't want to snog my brains out?" Harry laughed loudly as Malfoy turned a light shade of pink and threw a pillow in Harry's general direction but missed completely, by at least three feet.
"It's no wonder you're not a Chaser. You'd be terrible. Not that you're any better at as Seeker."
"Shut it, Potter. You're pushing your luck here."
Harry smiled softly and settled into his chair. "I was just joking. No need to get all worked up."

Malfoy gave him a look that clearly said, 'Try it again and you're dead.' He then turned his head and stared determinedly into the fire that he had started, as if it were the most fascinating thing in the world. Harry couldn't help but to continue smiling as he looked at the Slytherin boy. The firelight danced across his good-looking aristocratic features, lighting up his silver eyes. The hair on his head was slightly dishevelled from pushing his head into the couch and some stray hairs were falling into his face. His cheeks were still flushed a pink colour and he had a half amused, half angry look on his face.
Harry couldn't help but think that Malfoy looked quite attractive at the moment.
He shook his head mentally and shut his eyes tight. *This is Malfoy, Harry. Think of something else, right now!* When he opened his eyes, it was to find Malfoy staring at him.
"Something the matter, Potter?"
"No. I've just got a bit of a headache."
…Which wasn't a complete lie. His scar was burning a little. "Want me to get you something for it?" asked Draco.
"No, thanks. It's nothing really that you can help."
"A simple headache potion will help. Trust me."
"No really. It's just my scar. It burns during and after my Voldemort dreams.. There's nothing for it. I'm used to it, really. It's been worse."
"How worse?"
"Er… - well, when I come face-to-face with Voldemort, it feels like my head is about to split open. During the third task, I had to throw up because it was so bad."
"Hmm. I never knew. I mean, I heard that that happened to you. But I thought it was just something Rita Skeeter made up."
"No, she saw it happen in Divination."
Malfoy got up and opened the door to Snape's office. "Where are you going?" Harry called.
"Hold on. I'll be right back."
A few moments later, Malfoy did returned and with a vial of orange liquid. "Don't ask. Just drink," he ordered.
"I'm not drinking that. I have no idea what it is."is." Harry said, defiantly.
"It'll help the burning. Just drink!"
"No way. I don't trust you that much yet."
Malfoy sighed, exasperated and pushed Harry's head into the back of the chair, touching his scar in the process. Which, much to Harry's surprise, felt like it had a hot brand pressed to it. He let out a cry of pain and Malfoy stepped back in shock.
"What'd I do?"
"I don't know." He touched his scar gingerly and it erupted into pain. As soon as he pulled his finger back, the pain dulled considerably. "It's sensitive to touch now, I guess. You just touched it."
"Sorry. But, just drink this. It'll help."
"I still don't trust you."
This time when Malfoy pushed Harry's head into the back of the chair, he made sure not to touch the scar. And he tried to pour the liquid forceibly down Harry's throat. Harry pursed his lips together. "Mgeth yawiay," he mumbled with his mouth closed. He started to struggle as Malfoy started become less gentle.
"Just drink it! It'll help, you great sod!" Harry just shook his head back and forth violently.

Malfoy surprised him into paralysis when he straddled Harry's lap and pinned him completely to the chair. "Open up! Here comes the broomstick!" Draco said in a singsong voice, as if he were speaking to a child. He finally managed to pry Harry's mouth open and pour it in, which he choked on and swallowed instinctively.
"Damn you, Malfoy," he managed after it was all down.
"Yes. Damn me for making the pain go away."
Much to Harry's surprise, the pain was almost gone. He touched his scar and only felt a little pain. "I know what I'm doing. I am at the top our potions class for a reason you know."
"Can you blame me for not trusting you?"
"I guess not. But still. I was trying to help you." Harry pried his left arm out from under Malfoy's weight and put it on the arm of the chair so that it could wake up again. When he looked up again, Malfoy was looking at him strangely.
"What?"
"Nothing."
And that's when the position that they were in really hit Harry. Malfoy was *straddling* his lap right now. Harry swallowed hard and looked away from Malfoy's eyes. Malfoy seemed to realise the situation because he quickly got up and went to sit on the couch. Harry immediately felt the loss of heat the other body brought to him... even if it had been a very compromising situation, to say the least.
Malfoy's cheeks were stained pink again. Harry couldn't help but think that it was very endearing. Awkward silence fell upon them and Harry searched for something that would take the attention away off of what just happened. "Thanks for that. The burning is gone now." The Slytherin just grunted in reply. Both boys continued to stare into the fire.
"So, is this where you planned on this conversation going tonight when we met? Awkward silence? Because if I had known it would come to this, I wouldn't have come down here at all, even with knowing what Snape had just gone through,." said Harry, mischievously.
"No, you wouldn't have. You wouldn't have been able to live with yourself…. and awkward silences aren't that bad."
"Whatever you say. I'd rather be talking than not. So, talk."
"What do you think we're doing now?"
"Speaking about something extremely boring, that's what we're doing."
"Well, I'm sorry I can't entertain you more right now. I'm kind of waiting for a man who has just endured the Cruciatus curse three times. Probably on your account, I may add."
Harry's face visibly paled. It was true. It was his fault. Snape had been trying to get information out of Voldemort and it had set him off. It was his fault. "I... I never wanted him to get hurt," he said quietly. "I didn't ask for anybody's help."
"Well, you damn well got it!" Malfoy exploded and jumped up to start pacing the room.
"I'm sorry. I didn't want this," Harry whispered. But it fell on deaf ears. Malfoy was now storming about in a rage. It was so sudden that Harry was taken slightly aback and felt kind of scared of the manic glint that was coming over the Slytherin's silver eyes.
"Damn it, Potter. Can't you go one year without getting into some sort of trouble? And when you get into that trouble, can't you leave people out of it? I'm starting to think that whoever is casting this spell on Hogwarts is doing everybody a favour. They aren't in danger because now Voldemort will think that they hate you, so you aren't friends."
"Just shut up!" Harry screamed. "Maybe this person is doing me a favour. But the person is

working for Voldemort. I can't help that he has some sort of sick tendency to bring everybody I love into it. And you know what? ... I don't think it is my fault!"
"Like hell it isn't!"
Secretly, Harry agreed with him still, but he just didn't want to hear it. Malfoy didn't know when to shut up. "Snape doesn't even like me and he was just tortured for it."
"That's because he was trying to help your sorry arse!"
"No, Malfoy... he's helping out the Light side. Not just me. As are you. It just so happens that I am going to be helped in the process. If you really are on this side, then I suggest you quit your bitching."
Apparently, Harry had stumbled across a very good argument because Malfoy just stared. Harry was spared any more remarks from him because at that moment, Snape stumbled into the room. Both boys ran to him, and guided him over to the couch and helped to lay him down.
"I heard... somebody yelling," Snape muttered.
"There isn't anybody yelling, Severus. Put your head down and open your mouth."
The potions professor complied and opened his dry lips, and Malfoy administered the blue potion. Snape opened his eyes blurrily and stared squinted at Malfoy. "You look... you look exactly like Draco."
"Yes. Shh. Just rest." He started to look around frantically. "Potter. Where did you put those warm cloths?"
"I... I don't know."
"You're hopeless."
"Don't get up, I'll get some more," Harry said quickly as Malfoy stood. Both boys ended up going into the bathroom.
"Stupid bastard," Draco muttered. "Did you see how disoriented he is? That stupid bastard must have put all his power into it. *Three* times, Potter! Full blown, too. I can't even imagine..." he trailed off and stood staring blankly at the wall. Harry gently laid a hand on his shoulder in a gesture of comfort.
"He'll be all right. I'm sure he's been through this before. He's a strong man. We better get back out there."
Malfoy came out of his trance and met Harry's eyes. He tried to look away but found that he was captivated. The other boy moved towards him and placed his hand on Harry's side. It was as if all time stopped. All Harry could hear was his own rapid breathing and the beating of his heart. The light touch felt so warm on his side. Harry liked it.
"You're right. Thank you," Malfoy said softly, with a slight strain as if it were difficult to utter those words aloud. "I... I want to talk to you again later. Not tonight... but later. I promise I won't attack you this time. I was out of line. I am on the Light side." He offered Harry a lopsided smile that lit his eyes. "Even if I have to help you out, I'll do it."
He removed his hand and walked out of the bathroom. Time sped up again but Harry only stood motionless and placed his own hand on the still-warm spot that Malfoy's hand had just vacated. He let out a long breath that he hadn't even realised that he had been holding. His heart rate was only just beginning to slow down.
God... why did he feel like this? Why was *Draco Malfoy* making him feel like this?
He shook the thoughts for the time being and walked back out into the sitting room. Malfoy had covered Snape with two blankets, and was tenderly wiping his forehead with a warm cloth. His long black hair had been pushed off back from his sweaty face and set to the side, and he stared

up at the ceiling, with a vacant look in his eyes.
"Just hold in there, Sev. You'll be all right. You still have to help Harry and me."
The words were spoken so softly that Harry hardly heard them. But he did. And Malfoy had just said his name. It sounded so good coming out his mouth, almost as if he had never heard the name before in his life, and found it to be the most beautiful name. Maybe it was how he said it, or just the way his voice sounded when he said it. Or maybe it was just the person.
Harry walked to the door, completely unnoticed by the other two occupants of the room. His last glimpse of the two was of Malfoy, unnecessarily brushing Snape's hair out of his face. It made Harry wonder. Are the two really that close because of the friendship that Snape shares with the Malfoy père? Or was there some other reason? Whatever it was... they both seemed to genuinely care about each other, even if Snape did have a weird way of showing it. Of course, nothing about the man could be considered normal. But maybe there was.… something… that Harry couldn't see. Something only Draco Malfoy was allowed the privilege of seeing. Severus Snape was an interesting individual. It was at that moment that Harry decided that Draco Malfoy was a very lucky person.
A/N: Chocolate frogs to all my reviewers: Sorry, I lied. will not let me get to my reviews, so I cannot list all of you wonderful people right now. I will reply to all of you later. What's up with that anyway? Do any of you ever have this website tell you it's experiencing site overload? What a bunch of bullshit if I do say so myself. Sorry for the language, but since this story is rated R, I assume all of you can handle it. ^_^ Anyway, I hope I've wet all the slashers tongues out there who were looking for some slash action! Sorry for the wait! ^

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Chapter: 6

Disclaimer: I wouldn't be writing fanfiction if I owned this, now would I?
A/N: I'm so very sorry for the slight delay in getting this up. But I do have an excuse! This website would NOT let me upload anything. It kept saying that it was successful but then there would be nothing there. So, because of this, I do not have any thank yous to my reviewers yet. I did, but then I erased them so that I could submit to FA. Now, it's almost 10:30 and I still have homework to do for tomorrow so I don't have time to make comments and thank yous to all of you wonderful people. I promise that I will do it next time, if nothing like this happens again! So, thank you for reviewing, and keep them coming. I will comment next Sunday when the new chapter is posted.
Another note, something is so screwed up with this chapter's format. I stripped all the tags for italics but yet, the whole last part of the chapter is STILL italicised. I am getting very annoyed because I don't know why! I only wanted Harry's dream to be italicised but nnoooo. Nothing ever works for me lately! All I ask is ONE thing! Okay... can you tell I'm having a hard time of it lately? ^_^ So... I added this *~ around the dream to lessen confusion. Hopefully, you'll be able to distinguish his dream even without those symbols.
Also, big thanks go out to my beta, Padfoots_Bitch(Sirena Black) Thank you so much for making this 100 times better than it was! Now, on with the story!

B>Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Six

~~~~~ Dudley's reply finally came on Monday morning. Though it was Monday and Harry had Quidditch practice and homework to do, he was going to write back. Dudley's letter had been a little weird. It still puzzled Harry as to why his cousin had taken such an interest in the magical world. He had never so much as said a nice word about it before. He had always seemed to be absolutely terrified of it. And now... he wanted more books. He wanted more knowledge. And he wanted to know everything about Harry's life at Hogwarts.

There had been deep-felt apologies in the letter for Harry's troubles with his friends. There had been many questions as to if there was anybody helping him with it. And if so, who was it? When Harry wrote back, it was very carefully. Even with Dudley being a Muggle, he had to be extra careful to not let too much about his situation slip. So, he decided to say that, yes, there was somebody helping him. But no, he couldn't say who it was, just in case the letter was intercepted. Otherwise, he just talked about things of irrelevance. Things that could always take Harry's mind off of depressing thoughts.… In other words, Quidditch. He explained Quidditch to Dudley in a very detailed letter. Harry was sure that Dudley would enjoy that.

After sending his letter with Hedwig, Harry made his way down to the Quidditch pitch for the evening practice, that Katie had called on Saturday. Just as he was about to mount his broom, someone called his name.

"Harry! Wait a moment!"

The black hair boy turned to see Ron Weasley running towards him. He looked at his former friend suspiciously until they were just a few feet from each other, and Ron was trying to catch his breath from his fast sprint.

"I just wanted to you know... that I'm sorry for almost getting you kicked off the team on Saturday. You really are a great player. We could never afford to lose you. And... A man shouldn't do that to his best mate."

Ron was almost looking hopeful about this last sentence. It was as if he was saying, 'let's be friends again.' "Right," Harry began slowly. "Best mates don't do that to each other." Ron's face lit up and he slapped Harry on the back.

"I really am sorry about everything, though. I've been acting like a right prat."

"You don't really have to tell me that. I know." Ron turned slightly red in the face and ears and looked at his feet.

"I know it probably can't be the same after all this... but do you think you'd want to play chess with me later? We can talk things over, hopefully start new again?"

"Er... sure, I suppose we could."

"Great!" Ron exclaimed. "Well, we better get in the air then. We don't want Katie yelling at us. How about in the Common room after dinner?"

"Okay."

Before anything else was said, Ron had smiled broadly and took off into the air. Harry stared dumbly after him for a few moments before taking off himself. Maybe it was all his imagination. Maybe everybody actually *did* hate him now. It might not be another plot of Voldemort's to get him. It just didn't make sense.

All through practice, Harry watched Ron closely, and had the intense feeling of somebody watching him. None of the other players were paying attention to him. He was sure of that. The
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feeling had started as soon as he had walked out of the castle but now it just seemed more prominent. He began to feel a little uneasy about it, so he was glad when Katie called them in after Harry had caught the snitch for the fourth time.
"Good practice, everybody! We'll meet every other day from now on. First game is against Ravenclaw a week after Halloween. Their team will be easy to beat this year, but that doesn't mean we don't have to give it our all. So no slacking!"
Harry walked back to the castle alone as everybody went to the showers. He planned to take one in the castle. That…that feeling was still there. He just knew that somebody's eyes were boring into the back of his head. Every once in a while, he would stop and look around, but seeing nothing, would continue to walk again. He knew he looked stupid looking around all the time, but there was somebody... By the time he was on the fourth floor of the castle, he set off into a run, becoming extremely paranoid at this point. As he turned a corner and started running up a flight of stairs, he crashed into an invisible wall and flew onto his back, hitting his head. Footsteps started approaching and he knew no more.
The man watched, amused, as Harry Potter looked around his surroundings suspiciously. He cursed as the boy took off in a dead sprint. This would make it harder to do now. Somehow, he kept up and turned the corner just after his quarry and placed an invisible shield on the fifth step. The boy crashed into it and flew down onto the floor, hitting his head. The emerald eyes stayed open for a few seconds, and he just started to walk towards the boy when they closed into unconsciousness.
He knelt beside the younger man and looked pleased onto his work, as blood started to seep out from his head. "Perfect," he whispered. The man took down the shield so nobody else would meet this unlucky fate and then started to collect the blood into his wand. It would come in quite handy. He sat Harry Potter into a sitting position, his head rolling about on his shoulders and cleaned the blood from his hair as well.
He knew that this wouldn't be enough blood. With an injury like this, taking more wouldn't hurt. The boy had already lost so much. A pocketknife was withdrawn from his cloak pocket and he slashed a cut over a scar in the crook of the boy's elbow. He collected all the blood he needed and cast a spell on the boy for the man's future needs. He walked swiftly away from the scene of the crime. There was a potion waiting to be made.
Harry slowly made his way back to consciousness. There were whispers next to him but he didn't bother to open his eyes. He knew it would cause too much pain. A groan escaped his lips as he tilted his head to the side and the whispers stopped.
"Harry?" a voice asked cautiously. "Are you awake?"
"Don't talk so loud," he grumbled. "I've got a splitting headache."
"As you should," said another voice that sounded suspiciously like Professor Snape's.
Harry cautiously opened his eyes and found everything to be blurry. He blinked several times but couldn't get it to go away. "Your glasses," replied the first voice and then cold metal was placed in his hands. He slid them on and Draco Malfoy's face came into view. If Harry would have had the energy, he would have done a double take. His face looked worried.… Draco Malfoy was worried. And Snape looked worried, as well.
"And why should I have a splitting headache? Did I fall off my broom again?"
"No... You fell down the stairs, as far as we can tell," said Malfoy.
"What? I don't reme..." Harry thought hard, which made his head ache even more. But then it came to him. Quidditch practice. The person watching him. Harry running through the halls. The

invisible wall. Nothingness. Then, Draco Malfoy and Professor Snape.
"Oh. There... there was an invisible wall. It knocked me down the stairs because I was running. I fell down the stairs because I ran into it."
"And why were you running in the hallways?" Malfoy gave Snape a withering look as if to say, 'why is that important?' Either Snape didn't notice or chose to ignore the younger Slytherin.
"Er... somebody was following me, watching me. From the moment I stepped outside of the castle there was somebody watching me. I think I got a little paranoid by the time I started to run."
"Obviously, it was for good reason," said Malfoy.
"It could be that a reckless student put up an invisible shield of some sort for a joke, or someone could have been following you and put it up... It is suspicious." Snape changed the subject. "Do you know who has been here every day to see you?"
"Er... I dunno. You two?"
"Well, yes, but that's not all. Ron Weasley and Sirius Black. Both of them have been going out of their minds with worry over you."
"Huh? Sirius is worried about me?"
Snape gave Harry a calculating look. "And you're not wondering about Weasley?"
"As a matter of fact, I am wondering about him. He wanted to play chess with me after practice. He apologised for being a huge prat all term. I don't know what to make out of any of it."
"Try not to. He hasn't been back here for three days at least..." Harry shot up in bed.
"Three days?" Harry exclaimed. "How long have I been unconscious?"
"A week and two days," replied Draco. "You really did a number on your head. And you lost a lot of blood. Although when Weasley found you, he said that there was no blood on the floor. It had been cleaned up."
"Cleaned up? Why would anybody clean up my blood and then just leave me there?"
"That's what we were wondering. I'm guessing that somebody deliberately did it. I don't think a student did that as a joke," said Malfoy, sending a raised eyebrow at Snape.
"Don't give me that. I'm just thinking up all possible explanations," Snape scowled.
"Potter! You're up. Professor Snape, Mr. Malfoy, I'll have to ask you two to leave. I need to see to my patient," Madam Pomfrey said as she bustled over. Snape quickly changed topics when he saw Madame Pomfrey bustle over to them.
"We'll talk more about your assignments that you missed at a later time, Potter. As I said before, Draco will be tutoring you. Merlin knows you have needed an extra tutoring session anyhow for quite some time," Snape sneered. Draco sent Harry a withering glare, which Harry returned.
Madam Pomfrey 'tsked' at their behaviour and started shooing them with her hands. Harry scowled at Snape's back as Madam Pomfrey saw the two to the door and then came bustling back to Harry to give him a variety of potions.
She seemed to be indifferent to his presence. Either she wasn't under the spell or she was just too busy to care either way. He was a patient that she needed to take care of. Once she had left Harry to himself, he began to wonder about Ron and Sirius. Of all people, why had they been here? Why did Malfoy look worried about him? Did he actually care? There had never been any signs to show that he did. So, Harry would just keep assuming that the hate was still there. It had to be. After all, people didn't just change over night.
Immediately after thinking this, Harry remembered that Draco had said that he didn't completely hate Harry; Draco had said that he only disliked the Gryffindor. Harry groaned at this memory. It

made things more complicated.
"Harry Potter."
Harry looked all around but found that nobody was in the room. He sunk down into his blankets and moved his eyes around the room suspiciously.
"I'm not in the room."
"Where and who are you?" Harry spoke aloud.
"All you need to know is that I'm a follower of the Dark Lord. You have noticed that nobody likes you anymore?"
"Yes. What have you done?"
A loud laugh resounded in his head. *"Me? I have not done anything. They have begun to hate you of their own free will, Potter. Don't you see? You're not wanted by them. The side of the Light has shunned you. They are pushing you away."*
"No, they aren't. They don't know what they're doing." By now, Harry realised that the voice was in his head, and stopped speaking aloud so as not to draw the nurse to his bed.
"Oh, I assure you... they do. Why don't you come where your powers will be put to good use? Where the people will accept you for who you are?"
Harry scoffed. "Yeah? And where would that be?"
"Come join the Dark Lord. He will take you in, train you, and show you the respect that you deserve."
"No, he wouldn't. He'd kill me if I ever went to him."
"He's willing to let you live if you join him. Just think about it, Harry... all the power you could have. You'd be his right-hand man. Together, you two could conquer all."
"I'm not power hungry. All I want is to be rid of Voldemort."
"That's not how everybody else sees you. They think that you're the next Dark Lord in the making. You're a Parselmouth, just like Voldemort. You made up 'crack-pot' stories about the third task. You do know that people still think you killed the Diggory boy? His parents blame you. If they had the chance, they'd kill you. They want revenge on you. Why not make it so that you're not so vulnerable?. The Dark Lord will offer you protection; give you enough knowledge so that you will be able to defend yourself in dire situations."
"*Leave me alone!* I will never join him!"
"Oh, I'll leave you alone for now. But you'll hear more from me, Potter. You can take my word on that. I'll make you see what's right. You'll see."
Before Harry could reply, he heard an odd noise in his head and he knew that the connection was cut. He gripped his blankets tightly when he realised that he was shaking. He stared up at the ceiling for a long time, seething at the audacity that Death Eater had to enter his brain and speak to him. Through his anger, Harry realized his eyelids were beginning to droop. Before he fell asleep, he slipped his glasses off and placed them on the bedside table. No sooner had he done this, he was asleep.
*~An open field was surrounding him. Many different varieties of flowers were placed growing here and there. The wind blew gently, causing the grass and stems of the flowers to bend and sway. It blew through his cloak, wrapping his body in the warmth, tickling his nose with the gentle fragrance of the earth. The sun shone brightly down and Harry turned his face up and closed his eyes, taking in every ounce of heat that he could get.
He breathed in deeply and started forward, careful not to tread on the many flowers. A beautiful purple flower with big petals caught his eye and he picked it. The name of the flower eluded him,

but he didn't care. He brought it to his nose and took in the heavenly fragrance.
The young man began to walk again, his destination unknown, but it didn't matter because something was telling him to just walk forward. Finally, after what seemed like hours, a small winding river came into view. The water was clear and fish could be seen swimming about aimlessly. Harry stood next to the water's edge and waited. For what, he didn't know, but it was what he was supposed to do. So, he waited.
A whirlpool started before his very eyes. It grew bigger and bigger until the water was starting to lap near Harry's feet. He stepped back in alarm but found that he couldn't run away quick enough. So, he stopped and waited patiently for the water to get him. It finally touched his toes and his body was pulled into the whirlpool. There was darkness all around him and he spun, not even feeling wet. Even though every rule in the book told him that he should be drowning right now, he wasn't. He had never felt more alive. With arms outstretched, he continued to spin until at long last, the ground came upon him and he landed very gently.
Harry opened his eyes to find that he was in the same place where as he had started, but it was very different. Now, it was cloudy,. There were no more flowers, no more grass. All that was left was dirt and rocks. The once purple flower in his hand had turned a grey colour with brown tinting the edges. It was wilting sadly in his hand. He frowned and let it go. He watched in amazement as it took to the wind and floated slowly to the ground in circles, dropping with a decidedly final blow.
"Didn't I tell you? It will get you. Just let the darkness take you, Harry Potter. There is no escaping. You will run, but you'll grow tired and give up. You'll feel alive when it first gets you. You'll feel like you're spinning and like you'll never stop. It's a wonderful feeling, Harry."
"But what about when I finally stop? What then? Will everything be dead with no colour? Will there be nothing alive? Will I be alive? Look at this place! I have spun and I stopped and now everything's dead."
"This is how everything will be if you don't accept it. There is no winning when you're on the Light side. Just let it take you..."~*
Harry woke up panting and sweating profusely. "No. No. I won't let it take me. I can't let it take me."
A gentle hand ran through his hair and somebody started to make soothing noises. Harry reached blindly for his glasses and slid them on. His godfather's face came into focus. "Sirius?" he asked hoarsely.
"Bad dream?"
"Yes. Sirius... what are you doing here?"
"I'm here to see you. You were injured, remember?"
"But... but you hate me. Why are you here? To make it harder for me?"
"No. I don't want to make it harder for you. You need somebody to be here for you. I know that you have nobody."
"But you never cared before."
"I do. I'm sorry, Harry. I don't know what came over me."
"Then... you don't hate me?"
Something crossed Sirius's eyes and he winced. "Let's just not speak about this right now. Okay? Are you feeling all right? Pomfrey said you'd be fine, but I'd like to hear it for myself."
"I'm feeling fine. A headache is all. I don't know what happened, though."
"... Neither do I. Nobody does."

Sirius continued to silently comfort Harry by running his hand through his hair. Harry watched his godfather as Sirius stared out the window. He felt tears prickling his eyes. Was this real? Did Sirius actually care about him? As much as Harry denied it to himself and to Sirius, he did need the older man. Badly. And he didn't hate him. He loved him. Probably as much as he would have loved his own father, had he lived. A tear slipped out and fell down his cheek and he threw himself around his godfather's neck, almost knocking over his chair in the process.
A startled grunt emitted from Sirius's throat but he slowly started to return the hug. Harry let silent tears run down his face. The only reason Sirius realized that his godson was crying was because of when he felt wetness that permeated his robes, so, because of this, Sirius squeezed Harry harder to him. "Sirius. I didn't mean it. I do need you. And I don't hate you... I need you." The last part came out in a sob. Sirius then lay Harry back onto his bed. There was something in his pale blue eyes again that Harry couldn't decipher. They looked troubled. Like Sirius wanted to say something, but he couldn't.
"I know you do. I'm sorry, Harry. I have to go right now. Just please... stay away from it." He squeezed the smaller hand in his and left the infirmary, leaving a very confused boy behind. *Stay away from what?*
Harry got out of the infirmary the next day. He spent his free time looking for Sirius. The man had been absent from class and nobody seemed to know where he was. Harry was getting slightly worried, and a growing urgency to speak with him about what his parting words had meant. No matter what explanation Harry put to them, it didn't make sense. After dinner, he finally gave up hope of finding his godfather. He was sadly walking back to the Gryffindor tower when he was roughly pulled into a classroom. He was about to give a cry of surprise when a hand covered his mouth.
"Keep quiet, Potter!"
He was released and he turned to see Draco Malfoy. "Merlin, Malfoy. You could have gone about that a better way. You nearly gave me a heart attack." The Slytherin smirked evilly.
"That was the point. I'm allowed to have a little fun, aren't I?" he added innocently. Harry pushed the other boy so that he hit the wall, and then sat down in a chair.
"What did you so rudely pull me in here for?"
"We have Hogsmeade tomorrow since it's Halloween."
"And?"
"And since you don't have anybody to go with, I was wondering if you'd come with me?"
"But we aren't allowed to be seen with each other."
"I know that," he replied impatiently. "That is what your Invisibility Cloak is used for. So that one of us isn't seen." He looked at Harry with puppy dog eyes, that made Harry snort in laughter.
"Draco Malfoy is giving me the puppy dog eyes? I think I've died. I take it you want to wear it?"
"Could I? I've always wanted to be invisible!"
"Malfoy... I don't trust you to be invisible."
"I promise I'll be good," he replied with a look that clearly stated, 'I'm lying.'
"... I don't think so. I don't want to be seen tomorrow. I'll wear it." Malfoy opened his mouth to protest but Harry had stood up and quickly put his hand over his mouth. "No, I don't want to hear it. Against my better judgment, I'll let you borrow it afterwards. Okay?"
"Fine," he mumbled against Harry's hand and then bit it.
"Ow!"
"Never do that again. When I want to speak, you let me speak," he said haughtily.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Yes, young Master Draco."
"Oh, I love that. Keep calling me that from now on."
"I don't think so. You can get a house elf for that, I think."
"No, mum wouldn't let me bring one. She said that there are plenty here at Hogwarts. But then they told me that I couldn't have one to myself in first year! Can you believe that?"
"God, you are so spoiled."
"I resent that." The blond pulled out his wand and pointed it at Harry. *"Rictusempra!"*
Harry doubled over laughing. Malfoy had sent the tickling charm at him. "Serves you right," Malfoy threw over his shoulder as he started for the door. But Harry lunged for him, still laughing and tackled him to the floor. "Hey! You big hippogriff! Get off me!" yelled Draco. Struggling and trying to get all the strength that he had left, Harry reached for Malfoy's wand hand, which was still holding his wand and pointed the wand at his chest.
"Ric... rictusempra!" he sputtered out.
The effect was instantaneous. Malfoy started laughing as soon as the spell was off of Harry's lips. Harry rolled by Malfoy's side. "Counter curse, Malfoy!" he said between bouts of laughter. To Harry's surprise, the other boy did point his wand at him. Draco said the counter curse, which he then performed it on himself. Harry was the first to finally stop laughing. He sat up and stared at Malfoy who had his eyes closed and with a broad smile was plastered onto on his face. A subdued laugh was emerging from him that sounded like he was truly having a good time. Harry couldn't help but smile at the picture before him.
It was at that moment that Malfoy finally opened his eyes and they made eye contact. Emerald and silver were both sparkling with happiness as they smiled at each other. "You're staring, Potter," Malfoy said softly.
"I am... I like hearing you laugh. It's much better than the snide remarks."
"Give me some more reasons to laugh and I'll gladly do it for you."
"I'll do that, Draco."
Draco sat up and looked down at his robes. "I'll get you back for this, you know. This floor is filthy."
Harry awoke the next morning very excited for the day ahead of him. Draco Malfoy would be waiting for him in the Three Broomsticks; after having a butterbeer, they would go shopping at Zonko's and Honeydukes, then wherever they felt like going from there. As Harry ate breakfast in the Great Hall, he looked around at all the people. When he and Ron made eye contact, the red hair boy glared at him. That was something that was thoroughly confusing him. Ever since he had been released from Madam Pomfrey's care, Ron had been back to the way that he had been all year. Except this time, it was with more malevolence than before. Harry really didn't know what to make of it.
As students got up to go, Draco caught Harry's eye and gave him a meaningful look. Harry flashed him his Invisibility cloak, which was currently hidden beneath his cloak. Draco nodded slightly and walked to the doors. Harry deliberately waited until the line to get out of the castle had dwindled down to the last people and left under the cover of the Invisibility Cloak. The wind was bitingly cold and the clouds overhead threatened either rain or snow. It was certainly cold enough for it. Harry was lucky because he had two cloaks on, both of which were extremely warm. He ran through the small crowds of students, eager to get into the warm pub and drink from a tankard of butterbeer.
Just as he was about to enter, a head of blonde hair caught his eye and he turned to catch Draco

walking into an alley between Honeydukes and Zonko's. Without a second thought, he turned and ran quietly to where the other boy had disappeared to. It was dark in the alley but the light from the sky bounced off of Draco's light hair and gave him away. He was speaking with somebody that Harry wasn't able to see. It looked as though the person was just behind Zonko's. As quietly as he could, he crept closer to the pair.
"... go. I have somebody that I need to meet at the Three Broomsticks. I *won't* be speaking to you later. I hope that's understood," Draco was saying. Harry wondered what he had said before.
"Draco, you don't know what you're getting into by denying this. You know what will happen."
"How many times do I have to tell you? *I don't care!* I don't want what you have! I want what I want. And I won't give it up to follow him."
"Tell me, son. What is it that you want? What is more important than your own family?"
"Nothing that concerns you. Things are just starting to go the way I want them to and I'm not going to mess it up. Just leave me be. I won't be returning home this Christmas or summer. I've already arranged for another place to stay."
Hands reached out and grabbed Draco's shoulders roughly.
"You are my son and you will obey me!" the man roared as quietly as he could. Draco shrugged out of his grasp.
"I will not. Good-bye, Lucius. This is where we part. You are no longer my father."
As if in slow motion, Harry saw Draco start to turn around as a wand was being drawn by Lucius Malfoy. Before he could he even think of the consequences, Harry ran in-between the wand and Draco.
"Crucio!"
Harry fell to the ground in pain. He bit his lip to keep from screaming because he knew that the senior Malfoy was not able to see him. The curse was lifted off of him after what seemed like an eternity. He looked up to see Lucius Malfoy, looking at his wand in confusion. He had no idea what had happened. It had probably looked like the curse had just stopped in mid-air. But Draco had a look on his face that showed he knew what had happened. He lunged at his father and tackled him to the ground.
"Get out of here!" he spat out. "Before I go to tell Dumbledore that there is a Death Eater in Hogsmeade."
Lucius didn't need any further encouragement. He Disapparated, which caused Draco to drop to the ground. Harry finally let out a long moan of pain from beneath his cloak, unable to hold it in anymore. "Why did you do that?" Draco asked, looking around for the invisible Harry Potter.
"Where are you?" Harry pushed his hand out of the cloak, as that was all he could manage to do.
Draco scrambled over on his hands and knees to him and threw the cloak from over him. He looked up the alley and then pulled Harry behind the building so that nobody could see them.
"You're some kind of an idiot, aren't you?"
"I think so."
"Are you all right?"
"Well... I've been better."
Draco smiled sadly and took a corner of his cloak to wipe off the cold sweat that had formed on Harry's face. "What made you do that?"
"I don't know. I saw him raise his wand when you turned your back. It seemed only fair for him to put it on someone who was suspecting it. I didn't even think."
"No, I'll give you that. Harry... I was expecting it."

"I don't care. Nobody deserves that pain."
"That includes you, you prat."
"Draco... Can I ask you... what is it that you don't want to give up? What's going right in your life?"
"Oh! You heard that?" Draco exclaimed, going slightly red.
"Yes. I heard from when you said you had to meet somebody in the Three Broomsticks."
"Oh," he said again. "If you don't mind, I'd rather not talk about it."
"That's fine. I didn't really expect an answer anyhow."
"Thank you."
"No problem. I know how you just *love* it when I push things."
"No. I mean, thank you for taking the curse for me. None of my Slytherin friends would have ever done that."
"Oh! You're welcome. Just call me thick. I'm a Gryffindor for a reason, you know."
Draco chuckled softly. "You can say that again. Look, do you want me to just pick up some bottles of butterbeer and we can take them back to the castle? I fixed up our classroom the past couple nights. I think you'll like it."
"Yes. I have a pounding headache. That sounds perfect."
Draco stood as Harry sat up and then put his arm around Harry and helped him to stand. He swayed a bit and leaned against the Slytherin. "Do you think you can walk on your own?"
"Yes. I'm just a little dizzy. It'll pass. Oh, sweet Merlin. He packs a lot of punch in that curse, doesn't he?"
"He's had a lot of target practice at home," he replied grimly. Harry looked sharply at him.
"Are you serious?"
"Yes. But I'd rather not talk about it."
Harry nodded and then stood on his own. Draco picked up the Invisibility Cloak and wrapped it gently about Harry's shoulders. Harry bit his bottom lip as Draco brought his arms around the back of his neck and lifted up the hood up. Draco dropped his hands on Harry's invisible shoulders, and stared into the space where Harry's face was. "Are you sure you're alright to go now, Harry?" he asked quietly.
Harry nodded but then realised that Draco couldn't see him. "Yes. I'll be fine," he whispered.
"Okay. Let's go then." Draco dropped his hands from his shoulders, leaving Harry cold in the wind. The two quickly went into the pub and picked up plenty of bottles of butterbeer and then made their way slowly back to the castle. When they got to 'their' classroom on the third floor, Draco stopped and told Harry to wait, who was still under the cloak. The Slytherin went in and could be heard muttering spells to light the torches and the candles to light the room. He came back out and looked around excitably.
"Give me your hand."
Harry obliged and offered his hand. Draco took it and took a guess as to where Harry's eyes were and covered them and then pulled him into the room. He pulled the cloak off the Gryffindor and uncovered his eyes. Harry's mouth dropped open at the sight of the room. It looked completely different. There was plush, black carpeting, a couch in scarlet coverings and two chairs in dark silver. There was a table left to study at and two chairs. The windows had fake frost on them so that it was impossible to see inside and were draped by scarlet curtains. There was even a fireplace that Harry had never noticed near the couch and chairs.
Harry had to do a double take. There was even a large four-poster bed in silver hangings. *A bed*!

Beside him, Draco chuckled. "It's just in case you don't want to sleep in Gryffindor tower. Severus helped me out with all of this. There are charms outside the door so nobody else will try to come in here. They'll remember something they have to do and turn around. Kind of like Muggle repelling charms. There's also a silencing charm so nobody hears us talking. Come in here whenever you want. The password will be, gryferin."
"Gryferin?" Harry asked smiling but Draco just shrugged.
"Nobody would ever guess it. It's a combination of Gryffindor and Slytherin. Who would have thought? A Gryffindor and a Slytherin... friends?"
"Yeah, who would've thought?" Harry replied softly. "Why did you do this?"
"I don't know. I figured you would need a place to go if things ever become really bad with your housemates. And I was sick of coming to a plain old classroom every time we met."
Harry felt the overwhelming need to thank Draco in more than words. To... simply hug him. Just to touch him in that manner would be satisfying. But they were friends. Him and Ron always settled with patting each other on the back. He didn't know how Draco was. So, he settled for squeezing his hand.
"Thank you, Draco. This means a lot."
"You're welcome. It's a beginning anyway for me to pay you back for helping me out today."
"You don't have to pay me back." Harry flopped down on the couch and winced as his headache became slightly worse. "What made you decide on these colours?"
"Well, one Gryffindor colour, one Slytherin. I would have had gold, you know, silver and gold. But gold couches? I don't think so. So scarlet was the next best thing."
"I wouldn't have minded just green and silver. They're good colours."
"I'm sick of them. It's nice to have a slight change."
The two spent the rest of the day sitting in their room, drinking butterbeer and eating the food that Dobby had brought halfway through the day. After dinner, both boys decided that it was time to go back to their respective common rooms. Harry tucked the Invisibility Cloak under his robes, said good-bye to Draco and hurried to Gryffindor tower, where he went straight to his dorm. When he opened the door, it was to find Ron, Seamus, and Dean sitting in a circle on the floor discussing something quietly.
"Oh... hey, guys," Harry said awkwardly.
The three boys glared up at him and then looked at each other and nodded. They all stood up and faced Harry. "How was your day, Potter?" asked Seamus, in a not-too-friendly manner.
"It was okay," he said slowly. "Why do you ask, Seamus?"
"Just wondering. Well, we just thought that this would be a whole lot more fun if you had been having a good day."P Harry backed up into the door as the three boys advanced on hi

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Chapter: 7

Disclaimer: I wouldn't be writing fan fiction if I owned this, now would I?
A/N: Special thanks to my beta, Padfoots_Bitch(Sirena Black) Any mistakes are mine, not hers. This time, there *are* replies to the reviewers at the bottom! I haven't been able to reply to any of

you since chapter four so, I have everybody since then!
I'm putting in a teaser for the next chapter before my thank you's and will continue to do so for the rest of the story! REMEMBER: updates every Sunday unless something life threatening comes up or the site is down!

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Seven
Harry backed up into the door as the three boys advanced on him.
"What are you doing?"
"Nothing," Ron replied, innocently.
Harry didn't trust the looks on their faces. As slowly as he could move, he reached into his robe pocket for his wand. The three boys stood directly in front of Harry for a moment, staring at him, when Seamus, very suddenly threw a punch at Harry's face. Luckily for him, he had been watching the sandy hair boy and saw his intentions before he acted on them. Seamus's fist hit the door with an extremely loud bang after Harry ducked. Seamus clutched his fist and spouted a string of obscenities. Dean took Harry by surprise and held him in place while Ron came forward and punched him in the stomach, completely winding him. As he was doubled over, a punch landed him in the eye, breaking his glasses, causing the glass to cut into his skin.
With a new spurt of anger, Harry lifted his knee and made contact with Ron's groin. He bent over in pain and backed off. Harry's wand was in hand, so he pointed it awkwardly back at Dean. "Stupefy!" He heard Dean fall to the floor with a thud, and turned to see Seamus coming at him just in time. "Impedimenta!" With Seamus going in slow motion, Dean stunned, and Ron clutching his groin, Harry was about to turn and leave again, but the urge to hit Ron in the eye got to him and he took a shot at his left eye. With a satisfied grin, Harry fled the dorm, thinking the whole time, 'thank Merlin for magic.'
Harry immediately went to the only place that he could think would be safe. The 'classroom' he shared with Draco. He'd sleep there tonight to be safe. The three Gryffindors would likely be in a very angry mood with Harry. He ran the entire way, not even bothering with his Invisibility Cloak. Once inside the room, he went to a window and sat on the ledge where he finally had the chance to take off his broken glasses. Any spells that might be able to repair them were completely eluding his brain. Anger was the only thing present and blocked out all logic on Harry's part. So, he angrily threw his glasses on the floor and leaned his head on the frost covered window. He began to etch an elaborate Quidditch game in the frost of stick people riding very beaten up brooms. The twigs were sticking out everywhere on each broomstick.
'See what they did to you?' The voice said suddenly. *'And they're supposed to be your friends? The people on the Dark side would never hurt one of their own like that.'*
"Good thing those brooms aren't real," remarked a drawling voice. "Those players probably wouldn't get more than five feet off the ground with those travesties."
Harry jumped at the sound of the voice and turned his head slightly so that only his uninjured left eye was showing. The one that wasn't coloured a nasty colour and bleeding. "Yeah. Good thing," he replied before taking out his wand and charming his drawing so that it moved by itself. Both boys watched as one of the stick figures scored and then threw up his arms in triumph.
"Where are your glasses?"
"Broken," he said, pointing to them on the floor.
"What happened?"

"Nothing. I just stepped on them."
"Oh. I see. When did you come back?"
"I don't know. Ten minutes ago? Why did you come back?"
"I didn't feel like being in the Slytherin common room. I stopped by the kitchens and brought some food from the Halloween feast since we just ate sandwiches for dinner. Do you want some?"
"No. I'm not hungry. Thanks anyway."
"Okay. No problem. I'll just put some aside for you."
"Thanks."
Draco sighed irritably. "Merlin, Potter! What the hell is your problem?" he exploded. "I'm just trying to make conversation here. You've hardly even acknowledged my presence. I sometimes wish that I was under that spell, so that I could hex you into oblivion. Because if you keep..."
Draco stopped talking abruptly, when Harry drew in a deep shuddering breath. Harry placed his face on the window but then decided against it, as he winced from the pressure.
"What happened?" Draco demanded. "I only saw you an hour ago and you seemed pretty happy then. What happened?"
"Damn you, Potter! What the hell happened to you?"
"Nothing," came the quiet reply.
Draco walked moodily up to the other boy and stared down at him. "Look at me. Tell me what's going on." Very slowly, Harry turned to face the Slytherin. Draco drew in a sharp breath and took a small step back. "Who..." he asked in a voice strangled with anger.
"It doesn't matter. You can't do anything about it anyway."
"Dammit! Just tell me who did it! Why do you have to be so insufferable? Just answer the question!"
Harry sighed. "Ron, Seamus, and Dean ganged up on me once I went into the dorm. Ron gave me the black eye."
"How did you get away from them?"
"I stunned Dean, kicked Ron in the groin, and put Impedimenta on Seamus. Then I punched Ron in the eye before I left, for good measure."
Draco smiled and sat down my by Harry's feet. "Impressive. Kick him while he's down. You could be a Slytherin."
"You have no idea," Harry replied, smiling a little as he squinted at the blond.
Draco raised an eyebrow. "Really? Care to enlighten me?"
"Maybe later. I'm not in the mood."
"I'll hold you to your word. Here, let me take a look at your eye."
"No. I'm fine."
"You're bleeding, and you can't tell me that it doesn't hurt at least a little bit."
"Fine." Harry swung his legs down and moved closer to Draco. He reached up and gently touched the bruise that was rapidly forming. Harry flinched.
"I'm sorry. I'll be more careful. You have a piece of glass stuck in your skin. How can you not notice that?"
Harry only shrugged as Draco reached up to pull at the offending foreign object. It came out with a tiny protest of pain from Harry and it started to bleed a little. Draco pulled out his wand and healed the cut and dulled the colour and pain from his eye. "You'll need some ice on that as well." Draco walked over to the remains of their lunch, dipped a napkin into the water pitcher,

muttered a spell, and returned to Harry with a frozen cloth. Draco placed it gently on Harry's face and held it. "Did they get you anywhere else?"
"In the stomach, but that doesn't hurt so much anymore."
"That's good. Are you sure you don't want any food? I brought a lot of it."
"I suppose some food wouldn't hurt."
"Ah. I knew all you would need is Draco Malfoy's magical healing touch."
Harry laughed softly. "Don't let your head get too big."
"Well, you have to admit... it is a good head."
"I will give you that much."
Harry took the ice cloth from the other boy and went to sit on the couch, stumbling over the carpet and furniture that he could have sworn wasn't there before. By the time he sat down, he could hear Draco, very unsuccessfully stifling his laughter. "You're as blind as a bat without your glasses, aren't you? You tripped over the non-existent bump in the floor."
"Shut up. I can't help that my glasses are broken."
"Well, magic will remedy that, you know." Harry saw Draco pick up, what he assumed were his glasses, then he walked towards Harry and sat down. "Since you can't wear them now, I'll just give you a temporary fix. It'll wear off in about three hours." He placed his wand tip at Harry's temple and muttered, "Emendo aspestus." Harry's vision immediately cleared and he blinked his good eye a couple times and stared at Draco.
"Is there a permanent version of that spell?"
"No. They haven't found a permanent cure for bad vision yet. And I don't recommend you doing that all the time. It can ruin your vision even more."
"Duly noted. Get the food. I want to eat."
"I'll pretend that you didn't just order me to do something and do it anyway."
For the next hour, the two boys sat on the couch and ate to their hearts' content, with a few bottles of butterbeer to wash it all down. Both were perfectly content in pretending that nothing was wrong, and that the only reason Harry had an ice cloth over his eye was because he was stupid and ran into a wall. Though the real reason became impossible to ignore, when he finally pulled the ice cloth off and gingerly touched the sore injury and winced. Harry looked at Draco and saw him clenching and unclenching his jaw with a manic look in his eyes.
"I don't like that look, Draco. What are you planning?"
"Who said I was planning anything?"
"Don't play stupid. What are you going to do to Ron?"
"Nothing too serious. Just a little payback. He'll never know who did it."
"Draco..."
"Harry," he replied, looking earnestly into Harry's eyes. Harry found himself bound to the other boy's silver eyes. His heart fluttered and his stomach twisted in knots. Draco reached up and ran a gentle finger around the sore edge of Harry's black eye. "He won't get away with hurting you as long as I'm your friend."
The sincerity in Draco's voice took Harry a little by surprise. There was a look of determination in his eyes and face and Harry found himself wanting nothing more than to take the aristocratic face in his hands and placing kisses all over it to thank him. "Draco," Harry whispered hoarsely. He felt his face flush as the last thought lingered in his mind. Why would he want to kiss his enemy? Draco had just said that Harry was his friend... but there was still the animosity that had always been there. It always would be there... wouldn't it? Before he could stop himself, he

found himself speaking. "Draco, you hate me."
"Yes. And your point?"
"But... you just said, 'as long as I'm your friend.' Friends don't hate each other."
Draco lifted an eyebrow and smirked. "Are you saying that I'm *your* friend?"
"I... I don't know," Harry stuttered out and immediately flushed red. "I asked you first."
"Look, Potter, there are some things that will automatically make you like a person more. For instance, when a person takes the Cruciatus that was meant for somebody else, that's a good reason."
"Malfoy, that was really nothing. Quit bringing it up."
"I don't understand you at all! You act as if Lucius threw the tickling charm at you! The Cruciatus is a bit more serious than that! Longbottom lives with his grandmother for a reason, you know."
"I know that. It's just not that big of a deal, okay? It's over and done with."
"And you asked me if I consider you a friend. Mind you, I'm still not a part of your fan club, but I can tolerate you now. And it's because what you do that I can do so."
"Okay, fine. But please, Malfoy. Just leave Ron alone."
Draco shook his head annoyed. "I will not leave him alone. Lucius beats me, you protect me. Weasley beats you, I protect you. Deal?"
"But..."
"Personally," Draco interrupted loudly. "I think I am getting the better part of the deal here. Weasley wouldn't dare use or even be able to use an Unforgivable. So, that should make you happy. I won't get hurt too badly. Do we have a deal?"
"Fine. You…you don't have to."
"Shut up, Potter. We already have a deal."
Harry sighed but decided to just let it drop. "Draco... how do you know about Neville's parents? I only found out in fourth year and Neville wasn't the one who told me. Dumbledore was."
"You forget who my father is, Harry. He knows all about it and he's told me stories about most people in our year. Excluding Mudbloods of course."
"Don't call them that. They are Muggle-borns."
"Still sticking up for them? Even when your so-called best friend, Hermione Granger, the *Mudblood*, attacked you with a skrewt? Oh, I'm sorry, that was on accident."
"She didn't know what she was doing. So, shut up! This will all be over soon, we'll be friends again and then I won't have to listen to you bash on Muggle-borns anymore!"
Draco stood up with an angry gleam in his eye and walked to the door. "I'm sorry you feel that way about hanging out with me, Potter. I can just imagine you when you get your stupid friends back. 'You guys will never believe what Malfoy told me! He said he considers me a friend! What a stupid git, eh? Like I, the high and mighty, Boy-Who-Lived, Dumbledore's Golden Boy, would *ever* hang out with a Slytherin!'"
Harry also rose from his seat and walked towards Draco. "If that's the way you want it to be, then keep talking to me like this."
"What makes you think that I *want* to keep talking to you, Potter?"
"Oh, the fact that you just told me that you are starting to like me?"
"*Starting!* That doesn't mean anything! It doesn't mean I want to hang out with you every waking moment like you and your stupid Gryffindor friends always used to do. I'd be fine without you. I always was before this."

"That's the thing. Before all this happened. Before you had your falling out with your father. It hasn't been that long since then, who are you going to turn to now you don't have Lucius to turn to?"
"Severus."
"I know you're close with him, but you'll want somebody else. Why else would you have come back to this room so quickly after we left tonight? Why else but to see me? I have become an important part of your life."
"You haven't become anything, Potter! There has been no time for it."
"Oh... so you're saying that given more time, I could become something?"
"That's not what I meant!"
"Oh, okay. Why don't you just leave then if I'm not so important to you? I'd like to be getting to bed now. Goodnight."
Harry stepped around him, opened the door and gestured Draco out. The Slytherin scowled at the other boy and left. Harry leaned up against the door after he closed it and sighed. If he and Draco couldn't make up, the only friend he had left was Snape. And, they weren't exactly friends. More, like reluctant allies. The Gryffindor stripped his clothes off on his way to bed, leaving a trail of clothing. Since he didn't have his pyjamas, he just left his boxers on and crawled under the dark silver quilts and immediately fell asleep.
Harry awoke the next morning, extremely warm and comfortable. A feeling of great contentment was hovering over him and he couldn't figure out why it was there. He smiled sleepily and snuggled into the arms that were holding him and buried his head in the person's neck. He inhaled deeply and took in the soft scent that was emanating from the skin. It smelled of pine needles and honey. "Potter?" a voice asked sleepily. "You awake?"
"Um hmm."
"Oh. Good morning."
"Good morning."
Harry's eyes snapped open and he sat up and looked at the other person in bed with him. "Malfoy!" he exclaimed and backed up on the bed and promptly fell onto the floor in his surprise. Draco's dishevelled bed head came into view and he had an amused smirk held in place. "What the hell are you doing in my bed, with your arms wrapped around me?" Harry asked, his eyes huge.
"I didn't know you were snuggler, Potter."
"That's all you can say? That you didn't know... What the *hell* is going on here? I thought you left? Did I get drunk and dream up that fight we had? I do feel a headache coming on. Could that be a hangover?"
Draco fell back onto the bed and promptly began laughing hysterically. "Oh, I was looking forward to seeing you wake up in the morning, but I didn't know it was going to be this amusing! That look on your face! What was that Muggle saying I heard Granger saying one time... a deer in headlights? Whatever headlights are."
Any more speech that may have been planning on coming out of Draco's mouth was lost as he rolled onto his side and clutched his stomach in hysterical laughter. Harry felt his face turn red and he stood up. "For your information, headlights are the lights on the front of a car. You *do* know what a car is, don't you?"
"Of course, I know what a car is," Draco said, getting some control over himself. "We have a Rolls Royce at home. It's been enchanted, of course. It doesn't even need an engine or gas."

"Then why on earth do you not know what headlights are?"
"I don't even know what an engine or gas are. That's just what the driver told me. I just nod my head and pretend to understand. All I know is that a car has four wheels, drives fast and can get you places when you don't have the means for the Floo network or can't Apparate."
"Okay... that answers that question. Now, what the hell are you doing in my bed?"
"Oh, come on Potter! You seemed to be enjoying the close proximity!"
"When I didn't know who was there! I didn't look at you! All I knew was that I was warm and comfortable and something smelled good."
"Really?" Draco asked slyly. "You think I smell good? Tell me, what exactly do I smell like?" He smirked broadly as Harry flushed red again.
"I... I don't know. I... you smell like... you smell like you," he stuttered out, completely aware of the fact that Draco's eyes were roaming his almost naked body, apparantly appraising him. Whether or not Draco knew Harry was aware, he had no idea. Or if Draco knew that he was doing it, was an even bigger mystery.
"Like me," Draco said faintly as his eyes finally settled on Harry's eyes once more. Harry kicked into action once more and walked quickly towards his discarded robe and then went to get his glasses that were still by the couch. He then went and sat at the edge of the bed, making sure the robe was covering as much skin as possible.
"Like you. Now, answer me! Oh, wait a moment! I know what this is! I am important to you! You couldn't stand the thought of being in a fight with me and so came and laid in bed with me. Kind of weird, to tell you the truth..."
"No, that's not the reason. And I'm not going to tell you, either. Breakfast? I'm starved."
"Yeah, sure," Harry said faintly, as Draco jumped out of bed and rang a bell that Harry had never taken notice of before. A house elf popped into view and looked at Draco eagerly.
"What does Master want this morning?"
"Breakfast for Master Potter and I," he said haughtily. "Could we get something different than what is in the Great Hall? We're not eating there for more than one reason, you know."
"Okay, what does Masters want? I is willing to bring you anything, sir."
Harry rolled his eyes and was just about to say to the elf to bring them whatever was in the Great Hall when 'The Voice of Evil,' as Harry had dubbed it, came to him again.
'Good morning, Potter. Have you come to your senses yet?'
"If by senses, you mean, tuning you out, then yes, I have come to my senses. Good day."
'You think it will be that easy, do you? Nothing is that easy. Especially when it comes to fighting the dark. Especially when the person fighting the dark is you, Harry Potter. It's there inside of you, waiting to come out and when it does, you will not be able to stop it. When it does, everybody in the light will shun you, be afraid of you for your power. What do you think is happening now, Potter? It's happening already. They can feel the darkness in you, waiting to be set free. They have started to shun you, there is no place for your kind of power in the light side. Come to where it will be useful, appreciated. Come to where you will not be shunned. You are dark. Let it come.'
"Harry! Harry!"
Draco was shaking Harry's shoulders and leaning over him with an apprehensive look on his face. "Harry, what the hell just happened to you?"
"Wha…'?"
"You just like fell onto your back and started screaming, 'NO', over and over again. Then by the

time you woke up, you were screaming, 'You are dark! Let it come.' You said it twice and you were nodding your head, yes. What were you talking about?"
Harry sat up and looked around his surroundings. There were breakfast trays sitting on the bed beside them and the curtains were now open as if the elf had done a bit of tidying up before it left again.
"I don't know. I think it may have been another dream about Voldemort," Harry lied.
"Is your scar hurting?"
"A bit. I don't remember it though."
"Oh," Draco said uncomfortably. "Maybe you should just forget about it then. You know, since you can't remember it. Probably nothing important. Are you hungry?"
"I'm starved."
Draco reached for the food trays hurriedly, obviously glad for the change in topics. The two boys began eating hungrily. After a couple minutes silence, Draco finally spoke up. "So, we're starting Apparition lessons today. That should be pretty cool, right?"
"Oh. I completely forgot about that. Who's teaching it?"
"Some Ministry official, I think. We have to go to Hogsmeade after we finish up with breakfast. Slytherin and Gryffindor are together again."
"That's good. How many times are we having these lessons anyway? I forgot."
"Three times a week until we learn how to Apparate. We won't be able to do it legally until we're either seventeen or out of Hogwarts. Whichever, comes first."
"I don't think I'll be very good at it."
"Well, if you think like that you won't be. My mother said that's the way she thought and she wasn't good at it at all. She still prefers Floo over Apparating."
"I hate Floo. Hopefully I'll be good at this."
"You should be. I hear it's quite easy for powerful wizards."
"You think I'm powerful?" Harry asked surprised.
"Well... yes. How can you not be? You're the bloody Boy-Who-Lived and not to mention a Potter. Of course you're a powerful wizard."
"Don't call me that name and why would my being a Potter be a factor in any of this?" Draco gave him a confused look and stood up.
"Maybe one day, Potter, somebody will tell you the history of your family. Potters are powerful wizards. I can't believe nobody has told you already. Your family history is quite impressive. Come on, let's go."
Draco hurried into the entrance hall and brushed the snow off of his cloak. He turned to say something cutting to Harry, just for appearance sake but found him to be already climbing the stairs. "Bloody ungrateful little sod," he muttered under his breath and started walking into the dungeons, which at this time of year was almost as cold as outside. It was now approaching the middle of December and more than a month had passed since the day Draco had surprised Harry in bed the morning after Halloween. Since then, everything had continued as normal between them. The fights were a constant but they were getting closer. Draco couldn't help but smile a little when he thought of the normally insufferable Gryffindor boy. In a way, he hated to think of himself as friends with Harry Potter, but that was what they were inevitably becoming. Friends. It had sort of a nice ring to it.
Everything else was continuing normally, as well. Well, as normal as you could get, considering the circumstances. Weasley was still being awful towards Harry, as was everybody else. So was

Professor Black. Harry had mentioned something about Black's visit to the infirmary the day before he was released. Something, about Black not really hating him. It now seemed like he hated Harry. Harry had managed to lose about one hundred house points in the past month just because of Black, and not to mention the three detentions for doing absolutely nothing. Harry had come back from each of those experiences, white, shaky, and extremely upset. He was in no mood for talking those nights. Draco had basically left him alone but had stayed on the couch in the classroom for moral support if it was needed. It wasn't, but Harry was grateful; Draco could tell that much.

As Draco walked down the dimly lit corridor, the suits of armour would start up on their horrible renditions of Christmas music and Draco would be forced to put a silencing charm on every one. What was the use of charming them to sing if you couldn't charm them to sing correctly? The Slytherin boy scowled at one when it began singing the worst Christmas song ever. 'There's No Place Like Home For the Holidays' The words of the song weren't only terrible, and too American, and Muggle, but it only reminded Draco that he didn't have a home to go to over the Christmas holidays, or anytime for that matter. He threw a hex at the knight and made it collapse in a heap to the floor, words from the song still coming out at sporadic places.

"Now, now. What was the need of that? That song is perfectly delightful."

Draco whirled around from the mess he had made and glared at the man standing before him. "Perfectly delightful if you've got a bloody home to go to during the holidays. And perfectly delightful if you're American."

"There's nothing wrong with listening to music that is clearly American like that. And surely you can go home to Malfoy Manor."

"Not likely. But it's not any of your business. If you'll excuse me."

Draco tried to push past the man but was stopped by his arm stopping him roughly across the chest. The younger man looked up bewildered. "I have to go to my Common room right now to change before dinner. I was just outside and it was snowing."

"Why don't you come with me and I'll give you a nice cup of hot chocolate. It'll warm you up and I know a good drying spell as well. You'll be warmed up and ready to go to dinner in no time. In fact, I'll escort you there."

"No thanks. I'll do fine on my own. I'll take a rain check on that hot chocolate. I've got somebody to meet for dinner."

"Indeed? And who is this?"

"Nobody. Just a person."

"A girl, by chance?"

"Not really. It's just a friend."

"Hmmm... I think your friend can wait a bit. Come along then."

The man grabbed Draco by the arm and started pulling him down the corridor. He yanked his arm free and glared at the man. "I do not want to have hot chocolate with you. I'd rather kiss Neville Longbottom. What are *you* doing here anyhow? If Professor Snape catches you..."

"My dear boy, I hardly care where I am supposed to be. And besides, the reason that I am here is none of your concern. Now come along... just a quick cup."

He grabbed Draco's arm again and pulled him along but Draco had reached for his wand and was pointing it at the back of his head. "Let go of me... *now.*" Draco said firmly. The man turned around, still clutching Draco firmly. He made a swipe for the wand but Draco dodged and pointed his wand again. "Stupefy!" The man fell down and Draco only looked down at him for a

few moments before he fled to his common room, thoroughly shaken.
When he got to his bed, he collapsed onto it, breathing deeply, trying to calm himself. Since when did people become so forceful about having a cup of hot chocolate with them? Should this be one of those things that he should tell Severus about? Surely the man just wanted company of some sort. But that would be strange. He and Draco knew each other, sure... but they had never been on friendly speaking terms. Why would he start now? And what was he doing in Slytherin territory? To see the man while walking to the Slytherin dormitories had been strange.
Draco was brought abruptly out of his thoughts by an owl landing on his stomach. He looked at it and immediately groaned. It was his father's owl. Probably another one, begging him to reconsider his decision to never come home again, that Lucius was still keeping Draco in the will, and that he would just in case Draco ever changed his mind. Draco figured that it was only because he was the only Malfoy heir. If his name was taken out of the will, the money would probably go to charity, and a Malfoy would never let that happen to his money without his consent. Draco scoffed and untied the letter from the owl, which immediately took off again. Sure enough, the letter was the same as always. Begging him to come home. Well, the closest a Malfoy could come to begging, that is anyway. It was more like a subtle threat. Nothing too nice or needy sounding. But near the end, a phrase jumped out at him that made his breath stop and everything around him come to a stand still.
The Dark Lord wants you to join him, Draco. He is willing to offer you a place in his inner circle. Just think of the rewards you could get. Think of the glory that would come your way for torturing and killing Muggles and Mudbloods. The feeling is like nothing else in the world, son. If you don't like it right away, you will learn to love it. It's thrilling. And as an extra incentive... the Dark Lord suspects that he is close in getting Potter. I won't tell you how as I'm sure you have noticed the change in the school, but he thinks he may be able to get Potter to join him. A very valuable resource has come to us and said that the darkness is getting him. It's only a matter of time before he surrenders. We would be on the winning side of this war already if he were to join us. If he does, I suggest you make up your mind which side you are on. If you decide to join me before that time comes, write to me and I will get into contact with the Death Eater inside Hogwarts. He will come to you.
Please reconsider the Christmas and summer holidays.
Lucius
Draco knew that this letter would be good to show Severus. They were close with Harry. Just how close? How would they find that out? And what exactly was Harry not telling Draco?
The next day was the match between Ravenclaw and Gryffindor. Harry's nerves were very high because everybody was telling him that he was going to do horrible and fall off of his broom. Even the Gryffindors were saying this but were also threatening that he at least better catch the snitch before doing so. That didn't help alleviate Harry's worries at all. And Draco hadn't been much of a help. Ever since dinner the night before, he had been acting strangely, giving Harry looks as though Harry were going to pull out his wand and kill Draco. Dinner had been an extremely silent affair. Any time that Draco did speak, it was tense and would usually end in a sort of weird, tense laugh.
So, when the whistle sounded, Harry mounted his broom and kicked off into the air, listening to Seamus Finnigan's voice announce the game. He had taken over this year in the place of Lee Jordan. Cho Chang gave Harry a menacing glare and flew off to her own end of the field, for which Harry was profoundly grateful. That meant that he probably wouldn't have to have any

contact with anybody. He flew high above the game, keeping a watch out for any sign of the little golden ball. The Ravenclaw beaters seemed to be hitting the bludgers in his direction more often than usual and Harry highly suspected that the only reason the Gryffindor beaters were helping him was because they wouldn't be able to win the game without him. Though, they were a bit sluggish in hitting the rampaging balls out of the way.
When the score was 80-60, Gryffindor's lead, the little snitch was spotted by both seekers at the same exact time. It was hovering in the middle of the field, about fifty feet from the ground. Harry wasted no time in flying after it. As Cho was definitely closer, she had the advantage. Harry was flying up behind her, putting all he had into his broom. Luckily, his Firebolt was still the fastest racing broom in the world and he was quickly neck and neck with the older girl. Just as they were nearing the snitch, Cho pushed Harry violently to the side in an attempt to get him away from their quarry and he veered off to the side. But then the snitch moved again, and in Harry's direction. He chased after it again, and reached his hand out and closed his hand around the fluttering ball.
From behind, Cho Chang flew up to him and pushed him violently once again. Harry lost his balance and started to fall off his broom. He quickly grabbed hold of it with his free hand and held on for dear life. As if from somewhere far away, he heard Cho yelling something to her beaters and saw her gesturing to him out of the corner of his eye. In the next moment, two bludgers were flying his way and hit his stomach and arm in quick succession. His arm cracked and the wind was knocked out of him, and he could no longer hold onto the broom. His fingers slipped off the broom and he began to fall the fifty feet to the ground, out cold before he hit.
"Harry, wake up. Don't be dead. Don't be dead."
Harry listened to the person's mantra with a groggy head. What was going on and why did it feel like he had been bashed with a hammer until he was mere Jell-O on the ground? He opened his eyes blearily and saw a head of blonde hair sitting beside him. His glasses were slipped onto his face and Draco Malfoy's fear stricken face came into view.
"Harry! You're awake! Do you know who I am? Do you feel like shit? Should I get Madam Pomfrey?"
"Shut up, Draco!" Harry replied hoarsely.
Draco crossed his arms and pouted. "Some thanks I get for worrying. You fell fifty feet, you know. I thought you died. And then to not even be able to come and find you until it it's dark... it's been sheer torture."
"Gee... I didn't know you cared that much."
"Shut up, Potter. You would have been worse, had it been me playing."
"No, I wouldn't have. Ah... I have such a headache. How come I didn't die? The last time I fell that far, Dumbledore slowed me down and I highly doubt he did so this time."
"No, I did. Very discreetly, I may add. I knew I'd be the only one who would. Severus wasn't at the game. He said he had a bunch of essays to correct."
Harry smiled weakly at the boy sitting beside him. "You saved my life. Now I owe you."
"You owe me shit, Potter."
"Shut up. You pay back Ron, I'll pay you back someday when the time comes. Say, how is that coming anyway? Are you still planning on paying him back?"
"Of course!" Draco grinned widely. "I am a Malfoy and we always get revenge." He got up from his chair and sat on the edge of Harry's bed. "Do you want to hear what I've got so far? It's very amusing."

"Um... no, I don't think so. It'll be better if it's a surprise."
"You're right. It'll be smack you on the arse funny! We'll definitely be putting Weasley in his place. I can't wait! It's been so long since I've been able to put my brilliant brain into action like this."
Harry scoffed. "Brilliant?"
"I resent that. I don't think I'll talk to you anymore tonight. Good night, Potter."
"Wait. Speaking of not talking anymore... what was up with dinner last night? You were acting extremely weird."
Harry immediately noticed the change that went over Draco. His face paled and he started fidgeting. "It was nothing, Harry. Just something personal that I spoke to Severus about."
"Was it about your father?"
"Yes. But I'd rather not speak about it, if you don't mind. Look... I'd better be going. I need to get to bed."
"But it's Saturday night."
"Well, I'm tired."
"But I need company!" Harry whined.
"I'm going to bed." Draco lifted his hand and hesitated for a moment but then entwined his fingers in Harry's hair and ran his hand through it. "I hope you get better soon." He took his hand out of his hair and ran his fingertips down the side of Harry's cheek. "Goodnight, Harry. Sleep well." The blonde hair boy quickly got up and left.
Harry watched him go until the door shut and only managed a weak, 'goodnight' after the door closed. He looked up at the ceiling, willing his heart beat to slow down so that he could go back to sleep and try to forget the pain in his entire body. And maybe the light touch of Draco Malfoy's hand on his cheek. But no, that memory was worth keeping.
The same grassy field that Harry had been in only once before was surrounding him again. The flowers were alive and prospering, screaming their colours to the world. Harry smiled down at them but didn't pick any, knowing that where he was going, it would only die anyway. The thought made him kind of sad but also excited. He began to walk with his face upturned towards the bright sun. Before too long, the sound of water reached his ears and he looked forward to find that where there was once a river, a large lake sat. He walked to the edge, and knelt down beside it and looked at his reflection.
But his reflection wasn't there. In the water, he could see the plain as it was after he spun for the first time. It was dirt and rocks and bare trees. He touched his hand in the water and was sucked forward in a whirlpool. The spinning sensation overtook him and he found himself to be laughing. It felt so good to be so free, liberated. And finally, he landed with a soft thump in that bereft plain. He looked around, smiling. Nothing had changed. The clouds were covering the sky, just as the dirt and rocks were covering the ground. The scarce trees were bare and there was no sign of plant life anywhere.
"This is where you could be, Harry Potter. Notice how happy you are? How free? You can do whatever you want here. Because when it's dark, nobody sees it. You're free. This is where you belong, not with the traitors who make you fall off your broom. You belong here, in the dark. Let it come."
And Harry found himself nodding along.

Thanks to my reviewers:

I Am The Bunny Slayer*: Yes, this does end happily. I can't say the two sequels will though. ::grins:: Well... actually the second in the trilogy will not end happily, but the third probably will.*
Rain*: Thanks!*
PeachDancer82*: Thank you! I will continue every Sunday! ^_^*
Avada Kedavra*: Two reviews! I hope you liked your spaghetti! ^_^ I am horrible, aren't I? Don't worry, slash is coming in chapter nine.*
Chips Challenge*: Three reviews! You're welcome! I think this chapter is even longer! I love reading what you have to say! Keep your thoughts coming!*
Sailor Grape*: Three reviews! I can tell you that they aren't pretending.*
essy*: Thank you!*
S. Wing*: Two reviews! My thoughts exactly.*
JungAnya, blackunicorn, darkanglefrmhell, Peace Angel, bloodbath, frizzy*(I love your story!)****, KittenBabyGirl, xikum, MaizeySugah***
Teaser for chapter eight:
...Draco walked moodily to Harry's private room, not caring if Filch or Mrs. Norris caught him for being out after curfew. He made it there quickly and went inside. And sure enough, Harry was lying on the top of his covers on the bed, fast asleep. Draco smiled a little and walked towards him, watching his chest rise and fall in a rhythmic pattern. Oh, this would be too much fun. Maybe it would do good for Draco to sleep on the couch tonight, just to see Harry's surprised expression when he woke up in the morning.
He sat next to Harry on the bed and looked at him, considering what his move would be. But as he started to pull out his wand, Harry started to stir and muttering, 'no,' over and over again. He started to thrash about more wildly and Draco was punched in the stomach by him. "Stupid bugger," he muttered. He put his hand out and laid it on Harry's cheek, hoping that it would calm him down. "Shh, it's just a dream, Harry." The thrashing stopped but he was still muttering, 'no.' Harry's eyes snapped open. Draco gasped and slid back on the bed. Harry's eyes were no longer the bright shade of green that they normally were. They were now so white, that they blended in with the whites of his eyes. The only colour was his black pupil, which was an unusual large shape.
He sat up on the bed and stared at Draco before smiling an eerie smile. It sent shivers down his spine.
"If I told you that there is darkness in me, waiting to get out, would you stop it?"
"What?"
"It's waiting to get out and there's nothing that I can do. Don't you think I'll work well on the Dark side, Draco?"
"Um... not really, no."
But his words fell on deaf ears. Harry's eyes fell closed and he laid back down on the bed, asleep before his head was down. Draco swallowed deeply and stood up, backing away slowly from the other boy. The Gryffindor started to stir again and opened his eyes. When he looked at Draco, his eyes were green again and he smiled at his friend. It once again sent shivers down Draco's spine, but for a completely different reason.
"I fell asleep. How long have you been here?"
"Ten minutes?" Draco replied, trying desperately to keep his voice calm. But his facial expression must have showed the confusion, surprise, and fear on his face because Harry looked at him concerned and got off the bed.

"Are you okay? Did something happen? You look like you've seen... well, a ghost."
"I see ghosts all the time, actually."
"I know. It's a Muggle expression. I didn't know what else to say. Okay, it looks like... like you've just seen Voldemort!" he exclaimed triumphantly.
"I don't know what I just saw," he confessed.
"What do you mean?"
"Nothing. I don't think I feel very well. I'll just go back to my Common room."
"Just stay here if you don't feel well. Do you actually think you'll feel different if you go back there?"
"Well, no. But my bed is there. I have to go."
Draco didn't waste any time with running out of the room. He did feel kind of bad when he caught the hurt look on Harry's face, but he had to go and see Professor Snape.
~That's it for now! Hope you enjoyed!

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Chapter: 8

Disclaimer: If I owned this, I wouldn't be writing fanfiction, now would I?
A/N: **Early Arrival!** I would have submitted this tomorrow as usual, but as it's Easter, I won't get the chance to. Better early than late though, right? ^_^ Thanks to my beta, Padfoots_Bitch(Sirena Black) Replies to my reviewers on the bottom. I'm also adding in another teaser! ^_^ Look for the next update next Sunday.

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Eight
Draco walked miserably to Professor Snape's office. He had just received a letter from the older man, summoning Draco to him. The letter had foregone the usual niceties, and that could only mean one thing. Severus Snape was angry about something. The young boy rounded a corner and immediately ran into Harry Potter. Draco scowled and pushed past him. "Potter," he said irritably. "What are you doing down here?" The Gryffindor boy turned around and immediately started following Draco.
"Professor Snape summoned me for a detention. I know I didn't do anything this time. Does he want to speak to us again or what?"
"How the bloody hell should I know, Potter? I wasn't summoned to him. I'm going to him by myself," Draco said, deeming it necessary to lie just in case somebody was listening. "Now, do be quiet. You're giving me a splitting headache."
The two walked on in silence for a few moments before Draco realised something and stopped very abruptly, making Harry run into him. "If you've been summoned to Snape, then how come you were way back there? You completely passed up his office."
Harry blushed red and walked past Draco. "I was actually looking for you."
"Really?" Draco asked, with a hint of amusement in his voice. "Without even knowing if I'd been summoned to him or not? Interesting..."

"Shut up. Don't be too flattered." Harry stopped talking as they reached the potions dungeon and he pushed the door open and closed it after Draco walked in after him. "It's just easier to talk to him if you're around. Then he has somebody else to talk to. And why do you have to be so nasty to me all the time?"
"It's part of my nature, Harry. And besides, we really shouldn't be seen speaking to each nicely in the middle of the corridors... or have you forgotten?"
"No..."
"As much as I'd like to hear where this has to go... I do have something to speak to you two about."
Both boys whipped around and found Professor Snape standing in the doorway of his office, arms crossed over his chest and a very menacing look spread across his face. "Sorry, Professor," Harry muttered and hurried past Snape and into his office.
"Indeed. Hurry up, Draco. I haven't got all day, you know."
After all three men were seated, Snape leaned forward across his desk and looked at his students. Harry leaned back nervously in his chair and looked to Draco for support. He received none, though he noted that Draco was looking at his nails, with disinterest. "Mr. Malfoy," Snape began softly. Harry saw the blond hair boy look up with apprehension on his face. He obviously recognised that tone of voice.
"Yes, Severus?"
"Let me ask you a question... How careful do you think you and Mr. Potter have been about your sudden *friendship?*" He spat the last word out like it was poison on his tongue.
"To be perfectly honest, sir, I think we have been pretty good about being discreet. Harry has used his Invisibility Cloak when we've gone to Hogsmeade and we make sure not to use names when we write. Why do you ask?"
"I was just wondering if you had figured out that your relationship to Mr. Potter is being put under the microscope. You two are now being watched *very* closely."
"Who's watching us, Professor?" Harry asked.
"Who do you think, Potter?" Snape barked, making Harry press himself further into his chair. "The one person who has wanted you dead since you were one year old. He now has eyes everywhere, and I am expected to be one set of them."
"But why? We've done nothing to make ourselves seem suspicious," replied Draco defensively.
"*You* have done nothing, Draco…but Potter has."
"I have not! What are you talking about?"
"A letter! Written to Draco, with his name written out in full."
"What? I haven't even sent a letter to him since a couple days after I got out of the hospital wing. Why wouldn't they have been suspicious until now? It's obviously some sort of set-up."
"It is not! I duplicated the letter on my last trip to meet with the Dark Lord. I have it right here. Tell me... did you, or did you not, write this letter?" Snape slid a piece of parchment across the desk to Harry and he picked it up and read.
Draco,
Remember when I fell down the stairs and cracked my head open, and then woke up a week later to find you and Snape next to my bed? And how you and Snape told me that Sirius and Ron had come back to see me every day? Have I told you that after you left, I fell asleep and when I woke up, Sirius was sitting in a chair next to me?
He told me that he was sorry for acting the way he had been acting and that he didn't mean it.

He even hugged me. But then before he left, he said the strangest thing. He said, 'don't let it get you.' I have no idea what this means and it has been driving me insane. Then he left and he wasn't in classes for the next two days. I don't understand anything anymore, Draco. Because now it seems as though he hates me again. I don't know what to think. He said that he doesn't hate me. Well... on second thought, he never actually said he didn't.
I really don't know what I'd do if it weren't for you. I know we aren't that close. I know that we will probably never be friends, but what I do have with you right now, means a lot to me. Even if it is only a few jarring comments to each other here and there. You're the only person I can talk to...
Harry stopped reading and looked up at the potions master with nothing short of confusion on his face. "Professor... I swear I didn't write this. This is not even what I wrote to him the last time. What I wrote was more along the lines of, 'M, Meet me in our room. I have something to ask you about SB. P'"
"Well, then who would be giving Voldemort false information?"
"I don't know. Truthfully... I know this sounds completely crazy... but this sounds more like the last letter I sent to my cousin Dudley. Only it's been changed around a bit. I only wrote to him last week. Except I didn't write it as though he were here when it happened. I only told him that I fell down the stairs and cracked my head open and about Sirius coming to talk to me. And... I did write that I was grateful to him, that I had somebody else to talk to, besides for the one person who could be considered my friend now."
Draco and Harry's eyes met and they held the each other's gaze for a moment before the corner of Draco's mouth lifted a bit, in what could be considered a smile. After a moment, Draco broke their gaze. "I just don't understand how they could have figured that it was Draco, who I was speaking about. I only put an M down, when I was referring to him. I promise, Professor, I didn't write this."
Snape scowled and leaned back in his chair. "Fine. No matter though. I still have procured these two pieces of parchment for you." He reached into his desk and pulled out two blank pieces of parchment and handed one to each boy. Draco and Harry looked down at them, and then at each other, and raised an eyebrow. "It's so you don't have to send owls anymore. Here, test it out, Potter. Write something on yours."
Snape handed him some ink and a quill. Harry took it and very slowly, wrote out the word, 'hello' on his piece of parchment. He looked at it with an eyebrow still raised and then gave a start when Draco gave a small sound of surprise. He looked at Draco's piece of parchment and found that the word he had written, had appeared on Draco's. When Harry looked back to his own, it was blank once again.
"Cool," Harry muttered.
"Give me that," Draco exclaimed and ripped the quill from Harry's hand and began to write on his.
"You two will be the only people who can see what is written. So feel free to write whatever you want," Snape said with slight hesitation in his voice. Draco smiled evilly and began writing even more furiously. A few moments later, a sentence appeared on Harry's, written in a precise, neat handwriting.
You're such a bloody ponce, Potter. Why I even bother with you, is beyond me.
Harry grabbed the quill and began to write. *'Like I said once before, you can't live without me. I'm too important to you, Malfoy.'*

'You wish, Potter. You're the one who can't live without me. I'm the only friend you have.'
'I always have Dudley. The only thing you're good for is my ego when playing Quidditch. You don't know how to handle your broom correctly.'
'Care to teach me? After all, playing alone with your broom is never any fun.' Draco sent Harry a small pout with a look in his eyes that clearly said, 'come hither.' Either Harry was oblivious, or he ignored it.
'Any time, Malfoy. Name a time and place.'
'How about tonight, in the classroom, ten o'clock.'
Harry looked down at his parchment in confusion and then looked up at Draco. "You're an idiot. I can't show you how to use your broom in the school. We need to be outside!"
Draco looked at Harry, amusement apparent on his face. His mouth was slowly turning up into a large smile. He threw his head back and started laughing. "Oh, Merlin! Potter, you are the idiot! You're so naive!"
"What?" Harry asked, completely bewildered.
"I think... and this is only a guess, since I do not know what you were talking about, and I'd like to keep it that way. Draco is making a sexual connotation," Snape said dryly.
Harry felt himself turn red and he slowly put the quill back on Snape's desk, while listening to the sound of Draco laughing. "Oh. I think I'll be going now."
"Me too," Draco said, as he wiped the tears of mirth off of his face.
"Actually, Draco. There is something that I do need to discuss with you now." Snape gave him a pointed look and Draco's face immediately paled.
"Right."
"You may go, Potter."
Harry left without another word to anybody, obviously still embarrassed at his naiveté.
The two sat in silence for a while after the door clicked shut behind Harry. Draco was fidgeting slightly in his chair and playing with his blank piece of parchment. "Keep playing with that and you'll rip it," Snape said idly.
"Right." Draco put the parchment in front of him and levelled Snape with his gaze. "So... what did you want to speak to me about?" he asked, knowing exactly what Snape wanted to say.
"I think you know. But I'll enlighten you anyhow. This is about a certain other letter that you have shown me not too long ago now. You know... the letter from Lucius."
"And what was your decision about that, sir?" Draco asked, feeling it necessary to be formal.
"Cut the 'sir,' nonsense, Draco. I may be your professor, but I am your godfather first. I hate it when you call me that."
"Sorry, Sevy."
Snape made a disgruntled sound in the back of his throat but continued on. "I want to know, first of all, has anybody been acting strange towards you? Has anything out of the ordinary happened since you have received this letter?"
Draco thought about his encounter with the man in the dungeons, how eager he seemed to be to get him to come and have a cup of hot chocolate with him. How his anger wasn't showing when Draco had refused, wasn't showing but it could be felt in his very skin. With years of experience with Lucius, Draco was very good at knowing when people were angry, even when they didn't show it. And, the man had most definitely been angry. Draco shuddered inwardly and looked Snape in the eye.
"No, Severus. Nothing out of the ordinary has happened. Except for me becoming closer to

Potter. That's strange. I actually don't want to fight with him all the time anymore."
"Yes. I don't know if I like it, either. When things get back to normal around here, I should think I will miss our Potter-bashing conversations."
Draco laughed and shook his head. "I think I will too. But we always have everything else to bash. Such as Weasley's lack of brains, and money. And Granger's annoying abundance of brains."
"Quite. I have a funny story to tell you about Weasley's detention that I oversaw after he threw that slug at Potter's face. But, that's for another time, I think. We're getting off topic here."
"Do we really have to get back on topic? I'd much rather talk about Weasley's misfortune. It'll give Harry a laugh later, especially since Weasley had the balls to try to beat him up. I think he's still a bit down on that."
"Weasley tried to beat him up? How come you never told me about this?"
"I have my own plans for revenge," Draco said evasively. "He'll get what's coming to him."
"I don't understand your relationship with Potter and I don't intend to. Just as long as you make sure he doesn't get himself killed. I'm sure Dumbledore wouldn't fancy waking up from his 'trance' and finding his wonder boy dead."
"He won't. We made a deal to protect each other."
Snape raised an eyebrow but didn't ask. "Now, Draco... I have come to a decision. There is really only one way to figure this out. Your father says that if you decide to change your mind about becoming a Death Eater, to write to him."
"Your point?"
"I think it's time to write to him."
"Ex... excuse me? I am *not* going to become a Death Eater. Kissing the hem of some twisted old sod's robes does not appeal to me!"
"I know you don't want to become a Death Eater, just as much as I don't wish to continue being one. But Lucius said that if you do wish to become one, he would send their operative in Hogwarts to you. We need to know who this man is, Draco. That'll be the first step. I promise I will protect you from anything that will put you in danger. I can't promise you that you won't need to do things that you don't want to do... but it's part of the job. Just know that you'll be doing something helpful. You'll be helping everybody out. You'll be helping Potter."
Draco scowled and stared down at his shoes for a long time. "Draco?" Snape asked quietly, after a few minutes.
"Fine. I'll write to Lucius. I'll become a Death Eater. Can I tell Harry? You know, just in case he sees the mark and thinks that I've betrayed him?"
"No!" Snape said sharply. "First and foremost, you do not tell *anybody* what you are doing. Crabbe, Goyle, Parkinson, Zabini... *nobody* must know. Even if most Slytherins are loyal to Voldemort, we can't risk anything. If Potter does see the mark, then I will tell him what you are doing, but that is only if worse comes to worst." Draco felt himself draining of colour and knew that it must have showed because Snape was looking at him with a very concerned expression. It was very rare that the potions master ever showed any emotion towards him. And when he did, it always left Draco feeling very safe. Both of his parents had always neglected in showing any kind of concern for him his entire life.
"I promise it'll be okay, Draco. I won't let anything happen to you."
Draco nodded, still staring at the floor. "I know. I'm more worried that it'll all be for nothing. What if Voldemort finds out where my loyalties lie before I have the chance to do anything?"

"As long as you toe the line very carefully, you'll be alright. Now, I need to talk to you about something else as well. I was wondering how your friendship with Weasley and Granger were going?"
"They aren't. They won't let me in. Apparently, just because they don't like Harry, doesn't mean their feelings towards me have changed."
"You need to keep trying. After you write to your father, go find them and try again. Don't stop. Okay?"
"Fine. Do you know what you're doing to me? First Harry, and now Weasley and Granger? You're completely sadistic."
Snape smirked. "Yes, well, you are friends with Potter now, aren't you?"
"I suppose you could say that, in a way, yes we are friends. Not friends in the way he and Weasley used to be though."
"And I doubt it will ever be that way. You've hated each other too long for anything to really form between you."
"But Severus... I haven't hated him as long as he's hated me. I liked him when I met him at Madam Malkin's. I didn't know who he was... but that's besides the point."
"But you've basically hated him since he refused your friendship, haven't you?"
"Yes. But it wasn't so bad last year. I still acted nasty towards him... but I didn't loathe him anymore."
Snape gave him a knowing look and leaned back in his chair. "Do you want to be good friends with him?"
"I think so. But I don't know if he wants to be. He'll probably just ditch me again for Weasley when this blows over."
"Well, Draco... there's only one way to find out. Offer your hand to him again. If he takes it, you're friends. It hasn't actually been said that you are, has it?"
"Not really. Not officially. He probably doesn't need to know for sure. But I do. I need to know I'm not wasting my time."
"Then I believe you have some things to do now. A letter and then three friends to make. Though I do believe one of them will be more willing than the others."
"Right. Thank you, Severus."
"Any time. Just don't tell anybody else that. My door is only open to you."
Draco smiled and nodded. His godfather was an interesting individual. Draco stood up and grabbed his parchment from the desk. "Oh, and thanks for this."
"Certainly. Now leave."
The younger man hurried out of the room, and to his dorm room. Once there, he pulled out a blank piece of parchment, quill, and ink and began to write a letter that would inevitably, change his life for the worse.
Father,
Thank you for your last letter. I'm sorry that this reply is late. I have been busy with my studies and I have been thinking over your suggestion. I have decided that I want to join you and the Dark Lord.
I'm sorry that it has taken so long for me to figure this out, but I now know that it is the right way to go. Mudbloods and Muggles have no place in our world. I think you'll be happy to know that Severus is the one who persuaded me into it. I know how you think that he is the traitor. I can assure you, that he isn't. His allegiances are very much with Lord Voldemort.

I also write to tell you that I am still staying at Hogwarts for the Christmas holidays, as I have already signed up to do so. I think it will be for the best since all the professors are assigning us so much more work for us this year. I believe it is in preparation for the N.E.W.T's next year. Staying will give me access to the library. Our library at home is hardly acceptable for my study needs.
I am awaiting either a reply or for the operative inside Hogwarts to come and find me.
Your son,
Draco
Draco tied the letter to his owl, feeling like a large paperweight was sitting in the bottom of his stomach. He didn't think that anything would take away this feeling of guilt. He felt like he was betraying Harry in every way possible by becoming a Death Eater. No matter how honourable his intentions were. He was still becoming the enemy in Harry's eyes. He just knew that that was how Harry would feel about it.
Draco looked down at his enchanted parchment and decided to write a quick note to Harry. *Do you mind if I come and see you tonight? I promise... no broom practice.*
'Yes. Please come tonight. I'm extremely bored. I'm watching the Quidditch game on my windows. I've even coloured one team scarlet and the other green. Scarlet is winning of course. And I was so looking forward to our broom practice, Draco! Why must you let me down all the time?'
I'm not here to please. But if you insist, we'll take our brooms out for a little practice run.
'Brilliant. (Note: If I were talking, my voice would be dripping with sarcasm right now.)'
Now who's letting who down?
'Still all you. Why don't you come now?'
I wish I could, but I've got something else to do.
'What's that? Or are you not allowed to say?'
I have to make friends with Weasley and Granger.
'Oh. Good luck. You'll probably need it.'
Thanks. I have to go. I'll see you when I'm done with them, okay?
'Okay. See you.'
Draco put his parchment down and saw all the writing disappear. He then decided to take it with him, just in case somebody decided to use it or actually figured out what it was. The Slytherin quickly got up and walked to the first place that came to his mind that where the two Gryffindors would might be. The library. When he got just outside the library doors, sure enough, Granger came out with Weasley close behind, carrying a large stack of books.
"But Hermione, you can't possibly need all of these books for one essay," Weasley was saying.
"Oh, Ron. You just don't understand how far a little extra work will take you. You have to broaden your horizons."
Weasley put the books on the floor and went to stand in front of Granger. He put his arms around her and began kissing her neck. "I can help broaden your horizons for you. It'll be fun for both of us." Granger looked annoyed at Weasley's antics and pushed him away just as she spotted Draco.
"Malfoy. Can we help you?" she said civilly.
"Actually, yes, you can help me, Hermione." Inwardly, he cringed just saying her name. It wasn't anything like saying 'Harry.' It just didn't feel natural. The girl raised an eyebrow and stepped forward, with Weasley right beside her.
"Bugger off, Malfoy," he hissed.

"Really, Ron. There is no need for that. I'm just looking for a civil conversation here."
"What do you want? You're calling us by our first names, Malfoy."
"Good observation, Hermione."
"Why?"
"Why not? I figure that you two are worth being friends with after all. Any person who isn't friends with Potter, should be a friend of mine. We have a common goal. To make his life miserable."
"Well, it seems to me, Malfoy, that you aren't doing a very good job of it lately. That's why I threw the slug at him that one time. You hadn't done anything to him. I was just making things more interesting."
"Hmm... is that why you did that? Well, I have had some other things on my mind since the beginning of term. I couldn't really bother in torturing Potter. But now... my schedule is free and I'm finding myself to be quite bored, actually. I thought it might be a good thing to do. So... how about it?"
"You haven't exactly asked us to do anything," Hermione pointed out.
"Oh, right. Well, I was just thinking that we could you know, talk a little, break the ice between us. We can discuss why we hate him. Plans to torment him with. We could have quite a good relationship if you think about it. I am willing to overlook the fact that you two are Gryffindors."
"Oh, that's so kind of you," Ron said scathingly.
"Well, honestly, you were probably willing to overlook the fact that I'm a Slytherin if you really wanted to do this."
The two Gryffindors looked at each other and then seeming to decide upon something, looked back at the Slytherin.
"Fine. We'll overlook that fact as long as you overlook the fact that we're Gryffindors and that I am a Muggle-born."
"Deal."
"Good. We've been trying to think up a good plan since our last one didn't work very well," Ron said, wincing a little at the memory. Hermione patted his arm.
"Well, there was no lasting damage done to you. We'll have no problems in the future." Her eyes glittered mischievously. Ron groaned.
"Stop it! We're only sixteen. I'm not ready for kids!"
"I'm only kidding, Ron. You know that."
Draco rolled his eyes. That was something he didn't need to hear. "Oh, please. Just because I'm willing to be friends with you, doesn't mean I want to hear about your sex life."
"How did you know that that was what we were talking about?"
"Oh... I heard Seamus talking about how Potter kicked Ron in the groin. Plus, you were talking about having kids. It was kind of hard to miss. I'm sorry, Ron. That has to hurt."
Again Ron winced. "Every time I think about it, it starts to hurt again. Merlin, he kicks hard."
Draco grinned inwardly. Nothing more than the bastard deserved. "Oh, he'll get his comeuppance. Come on, let's go somewhere and talk."
Draco motioned for them to follow, and so Ron picked up the forgotten books, took Hermione's hand and followed the Slytherin into a deserted room. Two hours later, Draco walked out with a very smug grin on his face. Hanging out with the two Gryffindors had just given him a completely different plan for his revenge on Ron Weasley. Draco watched his two enemies, with ill-disguised hatred, walk back to the Gryffindor tower, talking excitably about their plans for

Harry. It was just a good thing that the two never looked back. Once they were out of sight, Draco turned around and headed for the room that Harry was currently waiting for him in. After spending, what seemed like two extremely long hours with Granger and Weasley, Harry was looking like a welcome retreat. He ran to the door and stopped before it to catch his breath and muttered the password, which was still Gryferin. Harry turned to look at him from the couch and his face immediately lit up.
"Draco! It's about time you get here!"
Draco smiled and sat next to the Gryffindor. He couldn't help but feel his spirits lift upon seeing Harry's face light up like that. Maybe becoming a Death Eater wouldn't be so bad after all, as long as he kept his priorities straight and reminded himself that he was doing it for Harry. Draco stopped in his thoughts. Since when had he been doing anything for Harry? Wasn't it all supposed to be for Light side? It wasn't for Harry, it was for the Light, Draco convinced himself. He looked at his companion and smiled again.
"I know what you mean. That was the longest two hours of my entire life. I don't know how you could *want* to be friends with those two."
"They've been nothing but wonderful to me before all this. They're my only family. That's how," Harry said quietly.
"Oh. I'm sorry. I never really..."
"No, you have nothing to apologise for," Harry interrupted. He then looked over Draco. "What happened to the Malfoy that I can't stand? The Malfoy that makes terrible comments every other sentence that comes out?"
"Do you want that back?"
"I don't know. What happened?"
"It's not like I've changed completely."
"I know. But you're different."
"Some things change you. People change you. Priorities change you. I know that I've had a lot of time to figure out where my own lie, and it's most definitely not where they were before Voldemort rose again."
"I've noticed. So... how did it go with Ron and Hermione?"
"They fell for it. I don't really know what changed their minds, but they did. And they told me some interesting things."
"Like what?"
"Can we just save it for another time?"
"Sure. You want to get your arse kicked in Exploding Snap! again?"
"Yeah. I haven't had a good arse kicking in a long time."
"Well, be prepared because this will be the worse you've had in a long time."
Draco watched amused as Harry sprung off of the couch and went to rummage in his trunk for his cards. Yes, it would do no good in telling Harry what his friends had to say about him. It would only cause him more unwanted pain and confusion.
The last two weeks before the Christmas holidays flew by. Draco would visit Harry every night, from after dinner until at least midnight. His Slytherin friends were wondering what was going on with him but he just waved them off with a different excuse every night. Out of their respect for him, they left it at that. On the night before everybody would leave for the Christmas holidays, Draco was sitting in his dorm writing meaningless banter between him and Harry on their parchment. A loud knock at his door made him stuff it under his pillow and lay on his back

as if he had been doing nothing.
"What do you want?" he yelled irritably.
Vincent Crabbe blundered in with an envelope in his hands. "An owl just dropped this off in the Common room for you. It's from your father."
Draco grabbed it out of his hands. "Thank you." He began to open it but noticed that Crabbe was still standing stupidly in the door. "What? I'm not going to read it out loud to you! Get out of here!"
"Sorry," he mumbled and closed the door behind him.
"Bumbling fool."
Draco,
It is about time you have made your decision. I knew you wouldn't let me down with this, son. As much as I am disappointed that you are not coming home for the holidays, I am also glad. This will give our operative the time to speak with you and make arrangements. I understand that there are very few people staying so it will be easy for the both of you.
The snake that you requested in the your last letter I just received from you yesterday, will be delivered to you via owl post in a few days. Would you care to explain why you want a snake? Or is this another one of your big secrets?
Don't bungle up this meeting, Draco.
Lucius
Draco folded up the letter and smiled. He had written to his father two days ago, requesting a small snake. Of course, his father would never know why. Although the thought of becoming a Death Eater didn't appeal to him very well, the snake did. So, Draco was in a very good mood. He pulled the parchment back out and ignored the notes from Harry that were asking where he was.
I'm coming to see you now.
'Okay, but I warn you... I'm really tired. I might be asleep by the time you get here.'
No problem. You might regret it though.
'You better not do anything to me.'
I make promises to nobody.
'Whatever. Just come before I fall asleep.'
I'll be there in ten minutes.
Draco didn't wait to see if there was a reply. He put the parchment on the bottom of his trunk and hurried out of his dorm and into the Common room. "Hey, Draccey!" Draco shivered.
"Pansy. What do you want?"
"Come sit with us! You never hang out with us anymore."
"That's because I have better things to do." He started walking towards the wall that served as a door, but Pansy pulled him to the couch and made him sit.
"You're not getting away that easy, Draccey."
"Pansy... how many times do I have to tell you, *not* to call me that. My name is Drac -O."
Pansy moved towards him and linked her arm in Draco's. "You know you secretly like it, Draccey," she purred in his ear.
"Get off me," Draco snarled as he pushed her off. Blaise Zabini started to snicker but was silenced when Draco sent a glare his way. "Now, what's so important that it couldn't wait for later?"
"We were talking about the Dark Lord," Blaise informed him. "My father told me that they have

a plan in action to get Potter. Whether to kill or recruit him, I wouldn't know. Hopefully to kill him. He definitely deserves it. Don't you think, Draco?"
"Hmm..."
"I've been speaking with my parents as well. I'm trying to become a Death Eater," said Pansy proudly. "When do you think you'll become one, Draco?"
"I don't know. You really need a life if that's all you think about. Why not concentrate on school for now and then on becoming a Death Eater?"
"You're one to talk, Draco," grunted Goyle.
"What do you mean?" Draco said sharply.
"My father told me that you're making arrangements through your father to become one. Apparently, you're to become one after the Christmas holidays."
Draco clenched his jaw tightly as all his friends gasped and started to congratulate him.
"Obviously, your father has been given incorrect information. And even if he had been given the truth, the Dark Lord should kill him for telling anybody. It's not safe to be divulging that sort of information to anybody... even if you do plan on becoming a Death Eater, Goyle. Your father deserves a slow, painful death. Now if you'll excuse me, I have somebody to meet."
Draco stood up before anybody could stop him. He could feel their eyes boring into the back of his head as he left, but he didn't care. How could they just sit around and talk about one of their classmates' demise? Even before he became friends with Potter, he never wanted to partake in those discussions. If he had, it was all for show. But now, he couldn't bring himself to do it. Damn Potter to hell for making him soft. Draco walked moodily to Harry's private room, not caring if Filch or Mrs. Norris caught him for being out after curfew. He made it there quickly and went inside. And sure enough, Harry was lying on the top of his covers on the bed, fast asleep. Draco smiled a little and walked towards him, watching his chest rise and fall in a rhythmic pattern. Oh, this would be too much fun. Maybe it would do good for Draco to sleep on the couch tonight, just to see Harry's surprised expression when he woke up in the morning.
He sat next to Harry on the bed and looked at him, considering what his move would be. But as he started to pull out his wand, Harry started to stir and muttering, 'no,' over and over again. He started to thrash about more wildly and Draco was punched in the stomach by him. "Stupid bugger," he muttered. He put his hand out and laid it on Harry's cheek, hoping that it would calm him down. "Shh, it's just a dream, Harry." The thrashing stopped but he was still muttering, 'no.' Harry's eyes snapped open. Draco gasped and slid back on the bed. Harry's eyes were no longer the bright shade of green that they normally were. They were now so white, that they blended in with the whites of his eyes. The only colour was his black pupil, which was an unusual large shape.
He sat up on the bed and stared at Draco before smiling. It sent shivers down his spine.
"If I told you that there is darkness in me, waiting to get out, would you stop it?"
"What?"
"It's waiting to get out and there's nothing that I can do. Don't you think I'll work well on the Dark side, Draco?"
"Um... not really, no."
But his words fell on deaf ears. Harry's eyes fell closed and he laid back down on the bed, asleep before his head was down. Draco swallowed deeply and stood up, backing away slowly from the other boy. He started to stir again and opened his eyes. When he looked at Draco, his eyes were green again and he smiled at his friend. It once again sent shivers down Draco's spine, but for a

completely different reason.
"I fell asleep. How long have you been here?"
"Ten minutes?" Draco replied, trying desperately to keep his voice calm. But his facial expression must have showed the confusion, surprise, and fear on his face because Harry looked at him concerned and got off the bed.
"Are you okay? Did something happen? You look like you've seen... well, a ghost."
"I see ghosts all the time, actually."
"I know. It's a Muggle expression. I didn't know what else to say. Okay, it looks like... like you've just seen Voldemort!" he exclaimed triumphantly.
"I don't know what I just saw," he confessed.
"What do you mean?"
"Nothing. I don't think I feel very well. I'll just go back to my Common room."
"Just stay here if you don't feel well. Do you actually think you'll feel different if you go back there?"
"Well, no. But my bed is there. I have to go."
Draco didn't waste any time with running out of the room. He did feel kind of bad when he caught the hurt look on Harry's face, but he had to go and see Professor Snape. This was most definitely something that would do well in discussing with him. As he was running through the entrance hall, he ran straight into Snape, who was coming out of a side door.
"Mr. Malfoy. What are you doing out after curfew?"
"Potter," he panted. "Need to speak with you, right now."
"Come to my office," Snape said curtly. Draco followed in the long strides of his potions professor and was soon in his office. "Now, what has happened?"
"I don't know. I went to see him and when I got there, he was asleep."
"Which most people tend to do at midnight."
"Well, I didn't think that that was unusual. He told me that he might fall asleep by the time I got there. But he started dreaming when I was there and was thrashing about and muttering, 'no' the whole time. I tried to calm him down and after he stopped thrashing, he opened his eyes..."
"Which also happens when a person wakes up," Snape interrupted.
"Just shut up! I'm not done." Snape raised an eyebrow but motioned for him to continue. "His eyes weren't green anymore. They were completely white, except for his pupils. He looked at me and said something along the lines of, 'would you stop the darkness that is fighting to get out of me?' I asked him what he was talking about. And he said that there was darkness in him, fighting to get out and that there was nothing he could do. He asked me if I thought he would work well on the Dark side. I said no, but he fell asleep again. He woke up a minute later and his eyes were normal again and he started to make normal conversation again. I told him I wasn't feeling well, after he asked what was wrong. That's when I ran out of there to find you."
Snape got out of his chair and began pacing the room. Draco watched him walk back and forth and then stand with a hand on the mantle of the fireplace. "Somebody is in his head," he said suddenly.
"Excuse me?"
"Somebody is in his head, brainwashing him, I think. Voldemort hasn't stopped at anything before. I know of somebody who was brainwashed and the same thing happened to them that you just described to me."
"Do you know how to stop it?"

"Only if I find the person who is doing it. But I have to be absolutely certain about that. Otherwise, it could mean my exposure. Has anything else of this nature happened before?"
"Well, he had a dream before when I was with him one time. He was yelling 'no' and then started yelling, 'yes, let it take you,' something like that."
"How long ago was that?"
"Around Halloween I think. Severus, why wouldn't Voldemort just use the Imperius on Harry? It seems a whole lot easier."
"Potter can fight the Imperius. It would be a waste of time."
"He can fight it?"
"Yes. He gets it from his father. He could do it as well. Only really strong minds can do so and Potters have always been powerful wizards with strong minds."
"Well... what's going to happen if we can't stop him from being brainwashed?"
Snape sighed, and levelled a grave stare on Draco. "We'll have another Dark Lord in the making."

*Thanks to:***S. Wing,**
Sailor Grape: I know teasers are mean! That's why I do them!
chips challenge: Good thoughts. Yes, you do know who 'the man' is. I'm not telling though!
I Am The Bunny Slayer: Well, if I *did* kill Harry or Draco off in the second one, it would be pretty pointless to write a third, now wouldn't it? ^_^ The ending of the second just leads into the plot of the third which is... well, I suppose it's kind of a mystery but not like this story that you're reading right now. It's not a Voldie plot anyway. I shouldn't say too much, so I'll shut up. So yeah, no need to boycott my story! ^_^ I would say that though, wouldn't I?
Devil of Dragon Destiny: I like the name! Of course this will be over soon! The sixteenth chapter to be exact. ^_^ But you won't find anything out until the fourteenth.
frizzy: I did think of Sirius hitting Harry, and I actually wrote it in... but I took it out because it made even me cry! I love Sirius and can't screw his character up *that* much. Even with him being all evil towards Harry, I don't think he'd resort to violence because as you all know, Sirius still does love Harry as seen in chapter six. He's just having a little trouble.
Kimmy: Maybe they will...
Jaded Green: Thank you, thank you! ^_^
BlackDiva: I don't know. You'll just have to read and find out! ^_~
Rain: What? You thought I was going to get Harry and Draco together? haha. Just kidding. Of course I'm getting them together. You just have to wait until chapter nine. Read the teaser, you'll see.
blah: Yes! Here's the next chapter. I hope you enjoyed it!
Teaser - Chapter Nine
"What the hell did you do to my Common room?"
"I enchanted it. We certainly can't have a snow fight out in the open so I decided to do something about it. Don't worry, after we're done, I can turn it back. Harmless, really." Harry was still staring around in bewilderment when he was taken by surprise by a snowball to the back of his head. He turned to see Draco smirking evilly at him.
"I'll get you now, Malfoy."
"Not if I get you first, Potter," Draco retorted in a low voice.
Harry had no time to deliberate over the underlying meaning of those words as he was tossed

into the best snow fight he had ever had. Draco was undeniably winning by pushing Harry further and further back. Harry finally gave up and started running for the protection of the trees. But before he got there, he ran into an invisible wall and was thrown back into an embankment of snow. "Oh," he groaned as he rubbed his aching chest, which had taken the blunt of the blow. "Déja vu."
"Oh, I forgot to warn you about that. The walls are still there, so you just ran into one," Draco said as he sat beside the Gryffindor.
"Thanks. The warning is much appreciated."
"I'm sorry." Though, how sorry he actually was, Harry could only guess since that amused smirk was held in place once more. He couldn't help but smile back. Draco was looking... there was no other word for it... beautiful. His cheeks were flushed a subtle pink from the exercise and the cold. And his blonde hair was wet and strands were falling over his face, covering up his gleaming silver eyes. The smirk fell from his mouth and now his rosy lips were parted, revealing the tips of his white teeth. His breath was condensing in front of him and with bated breath, Harry watched as Draco scooted closer in the snow. He put his hands on Harry's torso and pressed slightly.
"Does that hurt?"
"No. But it kind of tickles," he replied, looking down at the Slytherin's hands.
"Then you're probably okay. Just a little bruised." Harry froze as he felt Draco's breath on his face, but slowly, he turned his face up and found their faces to be only centimetres apart. "You still have to prove to me that you don't find me attractive," Draco whispered, eyes twinkling mischievously.
"Well, I think that doing that would be kind of pointless after I do this."
~~I feel so evil! And I love it! muahahahaha! Have you ever tried evil laughter? It really feels good to do and freaks people out. Seriously, try it sometime! ^_^ Please remember to review! That also feels good, you know

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Chapter: 9

READ ME! *::Gasp:: Somebody guessed who 'the man' is! Of course, I'm not going to tell any of you reading this who guessed or who the man is. I'll also tell you that a ton of people emailed me trying to guess who 'the man' is, so the correct guess might not be in the reviews so there is really no way that you could guess that way. I just thought I'd let you all know that the correct guess will be getting a year's supply of chocolate frogs when the truth is known. I can't believe somebody got it! I didn't think it was obvious at all! Oh well, maybe this person is just unbelievably smart. Keep guessing everybody! I love hearing who you think it is!*
A/N: *Anyway... off that topic... thanks again to my beta Padfoot's_Bitch(Sirena Black). Any mistakes are mine, not hers. Thanks and replies to my faithful reviewers are on the bottom. And let me just say... WOW! I don't think I've ever received such great response on this story as I did with this last chapter. It really blew me away! Keep those great reviews coming! Anyway... SNOG TIME! ^_~*

>Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Nine

By the time Harry left his rooms the next day, it was already after lunch. He had slept late into the day and had opted to lay in bed, awake, pondering what had come over Draco before he had run out of the room. So, when he left, it was with the purpose of finding the Slytherin. The castle was almost completely empty. Which, Harry was blissfully thankful for. He wasn't even sure if there were any students staying besides for himself and Draco. Luckily for Harry, he ran into the other boy just outside of the library. Draco was coming out of the aforementioned room with a small stack of books in his arms and looking completely preoccupied.

"Malfoy!" Harry called.

Draco gave a start and dropped his books. "Potter. What do you want?" he sneered.

"I um... I didn't know you were staying for the holidays."

Draco raised an elegant eyebrow and stepped forward. "Yeah, you did," he said quietly so that only Harry could hear.

"I know. I just didn't know what to say. What are you doing today?"

"Studying. Like I told my father I was."

"You've been speaking to your father again?" Harry asked surprised. Draco bit his lip and looked down for a moment before meeting Harry's eyes again. No emotion showed there and Harry didn't know what to think.

"Yes. We've been writing to each other. I am his son, Potter. What do you expect?"

"But..."

"But nothing. I don't know why you stopped me, but I don't care to carry on this conversation. It's wasting my time. Why don't you do something useful and go pull out some *parchment* to do some actual homework? Merlin knows it might actually help your terrible grades." Draco looking meaningfully at Harry and then turned to pick up his homework.

"Right, Malfoy. Wouldn't want to waste your precious time. You may miss a Death Eater meeting."

Harry turned on his heel and hurried back to his room to pull out his enchanted parchment. A note was already neatly scrawled across it from Draco.

Sorry about the grades remark. I know you're not completely stupid.

'Your confidence in me astounds me, Malfoy.'

Would you expect anything less?

'Probably not. I'm going to move back into the Gryffindor dormitories today. You want to meet me there later?'

Sure. Why not? I'll have nothing better to do. I'm the only Slytherin here. And there's only two Hufflepuffs and one Ravenclaw.

'How do you know?'

Some of us take the time to show up at meals. That's how.

'Oh. I was sleeping for most of the day and then I didn't feel like coming out.'

Right. Well, I have some things to do right now.

"Okay. Stop by the room first and I'll leave the Invisibility Cloak in here for you. The password to the tower is bravery.'

How original. I have no idea where the Gryffindor tower is, you know.

'Seventh floor at the portrait of the Fat Lady. I never thought I'd share that information with you.

I'll talk to you later.'
Later, Harry. Oh.. wait. Don't ever talk to me in the hallways again or I may be forced to place rictusempra on you again.
'Should I be scared? Because I'm not.'
Probably not. But seriously, don't.
'I know. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.'
Good. I'll talk to you later.
'You better make good on that promise.'
Only for you Harry, dahling. Ta-ta!
Harry snorted in laugher. *'Ta-ta!'*
For the rest of the afternoon, Harry busied himself with moving his personal belongings to his dorm room. Afterwards, he lay down on his bed and sighed. It really was great to be back in his own bed again. No matter how accustomed he had become to the other room, this room was still his home. A half an hour before dinner, Harry was still lying on his bed, staring up at his scarlet hangings, when part of his bed sagged under an invisible weight. Harry gave a start and sat up, but a hand pushed him back down and traced a finger down his chest.
"I swear that better be who I think it is, or you will die a terrible, painful death."
Ripples in the air appeared and a moment later, Draco Malfoy's head appeared, smirking broadly. "I hope I'm the one you're expecting."
"Who else would I be expecting?"
"Somebody a bit less attractive than me, maybe?"
"I don't think that that is possible, seeing as how you already rank on the bottom of the 'attractive people' list."
Draco adopted a sly smile and moved onto his still invisible knees beside Harry. "Drop that cloak. You're freaking me out."
"I didn't know you wanted to see me naked so badly, Harry," Draco said demurely.
"That's not what I meant." Draco sighed and let the cloak puddle to the bed around his body. He then started tracing patterns on Harry's chest that only he was able to see.
"You really don't find me attractive?" he pouted.
"Do you really want me to that badly, Draco?"
"It's good for a boy's ego."
"Well, sorry. But... I don't," he said, without much conviction in his voice.
Draco leaned down and began to whisper in his ear, purposely breathing into it. "Sorry, if I don't believe you, Harry, but you're just going to have to... prove it," he said and he jumped off of the bed and ran out of the room. Harry stayed motionless on his bed for a few moments, trying to gain his senses back, before he also jumped off of his bed and chased after the other boy. He heard the light footsteps of Draco running down the stairs and stopping in the common room. Harry tore after him, into the warm, and cosy room. Only now, it was neither warm nor cosy. In fact, as Harry stepped off of the last stair, his foot caught the ice that covered the floor and he slid a distance before finally dropping down onto his bum.
Draco's laugh resounded throughout the room as Harry looked around his Common room in bewilderment. It was no longer his Common room. It looked as if they were outside, in the snow. There were a couple large snow forts and plenty of snow. The walls that Harry could have sworn had been there when he had gone up the stairs to his dorm room, had now been replaced by nothing but trees and endless fields of snow. "What the hell did you do to my Common room?"

he demanded.
"I enchanted it. We certainly can't have a snow fight out in the open so I decided to do something about it. Don't worry, after we're done, I can turn it back. Harmless, really." Harry was still staring around in bewilderment when he was taken by surprise by a snowball to the back of his head. He turned to see Draco smirking evilly at him.
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"Well, I think that doing that would be kind of pointless after I do this."
Harry closed the small distance between them and pressed his lips against the other boy's. His hands crawled slowly up Draco's chest and then entwined into his wet hair, while Draco's hands encircled Harry's waist and brought his body closer to his own. They pulled away from the gentle kiss at the same time, and Draco kissed the corners of Harry's mouth before allowing their lips to meet fully once more. Draco's tongue slid out of his mouth and ran along Harry's bottom lip, and soon their tongues met for the first time, searching, exploring. They both laid back into the cold snow with the blonde boy on top, getting to know the inside of each others mouth. The wetness, the taste, the texture, anything that would help them to remember this moment forever.
Before the kiss could become more urgent, the boys pulled away and looked into each other glazed eyes. Green met silver and it was as if an iceberg hit land. "Oh my God," they both muttered at the same time and separated. "I... what... what... we..." they both stuttered in unison.
"You're gay?" They both managed to get out, once again at the same time. More staring. Silence, quiet enough to suffocate. Slowly, both of their mouths quirked up in smiles and they began to laugh nervously, not quite sure of what to do besides laughing..

After both boys stopped laughing, they stared some more. Finally, Draco broke the silence: "Let's just clean up all this snow up and agree to not talk about this. At least not right now... okay?"
"Agreed," Harry replied with a grin and held out his hand. "Friends?" Harry watched as a dozen different emotions flitted across Draco's features. The first was surprise, disappointment, acceptance, surprise once again, happiness, and then pure bliss. Draco put his hand into Harry's and shook firmly.
"I'll take your word on that, Harry. Friends."
Harry smiled as they shook on it, but couldn't help but feel a little disappointment. Friends. They were friends. And that was it. Did he actually want something more?
The next couple days were spent going between the Slytherin Common room and the Gryffindor Common room. Though more time was spent in Gryffindor since the dungeons were always so cold and Harry complained when they were down there. The incident in the snow was not spoken about as planned, but when there was a silence, both knew that it was what the other was thinking about. For Harry, it was either that, or the voice that still came to him. It kept telling him the same things: that he was too powerful to be on the Light side. That the Light didn't want him in the first place. The Dark would treat him better. Though Harry still fought with it, his arguments were becoming weaker. The voice was too good at coming up with good answers to Harry's doubts. Soon, Harry felt like he would have none left. And… that was what scared him. So, more and more, he found himself trying to block out the voice to think about his kiss with Draco. It wasn't exactly preferred, but it was a good distraction. Especially since Draco's lips had been so soft, and his kisses so gentle. So caring, like he would never let anything happen to Harry. And his hair had been like silk, so gratifying to run his hands through. But no, Harry couldn't say any of those things to Draco. He had to settle with the one memory he had and sometimes look longingly at Draco, when he thought he wasn't looking. It was weird to think that Harry was even comfortable with his feelings for Draco. If somebody had told him that he would develop feelings for Draco Malfoy a year ago, he would have told them to go check themselves into St. Mungo's. It seemed natural now to fancy the boy. It seemed natural to send him those discreet longing looks.
Draco did see the looks sent to him by the Gryffindor. The last thing he would do though, would be to let on that he did see it. The fact was, was that he liked knowing that Harry could possibly be longing for him. Because, it just wouldn't be fair if he was pining for Harry, and Harry didn't feel the same way. Though knowing that they both fancied each other, Draco didn't make another move. He thought it better to let it happen naturally, like it did before. Besides, Draco *did* have slightly more important things to worry about. Like, such as his upcoming meeting with the operative inside Hogwarts. It was coming up, the day after Christmas. Upon reflection, Christmas morning was here, and Draco was still lying in bed.
The Slytherin chastised himself and quickly jumped out of his bed to rip into the presents that were sitting at the base of his bed. They were all from his parents and from the select few Slytherins who were nice enough to get presents for their friends. Draco ripped through all these without a thought to any individual thing. After all, he was to meet Harry in the Gryffindor Common room so that they could exchange their presents at the same time. Draco quickly showered, dressed, shrunk Harry's presents and wrapped the Invisibility Cloak around himself. But, just as he stepped out the door from his dorm room, he stopped himself and ran back to spray a bit of cologne on himself. Hopefully, Harry would notice... and maybe then anything something could happen.

Draco scowled at himself, as he ran out of the Common room, for his girlish thinking. He was like a silly little school girl with a crush. It wasn't like Harry *would* notice. But then, the last time he had checked, Harry had been undeniably sexy. It wouldn't hurt to put a little effort into his appearance. Draco secretly didn't think he had a chance over those sparkling emerald pools that Harry had the nerve to call his eyes. (Though Draco would never admit that to anybody) Nobody's eyes were that pretty. Then there was that hair that was so stubbornly untidy and flew every which way. Draco had checked for himself while Harry had fallen asleep the day before. He had tried to brush it down but nothing had worked. It was naturally that way. Damn it all to hell. That made Harry's appeal all that much more sexy. Draco felt his knees go weak as he imagined those full red lips, covering his own body with kisses. Damn Potter. *Damn him to hell for making me like this,* he thought fiercely.
As his thoughts continued of Harry's lips, the portrait of the Fat Lady appeared before him and he called out a breathless, 'bravery.' After he climbed through, he let the cloak fall to the ground and looked up just in time to see Harry wrap him in a hug.
"Happy Christmas, Draco."
"Happy Christmas, Harry," he replied into Harry's shoulder. He couldn't help but smile as he heard Harry take in a deep breath, most likely taking in his scent. They pulled away and smiled at each other. This time, it was Draco's turn to take a deep breath. Harry had already showered and dressed. And damn him to hell a thousand times. He looked good. He had on form-fitting black trousers and a dark red knit jumper. It all fit... *very* nicely. "You look... good," Draco choked out. Draco cursed Harry to hell a few more times when Harry gave him a maddening knowing smirk.
"So do you, actually."
"Don't I always?" Draco replied smugly.
"And I'm the one who needs a pin in my ego?"
"Who says that?"
"Everybody who hates me. So... everybody."
"Well... I don't. I'll prove it. I brought you presents!" Draco exclaimed while enlarging his the shrunken gifts. Harry's eyes bulged as they saw them.
"You didn't have to get me three gifts!"
"I'm making up for the ones you probably didn't get this year. I don't mind."
"Well, now I feel like I've cheated you out of two gifts."
"Not necessarily. Depends on if your gift is good or not." Draco said with a grin.
"That makes me feel better. Come on. Let's go open them. I have yours over there by the couch." Harry pulled Draco over to the couch and sat down.
"You first," they said at the same time. They both laughed uncomfortably, as speaking at the same time brought back the memories of their first kiss.
"You first," Draco said again. "You've got three. I'll open mine last."
"Fine." Harry grabbed first the one that looked like a book and wasted no time in tearing it open. A book with a golden title gleamed up at him. *"Know Your Enemies'*
"What's this?"
"It's a book on Dark curses and potions. It's so that you know what's coming to you if you are ever in a bad situation. It actually tells how to cast the certain spells and make the potions if necessary, and of course, how to defend yourself against them."
Harry got a wicked gleam in his eyes and he quirked a corner of his mouth up at Draco. "Now,

Mr. Malfoy, what would give you the idea that *I, Harry Potter* would ever need to defend myself against Dark curses and potions? Why, the idea is simply preposterous!" Draco smiled and immediately became sober again.
"Do you hate it?"
"No! I love it! Of course I like it. Why wouldn't I want to know more ways to defend myself? It's very nice." Draco's smile reappeared and he pushed the largest present towards Harry. It was a cube about a foot long and just as tall on every side. Harry ripped the paper open again and gasped as a glass cage with a violently purple snake inside came into view. "A snake!" he exclaimed. "It's beautiful, Draco! Thank you!"
"Take it out. Talk to it."
Harry looked hesitantly into Draco's face but got nothing but encouragement; so, he put his hand inside the tank, let the snake's tongue flicker out to smell his hand, and then the snake slowly wrapped itself around Harry's wrist. It wasn't a very large snake. Maybe, about six inches long. Draco informed him Harry that it was already full-grown.
"My name is Harry Potter. What's your name?" Harry hissed at it.
"I do not have a name, Harry. But you are welcome to give me one. Only those who can speak my language are worthy enough."
"Er - I can't think of one right now. I'll get back to you on that one."
"Take your time. Can I stay wrapped around your wrist? The cage is cold."
"Sure. I'll place a warming charm on it for when I can't have you on my wrist."
"Thank you."
Harry looked back up at Draco, his face shining. "She's wonderful. Thank you."
"Do you have any idea how weird it is to see you speaking with a snake?"
"No. Sorry. I won't do it around you if it bothers you."
"No! I like seeing you do it. It's fascinating. Just weird. Here, you still have another gift." Draco handed the last gift to Harry. and Harry thought that this one kind of resembled the shape of a photo album. Sure enough, when he opened it up, it was a photo album full of pictures of his parents' school days, wedding, Harry's own birth, first birthday, and a picnic.
"Where did you get this?" Harry asked, awed, as he flipped through it.
"I... I don't want to say. I had to tell some lies to get it and... I'll just tell you when the time is right, okay?"
Harry looked up into Draco's eyes, curious, but let it go. He would find out sooner or later.
"Thank you," he said quietly. "I don't have that many pictures of them."
"No problem," Draco said, but really he was thinking that it had been worth all the problems that he had gone through to get it.
"You still have a gift, Draco," Harry said as he pushed his gift over to him. Draco took the gift in his hands and began to unwrap the silver paper. Inside, there was a dark green, velvet box, and upon opening it up, a dark silver dragon flew out and landed on Draco's knee. He stared at it, captivated. It was about the size of his fist and had the most amazing eyes that Draco had ever seen. They were an emerald colour that had a light silver shimmering through it like waves. The dragon spread its wings as if in a stretch, opened its mouth to emit a small jet of fire and curled up on Draco, ready for a long nap.
"Wow," Draco breathed.
"Do you like it?" Harry asked nervously.
"Like it? Harry... it's the most wonderful gift anybody has ever given to me. I'm not just saying

that. Nobody ever gets me anything with dragons and they're my favourite animal."
"Well, then it's good luck that your name is Draco, isn't it?"
Draco finally looked up from the small dragon on his knee to look at the boy beside him. He gave a dazzling smile that made Harry's heart flutter rapidly. Never had Draco given out a smile like that to anybody, and Harry had been the recipient of it. "It's incredible good luck, Harry."
Draco picked the dragon up and placed it on the table and then surprised Harry by giving him a hug. "Thank you," he whispered into his ear.
"Don't mention it. You deserve more than that for all that you've done for me this year. I never thought I'd come to you as a friend."
"I know. I can't believe I let Snape talk me into this," Draco said as he pulled away. They both sat back on the couch with their bodies much closer than they had started out. Harry could feel the heat radiating off of Draco's body now and longed to touch. "I really didn't want to be your ally," Draco continued.
"Why? Because of who I am, or because we've been enemies for so long?"
"Both I think. And I think I was scared."
"Of what?"
"... That - that you would reject me again."
"... ... I did do that, didn't I?" Harry said slowly.
"You did."
"I'm a terrible person. I'm so sorry, Draco. I know that must have sounded pretty harsh what I said to you, but in my defence, you had just insulted my first-ever friend."
"I know I deserved it. I was just parroting what my father put into my head. I'm not completely stupid, I know what I said to you. But I won't deny that it did hurt when you said that. That's why I've been so rotten to you all these years, Harry. I was protecting my pride. I *was* just trying to be nice, and then Weasley laughed at my name, so I snapped back about his family. Then you refused my hand because of it. Again, I made your life terrible because of it."
"I'm really sorry, Draco. I wish things would have been different but..."
"They weren't. We are bitter enemies..."
"We're not anymore. We did shake on it the other day if you don't remember."
"I know. I remember, I remember perfectly."
The two boys locked eyes, silver swirled into green, and it was as though all time stopped.
"Draco," Harry whispered.
"Hmm?"
"I... I don't know."
A few moments' silence stretched out between them. "Draco," Harry whispered again, intent on saying something intelligent this time, but stopped any thought process as their faces slowly crept closer. Draco's hand brushed along Harry's cheek to rest lightly on the back of his neck. And the two still stared into the other's eyes, unable to look away.
"Harry..." Draco whispered softly. His breath played against Harry's lips, sending a tingling down his entire body. Both their eyes closed as their lips touched. Neither one moved. They both sat there with their lips pressed softly together, enjoying the touch more than anything else. Draco was the first to move. He brushed his lips across Harry's cheek and down to his neck. Harry took a deep breath and fell into Draco's embrace, feeling like everything was right again. As long as they stayed the way they were, nothing would ever go wrong again. Neither boy knew how long they held each other, but they didn't care. All Harry knew, was that he liked having his head

buried in Draco's neck, taking in his soft, masculine smell.
Draco drew in a deep breath and pulled away a little, only to be drawn back by the intense need to kiss Harry again. He pushed the red jumper a little to the side and kissed the place where Harry's neck ended and his shoulder began. Draco made a trail of kisses up Harry's neck, down his jaw bone, to his chin, until finally, Draco's lips found Harry's lips once more. He gave the Gryffindor a lingering kiss before gently snaking his tongue out to seek entrance to Harry's mouth. Harry sighed and returned the kiss, wrapping his arms even more firmly about Draco's neck. It was Draco's turn to sigh into the kiss as he felt Harry's fingertips softly playing with his hair and brushing over the back of his neck. Draco pulled back from the painfully gentle kiss and gained a small whimper of protest from Harry. The Slytherin smirked a little and kissed Harry's cheek.
"I can't give you too much of Draco Malfoy at once, Harry. You may faint from sensory overload."
Harry laughed and playfully pushed him away. The rest of the day was spent sitting in front of the fire, spearing food onto the fire pokers and eating to their hearts' delight. They spoke of inconsequential things, Quidditch, homework, teachers, (mainly Snape) new broomsticks, and telling foul jokes that had them rolling on the floor with laughter. It was still an unspoken rule to not bring up their two kisses and when silence fell upon them at a couple points during the day, Harry found himself wondering what they both meant. But he wouldn't be left long to ponder as either Draco, would break into those thoughts, or the voice would. The voice was becoming relentless and Harry had even begged it to leave him alone on Christmas. For some reason, the man had become suspicious and asked who he was with. Harry, of course told him nobody, that he had no friends left. Then the voice would be so kind to remind him why he didn't have any friends and that the Dark side would be more accommodating. Harry found it increasingly difficult to deny.
Sometime after the two boys had arrived back in the Gryffindor tower from the Christmas dinner, they could be found sprawled out on the couch together once again, playing with their presents. Draco was petting his new dragon with his forefinger and Harry was absentmindedly stroking his purple snake, trying to think up a good name for her.
"Thought of a name yet?" Draco asked suddenly, making Harry jump a little.
"Er - not yet. I might just look one up soon if I can't find one I like a lot."
"It's not hard to think of a name, Harry. Just name her Bob or something."
"You can't name a girl, Bob, Draco! Besides, I want something that I think sounds exotic."
"How about Rosalie?"
"Hmm... good name but not exotic. And it just doesn't fit a snake. Did you name your dragon?"
"I sure did!"
"Well? What is it?"
Draco smiled and scratched the dragon under his chin. The little animal seemed to like it and gave a weird sort of purring sound. "Wally."
"Wally? Where did you come up with that?"
"I don't know. I just knew from the moment I saw him that his name was going to be Wally."
Harry laughed quietly, shaking his head. "I don't know about you sometimes, Drake."
Draco cocked his head to the side in a thoughtful expression. "Drake, hm? Nobody has ever called me that before. It's almost as good as Young Master Draco... and since you refuse to call me that, you'll call me Drake from now on."

"Oh, really? I don't take orders from you, Malfoy."
"Oh, please, Harry?" Draco whined. "I promise the next time I kiss you, it'll be nice, long, and hard. Just the way you like it."
Harry flushed red and looked down. "How would you know that that is the way I like it?"
"I don't. But we'll experiment," he replied with a twinkle in his eyes. "I'll find out what you like and you'll find out what I like."
Harry looked up at Draco, hoping that his face wasn't red anymore, and offered him a small smile. "Okay, Drake." Draco's eyes lit up and he sank back into his seat.
"I knew you'd see it my way."
"Well, your way was extremely tempting."
Draco quirked an eyebrow at Harry just as a small strand of blonde hair fell over his eye. "That's because I'm extremely tempting, Harry, my boy." Harry only smiled and fell back into the couch. He wasn't fighting with that, but he also wasn't going to tell Draco that. His ego didn't need to be pumped up anymore.
Draco decided to spend that night in the tower with Harry. He slept in Ron's bed and they talked late into the night. After only a few hours of sleep, Draco rose and walked to Harry's bed, watching the gentle rise and fall of his chest with a smile. Borrowing a piece of parchment from his bedside table, he wrote a note to Harry, explaining that he had some things to do for Snape and would be back later to see him. He set the note down on Harry's bedside table, next to his glasses and sat down beside the Gryffindor.
"Wish me luck, Harry. Don't ask me why I feel the need to do this for you. I wouldn't have an answer." Draco sighed and ran a hand through his dishevelled blonde hair. "I'm supposed to hate you, you know. You're bloody Harry Potter. Lover of Mudbloods and Muggles. You're a half-blood. All the signs are pointing to hate this bo...man, but I don't. And I hate you for that. You're turning me soft. Just please... don't hate me if you find out what I'm doing today because I'm risking my life for you... and maybe a little for me." Draco lifted a hand and ran his fingers through Harry's hair. "I'll help to keep you safe from this, Harry. Even if I have to keep you from yourself."
Draco sighed sadly again and bent to give Harry's slightly parted lips a soft, lingering kiss. When he stood up again, Harry moved in his sleep and muttered a barely imperceptible, 'Draco' before drifting off again. Draco took the Invisibility Cloak, wrapped it around himself and left the Gryffindor dormitories. After showering and changing in his dorm, he left again to meet the operative in the East Tower. Draco couldn't help but be a little nervous about it. He kept telling himself that he wasn't doing this for himself. He was doing it all to keep the school safe and in the process, helping Harry. But, then the little niggling thought came back to him that deep down, this was what he wanted.
Not for Voldemort, not for his father, not for anybody but himself. To prove to himself that he wasn't turning soft. To prove that he still had the traits in him that made him so distinctly Draco Malfoy. Sure, he still had his hatred for Muggles and Mudbloods, but he hadn't been exactly vocal about it as of late. He still had his love for making people miserable, but again because of his preoccupation with Harry, that had been put on hold as well. Maybe the petty little joke that Weasley was going to receive when term started again would be enough, but somehow, Draco didn't think so. He needed something more to satisfy his longing for the Dark. Maybe this was for himself more than anything. He'd be satisfying a craving while helping out the greater good.
Draco arrived to his destination sooner than he expected, and taking a deep breath, opened the

door to the top of the tower. There weren't many windows in the room, so it was mostly cloaked in darkness. But from what Draco could tell, the room was completely lacking in any decorum. The Slytherin boy stood in the open doorway and shivered as a draft blew through.
"Close the door," a gruff voice said all of a sudden. Draco jumped but did as he was told, gripping his wand the entire time. "You're late."
"Sorry. I slept in later than I thought I would."
"Right. So... I think that introductions are necessary. I know who you are, Draco Malfoy." The cloaked and hooded figure could be seen taking down his hood but his face was still in blackness. "And I..." he said, as he stepped forward into a small beam of light. His features came into view and Draco's eyes bulged as he gasped loudly.
"You!"
Teaser after replies.
Lizzie: Was this Harry/Draco action good enough? ^_^ I'm not telling if it's going to be Evil!Harry. Though that answer should have been answer enough, right?
Meemo: You're Meemo Malfoy from FA, right? If so, you're awesome! I think you have reviewed every single chapter so far, if not, pretty darn close. Thank you!
Black Diva: I love being mean and I think that almost every author out there would say that it's fun to leave little cliffhangers. The ending of this chapter is proof enough of that though, right? ^_^ I can't say the teaser for this chapter will be a cliffhanger though because I haven't picked it yet!
Anne Pheonix: You think the worse has passed, huh? No comment. ^_^
frizzy: Yay! You keep coming back for more! I hope this chapter lived up to your standards for this story!
S. Wing: You keep coming back too! It makes me so happy! I am cruel though, aren't I? It's great!
Weeping Angel: You don't remember Draco asking for the snake because I edited that scene out. It was useless and made the story boring. I figured that it didn't really matter if I did put it in or not. Sorry if I confused you.
zeynel: Of course they'll feel bad! They are Harry's 'family' after all. Thanks for the glowing review! You're making me blush! ^_^
chips challenge: Hello again! Harry would never give up his friends of his own free will. Everything will be all well all in good time. Well, even if Draco didn't know who the DE was inside of Hogwarts before, he sure know now!
marguerite: Well, you will have to wait for Dudley... in fact, I didn't add in what is going on with him until the beginning of the sequel. I tried adding Dudley in the last chapters of this story but it just turned out really awkward and I think it just fits better there than in this story. As for Cornelius Fudge... I'm not telling. muahhahahaha.
xikum: I'll tell you that you have about four more chapters of frustration before everything is revealed. Chapter fourteen is when I answer all your questions. As for Black... I'm not telling. muahhahahahaha
Draconian: Thank you! I'm glad that I've succeeded in making good interactions between Harry and Draco!
I Am The Bunny Slayer: Ooh, I love that laugh the best. It scares people the most! I've found that it's strangely cathartic. Have I said that before? It seems I have... oh well. Hmm... I never thought of doing a fic with the main characters as ghosts... well, I have with Nearly Headless

Nick, but not with Harry as a ghost. That would be interesting, but the main characters are Harry and Draco. They are not ghosts. I'll try to be nice with the teaser this time.
Sailor Grape: Oh, Draco's revenge is funny. Well, at least I amuse myself by thinking it is. That Dark Lord statement was quite obvious, wasn't it? ::evil cackle::
Jess: Thank you!
DemonicCharity: Addict, huh? I don't see how I could complain to that. It makes me so happy to see that everybody thinks my idea is so original! Thanks!
redredredred: I post every Sunday so keep looking for them. I have the entire story finished and the last three chapters are with my beta as we speak. I wanna hug Draco as well. He really is just so cute, isn't he?
angel: Was this soon enough? ^_^ Remember, a new installment every Sunday!
Mrs Sourna Akito: Who reviewed chapter three just yesterday... Ah! I thought you were going to tell me how terrible my story is! I don't like much Harry/Ginny either, but I did it anyway. It was quite painful even though I used to sail that ship.

Teaser:
The two boys were soon throwing punches at each other for all that they were worth. The crowd around them were pushing closer into them, cheering them on. Everybody in attendance was cheering for Harry's murder, but Harry wouldn't give anybody the satisfaction of seeing him hurt. Especially not Draco. Just as he really started to give it to Draco, hands started to pull Harry away and when he looked up, Snape was holding back Draco with a look of pure venom. Harry could feel warm breath on his face from the person who was holding him back.
"It's getting you, Mr. Potter," the man whispered in his ear. Harry froze. It was 'the voice.' He'd recognise it anywhere. The man chuckled softly and began forcing Harry through the crowd, following Snape to his office. Harry tried turning around to see who it was, but the man had a firm grip and wouldn't let him. The group of four went into Snape's office and Snape turned to Harry and the man.
"You may go. I'd like to handle these two by myself, if you don't mind."
"Not at all, Severus. I know that you're very strict when it comes to your students. I'll just be on my way."
The man let go and Harry immediately turned around to look, but all he saw was the swish of the man's robes going out the doo

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Chapter: 10

A/N: Thanks again to my beta, Padfoots_Bitch. She's super cool! ^.^ Surprisingly, I don't have much to say today. All the thanks and replies to my awesome reviewers are on the bottom. I'm now over 100! Oh, and another teaser because well... I like being evil. *And* I want to see if I can get a record with how many times I get to be called evil this chapter. Well, on with the story!

Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Ten

Harry jolted awake the next morning with a great feeling of dread. He stared wildly about the room, wondering where, who, and what he was. But then, his brain started to work again and he remembered that he was in his dorm room, he was Harry Potter, and he was a wizard. Getting out of bed, he chuckled to himself. "Get your brain back together, Potter," he muttered to himself. He slipped his glasses onto his face and noticed a note sitting next to it with Draco's elegant scrawl on it.

Harry,

I have something I need to do for Snape this morning. If I don't see you before, I'll see you at lunch. Since there is only one table, I'll try to sit by you and make it look on accident. Otherwise, I'll meet you in the Common room afterwards, alright? I have the Cloak.

Draco

P.S. You snore.

"I do not!" Harry spoke to the paper as if Draco was right there. He grabbed his wand and started the paper on fire and watched it burn to a small pile of ashes. Harry spent a lazy morning in the Common room, flipping through the photo album that Draco had given him, and speaking with his snake, which he had decided to name Kiana. He wasn't certain that it was exotic, but he liked it all the same. By the time lunch came, he was extremely bored and couldn't wait to see Draco again. He hurried down to the Great Hall and sat at the end of the short table. Professors Dumbledore, Snape, McGonagall, Flitwick, Black, Hagrid, and Sprout were the only adults present, and the only other student was the lone Ravenclaw. Harry kept his head bent and tried his best to ignore the look of loathing that was coming to him from Sirius. Just as Harry was about to dig in to his meal, Draco sauntered into the Hall, looking even paler than normal. He took the seat next to Harry after giving him a glare. Harry watched Draco out of the corner of his eye for a few moments before turning to him.

"What's wrong with you?" he whispered.

Draco glared. "What do you mean, Potter? There's nothing wrong with me."

"You're all pale and shaking."

"Oh. *Saint* Potter is looking after me now? I didn't know you cared," he sneered. "If you knew what was good for you, you'd stay out of my business. I don't know why you even bother."

"I was just trying to make friendly conversation for once."

"If you haven't noticed, Potter," Sirius spoke up. "There isn't anybody here who *wants* to make conversation with you. Friendly or not. It's almost as if the entire Light side doesn't want you anymore. Why don't you go somewhere you're wanted."

Harry narrowed his eyes and clenched his teeth. He wouldn't rise to his bait. Sirius was just trying to get under his skin. Harry broke his eye contact with Sirius and looked at Snape for a moment. The potions master was eyeing both Sirius and Harry critically. "Merlin. Professor Black sure has a good way of putting it, Potter. That man is smart. You should listen to him."

Sirius gave Draco a winning smile.

"Why, thank you, Draco."

Harry threw his fork noisily onto the table and walked quickly towards the doors to all the Professors and Draco laughing at him.

"I don't know why 'e's angry," Hagrid laughed. "'Arry already knows everybody don't like 'im."

Harry bit his lip and began walking as fast as he could without actually running. It had seemed that Hagrid had been keeping to himself the entire term so far. But to actually hear him say

something against Harry made him feel even more miserable. "Why are you angry?" Kiana hissed at him as he climbed through the portrait hole.
"Nobody likes me anymore, that's why. Everybody likes to humiliate me and they try to drive me away from all my beliefs."
"Is it working?"
"... I think so. I'm going to put you in your tank now."
"Okay. Don't change your beliefs just because somebody told you to. You'll change into somebody that you aren't."
"Yeah, thanks," Harry replied as he set the small snake into its heated tank. The raven hair boy then stormed back down to the common room, paced around, sat on the couch, paced some more, sat, and then paced some more. He was so busy pacing at one point, that he didn't hear or see the portrait hole opening and closing by itself. Nor did he see the blonde hair boy appearing as if out of nowhere. The only time he noticed the other person was when arms wrapped around him and forced him to stop pacing. Harry's body immediately tensed up.
"What are you doing here?" he spat.
"Didn't you read my note? I said I'd come here after lunch to see you."
"Oh, you'd actually *want* to see me?" Harry sneered. "I didn't know you cared."
"Harry, stop being such a prat. You know I had to be mean to you in front of everybody. For what it's worth, I'm sorry. I didn't mean what I said, okay?" Harry glared at Draco and yanked out of his arms to go and sit on the couch again.
"Stop being like this! You know how it is, Harry! We covered this with Severus when we became allies remember? No public displays of comradeship. As far as anybody knows, I'm your enemy, and you're mine. I'm sorry, but I had to do it. You were showing signs of caring about me when you asked what was wrong." Draco sat next to Harry and looked at him angrily. "So if that display was anybody's fault, it was yours. We wouldn't have had to say anything to each other if you wouldn't have acted like you cared."
"Don't turn this around on me, Draco! I know what you really want me to do! You want me to do what everybody else wants!"
"Oh, really? And what's that?"
"Don't pretend like you don't know what happens to me every day."
"What? I have no idea what you're talking about."
"You're behind it all, aren't you? I should have known better than to trust you!" Draco leaned away from Harry as his accusation came out in a wild shout. After getting over his shock of being yelled at for no apparent reason, he reached forward and grabbed Harry's shoulders.
"*Get a hold* on yourself, Harry! You have no idea what you're talking about. All I want for you is to be safe, to have your friends back again, to not have to worry about Voldemort killing you. You have to get a hold of yourself. I just want for you to be happy again."
Harry looked down, seeming to be ashamed of himself for his outburst. "You don't want what everybody else wants?"
"No, I don't," Draco replied, not knowing what he was talking about.
"You want me to be happy?"
"Yes."
"Then just kiss me."
Draco started at his sudden request but a smirk crossed his face and he granted Harry what would make him happy.

The next week until the school returned was spent doing extra homework, playing Exploding Snap, chess, playing with Kiana and Wally, talking, laughing, and stealing small kisses from each other. Neither one mentioned Harry's blow up the day after Christmas. Even if Draco had asked about it, Harry wouldn't have an answer to why he did such a thing. He had just started to feel panicked while he had been pacing, thinking that Draco was against him, and that there was only one thing to do now that there was nobody on his side. But Harry continued to push that thought aside with just being with Draco. As far as Harry knew, Draco hadn't turned on him yet, but there were those times when Draco seemed to pale even further and break out into a small sweat, thinking about something. Harry often wondered what it could be.

The thing that Harry wondered most about on the day he was moving back into his classroom, was how he had ended up liking another boy. Never, in Harry's entire life, had he been attracted to another boy. There had always been girls. First, there had been Cho Chang. She was a pretty face, and he couldn't really say that she didn't have a brain in her since she was a Ravenclaw, but that's all she really was. A pretty face and a brain. There wasn't much personality to her at all. Cho was just something to admire from afar. Then there had been Hermione for that brief month in fifth year. She had never learned of his fleeting attraction to her, nor had Ron. Harry suspected that he probably wouldn't be alive right now if he had known. Hermione also had a pretty face, in more of a subdued way than Cho did. But Hermione also had brains, and a good personality. She was a good catch, but she just didn't do anything for him. He had realised it pretty quickly. Hermione was just another one of those girls to look and admire from afar. For him anyway. Then... there was Ginny. She was undeniably the most beautiful girl that walked on two legs in Harry's humble opinion. She was so down to earth and funny. And so completely loyal that it made Harry's heart break to even think that she didn't like him anymore. Kissing Ginny had been wonderful, she was a great kisser... but thinking back on it, Harry hadn't felt in the least bit turned on by it. It had been something fun to do, instead of only thinking about the next person who was going to hate him. Which inevitably, turned out to be Ginny.

There were no girls to catch his eye after that. Because the next one to catch his eye had been Draco Malfoy. There were no words suitable to describe him. He was beautiful in every way possible. His blonde hair, silver eyes, body, personality. Yes, even when he was being a downright prick, he was undeniably beautiful... sexy. Then there was the fact that all Harry ever wanted to do when he saw Draco, was to ravish his full pink lips. Kissing him, was nothing like kissing Ginny. Harry's body filled with an aching fire that was dying to be put out, but it would only continue to burn with more ferocity the more they kissed. To Harry's surprise, the fact that Draco was a boy, didn't bother him. It was a minor detail that could be overlooked, just as long as Draco kept kissing him, it didn't matter. There was something right with being with the Slytherin, Harry had yet to figure it out.

Over the coming weeks following the Christmas holidays, Harry didn't get much time to try to figure out what it was. Both boys were being kept away from each other by the large amounts of homework that were being piled on top of them, and Quidditch practice. The much anticipated game between Gryffindor and Slytherin was fast approaching and both teams wanted to be ready for it. During the month of January, the two boys only got together twice and both were sorely missing the friendship that they had forged. None more so than Harry was. But they made it a nightly ritual to pass banter back and forth on their parchments before retiring to bed. It always gave Harry a much needed lift to his day since his days were comprised of fighting with anyone and anything. Mainly Ron and Hermione, and the voice, and the dreams.

The dreams with the water were becoming more real than ever. And the water that had started out as a small stream, was now an ocean, and Harry could be found on a small island every time, trying to get away, but the water would claim him before long and he would sink into the darkness. He would wake up from these dreams, sweating and shaking, but feeling strangely calm through all of it.

One morning, the day before Valentine's Day, Harry had woken from this dream for the first time, not sweating and shaking. He felt incredibly upbeat by this, telling himself that he was beating it. He practically skipped to the Great Hall, and just barely managed to hold in his smile as he ate. As the post owls flew in, Harry looked up out of habit, though he knew that he wouldn't be getting anything. But to his surprise, an owl dropped a letter in front of him and flew off again. His happy mood at receiving a letter were diminished however, when he found that it was only from Professor Snape, informing him of a new detention that was to take place in his office after dinner. Harry shook his head and looked at Draco who was reading a piece of parchment as well, also shaking his head. They caught each others eyes and gave each other a secret smile, both knowing that they didn't actually have a detention.

To Harry's great relief, the day flew by quickly and soon, he was being nodded to by Snape from the Head table and Harry left the Great Hall, with Draco not too far behind. Draco and Harry got to his office first. They smiled and rushed towards each other, wasting no time in catching up with what they had sorely missed the past month. Harry sighed with content as he tangled his fingers with Draco's hair, pulling him closer to his own body. Both boys smiled inwardly as they shared their passionate, lust filled kiss. They hadn't felt this good since before Christmas when they had felt so isolated in the Gryffindor Common Room, sharing their very first kiss in the magical snow. What they both would give to have those moments back and stay there forever where they didn't have to face the real world, where everything was perfect just as long as they stayed together. They pulled reluctantly away from their world after a few moments, and leaned their foreheads together. "I've missed you," Harry said breathlessly.

Draco was about to reply but the boys were startled apart by a loud bang in the potion dungeons outside. They quickly sat down and Snape entered directly afterwards. Snape gave them a calculating, amused look but quickly swept pass them and sat behind his desk. "Sorry about that bang. I miscalculated my strength and slammed the classroom door shut," he said, laughter underlying his calm words.

Draco smirked at his godfather and leaned back into his chair. Snape merely raised an eyebrow at Draco and continued on. "It has been a while since we all met here. I've been wondering how your progress has been going? Draco, you have not told me anything about Weasley and Granger. Have you had any luck with them?"

"Yes, I have actually. I did directly after you told me to try again. They are quite gullible and they told me whatever I asked."

"And?"

"Well... I asked them why they suddenly hated Harry..."

"Quit stalling Draco. It can't be that bad," Snape spit out.

"It's not. It's just weird. They said that they don't know why they hate him now. They both woke up one day, and decided that they didn't like him. Which was also weird, because they both said that they had been talking to each other in the kitchen at Weasley's house one moment and the next they woke up in the middle of the living room floor. They both voiced their opinions on him then."

"That is strange. Was there anything else of importance?"
"Not really. We were just trying to think up pranks to pull on him. I'll have you know Harry, that I've successfully fouled up four jokes on you since the end of the Christmas holidays. You would have ended up in the hospital wing for two weeks with each one of them." Harry shivered. "Thanks."
"Speaking of pranks, Draco," Snape said cautiously. "You wouldn't know anything about Weasley having problems with his libido, would you?"
"No! Why would I?"
"Hmm... no reason. Now, Potter... how has your research been going?"
Harry swallowed the little lump that had formed in his throat and attempted to speak. "It's going. But where it's going... I don't know. I haven't found anything useful." In fact, the search wasn't going anywhere at all. He had been successfully convinced by the voice to stop any nonsense at figuring out what was going on because the fact remained, was that there *was* nothing going on at all. So Harry had stopped his research about a week into January, and hadn't picked up a book on it since.
Harry looked away from the calculating look he was receiving from his Potions Professor and from Draco. They both seemed to be suspicious of something, but Harry couldn't let on that he was hearing voices in his head.
"Is there anything you would like to tell me, Potter?" Snape asked.
"No, Professor. Everything is fine. No more worries here that you don't know about. Honest."
Snape gave him a stare for a few more seconds before waving his hand. "Fine. You may go. Draco, stay. I have something else to speak with you about." As Harry was standing up to leave, Draco grabbed a fistful of his robes and brought him down so that he could whisper in Harry's ear.
"Meet me in the Transfiguration classroom."
Harry nodded and left. "So, Draco, how are you feeling?"
"Bloody brilliant. How do you think I'm feeling?"
"I don't know. Why don't you tell me?"
"Nauseated. Sweaty. Shaky. Just plain old sick."
"That's to be expected. Just remember that I'll be there tomorrow night, and just as long as you toe the line carefully, you'll be okay. Be prepared to take the Cruciatus a few times. That's the Dark Lord's favourite when initiating somebody."
Draco grimaced. "That makes me feel a whole lot better."
"It wasn't supposed to." Snape sighed tiredly, showing a rare moment of weariness. "Are you still set on not telling me who the operative is, Draco?"
"Yes," he said firmly.
Snape sighed. "I don't understand why you won't tell me. It would help us a great deal."
"Don't worry. At least I know who it is now. If he gets near Harry, I'll make sure he's okay."
"Fine," he replied heavily. "Now get going. I know you're dying to go snog him in the Transfiguration classroom."
Draco smiled beatifically. "Why couldn't you be my father? If you were Lucius, you would have beaten me to a pulp had you known that that was my intention."
"That's why I'm not him."
"How did you know anyway?"
"I came in here when you were kissing. Neither one of you noticed so I went back out and

slammed the classroom door. Merlin, Draco, I never would have made you become friends with him had I known you were going to start snogging each other in my office."
"And I would have refused point blank as well. But now, I'm going to have to thank you one day." Snape rolled his eyes.
"You're turning soft."
"I'm not! I'm leaving before you can insult me anymore."
Draco mock stormed out of Snape's office and ran for the Transfiguration classroom with a smile stretched across his face. After putting a silencing and locking charm on the door, he rushed over to Harry, who was standing near a window and started biting and nibbling at his neck from behind. Harry moaned and pressed into Draco's body. Draco turned the other boy to face him and their mouths met in a burning kiss. Draco pulled away in need of breath, only to start devouring Harry's neck again. Harry thread his fingers through Draco's hair. "Oh, Drake," he moaned. Draco moved his hands down Harry's back, going for his butt, but Harry's body tensed up suddenly and he pushed Draco away.
Harry's lust filled eyes were frozen in realisation and he shook his head. "I can't..." Harry turned and ran out of the room, with Draco staring after him in confusion.
"Stupid bastard. And *he's* supposed to be the brave one. My arse." And then Draco, too stormed out of the classroom, this time, his anger real.
For the next week, Draco refused to speak with Harry, no matter how much he tried to explain why he had run away. Draco didn't want to be with anybody who was going to be such a coward when it came to the relationship. If his being a boy bothered Harry, then he wouldn't let it bother him. They simply wouldn't be a thing. Harry had tried many times to pull Draco into an empty classroom to talk, or to speak to him using the parchment, but nothing would work. Draco would shrug him off in the hallways, and ignore the pleading statements on the parchment. In fact, he didn't even bother to look at it anymore. It was now buried on the bottom of his trunk.
So, when Potions came on Friday, the day before the Quidditch match, Harry was hoping to 'accidentally' get to class late, in hopes that Draco would have an empty seat next to him like he usually did. But as Harry ran into the classroom, and listened to Snape rant at him for being late and taking points away, Harry turned to look and found that Draco had surrounded himself with Slytherins. Draco smirked at Harry and turned to the front. Seething with fury at the stupid Slytherin, he took a seat by himself. How was Harry supposed to explain that he was hearing voices in his head? How was he supposed to explain that it was talking to him while they had been snogging? That wasn't something that a person wanted to listen to while kissing somebody.
The time came to make the potions, and Harry bolted out of his chair to get his ingredients. This had come as an instinct to him now. Getting to the students cupboard first was a survival technique in this class if he were to survive his classmates. So, Harry was the first one with his ingredients to his cauldron as students were swarming around the stores, picking things out.
"Hermione! What was the last ingredient on the list again?" Ron called out as he stopped in front of Harry. Harry looked up at his old friend, but as his eyes travelled up, he couldn't help but notice the bulge in front of his robes. Harry snorted and shoved his fist in his mouth. Ron looked down at him and glared.
"What's up with you, Potter?" he snapped.
"I think I should be asking you that question."
"Weasley!" Snape hissed as he hurried over. "Professors McGonagall, Flitwick, *and* Black have had to speak with you about this. I don't care what you were thinking about, you need to keep it

under control! Need I remind you that we are in a classroom?"
"N... no, Professor." Snape growled low in his throat and began leading Ron out into the hallway, speaking in a low voice about detentions and point deduction. As soon as they were out of ear shot, the entire classroom burst into laughter, as everybody had stopped to watch as soon as Snape had spoken. Harry and Draco's eyes caught and in that moment, Harry knew... this was what Draco had done to Ron. He had given him an uncontrollable and unpredictable erection, popping up whenever it wanted, no matter the circumstance.
Draco made no acknowledgement that he had done it because he just glared at Harry and turned to his work. Harry continued snickering until Snape came back, in an even more foul mood than before. He wiped the smile off of his face and continued working.
Draco glared at Harry and turned to begin working on his potions. He tried not to show how much it had done for him, to see Harry smiling and laughing like that, and he hoped that it had shown on his face, what he was trying to tell himself. That he hated Potter. But he really didn't. It enraged him to no end that Harry would just run away like that. Nobody ran away from a Malfoy, especially when said Malfoy was snogging you. Draco felt the anger burn up inside him again and for the first time all school year, he wanted to punch Harry's face in.
The bell rang to signal the end of the lesson twenty minutes later and Draco quickly left, trailing Harry to the Great Hall for dinner. Just as the Gryffindor was about to enter, Draco called: "Hey, Potter!"
He saw Harry spin around and his face almost lit up in a smile before it turned into a scowl.
"What do you want, Malfoy?"
"I'll tell you what I want. I want you to bloody grow up!"
"Excuse me?"
"You heard me! I want you to grow up, and stop thinking that you're going to beat me in Quidditch tomorrow!"
"Malfoy, you have never..."
"No, shut up for once! I know that you're a stupid *brave* Gryffindor, but when something gets too much for you to handle, you can't just bloody well run away from it! Especially when it's probably the best thing that has ever happened to you in your entire, pathetic life. What makes you think you can throw it away?"
"Are we still talking about Quidditch here?"
"Yes, we're still talking about Quidditch, you daft prick! What. Makes. You. Think. You. Can. Throw. It. Away?"
"I'm not throwing anything away. If anybody is, it's you, Malfoy. You know, when the snitch comes up to you and just hovers in front of your face, you can't just sit there and stare at it. You have grab it. Catch it while you still can! But, like you would know that. You *did* buy your way onto the team. What would you actually know about being a Seeker? Absolutely nothing, Malfoy. Nothing. Because you still have to grab it. It's right in front of you. If you don't move fast enough, it might just get away from you because it's not going to make the first move if it's already tried."
The two boys stared angrily at each other for a few moments, Draco trying to decipher the meaning of Harry's words because he sure as hell wasn't speaking about Quidditch. "Fight!" somebody yelled. And with that, Draco's emotions of the past week flooded out of him and he charged for Harry and punched him in the face. The two boys were soon throwing punches at each other for all that they were worth. The crowd around them were pushing closer into them,

cheering them on. Everybody in attendance was cheering for Harry's murder, but Harry wouldn't give anybody the satisfaction of seeing him hurt. Especially not Draco. Just as he really started to give it to Draco, hands started to pull Harry away and when he looked up, Snape was holding back Draco with a look of pure venom. Harry could feel warm breath on his face from the person who was holding him back.
"It's getting you, Mr. Potter," the man whispered in his ear. Harry froze. It was 'the voice.' He'd recognise it anywhere. The man chuckled softly and began forcing Harry through the crowd, following Snape to his office. Harry tried turning around to see who it was, but the man had a firm grip and wouldn't let him. The group of four went into Snape's office and Snape turned to Harry and the man.
"You may go. I'd like to handle these two by myself, if you don't mind."
"Not at all, Severus. I know that you're very strict when it comes to your students. I'll just be on my way."
The man let go and Harry immediately turned around to look, but all he saw was the swish of his robes going out the door. He began to go out and look but Snape yelled.
"Potter! You are not to leave! Close the door."
Scowling, he closed the door and sat down in the chair beside Draco. They stared malevolently at each other before turning back to Snape. "What has got into you two?" Snape hissed menacingly. "You two were snogging in my office last week and now you're in the entrance hall, brawling. My, my... that is a change of pace, isn't it?"
"It was his fault, Professor!" Harry yelled. "He started yelling at me and then he threw the first punch..."
"Silence! I do not care who started it. The fact is, is that you two have been fighting and I have not known. This could have had serious effects if you two had said anything."
"That's why I chose to speak about Quidditch, Severus," Draco smirked.
"Wow," Snape said sarcastically. "You are quite brilliant, aren't you Malfoy? And what if Potter hadn't caught on? What then?"
"I... I don't know," he replied, flushing pink. "I didn't think..."
"*That* much is obvious. This was an extremely idiotic thing for you two to pull. You will both serve detention with me, this time for real, and twenty house points from each. Don't make me do it again, Draco."
"I won't, sir."
"Get out of my sight. And the next time I see you two together, unless it's tomorrow's game, I really hope you're not brawling. As much as it makes my skin crawl, I'd rather see you two kissing."
"Me too," both boys muttered but neither one heard each other. They walked out of Snape's office without a word to each other and separated ways.
"You'll be eating the field tomorrow, Malfoy," Harry called just as he turned the corner and disappeared. Draco scowled and hurried to his Common room.
"And the tension is high as Gryffindor and Slytherin take to the air!" announced Seamus Finnigan as they kicked off. "If any of you missed it, a great fight took place between Potter and Malfoy, both Seekers for their respective teams, last night in the entrance hall. I haven't seen the likes of it for a long time. Too bad Malfoy wasn't able to smear Potter. If I wasn't a Gryffindor, I'd say the same thing right now. But... I am, so Potter, if you don't win, *I'll* smear the floor with you!"

"Finnigan! Get on with the game!" snapped McGonagall.
"Right, you are, Professor. And Katie Bell takes the quaffle from the Slytherin chaser and passes to Ginny Weasley."
Harry tuned out Seamus as he was now concentrated on the game and began to really look for the snitch. He wouldn't and couldn't let Draco win. This game was too important to him. He had told Draco that he would be eating the field, and he would hold true to that promise. Harry frantically searched the field for the elusive snitch as the score rose higher and higher. By the time they were an hour into the game, the score was 150-90, Gryffindor's lead. Draco had stayed away from Harry the entire game but now, Harry saw the blonde boy coming for him.
"What, haven't spotted the snitch yet, Potter?" he sneered.
"It's not like you have either."
"Hmm... good point."
Harry almost laughed before he remembered that Draco had attacked him yesterday and that they weren't friends. They began to search the field, side by side, not exchanging any words, just occasional glances. Harry's heart skipped as he saw the golden snitch ten feet above where they were currently situated and on the other side of the field at the Slytherin goal posts. The two seekers were currently near Ron at the Gryffindor. Harry took off with Draco in hot pursuit. He felt his Firebolt being hit gently but gradually getting harder. He turned his head and found Draco bumping into it.
"Get off, Malfoy!"
"In your dreams, Potter! That snitch is mine!"
Just knock him off his broom; the snitch will be as good as yours then.
No! I can't knock him off!
Do you want to win or not?
Yes, I want to.
Then knock him off!
Harry's body started moving without being told what to do. He slowed his broom down a little so that Draco's inferior broom could catch up. They were now neck and neck, racing along the field, getting ever nearer to their goal. Harry lifted his foot that was nearest Draco and kicked the twigs of his broom. He started to go out of control and Draco looked wildly behind him. Harry took advantage and flew closer to Draco, and knocked his broom forward. Taken by complete surprise, Draco's grip loosened and he flew off of the front of his broom. Harry kept going and closed his hand around the snitch. When he turned to look down, he smiled in grim satisfaction at Draco's body, falling through the air, waiting to smack into the ground.

Thank you all!
SailorGrape: Yes, everybody was waiting for the H/D action! I thought I'd be nice to all of you and give you more in this chapter before Harry knocked Draco off his broom. ^.^ If you hated the ending for chapter nine, I can't wait to see your reaction for this doozy! I'd break out into my evil laughter, but sadly, I'm not in the mood. I'm too sad about Draco falling off his broom!
S. Wing: The man will be revealed in chapter fourteen. A long wait for you sadly, but the suspense must be kept up! ^.^
an innocent author of FF: haha, close your mouth! Anything might wander in there while you're not paying attention! Well, sadly, as you can see, Harry does fall to the dark side. But it will be a happy ending of sorts. I mean, he will have his friends back and all that. But since this

is a trilogy, more trouble will come! ^.^
Vampire Goddess Jekyll: Wow! You have given me the longest review that I've ever received! What you wrote yourself after Dumbledore told Harry to get out of the Great Hall was really dramatic and great. You actually gave me goosebumps when Harry made all the windows shatter and the candles go out. I wish I would have thought of that! I'm flattered that I could actually evoke enough emotions in you that you just had to write something to go along with it to show what you were feeling. Wow, thank you so much for the review! It really brightened up a bad day for me! I hope you have enjoyed the rest of this story!
Meemo: Sadly, I don't think it would be smart of me to give any clues out. Only four more chapters though. Chapter ten did give a clue, no matter how subtle it was... it's there. But you all do know who he is. He's a major character (I think anyway) in the books. That might be saying too much though.
Demonic Charity: Somehow, I think that the elusive man is still driving you nuts since you still don't know who he is! Well, he might be a teacher, but he might not be. You never know. There's a whole world of people that it could be. ^.^
angel: Yes! Another person in on the evil laughter. It's fun! But no... you can't make me update more often! ^.^ Sorry! I don't really have time to update more than once a week. Plus, updating this often is giving me a nice head start on the sequel. I mean, you want the next story out right away don't you? ^.^ This way, I can get it written, beta'd and posted, hopefully a week after the last chapter of this story is up!
Phayze: Obedient slaves, huh? I could get used to this! ^.^ Just kidding. I like that I can actually stump people so much! There have now only been two people to guess. One is my new beta for the sequel. She got special privelages and was sent the rest of this story to read before she beta'd the first chapter of the next. Of course, I think I did give it away with one statement I made to her when sending it... Oh well, she guessed it anyway. Come on! You all have to at least give me some ideas as to who you are all guessing! I like to know if you're on the right track or not!
xikum: Well, I can't tell you if your guess was right or not! Harry hasn't told them because well... he's stupid for one. Not really, but as said in CoS, hearing voices even in the wizarding world, isn't a good thing. Or something to that effect. I mean, if you were Harry, would you say something? I'd probably think I was crazy!
Fate's Child: Yes, it was cruel to end it there. So, how'd you like the ending of chapter ten? ^.^
Nagini: c r i m s o n: ::dryly:: So I've been told. ^.^ I love getting called evil!
SkyCorker!: They are cruel. That's why I put them in.
frizzy: You're my 100th reviewer! Thank you thank you thank you! Their relationship is going to get a bit stickier now...
chips challenge: I think you're daydreaming! ^.^ I didn't put in that Draco asked for the snake. It was always left unsaid. Where's Wally... that's a great idea! If you don't mind, I might just use that in the sequel for a bit of comic relief. I'll give you credit if I do. I got the name as I was looking at my bookshelf. Have you ever heard of the author Wally Lamb? He wrote I Know This Much Is True and She's Come Undone. They're great books if you've never read them. Anyway, that's where I got the name from. And no, I've never seen that movie. In fact, I don't think I've ever even heard of it. I'll have to look for it.
Draconian: Sorry, here's another cliffie. I really liked the snow scene as well. I think it allowed them to take their friendship a step further because I think they felt isolated from the rest of the world. So at that moment, they didn't really have anything else to worry about. It allowed them

to be themselves and that's a main reason why I didn't write in any dramatic reaction to them kissing.
I Am The Bunny Slayer: Sorry my friend, but you're going to just get glimpses until chapter fourteen. I don't think I'd like Draco and Harry as ghosts either. I mean... could they even *have* a relationship if they were ghosts?
Rain: I update every Sunday so hopefully it isn't too long for you.
Alura: Oh dear... I have a stalker! ^.^
Cassie: Who do you think it is? Come on, people! Let me know! Or are you all going to be just as evil and not tell me?

Teaser:
Harry turned his head and immediately wished he hadn't. This is what it's like to have a hangover. he thought dryly. The boy tried opening his eyes but had to shut them again as the bright light assaulted him. He groaned and buried his head in the softness that was beneath him... and it groaned as well. When Harry's eyes opened this time, they stayed open. Looking up, Harry saw that he was lying on top of Draco and that they were lying on his bed, seemingly naked. Harry quickly scrambled into a sitting position beside him.
"Hey, where'd my blanket go," mumbled Draco as he shivered.
"Malfoy, wake up!"
Draco opened blurry eyes and looked at Harry. "Why are 'ou calling me Malfoy?"
"That's your name."
"My name is Draco."
"Malfoy, did we sleep together?"
"Of course, why do you think we're waking up together?"
"No! I mean, did we have sex?"
Draco thought, scratching his head...
Okay, this was the least mean teaser that I could find. I should have put what Draco is going to say, but... I don't wanna! ^.^ At least I answered two of the questions you'll be sure to ask. Harry and Draco have made up, and Draco isn't dead. But like I would kill him anyway! Where would the be trilogy be able to go the

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Chapter: 11

A/N: Hello all! You'll have to excuse me this week. I just got off a twelve hour shift at my new job and I'm extremely tired. I'll name all of you wonderful reviewers at the bottom as usual and maybe make a few comments, but otherwise, I won't talk as much. I'm just too tired. I would do this tomorrow (well, actually, it is Sunday since it's nearly one in the morning, but that's beside the point)
Oh, I have to comment on one review right here though. I don't remember who said it and I'm too lazy to look right now, but somebody said that they didn't get how chapter ten moved the plot along. Well, for one, Harry... what's the word I'm looking for? My brain is fried. Harry has

succumbed? Yes... succumbed to the darkness in chapter ten. You see that with him pushing Draco off of his broom and you'll see more of it in this chapter. Or maybe the reviewer was just referring to Harry and Draco's relationship, and how it wasn't moving the plot along? Well... their relationship is a nice little break from the seriousness of the story. Granted, their relationship does get a bit rocky, but it's kind of like how Shakespeare (I'm not even trying to compare myself to him, because I mean... who could? ^.^) puts funny characters in for comic relief. You need to get a break from all the seriousness of the plot sometime. Plus, their relationship is a large part of the next two sequels to this story. I have to add it in. So all in all, it does add to the plot. You just don't see it until the next story. Okay... now that I said to myself I wouldn't talk much... ^.^ I need to draw a line for myself. I talk way too much. Anyway, on with the story!

Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Eleven

When he turned to look down, he smiled in grim satisfaction as Draco's body fell through the air, waiting for him to smack into the ground.

Harry noticed that the entire crowd was silent and a beam of light shot towards Draco, hitting him just before he hit the ground; he hit with a sickening crack that echoed throughout the stadium. Screams were heard all around from every house and people were beginning to run onto the field. Harry could do nothing but watch in detached amusement, though he forced his face to look shocked. He was really smiling inside.

He had done this. Harry Potter had purposely made somebody fall off of his broom, possibly to his death. It was a rush, having this sort of power. With a jolt, he realised that the voice was right. It felt like he was spinning and would never stop. He would do anything to keep the feeling up. Why in the world had he denied this for so long? It was a question that he would probably never be able to answer to himself. After a few moments, he realised that he was going to have to act like his normal self. So, upon this realisation, Harry hurried to the ground and ran after Madam Pomfrey, the stretcher that held Draco, and the teachers.

They arrived to the hospital wing first, and when Harry arrived, he slammed through the door, threw down his Firebolt down and attempted to get by Snape to see Draco. "You are not allowed in there, Potter."

"But I have to know if he's going to be okay, Professor! Please let me see him!" he said desperately, while congratulating himself on his acting skills.

"There is nothing that you can do," he said quietly.

"Well, is he alive? He fell over fifty feet!"

"He's alive, Potter. No need to worry about that. And I'm perfectly aware of how far he fell. You should know as well," he said even more quietly with a menacing look in his eyes. Harry stepped away and put on his best incredulous look.

"What are you implying, Professor?"

"I'm implying that you knocked him off."

"What?" Harry asked quietly. He took a deep breath and looked in Snape's eyes defiantly. "You were not up there and you do not know what happened. We were just racing for the snitch and the next thing I knew, Draco was falling. I have no idea what caused it. If you actually think that I could do such a thing... The very idea of me pushing him off of his broom is ridiculous. I wanted to win, but not *that* badly. Surely you have more respect for me than that?"

Snape sighed and ran a hand through his greasy hair. "I'm sorry, Potter. I do know you would

never do such a thing. It's just that I was watching you two and it seemed a little suspicious."
"Trying to catch the snitch is suspicious?"
"No. Never mind. Look, I'll let you stay here but you're not allowed to see him until the nurse says it's okay. Do you hear me?"
"Yes, Professor."
"Oh, and Potter, make sure none of the Slytherins come in here. Draco can't stand his closer friends," Snape muttered under his breath as he left.
So, Harry stayed in the hospital wing all day, and even fell asleep. Madam Pomfrey had long since given up on making him leave since he was so adamant on staying until he was able to see Draco. Harry had given the argument that he felt guilty about not being able to do anything to stop Draco from falling. Because of this, Madam Pomfrey had not seemed suspicious for Harry's presence. It wasn't until the next morning that Harry finally went to take a shower and change out of his Quidditch uniform. The same routine was repeated every day for the next week. He went to classes, visited Draco, ate, visited Draco at night and most of the time slept on the bed near him. It was exactly a week later when Draco finally began to stir from his coma and opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was Harry sitting in a chair beside him, looking out the window.
"Harry?"
Harry jumped and looked down at the Slytherin. "Draco! You're finally awake!"
"What happened?"
"You don't remember?" Harry asked, barely keeping the joy from his voice. At Draco's affirmative shake of the head, Harry continued. "You fell off of your broom. You've been unconscious for a week now."
"Oh." Harry jumped off of his chair and sat on the edge of Draco's bed.
"Draco, I'm so sorry. I should have noticed that you fell. I should have tried to catch you, but I didn't. My eyes were too fixed on the snitch. I'm so sorry."
"Harry, it wasn't your fault. Having your eyes fixed on the snitch wasn't a bad thing. That's what good seekers do. I'm still alive, aren't I?"
"Yes, but you could have died."
"But I didn't. Look... about our fight before the game, I'm sorry. I should have grabbed my snitch while I had the chance. I'm just sorry I missed it."
"Who said you did?" Harry smiled as he leaned down and kissed Draco. "I'm glad you're awake," he whispered against his lips.
"Me too." Draco surprised Harry by pulling him down and kissing him deeply. Harry pushed away and smiled.
"We don't want you overdoing yourself. You did do a lot of damage to yourself."
"Oh, who cares? I'll kiss you as much as I please."
The two began kissing again but abruptly pulled away when somebody cleared his throat behind them. Harry jumped up and turned around with wide eyes to find Professor Snape looking very cross.
"I know I asked for that it in my office but you shouldn't be doing it in public, you know. Do get out now, Potter. I have some things to discuss with Draco."
"But he just woke up, Professor. Let him rest."
"If you want him to rest, then you should leave as well because he wasn't getting any rest before I came in." Both Harry and Draco flushed red. "You will leave, Potter. This cannot wait."
"Fine," he replied grudgingly. He leaned down again and gave Draco a chaste kiss before

leaving. Snape raised an eyebrow at Draco and sat in a chair.
"You two are getting along, I see."
"Boy, what gave you that idea?" Draco asked, rolling his eyes.
"Yes, well... it's good to see. In a sense," Snape grimaced and decided it was time to change topics before he made himself ill. "Tell me, Draco, have we underestimated him all these years? Is that why you like him now?"
"He's just good for a nice snog, is all."
"Draco."
"No, we didn't underestimate him in every way. He is an annoying selfish, stuck-up prat. But he isn't dumb like we always said. He's worthy of an intelligent conversation."
"Indeed. Now..." Snape started, his voice getting lower. "I won't waste my time in telling you that a certain man wasn't too happy with your absence. Especially since you just joined, but I did make your excuses. But you'll be lucky to get away with nothing."
"Merlin, I hate that man," Draco muttered.
"You and me both. Madam Pomfrey also saw your Mark. She didn't take it well so I had to memory charm her and I put a glamour charm on your wrist to hide it for the remainder of your stay here."
"Oh, just great."
"And Draco... have you noticed anything strange about Potter? I mean, before your accident, was he acting stranger than normal?"
"I don't know. He freaked out on me for no reason the day after Christmas. I still don't know what it was about. Why?"
"I'm not sure. Just keep an eye on him, all right? He may be becoming unstable."
"I'll keep an eye on him. Don't worry about it."
As much as Harry liked Draco, he was finding his company to be somewhat overbearing as of late. Ever since his release from the hospital wing, Draco had started checking in on Harry at every possible moment. Sometimes, it was just to snog, and that part, Harry didn't mind. Then the other times, Draco would just barge in, asking Harry what he was up to and how life was treating him. Harry would get extremely annoyed by this and push the annoying Slytherin out of the room.
He did this because he was in the middle of formulating a plan. A plan to not get him killed when he attempted possibly one of the more brave, or stupidest things he could possibly attempt in his lifetime. The first step to this, was to get a black, hooded cloak. Since a trip into Hogsmeade would be nearly impossible, the only way to get what he needed was to steal it. Though from whom, Harry had yet to figure out.
Two weeks after Draco's release from the hospital wing, Harry was sitting in Defense Against the Dark Arts, not paying attention. It suddenly occurred to him the exact person from whom he could steal his cloak, and he cursed himself for not thinking of it sooner. The only way the answer would be more obvious was if the solution were to hit him over the head with a hammer.
A broad smile broke out onto Harry's face and Sirius had immediately taken twenty points from Gryffindor for pleasing oneself in the middle of class. Of course, Harry's classmates fed off of this for the next few days.
Harry ignored all of this to the best of his ability, though some unfortunate people had been sent to the hospital wing with boils on their bodies. The second part of his plan was to speak with Professor Snape. It would do no good to try to go somewhere if he didn't know where he was

going. So, he'd have to coax the information out of Snape without arousing suspicion. As the first part of his plan couldn't be carried out as of yet, he decided to implement part two of his plan first. After dinner on a Wednesday night, Snape had swept out of the Great Hall, no doubt heading for his office. Harry quickly left Gryffindor table and followed him.
"Professor Snape!" he called after him.
"What do you want, Potter?"
"I... don't I have a detention to serve with you tonight again?"
"What? You have no detention with me tonight. Get out of my sight before I give you one."
"But Professor! I know it's highly unusual for a student to ambush you like this for their detentions..."
"Oh, no Potter. I get it all the time. Don't worry about it," Snape replied dryly.
"You're aggravating. I just... don't I..." Here he looked looking meaningfully into Snape's face.
"Have a detention to serve with you tonight? You know about that one thing I did a couple days ago." More blatant stares and Snape finally got it.
"Oh! You mean when I caught you doing some very questionable activities with a centaur?"
"What?" Harry screeched as a few people pointed and laughed at him.
"You know what I'm talking about. Come along, Potter. We'll go to my office."
Harry followed angrily in Snape's wake. Of all the obscene things Snape could have come up with, he came up with that. "You're disgusting," Harry muttered as he plopped himself into a chair.
"You're the one who wanted a detention."
"But you didn't have to say that! Why can't you be nice to me like you are to Draco?"
"Because you're not Draco. If you were my godson, Merlin forbid, I'm willing to bet that I'd be the same with you. Fortunately you're not my godson."
"He's your godson? That's why you're so close?"
"Oh, you mean he hasn't told you?"
"No, he hasn't."
"I thought he trusted you more than that. It's a secret. That's why he probably hasn't told you."
Harry seethed at the trust remark. Why wouldn't Draco trust him enough to tell him who his godfather was? He knew that Sirius was his godfather, why couldn't he know that Snape was Draco's? All the more reason for him to follow through with his plan. If even Draco was also going to turn against him...
"Are you okay, Potter?" Snape asked suddenly.
"What? Yes, I'm fine," he replied shortly.
"Okay. Now, what did you want to speak with me about?"
"Oh! I um..." Harry had not thought this far ahead. He cursed himself for not being smart enough to think up a fake conversation. If only Draco were here. His thoughts scanned to the 'Know Your Enemies' book that Draco had given him for Christmas and his mind fell on the first potion that he remembered. "Do you... do you think that the Semi-Vivus potion could be doing all of this?"
"Semi-Vivus? Well, it is quite possible but probably not. It would be very difficult to administer it to everybody."
"Well... you said in class earlier this year that it knocks you out and somebody can place a spell on you. What if that is what happened? Draco said that Ron and Hermione woke up in the middle of the living room floor and they suddenly hated me. Isn't there some sort of spell that

you can place on people to hate a person?"
"I'm not entirely sure, but I'm beginning to believe that there may be such a spell. You could look it up if you wish. If there is one, it shouldn't be too hard to find." Snape leaned back in his chair and surveyed Harry critically before his mouth turned up into the smallest of smiles. "I must say that I'm impressed, Potter. I'm not willing to bet on the Semi-Vivus potion, but we won't deny it as a possibility as it's pretty much the only idea we've come up with so far. Very intelligent thinking. Draco may be right about you after all. And if you tell anybody I said this to you, you will most certainly be cleaning out every bathroom in this school with a toothbrush for the remainder of the year."
Harry smirked. "Thanks for warning me in advance."
"Was there anything else that you wanted to talk to me about?"
"Er - yes, actually. I was just curious... Well, where do you go to meet Voldemort when you have your meetings?"
Snape narrowed his eyes and leaned his arms onto his desk. "Why do you want to know?"
"I said I'm just curious. And plus, if I ever had a vision of you in trouble again, I want to be able to help."
"I don't believe that..." Snape studied Harry's face for a few moments. "What's the real reason you want to know?" he finally asked.
"I'm just curious!" Harry said, trying to keep his voice low and calm. He didn't know how he was going to get Snape to tell him this information.
Potter.
Harry almost yelled for joy at that moment. *You can tell me where Voldemort hides out now!* he exclaimed to the voice in his head. A lengthy silence followed.
I don't know where it is.
Snape was speaking, but Harry didn't register it. Why wouldn't a Death Eater know where Voldemort was? Harry asked this question to the voice.
When I'm needed beside my Master, he sends for somebody.
'Why? Can't you Apparate?'
Yes. I... I don't know how to answer that. It's just the way it is. Snape should know where the Dark Lord hides out. Why don't you ask him?
'I'm trying right now, but I don't think it's going to work.'
Then just put him under Imperius, the voice answered easily.
Harry grinned and looked up at his Potions professor. Snape raised an eyebrow. "Have you been listening to a word I've been saying, Potter?"
"Erm- not really," Harry replied, reaching into his robes for his wand. "What were you saying?"
Snape scowled and began speaking again, but since it didn't have anything to do with what Harry wanted, he paid the words little attention. Harry pulled his wand completely from his pocket and slipped it up his sleeve. Kiana, who was wrapped around his wrist, hissed angrily at the intrusion, but Harry ignored her, and pointed the wand discreetly at Snape so that he wouldn't notice.
"Imperio," he murmured. Snape's eyes went blank and he quit speaking.
"Tell me where Voldemort is hiding out."
"He is at the Riddle house in Little Hangleton."
"Thank you." Harry released the curse and smiled at the professor who looked a little dazed.
"Potter. What did you just do to me?"
Harry adopted an innocently confused face. "I didn't do anything, sir."

"Then why did I just tell you that?"
"Where Voldemort is…? I asked you and you were kind enough to tell me."
Snape appeared to be battling with himself, but finally just sighed. "You listen to me, Potter," he said, pointing a stern finger in his face. "You are not to set a foot near that house. I don't want to be responsible for your death."
"Don't worry. It's just for the sake of knowledge."
"Oh, and Pot..." Snape took in a sharp hiss of breath and latched his hand onto his inner wrist. "I'm sorry, I need to go. If there was anything else, come find me here some other time." With that, Snape flew out of the room and into the corridor. Harry could have sworn that he heard Draco's panicked voice yelling his godfather's first name and Snape grumbling something along the lines of, 'Come on,' but Harry dismissed it and almost left when he stopped in the doorway and smiled. No time would be better than now. He stepped up to the wall that would allow his entrance into Snape's chambers and put his hand on the part that Draco had when an injured Snape had returned from Voldemort. His hand sunk into the wall and his mind cast around for possible passwords and said the first thing that came to mind.
"Slytherin pride."
Harry laughed with at his sheer dumb luck as the wall slid open. He crept into the rooms, even though he knew that nobody would be there and lit a few torches on his way to the bed chambers. Throwing the door open, Harry was met by a room of dark greys. It was a very depressing room but he had expected no less from the Potions master. The wardrobe was large and Harry smiled brightly upon sight of it. He flung the doors open and by the light of his wand, began to rummage through the clothing. Not surprisingly, everything was black. Which in turn, included an high abundance of black, hooded cloaks.… just what he needed to hide his identity for a short amount of time. He grabbed one, tried it on and found it to be too long. After magically shrinking it to his size, he folded it up into his robes, closed the wardrobe and crept back through Snape's office, the classroom and finally back to his room.
The third part of Harry's plan was slightly more difficult. Learn how to Apparate correctly. So far in their lessons, Harry and Draco were making the most progress and were very close to succeeding, but it just wasn't good enough. They would both leave behind one part of themselves every time. The first time, Harry had left his hair behind and had to deal with his classmates' taunts on being bald. When he had found his hair, it looked exactly like a wig. The Ministry wizard that was teaching them had to magic it back onto his head. Now when he Apparated, it was just one of his shoes, or a piece of clothing he left behind. Harry thanked his lucky stars that he had not Apparated himself naked to his destination yet. Only Neville Longbottom had done that so far.
Two days after completing his first two tasks, the Gryffindors and the Slytherins went to their Apparition lessons at the edge of Hogsmeade. Everybody started into it right away, not paying attention to each other. Harry's destination was always right behind Zonko's, and sometimes Draco would meet him there to compare notes on what they had left behind. Harry concentrated on his destination, and then imagined himself there and in the next moment, he was behind the joke shop. He checked himself over and found that he forgot his tie and socks. Growling to himself, he ran back to his starting point, put his clothes back on and tried three more times, without much success. By the time he was on his sixth try, he was becoming very aggravated. He knew that if anybody looked at him, they would probably be a little intimidated by the murderous look on his face. He scanned the crowd of students and found Draco just coming back

from his Apparition point. They caught eyes and Draco, upon seeing the look on Harry's face, gave a start, but then smiled at him encouragingly while eyeing Zonko's.
Harry took this as his cue and Apparated there. Moments later, Draco appeared beside him and wrapped him in a warm hug. "You should lighten up about this. It's only Apparating, you know."
"I just want to learn how. It's extremely aggravating."
"I know. Trust me. Damn, I think I left my boxers out there."
Harry broke out into uncontrollable laughter and had to lean on the wall of the store to remain standing. After he had controlled himself, he looked at Draco. "Do you want me to check for you to make sure?"
"Sure."
A devilish gleam settled in Harry's eyes and he moved towards Draco. He moved his hands around Draco's waist and slid his hand down Draco's trousers, causing a startled squeak to come out of the Slytherin. "What are you doing?"
"Making sure they aren't there." Draco began to struggle away from Harry, and to Harry's surprise, the Slytherin's face was twisting into one of pure terror. With a final pinch of Draco's bum, he removed his hand and stepped away. "And nope, you left your boxers."
Draco was breathing deeply and taking calming breaths. Harry raised an eyebrow at his behaviour. Draco took a final deep breath, settled into his indifferent mask and replied, "I thought you were going to go back and check for me, not stick your hand down my trousers!"
"And I thought I was the innocent one in this relationship."
"You..." Harry muffled Draco's words with his mouth and kissed him deeply. When he pulled away and looked at Draco, his eyes were still closed and he again had a scared look on his face.
"You are the innocent one," Draco finished lamely.
"Um hmm. I bet. Now, what did I leave behind?"
"I'll make you pay, Potter," Draco said and then made an extra deal out of checking over Harry and what he had left behind. Harry gave out a few surprised yelps, and was having a hard time keeping control of himself by the time Draco had finished checking him over. Draco looked at him with a weird look in his eyes.
"Harry..."
"What?"
"I don't think you forgot anything."
That statement officially brought Harry out of his semi-aroused stupor and made him check himself over. Draco was right, every piece of clothing was still with him, as well as his wand, a piece of candy that he stuffed into his pocket that morning, his glasses, and most importantly, his hair. A broad grin broke out onto on his face and he let out a triumphant whoop. Without another word, Harry Apparated back to his starting spot.
"I did it!" he cried to the Ministry wizard. The wizard came running over to him from where he had been helping Neville and gave Harry a few tests just to be sure.
"Congratulations, Mr. Potter. You're the first student in this class to achieve it. Since you're not seventeen until July, you'll have to travel in the means provided for underage wizards."
"Don't worry. I have no where to go anyway." Harry smiled.
"Well, you may leave then. It's been nice working with you and good luck with taking the test. I don't think you'll need it."
"Thank you."
Harry smiled at Draco and took off for the Three Broomsticks to get some more bottles of

butterbeer and then to Honeydukes to get some candy. He then crept into the cellar of the candy store and went through the secret passage. Fifteen minutes later, he climbed out through the hump-backed witch and immediately ran into Professor Snape, who narrowed his eyes and crossed his arms.
"Mr. Potter. What may I ask, are you doing? You are not allowed into Hogsmeade without permission."
"Actually Professor, I just came from my Apparition lesson."
"I see. That lesson isn't over for another half an hour. What are you doing back so soon?"
"Well, I successfully Apparated today, so I was dismissed. I just thought I'd get some butterbeer and candy for a little celebration tonight with a friend. I hope that isn't a problem, sir."
"Next time, come in through the front doors if you have permission to be in Hogsmeade. It doesn't seem quite so suspicious."
"Sure thing." Harry began to go in the direction of his rooms but Snape stopped him again.
"Oh, and Potter?"
"Yes, Professor?"
"Are you sure you're okay? You've been acting strange lately."
Harry gave him a winning smile. "Of course I'm okay. Couldn't be better. Ah, Professor Snape, I didn't know you cared," Harry taunted.
Snape's cheeks turned a little pink and he narrowed his eyes. "Five points from Gryffindor. You are speaking to a professor, Potter. Show some respect. Now get back to your room."
"Right-o, Professor Sevy Pooh."
Harry took off in hopes that Snape wouldn't take away anymore house points but Snape yelled that he was taking another ten points off for use of that name. Harry only laughed and ran faster to his destination.
After dinner that night, Draco went to Harry's room and they both started to eat all the candy that Harry had bought, along with the butterbeer. By the time Harry had gone through his sixth bottle, he was starting to feel just a little tipsy. He figured he would need to go through about another ten bottles to be close to being drunk. Draco was also just a little tipsy with eight bottles under his belt. Harry started to get up from the couch but Draco pulled him back down and put his face very close to Harry's.
"Did I remember to tell you that I brought some more alcohol for us?" he asked.
"You did? Well, bring it out, we need some." Draco grinned and pulled out a bottle of whiskey.
"It's the very best that you can buy. Father sends me bottles every month but I never drink them."
He opened the bottle and took a drink, wincing as it went down. Harry grabbed the bottle, took a drink and spluttered.
"That's disgusting!"
"You don't know good when you taste it, Harry. You're just not used to it." Harry shrugged and took another drink. They spent the next fifteen minutes, passing the bottle back and forth. Harry, not being used to drinking so much, became very drunk and every word that came out of his mouth slurred, and then spent a few minutes laughing at his stupidity, talking again, and then laughing for another couple minutes.
Draco, on the other hand, was getting very touchy with Harry and was laughing along with him. Draco straddled Harry's lap, taking another drink from the bottle. "Harry," he pouted. "I'm bored." Harry's eyes lit up and he leaned closer to Draco.
"I know what we can do."

"What?"
"We can have sex!" he exclaimed and then broke out into hysterical laughter.
An unidentifiable emotion crossed through Draco's silver eyes, but it went just as quickly as it came. "Haarrry! Drunk sex is so sloppy." Draco stared up at the ceiling, seeming to be very confused. "Of course... I've never had drunk sex, or sex with you, so I wouldn't know if it'd be sloppy or not. It has to be better than... Never mind." The Slytherin closed his eyes tightly for a moment and then smiled and leaned down and started kissing and nibbling Harry's neck. Harry moaned and pulled Draco to him and made their lips meet in a crushing kiss. Their tongues slid out of their mouths, met, and started having a fierce battle. It seemed Draco was warming up to the idea of having sex when he pressed his hips into Harry's, but almost as sudden as the kiss was initiated, Draco pulled away.
"Oh! I know what we can do!" Draco exclaimed.
"What?"
"Let's take your Invisibility Cloak and go out into the hallways and run around!"
"Okay!" Harry jumped up, forgetting that Draco was on his lap and sent him crashing to the floor. They both ended up in hysterics for a couple minutes before Harry was able to grab his Cloak and wrap it around themselves. They left the room in a tangle of limbs, both having a difficult time in staying upright, but somehow they managed to control themselves. The two began running through the halls, laughing loudly and shouting at the portraits who dared yell at the invisible people running through the halls. They were tearing around a corner on the fifth floor when they ran straight into another person, sending all of them to the floor. Draco and Harry looked at each other and began laughing again, but when Harry looked over and saw who they had run into, he immediately stopped. It was Professor Sirius Black and he was looking murderous.
"Harry Potter, I know that that is you. Step out of that cloak right now."
Draco was still having a hard time stifling his laughs but he managed to say something. "Don't know who Harry Potter is, sir. Don't know what cloak you're talking about so go smear some hippogriff dung on your face." Harry clapped his hand over his mouth and started snorting from trying to hold in his laughter. Draco pulled Harry up and they began running down the hallway again, laughing loudly once more, not paying attention to the angry shouts from their Defence professor.
Harry turned his head and immediately wished he hadn't. *This is what it's like to have a hangover.* he thought dryly. The boy tried opening his eyes but had to shut them again as the bright light assaulted him. He groaned and buried his head in the softness that was beneath him... and it groaned as well. When Harry's eyes opened this time, they stayed open. Looking up, Harry saw that he was lying on top of Draco and that they were lying on his bed, seemingly naked. Harry quickly scrambled into a sitting position beside him.
"Hey, where'd my blanket go," mumbled Draco as he shivered.
"Malfoy, wake up!"
Draco opened blurry eyes and looked at Harry. "Why are 'ou calling me Malfoy?"
"That's your name."
"My name is Draco."
"Malfoy, did we sleep together?"
"Of course, why do you think we're waking up together?"
"No! I mean, did we have sex?"

Draco thought, scratching his head. "Um... no, I'm pretty sure we didn't... No, we didn't. We were undressing each other on the way to bed, kissing and stuff, but once we got to the bed, you passed out. Good thing too. I'm not ready for sex."
"You're a virgin?" Harry asked surprised.
Draco looked at Harry, but quickly looked away again, refusing to meet the Gryffindor's eyes as he spoke. "Of course! Where do people get this idea that I'm some sort of pimp or something? Just because I'm damn sexy doesn't mean I'm a sex god!"
Harry smiled and snuggled back into Draco's arms and pulled the covers over them. "Hmm, that's more like it," Draco mumbled into Harry's hair. "So warm."
"If I asked you to, would you be my sex god?" Harry asked laughing.
"If you asked nicely, maybe I would. I make no promises."
"You always say that but yet you promised to protect me from Ron."
"I'm getting something in return though. So it's not all for nothing."
"Drake... can I ask you something?"
"You can ask but I'm not promising answers."
"Okay. Do you like me?"
"I'm starting to see what Weasley sees in you, yes."
"That's not what I meant. I mean, do you *like* me? If you had the chance, would you turn around and betray me? Do you like me more than that?"
"Harry, you know where my loyalties lie."
"But that's just the thing. Would you betray me?"
"Of course not!" Draco reached up his finger and traced the lightning bolt scar on Harry's forehead. It wasn't the first time that Draco had touched it, but he felt a jolt of energy surge through his entire body, making him shiver in pleasure. Draco then leaned down and placed his lips over it. "I like you, Harry. A lot. And I'm not about to ruin what we are beginning to have to betray you."
"Good. I like you a lot too," Harry said quietly. Draco smiled and leaned down the small way to Harry's lips and gave him a soft, lingering kiss. "I don't know what I'd have done without you this entire year." Harry continued.
"Probably gone mad. After this is all over, we can start being friends out in the open, and if you want, bring our whole relationship in the open..."
Draco continued to talk, with Harry nodding along. But Harry's head wasn't in the conversation. He still didn't trust Draco not to betray him, especially since everybody else that he cared about had already done so. It just didn't seem right for him to stay with Harry. Especially since Harry was so powerful and his power could be used against everybody on the Light side one day. That's why everybody was pushing him away, and soon Draco would realise this and push him away as well. If only there was something Harry could do to soften the blow when it came. He then realised that he was ready to do something already. Not after too long, the two boys fell back asleep, to sleep off the hang over. After they woke up, Draco kissed Harry's cheek and he left to spend the rest of the day in the Slytherin dormitories. Harry spent the rest of the day going over the plan in his head. How he would get out of the castle, what he would do if caught before he got to his destination, and most importantly, what he would say.
That night after dinner, Harry held a short conversation with Draco on the parchment, saying that he was just going to rest tonight and that he didn't want any company. So, at around nine o'clock, Harry threw his Invisibility Cloak over his head and crept through the nearly-deserted hallways.

Students were still making their way back to their dormitories from the library and detentions. Harry went silently out of the castle and ran through the grounds of Hogwarts. Once outside the gates, he took a deep breath.
It was time for step four: grovelling. And with a pop, Harry was gone.

Thanks to:
Meemo, Draconian, Xikum, S. Wing, Fate's Child, Mak, angel, Sailor Grape, dark*princess, *Dark*Angel*, Nagini: c r i m s o n, Anne Pheonix, Mystic Flower, one no, Black-Death, Rain, redredredred, I Am The Bunny Slayer*(I don't know. That's an interesting thought and I'll be quite honest that I've never actually been curious about it before. Now I am. Ghosts having lustful thoughts... That would be an interesting idea to explore. Maybe if he/she was promiscuous? ^.^ I agree, a Harry/Draco story isn't complete without some sort of lust-filled thought or action),* ***Rin,****(Two reviews! Wow! I've had one other person guess him, but I'm not going to say if you're right!),* ***chips challenge, Michael Serpent****(Who are you calling an insensitive twit, you... you insenstive twit? ^.^ Don't worry, I've been called worse and I don't mind being called names when it comes to this story! I welcome it, as a matter of fact! Besides... who are you to talk? When are you going to update your story? Huh, huh? ^.^* ***Myr, sigh, Cassie*** *Oh, I think somebody also remarked on the notable absence of my evil laugh. Not that any of you care, but here you go... MuahHAHAHAHAHA! Just in time for the teaser too! ^.^*
Here's another evil teaser! Oh, you all just love me, don't you! ^.^ Seriously though, do you not want these, or do you like me torturing you like this? I'd like to know because I won't do it anymore if you don't want!
He wasn't supposed to worry about Harry Potter in this way. It wasn't in his job description. It was, however, in Ron Weasley's and Hermione Granger's descriptions. Draco cursed them for abandoning Harry and forcing him to take on this job of worrying about him. But then, it wasn't all their fault. Draco had been the one to start liking Harry's friendship. Draco had been the one to start caring. Draco had been the one who started fancying the bugger. Draco had been the one... damn it. Draco had been the one to do everything that he was now cursing the two stupid Gryffindors for. Well, except for what was happening around Hogwarts.
Ha! Draco wasn't the one that brought this all on! It was Voldemort and his sick schemes! Damn *him* to hell a thousand times! It was his fault that Draco was falling in lo... damn. No, love had nothing to do with it. They hadn't even really said that they were anything to each other except a liking. It could be nothing more than a passing fancy. That was it. This feeling would pass. The feeling where Harry was the only other person in the room when they were in a crowd of people. His dark, unruly hair, his ugly round glasses that gave him that adorable, innocent look. The bright emerald eyes that stared out from behind those hideous glasses. The skinny body that didn't give off the faintest hint of being well muscled, from hours of playing Quidditch, unless you saw him naked. The gorgeous smile with straight, bright white teeth that blinded Draco with its brilliance every time it was directed towards him. His little nose. The brilliant brain that he hid and only let it showed if prodded into it. The innocence that glowed from him, the genuine goodness that radiated from him, given to him from his parents. All these things were only a passing fancy. It wasn't love. It was indigestion, not butterflies. It *would* pass.
…As would this dreadful worry that settled over Draco in the past thirty minutes of pacing his room. "It'll pass. Harry's fine," he muttered to himself even as he ran out the door, intent on going to Harry's room.

Personally, I think I'm losing my touch! ^.^ I don't think that was evil. I am trying to be nice here, so I put one of my favourite parts in. Isn't Draco just so cute when he's worrying about Harry? ^.^ Is this teaser still evil? Is there really no such thing as a nice teaser? Please tell me! If I didn't succeed, I'm sorry... Not really, but hey, it's the thought of being sorry that counts, right? Probably not. Oh well. I'm tired, so I'm off to bed. I hope you enjoyed the new chapter and thanks again for such great response for chapter 10. It really made me happy. I'll see you all next wee

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Chapter: 12

IMPORTANT A/N: Okay, this is the repost with a new **teaser** for chapter 13, and **replies** to reviews. Sorry this took a little longer than expected. But I did say either Sunday or Monday, and it is Monday! I meant to get it out this afternoon, but oh well!
Somebody help me! I really want to open up a LiveJournal, but I can't get in because nobody I know has one! Of course, I do know of a lot of people in the HP fandom who have one, but I don't know them that well... Not that I know any of you that well, but you like my story enough to give me a number for LiveJournal, right? ^.^ If you feel like helping out a person in need, please email me at I will dedicate the next chapter to you if you let me into LiveJournal! Is that good enough of a bribe? ^.^
Oh, and I'm so sad. I got my first bad review for chapter eleven! I wanted to say flame, but I don't know if it really classifies as a flame because it isn't that harsh. But still. Oh, and if you feel like giving me bad reviews, at least have the dignity to sign in. It's not like I'm going to email you and be like, 'biotch! What are you talking about? You think my story sucks?' I won't, because frankly, I think it does kind of suck. But that's me. Oh and another thing... I'm *so* close to getting to 200 reviews! Help me out! ^.^ That would be super cool! Anyway, for those of you who have already read this chapter, please feel free to scroll down to the end for the teaser and replies to reviews. The rest of you who are just joining us, enjoy!

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Twelve
It was time for step four: grovelling. With a pop, Harry was gone.
A two-story house appeared in front of Harry and he quickly checked that he still had everything with him. When he found that he had, he took the Invisibility Cloak off, folded it up and put it inside his black cloak and put the hood up. As he walked to the house, he felt his adrenaline pumping through his veins and he couldn't help the smile that spread slowly across his face. This was where he'd find people who would accept him. Stepping up to the door, he cautiously opened it up and stepped inside. Two hooded people were just inside the hallway and they stepped in front of him.
"What is your business here?" the man on the right asked.
"I've been summoned."
"We weren't told."

"Well obviously he doesn't tell you everything. Do you even know who you are guarding the door with right now?"
"Um... no, actually."
"I just proved my point. Get out of my way before I make you get out of my way," Harry threatened while pulling out his wand.
"Go right ahead," the second one said quickly while motioning Harry down the hall. Harry nodded his head slightly and continued down the hall, knowing he was going the right way when his scar began to burn slightly. The last door at the end of the hallway had a light gleaming from the bottom crack; and Harry quickly went to it and opened the door. He found himself in the room that he had dreamt of when he Saw Snape being tortured.
A small smile spread over his lips when he saw just the man he was looking for, pacing the room, with two more hooded men standing before him, cowering. "How could you two be..." he stopped talking when he spotted Harry. "Didn't I ask not to be disturbed until I was done with these two?" Voldemort asked in a deadly quiet voice. Harry stood up straight and walked toward him, leaving only a few feet between them and bowed down.
"I am sorry, my lord. The two men outside did not stop me from entering. I did not know you were busy."
"Well, what is your business with me tonight?"
"I have come to offer myself to you, my lord."
"You are not one of my servants already? Most people come without the proper clothing on."
"I had to borrow this from another one of your servants just to be safe. I wanted complete anonymity until I revealed myself to you."
There was silence for a few moments. "You may stand. And you two... Crucio!" The two men fell down in pain and began screaming. Harry winced as his scar began to burn fiercely in his head. He had to fight with all his will to not clamp his hand over it. Instead, he bit his lip to try to take his mind away from the pain. Harry watched as Voldemort lifted his spell and levitated the two limp forms out the door and sent them crashing to the wall outside. Harry watched them fall to the floor and the door slam shut before he turned back to the man before him.
"Complete anonymity, you say? If you wanted that, then you must be one of my enemies. Afraid I might kill you?" he sneered. Under the cover of his hood, Harry rolled his eyes.
"I used to be, but not anymore. I've been told that you wanted me by your side, and I'm willing to give my loyalties to you."
"Indeed. How do I know that you are loyal to me now?"
"I can only give you my word..." Harry reached into his pocket and retracted his wand and lay laid it on the palms of his hands. "…and my wand." Voldemort summoned it into his awaiting hands and opened his red eyes in surprise when sparks emitted from it. He sent a silver mist towards the door from his own wand. A moment later, a few hooded men came in and bowed down at the Dark Lord's feet. "Search this young man here. But, do not lower his hood quite yet. He only wants his identity with me." Two sets of hands began roaming his body, searching for anything that may harm their master. The only thing that was on Harry was his Invisibility Cloak.
"He has an Invisibility Cloak, Master. What shall we do with it?"
"Please don't take it! I need it to get back into the castle, otherwise I'll be in trouble for leaving the grounds."
"The castle?" Voldemort asked. "You are speaking of Hogwarts, aren't you?"
"Yes, I am speaking of Hogwarts. I am a student there."

"Convenient. I could use another person there to recruit people. What house are you in?"
"Gryffindor."
The older wizard gave a sharp laugh and immediately the others joined in. "I am surprised. Gryffindors are usually right in Dumbledore's pocket." He motioned for the Cloak to be given back. "Your wand," he continued after the Death Eaters stood by his side, "it contains a phoenix feather, does it not?"
"It does. It comes from the same bird that your feather did, my lord." Voldemort looked sharply at Harry and stared.
"Leave," he commanded the Death Eaters without removing his eyes from the hooded youth before him. He waited until the door closed and then approached Harry, trying to see through the veil of darkness that shrouded his face. "Are you ready to show me your face, boy?"
Harry slowly lowered his hood and stared into Voldemort's blood red eyes. He stared at Harry in disbelief for a few moments before breaking out into hysterical, high-pitched laughter. Harry raised an eyebrow and calmly waited for him to speak again. "Harry Potter! As I live and breathe," he said finally. "It actually worked. Who brought you here?"
"Nobody, I came here by myself."
"Really? I would have thought you had gone to somebody for help. How did you know where to find me?"
"I asked another Death Eater. I only told him it was for knowledge sake."
"And who was this?"
"Severus Snape."
"Ah, he would have helped you no matter what. You didn't need to be so secretive about it."
"No, I think I did. He doesn't like me. He'd never give me the time of day."
Voldemort seemed to ponder this idea for a moment, and nodded his head the slightest bit, then continued with questioning the young man before him. "Now... just to be sure, you are not here for that Muggle-loving fool Dumbledore, are you?"
Harry scoffed. "I have not spoken to him since he kicked me out of the Great Hall for merely being there. I'd rather be somewhere where I know the people won't betray me."
Voldemort smiled and had Harry not been asking to join his side, it would have sent shivers down his spine. For some reason, this man didn't scare him at all anymore. Even though he now held both of their wands and could strike Harry down at the mention of two words, he didn't care. Somehow, he knew that Voldemort wouldn't do that to him anymore. They were on the same side. Voldemort began circling Harry, twirling his wand between his hands.
"You have no idea how long I have waited for this day, Harry. After you left the graveyard the first time we met with my new body, I knew that I had to have you on my side. This has been a long time in waiting, but it will most definitely be worth it. Did the person who told you that I wanted you, also tell you that I wanted you as my second in command?"
"He said that I was powerful enough, but not that you wanted me to have the honour."
The Dark Lord came to a stop in front of Harry, cupped his chin and turned his face up. Burning pain shot through the scar on his forehead and he couldn't help the wince that came from the touch. Voldemort narrowed his eyes. "Why do you flinch when I touch you?"
"It... it burns my scar, my lord," Harry stuttered through clenched teeth. The older wizard moved Harry's fringe aside with Harry's own wand and examined it.
"Does it do anything else?"
"I sometimes have dreams of what you are doing."

"Is that how you knew that Severus is my servant?"
"Er, - yes, it is," he lied. He wasn't so sure if he wanted to rat his Potions Master out quite yet, even if he was working for Dumbledore. The information could be useful. "I Saw you giving him the Cruciatus three times a couple months ago."
"And does it hurt in these dreams?"
"Yes. I usually wake up from the pain."
"Hmm. I will get my best servants to find a remedy for it. Perhaps Severus will have something for you. That way he can administer it to you at school. The remedy could be easily accessible for you."
"Oh! Can you not tell him about me? I, er, don't particularly like him, you know. I don't want to see him more than I already do." Voldemort eyed him suspiciously for a few moments before laughing his eerie laugh.
"Of course. He will not know of you. Is there anybody else who you do not wish for them to know?" Voldemort said, with a hint of amusement in his voice.
"Is there anybody from Hogwarts that I would know?"
"Yes, there are two more than Severus. Draco Malfoy is one. The other one is a secret, just as you are. You will know in time."
"Dr... Draco Malfoy is a Death Eater?" Harry stuttered out.
"Yes, he was just initiated in the middle of February. Do you not want him to know?"
Harry thought quickly before he betrayed any of his emotions. "No, I don't. Don't tell him either. Though if you did, maybe we could be friends, but I don't know if I want to be."
"I like the way your mind works. You like to keep your enemies... well, with the exception of me. And to think, Draco never did anything as extreme as killing your parents," he sneered. An angry jolt of energy went through Harry and he narrowed his eyes.
"Oh, no. I still hate you for that. Don't get me wrong here; I've had to live with my blasted Muggle relatives my entire life because of you."
Voldemort smirked and paced back to his throne-like chair. "I feel your pain. Believe me, I do. Down to business, Harry, have you ever cast an Unforgivable?"
"Only the Imperius, my lord."
Voldemort looked faintly surprised by this, but chose to ignore it. "Put your hood up again."
Harry complied and Voldemort sent the silver mist once again and two Death Eaters hurried in.
"I'll only need one of you," he declared. "Harry, why don't you try the Imperius first. Make him do whatever you want." He then threw Harry's wand back at him, and he caught it deftly in his wand hand.
"Imperio!" he cried.
The man's body went limp and Harry commanded with his mind for him to bow down at his feet. The man dragged himself over and bowed down; and then after further encouragement, he kissed the hem of Harry's robes. With another wave of his wand, Harry lifted the curse.
"Brilliant!" Voldemort cried as if he were teaching Harry a simple leg locking charm. "Try the Cruciatus. It's a bit more difficult than that one." The man that was still kneeling on the floor, cowered before Harry as he raised his wand.
"Crucio!" The man twitched but did not scream out. When Harry lifted the curse, the Death Eater looked up at his attacker and snorted.
"That's the best you can do?" he sneered.
"Crucio!" Voldemort bellowed from his chair and hit the man square in the chest. "You will do

well to treat him with respect, Macnair. He will soon be my second in command. Harry, cast Avada Kedavra on him. You'll only be able to knock him out."
Harry took a deep breath, in an attempt to calm his shaking hands. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew that it was wrong to cast the spell that had killed his parents. He quickly put an end to that thought and pointed his wand at Macnair. "Avada Kedavra!" A faint green light erupted from his wand and he heard an even more faint rushing sound and the curse hit Macnair in the chest. He immediately fell over onto his face.
"Check his pulse, and if he's alive, just send him out into the hallway. Somebody is bound to take pity and tend to him."
Harry fell down onto his knees and felt the man's pulse. He felt a sinking feeling in his stomach when he found one. He had been rather hoping that the curse had worked. With a flick of his wrist, he sent the man flying through the door and 'accidentally' let him hit the wall, just as Voldemort had done with the two who had been in the room earlier.
"Wonderful, Harry. Although I would have preferred you coming to me fully trained in this area so that we could initiate you straight away, I am glad to have you here, so I am willing to train you three nights a week. I would do more, but I am sure you can deduce that I am a busy man. As it appears that we are connected through your scar, I believe that I will use it to let you know when I want you to come. You may go now. We'll be in contact soon."
Harry bowed down before him once again. "Thank you for your kindness, my lord."
"Anything for you, Harry Potter," Voldemort replied with a demonic glint to his eyes. Harry turned to leave but stopped when a question popped into his mind.
"If I may ask, my lord, when do you think I will be initiated?"
"I was thinking the next full moon, which is in three weeks' time. Is that acceptable, Harry?"
"It's perfect, my lord, thank you." He bowed once again and left the room, thankful for leaving since his scar was burning fiercely the entire time. Wrapping his Invisibility Cloak around himself, he Apparated back to the gates of Hogwarts.
Draco paced around his dorm room, worrying about what Harry was up to. They had decided not to see each other until the next night, but the way Harry had gone about trying to get him to stay away... it had seemed highly suspicious. Draco had tried to shrug it off all night, but the suspicions stayed and he found that it was all that he could think about.
How he hated himself for it. He wasn't supposed to worry about Harry Potter in this way. It wasn't in his job description. It was, however, in Ron Weasley's and Hermione Granger's descriptions. Draco cursed them for abandoning Harry and forcing him to take on this job of worrying about him. But then, it wasn't all their fault. *Draco* had been the one to start liking Harry's friendship. Draco had been the one to start caring. Draco had been the one who started fancying the bugger. Draco had been the one... damn it. Draco had been the one to do everything that he was now cursing the two stupid Gryffindors for. Well, except for what was happening around Hogwarts.
Ha! Draco wasn't the one that brought this all on! It was Voldemort and his sick schemes! Damn *him* to hell a thousand times! It was his fault that Draco was falling in lo... damn. No, love had nothing to do with it. They hadn't even really said that they were anything to each other except a liking. It could be nothing more than a passing fancy. That was it. This feeling would pass. The feeling where Harry was the only other person in the room when they were in a crowd of people. His dark, unruly hair, his ugly round glasses that gave him that adorable, innocent look. The bright emerald eyes that stared out from behind those hideous glasses. The skinny body that

didn't give off the faintest hint of being well muscled, from hours of playing Quidditch, unless you saw him naked. The gorgeous smile with straight, bright white teeth that blinded Draco with its brilliance every time it was directed towards him. His little nose. The brilliant brain that he hid and only let it showed if prodded into it. The innocence that glowed from him, the genuine goodness that radiated from him, given to him from his parents. All these things were only a passing fancy. It wasn't love. It was indigestion, not butterflies. It *would* pass.
…As would this dreadful worry that settled over Draco in the past thirty minutes of pacing his room. "It'll pass. Harry's fine," he muttered to himself even as he ran from the room, ignoring the intense pain shooting throughout his body. Draco flew to Harry's room in a blind panic that had absolutely no foundation. All he knew was that there was something wrong, something seriously wrong. He panted the password to the room, which had now been changed to, 'Gryffindor sucks' Surprisingly, Harry had been the one to change it the week before. Draco had laughed, completely missing the murderous intent in the green eyes. Draco closed the door and found the room to be completely dark. The curtains were all closed, blocking out the wan moonlight that might have been able to get in with the sliver of moon. With a flick of his wand, they opened, and the faint light from the moon drifted onto the bed, revealing that Harry, was, in fact, gone. Draco panicked and searched every corner of the room; even corners where he knew Harry would not be able to fit into. He even checked his trunk.
Swallowing the lump that had risen in his throat, he sat with a thump onto the trunk, but he immediately regretted it as more burning pain shot through him. Draco stood up carefully, stood in place, and stared at the door, willing for it to open, emitting a laughing Harry with an armload of candy and butterbeer from Hogsmeade, and calling out to Draco.
"Oi, Draco! I went into Hogsmeade and bought all this for us. Let's eat!" he'd call triumphantly. And then they'd eat, and laugh like they usually did, and then they'd kiss a little. Maybe Draco would leave, maybe he would stay and sleep on the couch... or in the bed next to Harry's warm body.
But none of these things happened. Draco stood in a stationery position for what felt like an extremely long time, waiting. By the time hurried footsteps were heard outside, his feet were more pain to add on to the already long list. The heavy door opened and, closed; and in the next moment, a dark hooded figure appeared out of nowhere. Draco had his wand out in an instant.
"Who are you?" Draco commanded.
The figure lowered his hood and revealed Harry's confused face. "What're you doing, Draco? It's me. Nobody else knows our password."
"Right," he said sheepishly, putting his wand away. "Where were you? Do you have any idea how long I've been waiting here, worrying out of my mind that you were being killed or something!"
"Okay, mother. I'm sorry I worried you."
"I deserved that. But seriously Harry... where were you?"
"I went for a walk. What's the big deal?"
"Okay..." Draco said slowly. "So then, what's the deal with the hooded cloak? I've never seen you wear such a thing."
"Nothing. It's new, and I thought I'd wear it."
"But you haven't gone shopping."
"Owl order, Draco," Harry snapped.
Draco stepped up angrily to face the other boy. "What are you hiding from me? I can tell you're

leaving something out. So... you went for a walk, but where did you go?"
"Around the lake. Stop with the interrogation already. I didn't go anywhere where I'd be harmed. I'm alive, aren't I?"
"I don't believe you."
Harry smiled and leaned forward to place a small kiss on Draco's lips. "Can't you just take my word for it? I was just out for a walk, Drake."
Draco scowled and moved away. He recognised that tone of voice. It was a slick voice, used for when a person was hiding something and trying to butter somebody up, by using *that* tone of voice with them. "That's the thing, Potter. I can't take your word for it because I don't trust you."
"And you expect me to trust you?" Harry replied angrily.
"Why shouldn't you? I've been nothing but honest with you, Harry!" Harry very roughly grabbed Draco's left arm and pushed up his sleeve to reveal the Dark Mark. Draco paled upon seeing the murderous look that Harry was giving him.
"Oh really. When did you get this little tattoo, Malfoy? Did you see Snape's and immediately decide, 'hey, that looks kind of cool. Where can I get me one of those?' I could have sworn that you would have rather done anything else than to grovel down at Voldemort's feet. Tell me, whose what side are you really on, Malfoy? Light or Dark? What's it going to be?"
"Harry... I swear I'm on your side. I swear."
"Are you sure about that?"
"Yes! I'm on your side!"
"And do you know what side that is?"
"The Light! Why are you asking me this? You know what side you're on, Harry! You're on the Light. I'm only a spy like Severus is, I swear. You can ask him yourself. My father was pressuring me and he told me that there was an operative inside Hogwarts. He said that the operative would come to me if I agreed to become a Death Eater and Severus persuaded me to become one so I could find out who it was."
"And did you?"
"Yes, I did! But I haven't told anybody. You have to believe me, Harry. I'm only doing this for you."
"Then you'll find that you'll be severely disappointed in the end. Your work will all be for nothing."
"No, it won't. Everything will be okay. You'll defeat Voldemort and we'll be okay." Draco leaned forward and kissed Harry deeply, passionately. The Gryffindor kissed back. Harry threaded his fingers through Draco's hair and Draco wrapped his arms around the shorter boy and pulled his body to his own. Draco sighed into Harry's mouth. *I love this boy,* he thought, and didn't bother to correct himself. The two pulled apart and Draco fell against Harry, as he said. "I'm sorry. I'll do anything for you."
"No. You can't do that. You'll be hurt in the end. Drake, I think I want to go to bed. Maybe you should leave."
Draco felt something rip out of his chest. Those last words sounded like he was breaking everything off. He looked up at Harry and silver met the end in the emerald eyes. "No! What are you doing this for? I'm what you want! You're what I want, Harry. Damn you for it too!. You've turned me soft! The only thing I've got left is my hatred for Muggles, Muggle-born, and Voldemort. You've made everything seem less important. You've even got me saying cheesy lines like that!"

"I'm sorry. We can be friends."
"Friends?" Draco scoffed. "Fuck you, Potter. You can continue in your pathetic existence with no friends to help you because you just lost your last friend."
"Drake, just because I don't want us to be together doesn't mean..."
"Fuck you! You know why I don't want to be friends? Because I realised just now that I... I love you. Okay? Happy now? Does that make you happy? I've never said that to anybody before, not even my parents and I just said it to you. You broke through my shell," he said sarcastically.
"God, I was right what I said on the train ride here. Everywhere I look, there's Potter. But now, it's in a slightly different way than what I meant before, because now I'll be *looking* for you. I'll be searching you out in the crowd. What is it with you and getting under people's skin like this? I can't stand you! You make my skin itch and crawl. You make me want to..." Draco stopped in his rant and stared at Harry's surprised face. Before he knew what he was doing, he had kissed Harry as roughly as he could. When he pulled away, they were both panting for air. "I hate you," Draco hissed and stormed from the room.
He flew down the hallways, not caring if anybody heard him, not caring that Filch was currently yelling after him, telling him to stop. Draco stopped caring when Harry stopped caring. That was probably a good thing since he was a Death Eater. Killing people wouldn't be such a problem anymore. It was looking like a sunny alternative to bothering with Harry. Just as he was passing up Snape's door, he stopped in his decision to a hasty retreat to bed and instead started pounding on his godfather's door. After a few moments' pounding, low grumbling could be heard from inside and in the next second, Snape's angry face appeared in the doorway.
"Draco! What are you doing, pounding on my door at this hour of the night? Some of us need to get our sleep. Go to bed!"
The door was about to be slammed on his face but he pushed it open and slid in past Snape. "Are you deaf? I said, go to bed! I am not in the mood for this right now."
"You know what I'm not in the mood for, Severus? I'm not in the mood to help out snivelling Gryffindors anymore. Potter can go sod off for all I care because he doesn't want our help anymore. He's fine just as he is."
Snape tiredly rubbed his temples and shut the door. When he spoke, it was in a calm, calculating tone, with the anger sitting at the bottom, waiting to come out. "Draco, it is two in the morning. I do not feel like talking to you or anybody for that matter. And when your chosen topic of conversation is Potter, I *really* do not want to hear it. I hear enough about him during daylight hours. Let me rest after dark."
"Normally, I would respect that, but I'm telling you, Potter doesn't want anything to do with me! He found out that I'm a Death Eater, don't ask me how, but he has! He started asking me what side I was on and I told him that I was on his side and he asked me if I was sure. Of course, I'm sure! Then he started going on about how I wasn't sure that he was on the Light side. Well, he didn't say it in so many words, but he pretty much implied it. I hate your idea. I am not dealing with any more Gryffindors for the rest of my life."
"Tough luck. You work for a whole load of Gryffindors."
"Bloody hell! Then I'm not going to be on the Light side anymore. I really don't have any qualms with killing people anymore. Every time I do it, I'll just imagine Potter's face and I won't feel any remorse because I'll just be killing Potter over and over again. Don't worry, I won't tell Voldemort about you being a spy. I still like you."
"Draco... shut up. You're rambling and I know you don't really mean that."

"How do you know? You don't know what goes on inside my head! I hate Potter and I'll do anything to go against him."
"I can't believe I have to do this," Snape muttered irritably under his breath. "Draco, listen to me. I know that you do not hate Potter. You may hate certain things about him but you do not hate him and if you deliberately do things that are against his beliefs, you will never get him back."
"Who said anything about getting him..."
"Silence! I am not done speaking. From all the ramblings that I have picked up from you, it has finally got Potter. Where was he tonight?"
"I don't know. He came back with a black hooded cloak though."
"Oh, wonderful," Snape said sarcastically. "Just believe me when I say that he probably didn't mean any of those things that he said to you today. Do not change your loyalties now, Draco. You may hesitate to turn me in to Voldemort, but I will not hesitate to turn you into the Ministry of Magic."
"So, you're threatening me now?"
"Not threatening, warning. You know what is the right thing to do. And what is it?"
"Staying on the Light side," Draco grumbled.
"Will you do it?"
"Fine! But don't expect me to be nice to Potter. He's made his decision and I've made mine. We are not friends anymore and there isn't anything you can do about it."
"Fine. Now that we've got this settled, get out of my rooms."
"Nice speaking with you, too," Draco complained, while being pushed out the door.
"I wish I could say it's been a pleasure, but well..."
The door was slammed in Draco's face, leaving him in the cold and darkened hallway, shivering.
"Bastard."

Replies: (I'm not replying to each one personally because there is starting to be too many, and some are just not long enough to reply to. Not that I don't love getting them, so keep those short ones coming! They're great and I thank you for them!)
Thanks to: **anonymous bystander, Mak, Ptijade, , Rin, redredredred, angel, Fallen Dragon, Lady Phoenis Gryffindor, mystic-flower, Kimmy, an innocent author on FF, *Dark*Angel* Anne Phoenix**: Please do keep asking questions! I don't think you're whinging at all, just a little confused! ^.^ I did get a couple people asking this question, so I'll answer it to the best of my ability, because it is a little confusing if I think about it too much. Okay, so Harry has 'succumbed' to the voice in his head, who is also the man inside of Hogwarts. We get that much, or at least I hope we all do! It's basically a form of brainwashing. That was how I saw it anyway. So, he is doing what this voice has been telling him is right, and what is supposedly the best thing for him. But deep down, harry knows how he feels about Draco. He knows that he really does like Draco, so that emotion is going to be showing at times. (Bleachpot. Good name! ^.^) Because of this, he wants Draco to be on his side, (the Dark side), but he's not entirely sure that Draco is on the Dark side. So, as we've now all seen in chapter 12, Draco tells Harry that he is a spy for the Light. Therefore, Harry breaks up with him to avoid getting hurt in the future. You didn't really get to see this because that part was in Draco's POV. Did I explain this well enough? I hope so. If not, feel free to ask more questions, and I will answer them, unless of course it's giving away a crucial plot point! ^.^
Draconian: I do feel like I'm losing my touch as well. Hopefully I have done a good job at

keeping up the evilness in this coming teaser. I sure wasn't in an evil mood when I picked it though.
Meemo: He is still listening to the voice. But after the Apparition lesson, he was really excited because he had just completed a crucial task to getting to Voldemort. Therefore, he wanted to celebrate a little bit. What other way than by getting a little drunk? ^.^ Plus, I'm sure that learning how to Apparate would be a pretty exciting experience. But yeah, this chapter did confuse a lot of readers. Check out my reply to Anne Phoenix. I tried to explain some of this stuff there. If you have more questions, just ask!
Sailor Grape: Damn. You're making me blush! ^.^ It's really good to know that I keep throwing everybody off, especially since this was my first attempts at a mystery. I don't think it's a full blown mystery like Malfoy P.I. is, but it's a mystery nonetheless. Right? Or am I just kidding myself here? Well, Snape and Draco do suspect something. I don't remember, but I think Snape asked Harry if he's feeling alright in Chapter 11 because he's been acting strangely. So, I guess he is doing a pretty good job, but they do notice something.
FireWulf: Ah, if only I could give you some clues. Alas, I cannot! ^.^ I would surely give it away. Maybe I'll try to come up with a riddle or something, but I'm crap at those, but I'll try. And oh my goodness! Waiting for this story is like waiting for the fifth book? Whoa. That's a really good compliment, but I would think that waiting for the fifth book is a little more um what's the word I'm looking for, irritating? No, that's not it. Oh well. But thanks for the comparison.
anonymous: Ah, here's my anonymous bad reviewer! ^.^ I did say in the summary that this was eventual H/D. I'm sorry that you got sick of waiting for it on chapter four, when the slash starts in chapter *five*. Besides, I have a bigger plot going on, and I wanted to develop how much of a jackass Sirius turned into. I think that library scene clinched that point. I didn't want a whole group of voyeurs spying on Harry and Ginny in the library, kissing. Draco would have been too much going on if I had added him in there. Besides, romance can't start in the blink of an eye. Especially between Harry and Draco. It has to be gradual. It has to be slow in coming. I'm sorry if I might sound a bit bitchy, but this is one point in the story that I feel strongly about. I didn't want to just jump into the relationship. Then the whole thing would just feel pointless. Their relationship is very poignant in the coming sequels and I had to start it out correctly, and I feel that I did. So, I'm sorry that you feel that way. Hopefully you made it to the rest of the chapters, and if you did, I thank you for reading this far, even though you basically said my story sucks.
Iljana: That's a good question. I'm surprised that nobody else has asked this before. It came up in my mind while writing it, and my reasoning was this... The voice talks to Harry, Harry can send thoughts to the voice. But he can keep his thoughts closed off. The purpose of the man casting the spell on Harry when he fell down the stairs, was so that he could brainwash Harry, not to read his mind. So, I suppose it works a little like telepathy, but it's really not. Does this explain your question?
I Am the Bunny Slayer: You know what's funny? Somebody has been reading our comments about promiscuous ghosts, and sent me a link to an NC-17 rated story. In it, Hermione and Ginny are doing it, then they seduce Harry together, then McGonagall comes into it. *Then* Moaning Myrtle is always watching them, and Hermione finds a spell that allows her to become solid, therefore, Harry can have sex with her, and he's like all watching his, you know, inside of her body... And it's all pretty disturbing. That's probably why nobody really bothers with it. lol. I laugh thinking about it. I mean, come on, Harry and Moaning Myrtle having sex? hehe. I think that if a really good author took the idea of a really randy ghost and made it into a humour fic,

then it would be a really great read. But never actually any sex in it. Otherwise, it's just disturbing. Hmm... now I want to read one for a good laugh. Maybe I'll go to FictionAlleyPark and recommend that somebody write one in the Plot Bunnie forum. Maybe somebody will take the idea! Since you're my last reply, I'll go do that now! I'm just that crazy to actually recommend that somebody do it!

Teaser:
When class ended a few minutes later, Harry walked out with his skin only giving off a slight tint of red, while his hair was a completely different matter. If his mood were able to give off any colour, it would most certainly look the exact same shade as his hair. Harry was fuming about for the nerve of Draco's nerve. How could he get the nerve up to do something so stupid when he knew that Harry could turn him into Voldemort for something that angered him. When Harry reached the entrance hall, he was absolutely fuming, and it did not make matters any better when he caught sight of the blonde Slytherin.
Without a second thought, he whipped out his wand and pointed it at his back and said the first spell that came to mind. "Conscindo amiculum." Harry watched as Draco's robes ripped into shreds and fell off his body, leaving him in only his emerald boxers. Draco stared down at his body in horror and looked around wildly. People were pointing and laughing at his misfortune. Harry ducked into the shadows so that Draco could not see him and doubled up with laughter. Draco started to run back for the dungeons but Harry placed Impedimenta on him and he slowed down to a snail's pace.
Quite suddenly, Harry had the overwhelming urge to see Draco bleed. To see his crimson liquid seeping from his body, and for him not being able to do anything about it because he was moving so slowly. Without another thought, Harry lifted his wand again. "*Conscindo*," he muttered quietly and watched as deep cuts appeared all over Draco's milky white chest, arms, neck and legs. Very slowly, Draco began to look down at his body, and his face began to twist into one of horror. A terrible smile crossed Harry's face as people began to scream and point at Draco, bleeding onto the floor.

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Chapter: 13

A/N: Hello again! I decided to write all these author notes out now(it's Friday night) so none of you will miss the teaser, in case you didn't come back to see if I had uploaded the last one. Since nobody emailed me last time, I'll ask again... I've been wanting to open a LiveJournal, but none of my friends have one, so I can't open one. If any of you wonderful, nice, beautiful people would like to send me a number or whatever it is that a new person needs, I would be ever so grateful! My email address is If you do send one, please indicate in the subject line that it is concerning LiveJournal, otherwise, I will probably delete it.
Oh, this note is **important!** Next week is scheduled for the uploading of chapter fourteen... Well, there's a bit of a problem with this. My beta has not written back to me in a while concerning chapters 14-16 - the last chapters of the story. I emailed her a little more than a week ago, asking

for an update, but she still hasn't replied... so here's the thing, chapter 14 *might* not be up next week. She still has one week to get to me on this chapter so we'll all keep crossing our fingers. If she doesn't get back to me, I'll be in contact with my beta for the sequel (which is now called *Remember You*) to this story and hopefully she'll be up for the job. So, if there is a delay in the coming chapters, I apologise in advance. If this is the case, there might be a sudden flow of chapters because I want this story all done before June 21st.(For good reason! ^.^) So, anyway, enjoy the new chapter!

Let the Darkness Take You

Chapter Thirteen

A cold breeze blew over Harry's sleeping form and he shivered in his sleep. His hands searched blindly for his blankets and pulled them over him. Green eyes snapped open in surprise as he felt that the blankets were as cold as ice. Harry threw them off and leapt off the bed, only to jump into two feet of snow. "What the bloody hell?" he yelled. Grabbing his wand off of his bedside table, he banished the snow from the room and warmed his blankets back up. But there was still a cold wind blowing in his room and no matter what Harry did, he couldn't get it to go away. There didn't seem to be a source for it at all. Scowling, Harry quickly got dressed and left his room, in search of a certain Slytherin.

Harry quickly made his way down to the dungeons and ran into the tow-headed Slytherin near the potion dungeons. "Malfoy, what the hell did you do to my room? I can't get that damn wind to go away!"

"What makes you think I did it, Potter?" Malfoy sneered. "I'm not the only one in this school who hates you now, or don't you remember?"

Harry growled and pushed Draco up against the stone wall and leaned his face so close that their noses were almost touching. Harry grinned inwardly when he felt Draco's chest start to rise and fall more rapidly against his own chest. He ran a seductive finger down Draco's neck and chest. "Oh, but I seem to remember you telling me yesterday that you *love* me," he said in a low, husky voice. "How can you love and hate somebody at the same time?"

"Very easily, Potter. Especially when that person is you. Get off of me."

"I'll let you go, if you get that cold wind out of my room."

"I didn't do anything to your room, Potter!"

"You're the only one who knows the password, speaking of which, I think I may have to change it since you're no longer allowed there. What do you think? 'Slytherins are all a bunch of pussies?' 'Slytherins are too proud to marry anything less than Purebloods, therefore Slytherins like to fuck their own cousins?' What do you think? I think I like the second one better."

"Shut the fuck up, Potter. I have no intention in marrying whomever my father tells me to marry. If I'm lucky, he'll either be dead or in Azkaban by then. You know why I won't?"

"No. Please enlighten me, Malfoy."

"The only person I want to shag is you, Potter. You're the only one who does it for me."

"Flattered. Really, I am. It's just too bad that I'm not a faggot."

Draco scoffed. "You, *not* gay? Yeah right, and I'm a Death Eater by choice."

"Just admit it, Malfoy. There's nothing wrong with it."

"There's nothing wrong with what?" Draco asked suspiciously.

"Admitting what you really are. But since you're too much of a coward to do so, I won't make you. Now... just get that damn wind out of my room."

"I'd like to see you make me," Draco spat.

"Fine," Harry growled out, his eyes darkening. "You'll regret it, Malfoy. Mark my words; you'll live to regret it. Then again, maybe you won't. Bloody traitor."
Harry pushed Draco against the wall, causing him to roughly hit his head. "Have a nice day," Harry said brightly and walked away. Draco rubbed his head and watched him walk away. He jumped as another person came out from behind the corner and checked his head.
"A bump is forming. You won't have a concussion," Snape's voice said.
"I don't give a fuck if I do get one."
Snape sighed deeply. "We have to work fast, Draco. Who knows how much longer we have until he's initiated."
Draco turned sharply and looked at his mentor. "You mean, he's already gone to Voldemort?"
"Now, I know you aren't that dense, Draco. Of course he has. He just threatened your life for Merlin's sake. I know that you've never particularly liked each other before this has all happened but can you in your memory ever remember Potter threatening your life?"
"No," Draco admitted.
"Let's just hope he doesn't tell Voldemort about us."
Harry pulled his hood over his head, wrapped his Invisibility Cloak around himself and ran out of the castle. Voldemort had just sent a message through his scar. It burned but it was in a different way that it usually did, so Harry had known that his new-found master had summoned him. Once outside the gates, Harry Disapparated and instantly reappeared outside of the Riddle house in Little Hangleton. Nobody stopped him this time, they merely nodded. Harry suspected that they had been told of his arrival, even if they didn't know whom he was. The door to Voldemort's chamber came into view and Harry pushed it open to reveal Voldemort, sitting in his throne-like chair like some sort of king. Nagini, Voldemort's snake, was curled up by the fire, enjoying the warmth. After closing the door, Voldemort got up from his seat and Harry took down his hood and bowed before his feet.
"My lord," he whispered.
"Up, Harry. A quick bent back will suffice from you. You are not one of my lowly servants. In fact," he said, walking to Harry and running his long finger down Harry's jaw line. Harry winced. "I hardly consider you my servant. Given time and a bit of practice, you could almost be my equal. *Almost*. And I look after my equals if they are on my side. You, Harry, will be well provided for. I have already found a remedy for your scar. Of course, it is a variety of potions and you will have to take them everyday. They will stop the pain and visions when you are around me. You do not need to experience this anymore."
"You are too kind, my lord."
"Put your hood up. Now, for the potions." He then sent out the silver mist; and moments later, a hooded Death Eater entered and bowed low before Voldemort. "You will retrieve the potions that I have asked for. I think you will find that Snape is in the potions room, brewing some of these for me right now. Bring all four if they are ready."
"Yes, master," the man whispered and left the room quickly.
"Does Snape know for whom he is brewing these for?" Harry asked nervously.
"No. I think he may be a bit suspicious about your identity, but he wisely has not asked me. He knows better than that." Minutes later, the man came back with eight vials of potion. He handed them quickly to Voldemort and left.
"Here. Drink these four. I will have more for you before you leave so that you can take them every day." Harry took them and obediently drank all four. Just as he was bringing the fourth vial

away from his lips, the door swung open behind them. Harry dropped the vial on the floor, causing it to shatter, and brought his hood up. He looked up to see Voldemort's red eyes flashing in the direction of the intruder. Harry turned and saw Snape taking his hood down. Harry's green eyes began to flash in anger. He knew what Snape was doing. He was suspicious, so he was putting himself in danger, just so that he could possibly see Harry with Voldemort. And he just may have seen him.
Snape walked forward and bowed down before Voldemort. "My lord," he murmured. "I am sorry for my intrusion, but you know how I like to see if my potions have worked or not when administered. Did he drink them all?"
"Bollocks," Harry muttered, feeling his blood start to boil.
"My sentiments exactly," Voldemort said, eyeing Snape distrustfully. "Are you really this senseless, Severus? I specifically told everybody that I was not to be disturbed while with my new protégé, unless I specifically asked for somebody. Perhaps you would like to practice the Cruciatus on Snape?" he directed towards Harry.
Without a second thought, Harry pulled out his wand and cast the Cruciatus on his potions professor, putting all the anger he could into it. Not just the anger he felt towards Snape, but also towards Draco. It must have worked because in an instant, Snape was writhing on the floor, screaming with pain. Harry lifted it after a minute and pocketed his wand. He turned to his master and saw that he was smiling sadistically.
"Very good job. And only the second time you have done it. You will learn to put more power into it later. Be grateful Severus, that he is not able to use the Killing Curse yet. I would not have hesitated to let him use it."
"You are merciful my lord. I will not interrupt you again."
"See that you don't. Now, get out of my sight, and get ready more vials of the potions."
Snape hurried out of the room while casting Harry a suspicious/angry glance. He was limping slightly from the after effects of the Cruciatus and Harry felt a certain sort of pride in having done that to him. "Now that we have got him out of the way, I will let you practice the Killing Curse." Harry's eyes lit up and he looked towards where Voldemort was pointing his wand. There was a cage built into the wall; and with a flick of his wand, it opened and two cats came walking out, stretching luxuriously. "Practice on those," he said carelessly, waving his bony hand in a majestic circle, and sat down in his chair. Harry watched the cats walk up to him and start to rub their bodies on his legs, emitting soft purring sounds on contact.
"Stupid animals," he whispered and raised his wand. "Avada Kedavra!"
A faint green light erupted from his wand and hit the cat on his right leg. The grey cat mewled low in its throat and collapsed onto its side. Harry was about to bend down to check if it was alive when it rose up into the air and flew into Voldemort's waiting hand. "Let us see what you have managed to do, Harry." He waved his wand over the prone form and a blue light appeared.
"Hmm... Crucio!" he said calmly as he pointed his wand at Harry. Harry felt the curse hit him and he fell to his knees in pain. Knives were stabbing every place in his body, entering his bones, making them feel as if he were on fire. He bit his lip painfully to keep from screaming out, he would not show weakness. The curse was lifted off of him after what seemed like an hour and Harry tiredly lifted his head and met the red gaze.
"That is just a taste of what is coming to you if you do not achieve this curse. I suggest you practice at all times. Now... try again."
Clenching his teeth, Harry stood up and pointed his wand at the remaining cat that was slinking

over to the wall. "Avada Kedavra!" he cried, putting the only energy he had left in him, which was the anger left over from the Cruciatus curse. A green light, that was only a little brighter than the one before, came from his wand and hit his intended target. It fell to the ground, then immediately summoned by Voldemort again.
The blue light glowed again after Voldemort waved his wand over the second prone cat. Harry cringed inside, hearing the 'tsk, tsk' sound coming from his master's mouth. The brother to his own wand was raised and pointed at him. "Crucio!" For the second time in minutes, Harry felt the excruciating pain rip through him. This time, he stayed on his feet.
Afterwards, Voldemort let out some more animals on which Harry practised on. Each time, he only managed to knock them out, and each time, the Cruciatus curse was sent at him. After the fifth time, he was feeling disoriented, and nauseous. The last time he had fallen to his knees again, and Voldemort had deemed it time to stop. The tall wizard walked to Harry and lifted him to his feet.
"Be glad I am not using all my power on you, young Potter. You would be visiting the Longbottoms in St. Mungo's right now."
"You... you are merciful, my lord," Harry gasped out.
"A little too much, I believe. Alas, I cannot keep putting the curse on you tonight. You will not be able to get back to school. You are free to go. Come back in two days' time to resume your training. I suggest you practice a little, so that we can move onto more important things... like duelling. They are skills that you will need, and we have very little time before your initiation."
"Yes, my lord. I will practice whenever possible."
"Good. Now leave my sight."
Harry bent his back, pulled his hood up and hurried out of the room. As he was stepping out the door, Snape came to him and handed him a large box of what looked to be about twenty-eight vials of potion, four to each row. "They are sorted so that you can drink one row a day. This will last you a week. I will have more ready for you soon."
"Thank you," Harry said, hoping that he was disguising his voice enough.
"You don't fool me, Potter," he sneered in a low voice.
"Why are you calling me, Potter?" Harry asked, feigning dumbness. "That's not my name."
Snape scoffed. "I'm sure it isn't. Is that why I'm making potions for a curse scar? I don't know of anybody else with one on their foreheads."
"Well, I have a curse scar and you're right, it's not my forehead. It's on my arse."
Snape looked slightly taken aback for a moment before he sneered at Harry again. "Nice, Potter. But I didn't need that mental image. I warn you... if you go any further in this, I will go to the Ministry about you."
Harry immediately pulled out his wand and pointed it at Snape's forehead. "And I warn you," he said in a low, menacing voice. "I will tell Voldemort about you... and Malfoy. You don't want to risk your lives just so that you can turn me in, do you?"
Snape was silent for a moment, not looking at Harry's wand, but trying to see his face through the hood. "Looks like we have a stalemate."
"Seems so," Harry replied, pocketing his wand. "See you at school, Professor."
"Oh, and Potter? Fifty points from Gryffindor for stepping off the grounds without permission."
"Sod off," he called back as he Disapparated with a pop.
Over the next week, Harry's and Draco's fights became more ferocious. They would each make sneering comments to each other about their sexuality. Harry would deny that he was gay and

announced to everybody that Draco was in love with him. Draco was furious and proceeded in tripping Harry up in the hallways. But Draco had vowed to himself that that wasn't the only thing that Harry was going to get. A faceful of hard stone floor just wasn't good enough. While Draco was scheming, Harry was formulating a plan on retaliating to Draco's viciousness. Both were just waiting for the perfect moment.

Snape had also begun to be Harry's shadow, much to his annoyance. Everywhere he'd go, he'd run into the greasy Potions master. Snape would question him suspiciously about his activities. Harry would put an angelic smile on his face and say that he was just switching classes, going to his room, or going to the Great Hall for a meal; which was true most of the time. Other times, he'd be off to find some poor unsuspecting animal on which to practice the Killing Curse on. But, Snape was not to know this.

While this was going on at school, Harry had made three more visits to Voldemort since his first training session. He had just succeeded in casting the Cruciatus with so much power that he had broken the Death Eater's arms and gave him a bloody nose. He figured that any day now would be one of the unfortunate cat's deaths. Harry was rather looking forward to it, after all the pain he had gone through just to try to kill the little buggers. If he could help it, he'd kill every last cat in the damn Riddle house just to prove he could.

Two weeks away from Harry's initiation, Harry went to the dungeons for double potions. When he arrived, it was to find that all the Slytherins were there and only half of the Gryffindors. Harry took his normal seat by himself and began setting up his cauldron. An uneasy feeling settled over him as Snape began his normal speech about which potion they were brewing. He looked up towards the Slytherins as Snape told them to get started and found Draco staring malevolently at him. Harry glared back and began to mix and chop his ingredients. Throughout the entire period, Harry could feel those silver eyes upon his head, and by the time that there was only fifteen minutes left of class, he was beginning to squirm in his seat.

"Hey, Potter!" Draco called suddenly, as the majority of the class was waiting for their potions to turn purple.

"What do you want?" Harry sighed.

"I was just wondering... are you sure that you put the right ingredients into your potion?"

"Of course, I did, you prat. I checked all the labels."

"Labels can be misleading."

Harry glared. "What did you do to my things, Malfoy?"

"Me? Nothing," Draco replied innocently. He reached into his robes and withdrew something that Harry couldn't make out. Draco lit the object and tossed it into Harry's cauldron. Harry stepped back with a cry as his potion exploded its red contents. Most people had seen it coming and had ducked under their desks, avoiding the spray. Harry, however, had received the full blow of it.

"You might actually want to make sure that the labels are correct when adding ingredients, Potter," said Draco, coming out from under his table. "You might just find that you have just made a dyeing potion. I must say... your hair looks rather good red."

Harry growled low in his throat. "You would, Malfoy. You probably think I'm quite fetching right now. Trying to think of different ways that would be good to shag me in?"

Draco's cheeks turned pink with rage and embarrassment as Snape grabbed his collar and turned him around. "Mr. Malfoy," he said in a dangerous voice. "What do you think you're doing?"

"Um... nothing?"

"That's right. You will be doing nothing with your friends this Saturday night because you will be serving detention with Mr. Filch... cleaning Moaning Myrtle's bathroom with a toothbrush - no magic."
"But Professor!" Draco protested.
"But nothing, Malfoy. You will do as I say. Nobody disrupts my classroom. Oh, and twenty points from Slytherin. Don't make me do it again."
With a wave of his wand, the mess was cleaned up, and he stopped in front of Harry and glanced him over. "At least it's an improvement," he smirked. Harry glowered menacingly.
"Is there something that I can wipe this off with?"
"Your skin, yes. But your hair will be red for a while, I'm afraid. It looks like you'll have to deal with Malfoy pining after you for a while."
Harry heard Draco growl low in his throat at his godfather, and Harry smirked at him. "Well, it'll be nothing new, Professor. Though, I don't really blame him for liking me."
Snape rolled his eyes and walked to his potion stores, muttering something about 'just like his father.'
When class ended a few minutes later, Harry walked out with his skin only giving off a slight tint of red, while his hair was a completely different matter. If his mood were able to give off any colour, it would most certainly look the exact same shade as his hair. Harry was fuming about of Draco's nerve. How could he get the nerve up to do something so stupid when he knew that Harry could turn him into Voldemort for something that angered him? When Harry reached the entrance hall, he was absolutely fuming, and it did not make matters any better when he caught sight of the blonde Slytherin.
Without a second thought, he whipped out his wand and pointed it at his back and said the first spell that came to mind. "*Conscindo amiculum.*" Harry watched as Draco's robes ripped into shreds and fell off his body, leaving him in only his emerald boxers. Draco stared down at his body in horror and looked around wildly. People were pointing and laughing at his misfortune. Harry ducked into the shadows so that Draco could not see him and doubled up with laughter. Draco started to run back for the dungeons but Harry placed Impedimenta on him and he slowed down to a snail's pace.
Quite suddenly, Harry had the overwhelming urge to see Draco bleed. To see his crimson liquid seeping from his body, and for him not being able to do anything about it because he was moving so slowly. Without another thought, Harry lifted his wand again. "*Conscindo*," he muttered quietly and watched as deep cuts appeared all over Draco's milky white chest, arms, neck and legs. Very slowly, Draco began to look down at his body, and his face began to twist into one of horror. A terrible smile crossed Harry's face as people began to scream and point at Draco, bleeding onto the floor.
"*Finite Incantatem!*" someone yelled frantically and Draco began to move to normal speed again. He immediately collapsed onto the floor and looked up at Professor Snape, who had yelled the counter curse, with large, frightened eyes.
"Who did this?" Draco cried out, disoriented.
"Never mind that," Snape muttered, though he cast a murderous look in Harry's direction, as Harry adopted a good impression of concern and curiousity as he stepped onto the scene. Snape then put bandages all around Draco's body to stem the blood flow. Sirius then hurried to them.
"Let me take him, Snape. Find out who did this."
"Fine," Snape replied as Sirius picked Draco up, who had passed out from the blood loss. Sirius

ran up the stairs and to the infirmary. Snape then turned to Harry, who was slowly backing up, along the wall. Like a bat, Snape bore down on him and grasped him firmly by the shoulder. "Come to my office, Potter. We shall have a little chat."
Harry only scowled as he was roughly led back down to the dungeons to Snape's office. "You don't actually think I did that, do you?"
"Two months ago, I would not have. But now I know better," Snape said, pushing Harry down into his seat. "What exactly," he started in a low voice, "were you thinking? You could have killed him if there had been nobody around."
"I didn't do that."
"Potter, do not lie to me," he said, voice deceptively calm.
"I'm not."
"Fine. Don't admit it. I will have to take this to the Headmaster. I think he will see fit for you to be expelled from this school."
"Do you really think that wise, Professor? I mean... I hold your life and Malfoy's life in my hands. Do you really want to bring the Headmaster into it?"
"You aren't doing a very good job of holding onto Draco's."
"Did I say I was going to do a *good* job? Besides you don't have any proof that it was me."
Snape growled low in his throat, and after a few moments where he looked to be having a personal battle, he finally spoke. "You will serve detention on Saturday with Draco. I will be taking both of your wands during your time, and Filch will keep a watch on you two so that you don't start brawling."
"I'm *not* cleaning out Moaning Myrtle's bathroom with a toothbrush. Especially with Malfoy!"
"I don't see the big deal. Only a couple weeks ago, you were too willing to have his tongue stuck down your throat. I'm sure you can deal with the closeness of the bathroom. One hundred points from Gryffindor, as well. I do not take attempts on my godson's life, lightly."
"I didn't do it."
Snape looked him with a disgusted look on his face. "Don't deny it, Potter. I know you did it."
Harry glared. "Shut up."
"Ten more points from Gryffindor. I suggest you get out of my sight before you get all your house points taken away."
Harry glared and left the room as quickly as possible. Snape would get his. It wasn't that much longer before Harry would officially become a Death Eater. Then... Harry would have all the power he wanted, and he'd get whatever he wanted from people. Smiling, Harry went to the Great Hall to eat.
Saturday night came and Harry trudged to Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. Snape, Filch, and Draco were already waiting, and all three glared at him as he approached. "What a lovely night for detention, huh?" Harry asked cheerily. Of course, he would think so. It was exactly one week until his initiation.
"Shut up, Potter," Filch growled.
"My sentiments exactly, Argus," Snape replied, staring beadily at Harry. "Wands, Draco, Potter," he said, holding his hand out. The two boys angrily removed their wands from their robes and handed them over.
"I better get it back in one piece," Harry growled.
"Oh, don't worry. You will." Snape advanced on Harry and began feeling around his body.
"What are you doing?" Harry exclaimed indignantly.

"I'm making sure you don't have any dangerous weapons on you."
"I told you. I didn't do that."
Satisfied that Harry held no weapons on him, Snape backed away and glared. "No fighting."
With that, Snape walked away in a flurry of robes. Filch then roughly pushed buckets of soap water, and two toothbrushes into their hands.
"Get to work. You have a long night of cleaning ahead of you." He smiled cruelly and walked away.
"Hold on!" Draco yelled. "You're supposed to stay here."
"I'll come back to check on you. Peeves made a mess in the trophy room again. I think you'll both be safe seeing as how you aren't armed. And I'll know if you have been cleaning or not, so I suggest you do it."
Harry shrugged and walked into the bathroom, followed by a reluctant Draco. They began to work in silence, on opposite sides of the room. Every half an hour, Filch would come back to make sure they were working, and once assured that they were, would leave again. After Filch's fourth visit, both boys were getting to the same point in the middle of the room, their knuckles, red and cracking from hitting them on the floor repeatedly. They were so intent on looking at the floor than at each other, that they didn't notice how close they were until their heads collided with one another. Both of them sat back with loud curses.
"Watch where you're going, Potter!" Draco snarled.
"I wasn't the only one not watching, you prat. Get over yourself."
"I'm not the one who needs to get over myself. You think everybody likes you."
"Actually, you're the one who said that everybody likes you. And I never said or have thought that about myself. In fact, you're the only person I know of that likes me."
"I don't like you, Potter."
"Maybe not... but you want to shag me rotten," Harry said as he began to walk forward on his knees, making Draco back up into a stall. He leaned forward to lick and nibble at Draco's earlobe. A small moan escaped Draco's lips as Harry pulled away. But before he could go back to his work, Draco had grabbed him and brought their lips together in a rough kiss. Draco's tongue snaked inside Harry's mouth and they began to kiss with a ferocity that Harry didn't know that he had for Draco. He had been adamantly denying any sort of feelings that he had towards the other boy... but now, it was like something snapped. The dark waters receded a little, and Harry found himself burying his fingers in Draco's silky hair.
"Draco," he moaned as Draco moved his mouth down to Harry's neck.
Footsteps sounded in the hallway outside the door of the bathroom and Harry broke away from Draco as if he had been burned. The door flung open to admit Filch, fifteen minutes earlier than he should have been. He looked at the two boys suspiciously. Both were red faced, and panting heavily from their fiery kiss.
"What have you two been doing?" Filch asked angrily. "You're supposed to be cleaning, not fighting!"
Harry glanced over at Draco and they met eyes. Draco's silver eyes were glazed over to which made it seem like he was angry, but Harry knew better than that. He knew his own eyes looked exactly the same; he could feel the lust in his body travelling to his eyes. A loud giggle behind Harry made him break eye contact with Draco and turn around. Moaning Myrtle was hovering above her stall.
"Oh, they weren't fighting," she giggled.

"What were they doing then?" Filch demanded.
Myrtle lowered her voice to a conspiratorial whisper as she glided down to Filch. "They were snogging. Getting all hot and bothered about it too; it's a good thing you came when you did."
"You filthy ghost! We were not snogging! I'm not a faggot!" Harry yelled angrily as Draco scoffed and crossed his arms over his chest.
Myrtle's eyes filled with tears as she looked back at Harry. "I know what I saw," she blubbered and flew back to her stall and splashed into her toilet.
"So..." Filch began while giving them both a very amused look. "Is all this hatred you two point towards each other in public, just so that you can get alone with each other in detention to have a secret snog?"
"Would you shut up! We were *not* snogging. We were just having a heated discussion," Harry protested.
"Yeah, with our lips," Draco said smirking. Harry glared at him and clenched his jaw.
"Well, if that's your game. But it would do you two good to start cleaning again. I won't be letting you go until you clean everything, toilets included."
"Not it for Myrtle's!" Draco exclaimed quickly.
Harry glowered darkly, and picked his toothbrush up again. Maybe he could make Draco use it on his teeth without him knowing that it was used on the bathroom floor, and soon the toilets. It was something to plan out...
Over the next week, Harry made more visits to Voldemort than he ever had in the past few weeks. The first visit to him after his detention with Draco had been when he had mastered the Killing Curse. His anger with Draco, Filch, Snape, and Moaning Myrtle had fuelled it all, and both he and Voldemort were surprised when the cat had flown back seven feet when the green light hit it. The Dark Lord had been, to say the least, extremely pleased and had told Harry that he would be getting a very fine reward on the night of his initiation. Harry had been very pleased to hear this.
The next lessons that Voldemort had started in teaching on had been duelling. Harry was already pretty well versed in duelling and was a natural at it. The only thing that his master requested was that he research for more proper curses for a duelling situations. In other words, Harry would have to sneak into the Restricted Ssection to look up illegal Dark curses. But that was what the Invisibility Cloak was for.
When Saturday night came, it was to find Harry sitting in his room, blanket wrapped around him since the cold wind was still blowing through the room. Before too long, his scar began to burn in that tell-tale way that told him that his master wanted him. Harry switched his blanket for his hooded cloak, his Invisibility Cloak, and ran out of the castle. He Apparated to the outside of the Riddle house, to see that the Dark Lord was just coming out of it with one of his servants by his side. Making sure his hood covered his face, Harry whipped off his Invisibility Cloak.
A terrible smile twisted Voldemort's face as he saw him. "Ah, right on time, I see." He grabbed Harry's arm and Disapparated. They appeared at the edge of a forest; Harry could faintly hear the sound of the ocean. The other Death Eater appeared a moment later and was summoned to Voldemort. The Dark Lord took the man's arm, pulled up his left sleeve and touched a finger to the Dark Mark.
The faceless man hissed out his pain as smoke emitted from it. "Now, we wait. Come stand by me, Harry."
Harry complied. They stood silently for almost a minute before small popping sounds were heard

and hooded men and women began to appear. Harry smiled as they all bowed down to their lord, kissing his hem and then forming a circle. It was time to become the thing that he was always meant to be.

A/N: So, what'd ya think? The next chapter is when *everything* is revealed. (Well, not everything, since some things aren't revealed until *Remember You*, the sequel... But more frequently asked questions will be answered next!) That's why I'm a little upset that I might not be able to get it out next week. But I'll see what I can do! Okay, here are the replies to reviews!

Thanks to: **madkornfan, HPIceAngel, frizzy, Mak, redredredred, FireWulf, Rain, RaeLynn**

HironiKoshinha: Well, I can say that Draco won't die, seeing as how there are two sequels to this story, featuring Draco as a main character! ^.^

Meemo: Um... I don't remember right now if there is an actual explanation in the story about why. I am planning on revising the coming chapters to make the next story run smoothly, and I think I was considering adding something like that in there. Have we discussed exactly why he has succumbed? I don't remember.

Sailor Grape: Don't worry! Everything will be peachy in a few chapters... Though the sequel messes up that happiness for a while! teehee.

lollipozz: Yes, everybody does ask me that, but I don't mind! I'm not telling. You'll just have to wait for the next chapter!

NayNymic: Hello! I tried emailing you, but when I read my reviews in my inbox in my email account, the message doesn't go to new lines, so I added your name to the end of your email address. I know, stupid me. Then I didn't realise what I did wrong until just now. Anyway, I'm not at liberty to say what happens in the next chapter, but I will say that there are a lot of goings on there.

Michael Serpent: Oh no! Please breathe again! ^.^ And please don't hold your breath for the next chapter since I'm not positive of when it will be coming out.

mystic-flower: A virus? That's a new thought. Interesting. But, no, he doesn't have a virus. ^.^

kyotyred: Wow, your review was great! Really, thank you. It's so great to know that I can write something that just stays on somebody's mind like it has with you. It makes me really happy to know that you think that I am staying true to Harry's character as envisioned by JKR. Harry's character is so complex to write and I think any writer who gives it a shot, will have trouble doing it, because I most certainly do. So, that's a really great compliment to me. Thank you! I hope the rest of the story lives up to your expectations!

Kwazy Kitty: You brought up some good questions. Yes, Voldemort should be concerned about Harry's loyalty. But considering the circumstances that Harry has joined him under, Voldie knows that Harry is technically true to him. Yes, he knows the dangers of the circumstances, but he doesn't know that Snape and Draco are onto what Voldemort is doing. If they weren't, who knows how long this little thing could go on for, you know? Did I explain myself well enough here? I hope so. Oh, and I know what you mean when you find a great story and you just can't stop reading it! I've stayed up *way* past my self-alotted bedtime before just reading a great HP fanfiction. It's a curse sometimes, I tell you! I'm flattered to know that it was my story that made you do it! ^.^

Zarah: Welcome back! ^.^ It's quite easy to miss a story on this website if you don't have the story or the author on your favourites list... Which reminds me, I have **50** people who have me on their favourites! Thanks people! ^.^ Anyway, I hope I don't disappoint with the rest of the story! Please read on for the teaser!

Teaser: Voldemort's laughter sounded through the air along with Ron's ragged breathing. "And this is why you will not get on Harry's bad side. Which is why I feel a little sorry for you," he said, pointing at a man in the circle. "Come here." The man walked forward and stood only feet away from Harry and Voldemort. "This man, Harry, has been the operative inside of Hogwarts. Since I know that you two are already on bad terms, I know that you will have no problem in killing him. He is of no use to me any longer. Kill him, and I will give you my mark. Now, reveal yourself to Harry."
The man reached up, and lowered his hood. Harry's eyes went wide and he felt something inside of him snap as the rage started to make his blood boil. The dark waters started to recede just a bit more even as Harry raised his wand.
"(insert man's name here)," he growled.
^.^ I think this merits an evil laugh... MuahHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! I had so much fun with that one. When I opened chapter fourteen to pick one out, I remembered this scene, and I gave my most evil laugh, if I do say so myself! ^.^ Okay... some guesses please! Does this teaser give you a clu

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Chapter: 14

A/N: I'll try not to talk too much right now because I know you're all anxious to see who the man is. Yes, it's revealed in this chapter! As you can tell, my beta got back to me! Actually, she just got the last three chapters to me in two days! Isn't she just the greatest? Really, she is. So thank you to her!
I decided that I might as well say right here that my updates will either be Sunday or Saturday night. I say this because I'm not always able to come on the computer on Sunday mornings, either because of church, or I'm sleeping! I don't like to update too late on Sundays because then the chapter isn't always posted until early Monday morning, or late Sunday night, whichever way you look at it.
Also, there will be a chapter dedication at the end of this chapter to the people who guessed the correct person who is the operative. I'd say right now, but I don't want to give anybody the definite answer right now. Four of you guessed it, so congratulations! ^.^ So much for not talking a lot! On with the story!
Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Fourteen
Hello darkness my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence

Simon and Garfunkel - The Sound of Silence

It was time to become the thing that he was always meant to be.

The circle was silent as more and more people began to Apparate into the area. Harry shivered as a cool breeze whipped around him, making goose bumps rise up on his skin. He moved his arm and the bumps rubbed painfully on his clothes. The full moon shone brightly down on them, the stars twinkling innocently beside it. To Harry's right, the trees of the forest groaned and cracked with the wind, and to his left, waves were breaking the shore, making the only other sounds.

When at last the final person arrived, completing the circle, Voldemort started walking around the circle, looking into each of their hoods. Every once in a while, he would stop, ponder something quietly to himself, come a decision and keep moving. He was half way through the circle when he stopped in front of one Death eater. "Mr. Malfoy. I have heard stories that amuse me. What do you have to say of this?"

"I did have a detention one week ago, cleaning Moaning Myrtle's bathroom."

Harry's blood froze. How did Voldemort know of this? He certainly had not told him. "Hmm... yes, and you had it with Mr. Harry Potter. I heard some interesting things happened between the two of you." Voldemort then turned to face Harry and he glared. "I did not know you two had become friends. I thought I would have known of this by now."

"We are not friends, my lord," Draco answered hastily. "It was just the tension. We had been fighting at first."

"Yes, and it led to some good snogging, did it not?"

"Um.. yes, it did," Draco admitted, his voice shaking, and Harry knew that the Slytherin's face was probably red at the moment.

"Interesting. I was under the impression that you completely despised each other, but it does not seem like it now, does it?"

Draco stood completely still as Voldemort ran a slender finger down the blond's cheek. "And what did I tell you specifically *not* to do, young Malfoy?" Voldemort hissed angrily.

Draco hesitated. "To not take any consorts on my own time, my lord."

"How well you listened," the Dark Lord mused. "*Crucio!*" The curse was held on the young Slytherin for nearly a minute before Voldemort lifted it. Draco screamed out his pain as the curse worked its way through his body like knives, cutting through his nerves. He didn't let himself slump to his knees until the Cruciatus was lifted. There Draco kneeled, gasping for his breath.

"Be sure that I do not hear of this again, for a much more painful punishment will be in order."

Without another word, Voldemort kept moving along the circle. Harry saw Draco's body shaking uncontrollably. Voldemort stopped again in front of another person, spoke a few quiet words that Harry could not hear, and then placed the Cruciatus curse on him. After Voldemort was done with him, he kept moving and he placed the curse on a few more people as he passed, before returning to Harry. He stared menacingly down at the younger man. "Snogging your enemy, are you?" he whispered.

"It was a mistake," Harry replied calmly.

"Indeed. If you wanted a person to snog so badly, I could have provided it. Be sure that you do not touch Draco Malfoy again. He is taken." The Dark Lord turned back to the circle, paused for a moment and then began a speech. "We meet here tonight because of a single person. This person surprised me three weeks ago by showing up at my headquarters. Had I not known that that day would come this year, I would have killed him on the spot. However, I knew that he wanted to be my faithful servant. Since then, I have personally been training him. He has now

mastered all the Unforgivable curses and he will be rewarded tonight, as well as tested." He turned to Harry and motioned him to join him at the centre of the circle. "This, my faithful followers, is my new second in command. I am particularly fond of this one, so if any of you dare to threaten him, you will answer to me. Take your hood down now," he ordered Harry, who looked up at him, with a pleading look, though he knew that his face was darkened by his hood.
"But I do not want to show everybody who I am," he whispered.
"You will do as I say," Voldemort hissed. "Take down your hood."
Tentatively, Harry raised his hands and lowered his hood. A collective gasp was heard from the side of the circle that he was facing, and confused mutterings could be heard behind him. Voldemort grabbed his shoulders and turned him around so that everybody could see who he was. Another gasp went up and Harry glowered at them all.
"But my lord," somebody spoke up. "That is..."
"Harry Potter? Yes, I am proud to say that he has willingly joined our noble cause."
"How do we know that this is not some elaborate scheme from Dumbledore?"
"Because Dumbledore would not be fool enough to send his golden boy in and risk his life; his only means of defeating me." He let out a shrill laugh and motioned with his hand to somebody. A man walked forward, dragging a person with him who was bound, gagged and with a bag over their head. He threw the person onto the ground and walked back to his respective place. "This school year at Hogwarts, some very strange things have been happening." Here, Voldemort smiled evilly and then continued. "It seems as though the whole student body, and all the teachers have taken an extreme disliking to young Potter here. This finally pushed Harry to approach me. He knew that where he was his powers would not be appreciated; he also knew that he would find respect with me. Harry... tell us, out of everybody who started to hate you, which people hurt the most?"
"Sirius, Ron, and Hermione," he answered without hesitation.
"Indeed. Your godfather, and two best friends. Well, no need to worry in their regards. This is your reward."
With a wave of his wand, Voldemort took the bag, ropes and gag off of the prisoner. Violently red hair was exposed and Harry knew that it was his former friend, Ron Weasley, even with his face smashed into the ground. "*Ennervate,*" Voldemort muttered. Ron woke slowly and looked blearily around him. When his eyes laid on Voldemort, they went wide and he very quickly got to his feet, though Harry could tell that he was in pain.
"How... how did I get here?" he stammered.
"That is of little importance," Voldemort said, waving him off with a dismissive hand. "Harry." At this dismissal, Ron looked to Harry and a relieved look crossed his face. "You may do whatever you want."
Harry smiled, lowering his head, making his eyes become dark and menacing. "Harry?" Ron asked uncertainly. "Um... did you get here the same way I did?"
"No. I came here by myself."
"But... are you crazy? He wants to kill you!"
"Not anymore." Harry raised his wand and pointed it at Ron's chest.
"What are you doing?"
"This is for all that you've done to me this year. Calling off our friendship, trying to beat me up, almost getting me kicked off the Quidditch team..."
"Harry, what are you going to do?"

"This. *Crucio!*"
Ron fell to the ground in immense pain, screaming so loudly that most people had to cover their ears to block the sound. Harry had the curse on him for almost a minute when he heard what he had been waiting for. The sound of cracking bones. He lifted the curse only then and stared down at Ron, satisfied for the time being. Voldemort's laughter sounded through the air along with Ron's ragged breathing. "And this is why you will not get on Harry's bad side.…which is why I feel a little sorry for you," he said, pointing at a man in the circle. "Come here." The man walked forward and stood only feet away from Harry and Voldemort. "This man, Harry, has been the operative inside of Hogwarts. Since I know that you two are already on bad terms, I know that you will have no qualms killing him. He is of no use to me any longer. Kill him, and I will give you my mark. Now, reveal yourself to Harry."
The man reached up, and lowered his hood. Harry's eyes went wide and he felt something inside of him snap as the rage started to make his blood boil. The dark waters started to recede just a bit more even as Harry raised his wand.
"Sirius," he growled.
"Harry," Sirius replied calmly.
"Is that all you have to say, you bloody two-faced Pettigrew wannabe!" Harry roared.
"Now, now, Harry. There is no need to get become so upset. You *are* on the same side after all," said Voldemort, grinning.
"I know," he replied tightly. "But he still did betray me when I was on the Light side."
"Well, are you going to do what I asked of you or not, Harry? Do you want the mark or not? I will not hesitate in killing you if you say no. Show where your loyalty lies."
"My loyalty lays with you, my lord."
"Then you should thank Sirius, because he is the one who helped to persuade you over to the Dark side."
Harry stepped forward so that he was only a foot from Sirius. "Thank you," he said in a deceptively calm voice. Without another thought otherwise, Harry raised his wand and pointed it at Sirius's chest.
Before he could get the deadly words out of his mouth, the trees behind them exploded with so much force that most people were knocked onto their stomachs and backs. Harry and Sirius were thrown forward, Harry landed on top of his godfather. Both of them were a little disoriented at first, but then Harry scrambled off of him, pocketed his wand and started throwing punches at Sirius, landing them wherever he could, in the stomach, face, and arms. Soon, Sirius came to and began fighting back.
Dimly, Harry was aware of curses flying above them, people falling to the ground dead, even more people being hit with the Cruciatus curse, but none of it fazed either man in the fight. They were too busy trying to do as much bodily harm to each other as possible. Fire was spreading across the ground; Sirius picked Harry up, and threw him through the air and onto the ground away from the fire. Harry stood up very quickly and charged Sirius
"You'll pay for this you stupid bastard!" Harry yelled viciously. "You don't deserve to live!"
The two began their vicious fight again, and Harry thought that Sirius probably was not putting his all into it because he was beating the older man more than he thought he could. By the time Harry remembered that he still had a wand, somebody grabbed him from behind, and another person grabbed Sirius. In the next moment, Harry felt a tug behind his navel, and he was taken through swirls of black.

Draco watched in horror as Sirius Black revealed himself to Harry. Harry was not going to take this well at all, even if he was not himself. Draco turned to the man next to him and elbowed him in the side.
"Severus," he whispered. "What are we going to do? We can't let Harry kill him or receive the Dark Mark."
"I know what I'm going to do. Just be quiet."
Draco started to fidget as Harry walked up to Sirius and said something that he could not quite make out. His eyes went wide as Harry pointed his wand at Sirius's chest. Draco was so caught up in what was happening with Harry, that he did not notice Snape throw a vial of potion towards the trees. In the next moment, the trees exploded, sending him forward, onto his face. Draco lifted his head, spitting out grass, and choking on smoke.
"Draco!" came Severus's voice. "Are you all right?"
"Yes. What the hell happened?"
"I'll explain later. We need to get Weasley, Black, and Potter before anybody notices."
As the smoke was beginning to clear, Draco felt Snape grab his arm and lift him off the ground. They began to walk, on the lookout for Ron Weasley. Some Death Eaters were yelling to Voldemort for instructions on what to do, while others were taking matters into their own hands and sending out the Killing Curse and the Cruciatus curse everywhere. Men and women were falling everywhere and general chaos ensued. Every couple of steps, Snape had to drag Draco down to the ground with him to avoid being hit by one of the curses. On one of these last attempts at not getting hit, Draco looked over and found himself staring into Ron's terrified eyes.
"Weasley! Are you okay?"
"Not really. Harry... Harry..."
"Isn't himself, and for that matter, neither are you. We need to get Harry, Black, and you back to Hogwarts, right now."
"Why are you helping, Malfoy?"
Draco started for a moment before he realised that his hood had fallen down from the blast, and of course, Ron could see who he was. "It doesn't matter right now. Can you stand?"
"No. Harry... my leg."
"Right." Draco turned to Snape who was lying next to him, trying to hear their conversation. "His leg is broken."
Snape cursed, crawled to Ron, and magicked a splint on his leg. "Better, Weasley?"
"Yes, thanks."
Both Draco and Snape helped him to his feet and together, they dodged curses, and looked for the other two men on their list to get back to Hogwarts. "There they are!" Ron said suddenly, pointing away from the fray. The two men could be seen away from the crowd of people, in the middle of a fight of their own. The three hurried their footsteps as quickly as they could with Ron being injured.
"I had made a port-key in case something like this happened. It's the necklace around my neck. Draco, you and I will grab it. Weasley, hold onto my arm. I'll hold Black, Draco you take Potter," Snape said quickly as they rushed forward.
They all saw Harry reaching for his wand and pointing it at his godfather. "Oh no you don't," Draco muttered, and leapt forward to grab Harry. Snape let go of Ron as well and grabbed onto Sirius. Ron limped forward, grabbed hold of Snape's arm, while Draco hurried forward, and grabbed Snape's necklace at the same time that Snape did. The familiar tug behind their navels

came and whisked them away from the chaos around them. The last thing Draco saw was Voldemort yelling angrily and running towards them.
Well, so much for my life as a Death Eater, he Draco thought with a smile.
In the next moment, the group landed in the middle of Snape's chambers in a jumbled heap. Snape immediately took his wand out and stunned Sirius. But he immediately regretted it as Harry disentangled himself and looked at Snape with a manic glint in his emerald eyes. Harry smiled a very disturbing smile as he reached into his pocket for his wand...
Harry landed with a thump in a tangle of arms and legs. He lay confused for a few moments before he caught Draco's eyes and he figured out what must have happened. As he disentangled himself from the fray, a voice called out the stunning spell, and a body fell with a thud to the floor. Harry turned around and faced Severus Snape just as he was taking down his hood. He smiled, reached into his robe, looking for his wand, never breaking eye contact with Snape. Harry's heart dropped into his stomach as he realised that he did not have his wand with him anymore.
"Looking for this?" drawled a voice beside him.
Harry turned sharply and saw Draco looking at him with a benign smile on his face, twirling Harry's wand between his fingers. "Give me my wand, Malfoy."
"And let you kill us? I don't think so. You wouldn't be too happy with yourself once you're back to normal."
"I am normal right now. I don't know what you're talking about. Give me my wand back, or I'll reveal what you really are to Voldemort."
"Oh, I think you would have already, if that had been your intention all along," Snape sneered. "Besides, he has seen us taking you three away. We have been discovered, so there is nothing you can do about it."
Harry looked between them, feeling decidedly lost on what to do. He was now powerless against them. Snape and Draco were looking at him with superior looks on their faces, and Harry just could not stand looking at them anymore, so he looked down at the floor to see Ron looking up at him with utmost fury on his face. "I knew you were a low-life, but to think that you actually sunk so low as to become a Death Eater... I'm glad I broke off our friendship," Ron spat when he saw Harry looking at him.
"Believe me, nobody is as glad about it as I am," Harry snarled back and took a well-aimed kick to Ron's ribs. Before Snape or Draco could react, Harry had lunged at Draco and tackled him to the floor. "Give me my wand back so I can finish the job Voldemort asked of me. I'm not finished with Weasley or Black."
"Not a chance, Potter," Draco huffed out as he rolled out from under Harry and pinned him to the floor. "Let the Ministry deal with Black."
"They'll only send him to Azkaban! He deserves death!" Harry shouted and punched Draco in the face. Draco rolled off him, bleeding at the mouth. Taking advantage of his surprise, Harry grabbed his wand, jumped up and pointed it at Snape. "Do anything, Malfoy, and I will kill your precious godfather."
Snape held up his hands and stepped back. "You're outnumbered, Potter," he said quietly. "You can't do anything, unless you revive Black and I'm sure..."
"That I won't," Harry finished for him. "I don't trust him as far as I could throw him. No... I want to do this by myself." Harry muttered a spell that bound Snape and he fell to the floor. He then turned his wand to Ron. Grinning madly, he winked at Ron. "Have a nice afterlife, Weasley. Say

hello to my parents for me."
"And I'm sure they'd be proud to hear what you've done," Ron spat. "Their precious son, working for the man that killed them. Yeah, that's something to be proud of."
"Shut up!" Harry shouted and kicked Ron again. "Avada..."
"Petrificus Totalus!"
Harry fell to the ground, his wand falling from his grip to the carpeted floor. His eyes were still open, and he could see Draco get up, unbind Snape, lean over Ron and then he came to Harry.
"I'm sorry. I couldn't let you kill Weasley. Besides, how stupid could you be, taking your eye off me? You wouldn't last one day as a Death Eater."
Harry tried to retaliate but found that his mouth was also glued shut. Draco smiled a little and brushed the fringe away from his forehead. "I'm sorry I didn't succeed in protecting you. I wish we weren't in this situation right now. Well, at least you're safe now. We'll get you back to normal."
I am normal! Harry screamed in his head.
"Draco, cast a sleeping charm on him. We'll wake up Black to question him on what he did to everybody."
"Okay." Draco turned back to Harry and looked down at him with an expression that Harry could not really decipher. "You'll see me when you're better. Sleep well." He then muttered the charm and Harry fell into a peaceful sleep.
When he saw that Harry was asleep, Draco took off the body bind, picked up his light bodyweight and went to lay him on Snape's couch. He gathered a blanket from off of the back, tucked Harry in tightly and walked back to Snape and Black. Draco looked down at Ron and found that he had fainted from exhaustion, fear, and anger. Draco shook his head and sat on a chair while Snape revived the Defense teacher.
Sirius looked around groggily, took in Draco and Snape, then let his eyes wander to Ron, then to Harry on the couch. "What's going on?" he wondered aloud.
"We thought that you could answer that for us," Snape said icily.
"What do you mean?"
"What did you do to the school? What did you do to make everybody hate Potter? What kind of curse did you use to make Potter become a Death Eater?"
"Oh," Sirius said quietly, and looked down, worrying his bottom lip with his teeth.
"I suggest you tell us so that we can fix the wrongs you have committed at this school. The consequences will be even more dire if you do not tell us," Snape warned.
Sirius hesitated. "I... well, I administered a potion to everybody, saying it was tea, hot chocolate, what have you. I don't know how I fooled everybody into drinking it. It was red."
"That's why you were so insistent on having me go for a cup of hot chocolate with you!" Draco exclaimed angrily.
"Yeah. I... and why were you so suspicious of finding me in the dungeons?"
"Well, the only teachers I've seen in the dungeons are Severus and Professor Dumbledore. Most people avoid them as much as possible, it being Slytherin territory and all that."
"As interesting as this is, we've got more important matters to discuss here," Snape said silkily.
"What potion did you use?"
"The Semi Vivus potion."
Snape stared in awe for a moment before coming back to reality. "Potter was right then. I suppose you were right about him after all, Draco. He isn't a complete dunderhead. So... when

Potter had the accident on the stairs and the blood had been cleaned up..."
"I did that. I was following him, trying to figure out some way to make him bleed. The first batch of the potion I had made wasn't very strong because I didn't have much of his blood."
"How did you even get it the first time?"
"When I went to the Dursley's last summer on Harry's birthday. Before I left, I went up to his room to say something else to him, but he was asleep. I knew that he had a scar in the crook of his elbow, so I cut it open and took some blood. I healed it, then left."
"So... the second time you made the potion, you had a lot of blood, gave it to more people..."
"Well, by then I was re-administering it to the people who were closest to Harry. I noticed that Ron's potion was wearing off, so I gave it to him and it's still working."
"Okay, and how did you get Harry to become a Death Eater?"
"When I caused him to fall down the stairs, he was unconscious, so I placed a brainwashing charm and a charm on him so that I could speak inside his head. I told him that everybody was starting to hate him of their own free will because he was dark, and that he would be appreciated on the Dark side. I also gave him dreams. I think those worked the best because he'd agree with me while he was dreaming."
"I figured that that was what you were doing. You will have to go to him now to tell him to listen to Draco."
"Listen to me?" Draco asked, confused. "What would I have to say to him?"
"Reverse all those thoughts that Black put into his head."
"But..."
"Do you want him back to normal or not, Draco? He will listen to you because he likes you." Snape lowered his voice to a whisper and leaned further in. "He'll listen to you because he loves you."
That was Draco's undoing. He looked down as his face turned pink. Snape only scowled. "I'll never understand how you could love him."
"I don't expect you to... I'll do it."
"Good. Let's bring Potter up to his room, then Black can tell Harry to listen to Draco," Snape said as he pointed his wand at Sirius and bound his wrists together. "One wrong move, Black, and I will not be stopped from doing something drastic."
Sirius nodded tensely and stood. Snape then conjured up a stretcher for Ron, placed him on it and was about to do the same for Harry when Draco stopped him. "Don't. I want to take him."
Snape raised an eyebrow. "I understand that you are probably used to climbing the stairs, but it is a different story when you have a sixteen year old boy in your arms, Draco."
"Put a charm on him to make him weightless then. I'm carrying him."
Snape snickered, but complied to Draco's wishes. Draco went to Harry, gingerly picked him up and held the Gryffindor close to his body. Harry sighed in his sleep, and moved closer into Draco's warmth, as the Slytherin followed his godfather from the room. Sirius was in the lead, wrists bound, and Snape's wand sticking into his back. And Ron was floating behind Draco and Harry, still unconscious. When they arrived to Harry's room on the third floor, Draco placed the boy in his arms, onto the four-poster and tucked him in once more.
"Do it now, Black," Snape commanded. "Tell him to listen to Draco."
Sirius closed his eyes and started muttering under his breath as Harry began to stir in a dream. Snape performed the spell needed for Draco to speak to Harry in his dream, and then waited for Sirius to open his eyes again. After a long five-minute wait, he did, and Snape immediately cast

the 'mobilicorpus' charm on him and he flew up into the air, suspended as if by invisible strings.
"I won't disturb you tonight, Draco. It might take a while to talk him back. Do you know what you're going to say?"
"Yes!" Draco snapped. "Just leave. We'll be fine."
Snape glared but complied. He walked out, following Ron's unconscious and Sirius's bound form. After the door was shut, Draco went to Harry and sat at the edge of the bed. "Harry..."
Harry was back on the island, with the ocean lapping at the shore. The sky was still covered in thick, grey clouds, and the wind was chilling. Harry shivered and wrapped his cloak further around him. The piece of cloth did nothing but offer him a small amount of comfort. Harry shivered a little more violently as he sat down on the rocky ground, waiting for something to happen. He did not know why he was here, he could only remember the voice telling him to listen to somebody else. Harry was scared to hear this voice. If only it could bring him out of this cold, dark place. If only he could feel the sun's warmth again, if only he could... feel again. He did not like this place he had ended up in and wanted to leave as soon as possible.
"Harry," came a distant voice. "Harry, can you hear me?"
"Please... speak louder," Harry said, standing up.
"Harry..."
The voice sounded so hauntingly familiar. It sounded like somebody that Harry knew; somebody that would help him. Harry ran to the shore, stopping just before the water could reach him.
"Please, help me!" he cried. "I'm so cold. Get me away from here!"
"Where are you?"
"I'm..." Harry looked around at his surroundings, taking in the small rocky island. A small tree stood in the middle, wilting sadly in the cold wind. "I'm on an island. There is so much water trying to get me. It's so cloudy, and dark. Please help me."
"Don't go near the water, Harry. Step away from it, and don't look at it."
Harry found himself complying. He went by the tree and lay down on his back to stare at the darkening clouds.
"The water isn't really there, Harry. It's all in your imagination, put there by somebody."
"Why would somebody want to put it there?"
"They wanted to turn you against all your beliefs. They wanted to make you dark. Did you ever let the water touch you?"
"Yes. I fell into it a lot. It was so wonderful. I felt so free."
"Do you want to go back there?"
"I... I don't know. It's so dark when I come out. There's less earth every time I land. I want there to be more land again, like when I was in the meadow. It was so nice there. The other voice lied to me. He said that I could be in that meadow if I let the darkness take me. He lied."
"You can go there again. You have to let yourself believe that you can go there again."
"How do I go there though? Do I have to touch the water again?"
"No. Whatever you do, don't touch it. It will pull you further in. The Darkness isn't what you were born for. You are the epitome of Light, you have to come back to us."
"But everybody hates me because of my power."
"That's not true, Harry. Everybody has been given a potion so that they would hate you. Voldemort did that. He tricked you into coming onto his side. The Light wants you, they have never stopped wanting you. You, Harry, were meant to fight against Voldemort, not with him. You are not his ally."

"It's where I belong. He treats me so well. He wants me to help him in his noble cause."
"His noble cause?" the voice scoffed. "His cause is to rule the world after killing all Muggles and Muggle-borns. Do you remember that your mother was a Muggle-born? One of your best friends is a Muggle-born, Harry. Do you really want to kill Hermione, do you really want to kill your mother all over again by working with Voldemort?"
"I don't want to kill my mother again!" Harry cried. "And Hermione could care less about me."
"You're wrong. She does care. Even if she didn't, could you really bring yourself to kill her after all the years of friendship you've shared?"
"I... I don't know."
"Don't you see, Harry? If you really were Dark, you would have answered yes without a hesitation. You are *not* Dark. The scar on your forehead is enough proof of that."
"But... but I thought I was," Harry replied quietly as he turned his head to the side. His green eyes widened and he shot up into a sitting position. "The water!" he cried out. "And the land! It's only a lake now! The meadow is back too." Upon closer inspection, he could see that everything was still dead and rocky. With a disappointed sigh, he lay back down and stared up at the endless clouds. "I want to see life again."
"Then see it."
"I don't know how."
"Just believe that you're not dark. You're not."
"Who are you? You sound so familiar."
There was a long silence and Harry feared that he had been deserted by the perfect voice. "Don't leave me! I like hearing you talk. Please don't leave me," he said desperately.
"I'm still here. I won't leave until you understand."
"But I don't want you to ever leave."
"You'll see me when you wake. Maybe not right away, but you will. I promise. I'll come see you."
"I'll be able to actually see you? Can't you show me who you are right now?"
"No. I don't know how. Later."
"Can I ask... what side are you on?"
"Would it make a difference to you?"
"It depends."
"I'm on the Light."
"Oh. Do you like me?"
"It depends on my mood," laughed the voice.
"Oh," Harry said crestfallen.
"No, Harry. I do like you. More than you know."
Harry then felt a warm hand on his cheek. His heart began to beat rapidly and he felt a warmth spread through his body from the touch. Harry lifted his hand and placed it where the hand should have been, but only felt his cheek.
"Do I like you when I'm awake?" he asked curiously.
"I'd like to think you used to before you went over to Voldemort."
"Did we ever... kiss?"
"Yes, we did. Quite a bit, in fact. Kind of like this."
Invisible lips were placed on Harry's in a soft kiss. Harry sighed his content and then again in frustration when he tried to touch his invisible person.

"I want to touch you."
"Soon enough, Harry. Not until you believe that you're not Dark."
"I don't know what to believe anymore."
"Look at the water. See how far gone it is now."
Harry did as he was told and found that the lake was now a river. The meadow was now nearly completely back, except for the life.
"It's a river, but there's no life yet. Help me find life again. Please."
"You're getting there, Harry. You have to find it in yourself to believe that you are Light. You have to remember all the wonderful things for the Light you have done. You saved the Philosopher's Stone in first year, you saved the school from the Chamber of Secrets in second year, you helped keep your godf... well, you saved a life in third year. You've saved more than one since then. You are Light. It's embedded into you, you just have to find it. Remember it."
"Is there anything else I've done?"
"Yeah. You've saved me from myself. You've helped to keep me on the right side. Even when I said I was going to go over to the Dark side to piss you off, I never did because I wanted to help you. I wanted to make you proud. I wanted you to love me the way I love you. I'm... I'm still working on that last part."
"Nobody has ever told me that they love me before."
"Then everybody you know is a bunch of fools to not let you know."
"Can I ask... what do you love about me?"
"Everything. I love the way you crinkle up your nose when you're thinking, the way your eyes show every emotion you're feeling, the way you bite your lip when you're nervous, the way you manage to aggravate me, your courage, your loyalty... You're everything I've always wanted to be but can't because of who I am. I love you for who you are, for being the opposite of what I've been brought up to be."
"What were you raised to be?"
"I was raised to be Dark."
"But... you're not. You said you were Light."
"Only because of you."
During the voice's speech, Harry had closed his eyes and committed every sense to his voice. Now at these words, he opened his eyes, and immediately had to shield them against the blinding sun. Harry sat up abruptly again and looked around him. He smiled so hard that it was beginning to hurt his face. The water was gone, the grass, the flowers, the trees, were all back. Life was back. Harry pointed his face towards the sun and took in the heat that it offered.
"Life is back," he murmured.
Harry stood up and began walking through the many flowers. He picked one of each colour, making a colourful bouquet. When he was done, he looked around, desperate to see his 'saviour.'
"Where are you?" he asked, holding out his hand.
His hand was gripped by an invisible hand. "I'm here," the voice said as it pulled Harry's body into a hug. Harry felt his heart expand to ten times its size when he could actually feel the invisible body. He wrapped his arms around the body eagerly and buried his face into the man's neck.
"You brought me back," he whispered, as he brought his hands up to entangle into the invisible, silky hair. "Draco," he breathed, because he now knew that the voice was Draco Malfoy. He knew from the moment that Draco had pulled him into his arms. Harry would recognise the feel

of those arms any day. He could recognise Draco's masculine scent anywhere, the silky feel of his hair...
Harry sighed with content as Draco rubbed their cheeks together softly and began running his nose along the skin of Harry's face, kissing Harry's skin softly in different places along the way. Draco finally let their mouths meet in a lingering kiss.
"Draco," Harry whispered against his lips. "I love you."
Draco sighed and Harry could feel the invisible arms wrap tighter around his waist. "I love you, too, Harry... You need to leave this dream."
"I don't want to leave you."
"We'll see each other when you wake. I promise. Sleeping makes the time go faster."
Harry nodded, gave Draco's cheek a brief kiss and felt himself drifting away into darkness. Only this time, it was a welcomed dark.
Draco felt Harry's body relax in his arms and his head droop onto his shoulder. He laid Harry down from his sitting position, and pulled the covers snugly around him once more. Draco sighed with exhaustion and happiness. He had done what he had meant to do. It had taken all night, but it was done. The sun had been up for about an hour now and soon, the early Sunday risers would be up and at breakfast.
Draco watched Harry's chest rise and fall in a steady pattern and smiled. Harry did love him... Draco just hoped that he would remember this when he woke. Well, he would not do anything about it, Harry would have to be the first one to say something about his confession.
The Slytherin yawned as another wave of exhaustion came over him. He had had that problem all night and he had to fight to stay awake for the sake of Harry. Draco had found it fascinating the things that Harry had said to him. In all truth, Draco had had no idea what Harry had been talking about when he was talking about the water. Something inside of him told him that he had to tell Harry to stay away from it. And that is what he did. Whatever Draco had done, it had worked.
While talking to the Gryffindor, Draco found that he did not even need to think about what he was going to say next. It all came naturally. The things he said were not the things that he had planned in the beginning, but they proved to be better.
For a long while, Draco watched Harry sleep peacefully with no dreams. But after a while, the exhaustion in his body became too much and he knew he would have to leave before he fell asleep beside Harry. Not that the idea did not seem appealing. It just would be a better idea for Harry to not wake up beside him in case it had not worked after all. Though Draco was sure it had, it was better to be safe than sorry. With one final kiss, Draco got off the bed.
"Sleep well," he whispered and left the room.
Draco dragged his weary body through the almost deserted halls of Hogwarts. There were now some students wandering off to breakfast, and he received a few suspicious glances from people who were not in his house, namely Gryffindors, since he was in their path to the Great Hall. Just as he reached the top of the marble staircase, somebody who was running up them, collided with Draco and they both fell to the floor.
"Watch where you're going!" Draco said angrily.
"I'm sorry." Draco brushed it off, got up and offered a hand to his attacker. Not until he had helped the person up did he realise who it was.
"Granger!"
"Malfoy!" She seemed equally surprised.

"Do watch where you're going next time you find it necessary to run up the stairs."
"I said I was sorry. I was just... I can't find any of the professors. You're the first person I've seen since last night. I... oh, Draco! Ron's missing. I have no idea where he is! I've looked all over since yesterday. The last time I saw him was Friday night. He just disappeared. I even checked his dorm room last night when everybody was sleeping. His bed was empty!" she finally finished, on the edge of hysteria.
Draco rubbed his ear from her shrill voice and looked at her shrewdly. "You may want to check the hospital wing, Granger."
"What happened!" she shrieked.
"Oh, you know the usual," he said, waving a dismissive hand. "He was abducted by, most likely, Sirius Black, brought to Voldemort, tortured, saved, and now he's back and probably in the hospital wing. And not to mention, mad as hell at Harry."
Draco smirked as Hermione opened and closed her mouth like a goldfish and finally just let it drop. Draco reached forward and closed it for her. "You... you can't be serious."
"Oh, but I am."
"Sirius is a Death Eater?"
"Seems that way. He's duped everybody into hating Harry, that's why you hate him. It's a superficial hate, Hermione."
"Well, I know *that* now. The antidote was waiting on everybody's bedside table, and a message from Dumbledore beside it. I don't hate Harry anymore... Draco, you look terrible."
"Hmm... thanks for noticing."
"What happened to you?"
"Oh, you know, a Death Eater meeting gone bad. I was forced to save a couple lives with Professor Snape, and then stay up all night talking to Harry in his dreams."
" ... Right. You saved Ron?"
"I suppose I had something to do with it, yeah."
Draco grunted as the small Gryffindor threw herself at him and had him in a suffocating hug.
"Thank you! He'd be dead if it weren't for you."
"Uh huh. Get off me, Granger. I'm not yours to touch. Besides, I don't like touching somebody with blood so questionable as yours."
"Ever the Pure-blooded, self-righteous-"
"What can I say?" Draco interrupted. "It's who I am. Goodnight. I'm off to bed."
Draco waved and began to walk down the stairs but was stopped when Hermione grabbed him by the wrist. "You're coming with me to the hospital wing and telling me why you had to talk to Harry in his dreams."
"Granger!" Draco whined. "I'm dead on my feet if you hadn't noticed. I've had an exhausting night and I'm sure that Weasley wouldn't want to see me."
"Fine! Then at least tell me where Harry is so that I can go see him after I see if Ron is all right!"
"I can't. I don't know if what I did worked. If it didn't, then he's still dangerous. Just wait until he's allowed to come out. I'm sure he'll be out tomorrow. Maybe if I feel up to it later, I'll write you a letter and explain everything that happened because I'm not coming out of my dorm today. Now, do let go. Didn't I tell you that I don't want you touching me?"
"Fine. I could care less if I see you ever again. Just go."
"Get used to seeing me around, Granger."
"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. See you."
With another wave, Draco ran down the stairs, eager to get away from the dirty Gryffindor. He laughed as he felt her eyes on him until he disappeared. Of course, he would not write her a letter telling her what happened. It would take too long and it was time that he could not spend on filth like her... even if she was Harry's friend. She deserved any angst that came to her. Right now, it was time to sleep. As he had told Harry, it was the best way to pass the time, and if there was anything that Draco needed right now, it was to pass the time as quickly as possible. He could not wait to see his Harry again.
So, what'd you think? Okay, so this chapter is dedicated to the people who guessed that it was Sirius. 1. xikum, 2. jelly-bean, 3. KwazyKitty, 4. Rin, 5. redredredred Great job! I give each of you a Harry and Draco plushie! ^.^ There lips have magnets in them so you can make them kiss! tee hee.
Thanks to: **Thistle, *Dark*Angel*, frizzy, moncherie(my 200th reviewer!), BloodIce, Rain, BDT, mystic-flower, Xirleb70, S. Wing, FireWulf, Sparkler, HPIceAngel, Draconian, madkornfan, mak, Michael Serpent**
jelly-bean: I like your reasoning. If you look closely throughout the whole story, there are subtle clues as to who it is. I honestly can't remember anything about the pocket-knife right now, but if I did add that in, that's what it was meant as. Also when Remus saw Sirius, he wasn't hostile or anything. He was a little confused because in my mind, Sirius wouldn't have told Remus that he was the new Defence teacher. Because for one, Sirius wasn't talking to anybody the previous summer. That's why Remus was surprised. Ginny didn't like the looks of things because Sirius was acting like such a jackass towards Harry, so on and so forth. I'm glad you caught on to the subtle hints in the story.
KwazyKitty: I don't know if I should consider your guess valid since you did change your mind... oh well, you have been thinking Sirius since the beginning so you were correct.
NayNymic: Yes, this does have a happy ending, and as you can see, Harry doesn't get the mark. I hope that makes you happy! ^.^
Rin: Well, I hope this chapter was better than 13 like you thought it would be. My beta said it was particularly exciting, but I think I kind of suck at writing the action scenes. They always take me forever to write. This chapter had originally been 5 pages because of it. Unfortunetly, I don't know how evil I can be with the coming teasers since the story is coming to a close and there isn't much more surprise happenings coming. Well, I suppose there is one, but I can't really use it for an evil teaser. Oh well, you will all have to be happy with a relatively evil teaser. At least I got the maximum evilness out of that last teaser, right? ^.^
HironiKoshinha: Yes, I can tell you that the next two sequels will be H/D. In fact, the third story is all centred around their relationship because of really crappy things happening in the end of the second story. And *that* is what I can't tell you! muahhahaha! I wish I could tell somebody right now because I just love the ending of the sequel! It makes me giggle just thinking of it! ^.^ Oh, and thanks for reviewing Always. I am particularly proud of that fic because I'm not able to write dark fics like that all the time. It's too damn depressing.
Meemo: Everybody in the school hates Harry, including Slytherins. But I kind of imagined that their whole house wouldn't have to drink the 'tea' because they mostly hate Harry anyway. Like that's why Draco didn't get to drink it because it was known that he was a future death eater and Harry's enemy.
Sailor Grape: ^.^ Well, I think that if you tied my beta down to a chair, it wouldn't help get the

chapter out any faster! And something else has already happened to Draco... the foreshadowing has been there already... but it won't come out until the sequel.
dina: Well, as you've just seen, the curse is off of everybody now. More H/D action will come. I don't know to what extent you want it, but it won't start getting really serious until the sequel.
redredredred: Great guess! You are correct!

I don't know how evil this one is, but I tried. There aren't too many more surprises that I can be evil with.
The ebony hair boy sighed and leaned his forehead against the cold glass. Outside, the wind was blowing fiercely, and foreboding clouds were swirling overhead, promising a good storm later on in the day. The windows whistled from the wind and Harry shivered violently as a slight breeze met his bare chest. As Harry looked up at the dark clouds, his thoughts wandered to his impending meeting with his friends. So, they didn't exactly hate him before, but would they hate him now that he had done such terrible things? Knowing that they could possibly hate him of their own free will was worse than anything that Harry had felt since the whole ordeal began. Harry had figured from almost the beginning that the hate had been superficial. There was no countercurse for real hate. If there was anything that could be done to get Ron and Hermione to forgive him for everything done, Harry would do it in an instant.
But then to top it all off, Harry fancied Draco Malfoy, of all people. That was the just the cherry on top of all the bitter ice cream. The trio's most hated enemy next to Voldemort for the past five years of their lives. Well, if Harry had to choose between his friends and Draco - he'd pick his friends...
Okay, there wasn't anything really evil, so this was the best I could do. The next two chapters is everything starting to come together again. Tune in next week! ^

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Chapter: 15

A/N: Hello again! ^.^ I'm glad you all liked that last chapter. I was kind of nervous about it, but it seems it went over well. Yes, I do have a reason for having Sirius being the traitor! But you won't find out until the last chapter... which just happens to be the next chapter. So, we're in the final stages of this story.
Which reminds me... I just updated my bio page yesterday, and I talk a little about the sequels to this story. There is a rough summary of the next one, *Remember You*. So, if you would like to read what I have to say about the sequels, *Remember You* and *The Emerald Dragon*, please feel free to click on my author's name above and read my bio. I update that page as often as I can so check back once in a while.
Thanks to my beta, Padfoots_Bitch for the wonderful beta job. Any mistakes are mine, not hers.
Teaser and replies on the bottom of this chapter as usual! Enjoy the new installment!
Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Fifteen
Harry slowly blinked his eyes open and stared out the window. It was still night-time... But what

night was it? He could not really be sure what time it was or how much time had lapsed. For one thing, he could not remember what had happened. Why was he waking at night, feeling wide awake? Harry stretched luxuriously with a catlike sound and then sat up. His eyes widened in surprise when he found Snape sitting on his couch, an amused smirk planted on his face.
"Charming, Potter. Do you always make those kinds of sounds when you wake?"
"Er... I... I..."
Another smirk and Snape stood up. "Glad to see you're back to yourself. How are you feeling?"
"I'm... feeling all right. Why are you asking me..." Very suddenly, Harry remembered what had happened. He almost became a Death Eater, he had threatened Snape's life, and Ron's, and Sirius's. A sudden feeling of nausea swept over him and then his expression hardened as he remembered that he should not feel guilty about Sirius. "I'm feeling like myself again... I'm sorry for… you know... threatening your life and all that."
"Well, it would not be the first time a student has done so. I'm still waiting for Miss Granger's threat on my life when I give her a grade of which she does not approve of."
Harry cracked a smile and gave a small laugh. "Yeah... but still, I'm sorry for not being more careful, Professor. This could have been avoided if I would have been a little smarter about things."
"Potter, as much as I'd like to pin this on your Gryffindor stupidity, I cannot. To be quite honest, I am impressed."
Harry stared for a few moments before coming over his shock. "Excuse me? I've managed to impress you?" he asked incredulously.
"Not a word to anybody else, Potter. This stays between us," Snape replied with the smallest of smiles quirking the corner of his mouth. "The mere fact that you fought Black off for so long, is quite impressive. I owe it to the fact that you are able to throw the Imperius off, but you know, since what Black did was invade your mind and made you believe things are real, it was harder to fight off."
"I'll... I'll take that as a compliment then," said Harry faintly. "Professor - what happened to Sirius?"
"He is in the custody of the Ministry of Magic now, awaiting a trial."
"They should throw him into Azkaban and lock away the key," Harry said, venomously and then thought of something. "Do they know he's an Animagus?"
"Yes. To be quite fair, Potter, he was sent to prison once before without a trial and he turned out to be innocent."
"I don't think that that is possible this time. I swear, I'll get him for this." Harry looked darkly at the carpet as if it had been the one to wrong him all his life. Snape uncomfortably cleared his throat.
"By the way, Potter, nice password. 'Gryffindor really sucks?' I never knew you had it in you."
Harry blushed and looked down at his hands. "Erm - yeah. I should probably change that, shouldn't I?" Snape was spared from making a comment when the door opened to reveal a sombre but yet very happy Albus Dumbledore.
"That won't be necessary, Harry. You'll be moving back into the Gryffindor dormitories soon enough."
"But... the last time I went in there, Ron, Seamus, and Dean tried to beat me up."
"Ah, well" the professor began as he moved into the room, "those were unfortunate circumstances that have been remedied." They both turned as the door clicked softly shut. Snape

had left quietly, leaving them to talk in private.
"They've been remedied, sir?"
"Yes. Professor Snape drafted the antidote for the Semi Vivus potion, administered it to all the teachers late last night, and then I had the house elves send some up to the dormitories for the students to drink when they woke. I wrote a note so that everybody would drink it. Then we performed the counter spell, though the hate basically wore off when the antidote was administered."
"It was the Semi Vivus potion? I had only been making that up when I asked Professor Snape about it."
Dumbledore sent a questioning look, and Harry began to elaborate, knowing what the Headmaster wanted. "I... well, I had wanted an excuse to talk to him. I kind of wanted to know where he went when he was summoned to Voldemort."
"So you could go there yourself."
Harry nodded his head and looked down at his hands. Dumbledore sat on the edge of the bed and sighed. "I'm sorry, Harry, for letting this happen. I'm also sorry for what I did to you at the beginning of term. I would never have done or wanted to do that to you had it not been for the potion."
"It's okay. Draco brought me food afterwards. And it's not your fault for trusting Sirius... I trusted him," he added quietly, his heart clenching painfully in his chest.
"I wish there was something I could do for you that would make the pain of losing him go away, but I cannot. I know how you felt about him."
"I just don't understand, Professor!" Harry finally exploded. "Remus said that he was so excited about me living with him at the beginning of the summer holidays last summer. How could he have changed so much in no more than three weeks? I mean, he must have just woke up one morning and been like, 'I hate Harry. What's the best way to spite him? Hmm... I think I'll become a Death Eater and make everybody hate him, and then turn him into a Death Eater.' It doesn't make sense."
Dumbledore put a comforting hand on Harry's shoulder. "I know. But all we can do is hope for the best."
Harry gave him a miserable look. "It can't get any better. I don't have a hope for getting out of the Dursley's anymore until I leave Hogwarts. And I just lost my godfather. He was my one connection to my mum and dad."
"There's always Remus."
"I know... but I can't live with him. He's not considered human."
Dumbledore sighed again and stood up. "Don't worry about it right now, Harry. You need your rest. I'll let you miss classes tomorrow to continue your recuperation. I'm also sure it will give you plenty of time to wonder what you're going to say to Mr. Weasley when you see him."
Harry visibly paled and sunk down into his mattress. "He hates me, doesn't he?"
"Understandably, he is very angry. I think that given time, he will see that it was not really you acting like that, and will want to be your friend again. So, Harry, would you like visitors tomorrow?"
"No. I just want to be alone for a while before I go back into the school."
"Very well. I'll have the house elves send food up for your meals. Oh, and one more thing, I have a dreamless sleep potion for you. I have a feeling that Voldemort is not going to be very happy with you. He knows of your scar now, does he not?"

"He does."
"Then I have no doubt he will use it against you. Professor Snape offered to keep making the remedy that Voldemort found for you but it won't block out what Voldemort deliberately sends you." Harry groaned and rolled onto his side to reach for the offered vial of potion.
"Thank you, sir," he said after he gulped down the contents.
"You are welcome. Sleep well, Harry."
However, Harry did not hear the Headmaster because he had already fallen fast asleep.
"Harry Potter, sir! Wake up. Dobby has brought you breakfast!"
Harry woke slowly, put his glasses on and looked at the little house elf that was standing next to his bed. "Morning, Dobby."
"Good morning. Dobby is bringing you your breakfast, sir."
"Thanks, Dobby. I'm starving. I haven't eaten for... two days, I think."
This statement made Dobby's large brown eyes go wide, and he immediately shoved the tray of food in front of Harry. "Harry Potter must eat. Dobby is making this himself. Headmaster Dumbledore told Dobby to put extra vitamins in it so that Harry Potter is feeling better. He is telling Dobby that Harry has been through a lot this school year."
"I have," Harry replied, taking a bite out of toast.
"Oh, Harry Potter should have come to Dobby! Dobby would be happy to help the noble Harry Potter anytime."
"And that's why you scare me, Dobby."
Harry smiled widely to take the edge of his words away, and Dobby returned it. "Dobby is needed in the kitchens, Harry Potter, sir. Dobby will bring Harry's lunch later."
"Thanks."
With a small pop, Dobby was gone. After Harry finished his breakfast, he realised that he did not know what to do. He started to desperately wish that Dobby would come back to just talk. The silence of the room was overbearing, making Harry's thoughts unbearably loud. After sitting down at the window, Harry looked out over the grounds, seeing the Sixth year Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs walking to the Herbology greenhouses. Harry swallowed thickly as he caught sight of the head of flaming red hair; that was without a no doubt Ron. Hermione's brown head was next to him. Hermione seemed to be talking very seriously about something, but Ron was only scowling and making furious hand gestures when he answered to Hermione's comments. Harry had a nasty feeling that he knew about what they were talking about. Well, he knew how Ron felt about him becoming a Death Eater, especially since Harry had tortured and almost killed him... Again, Harry swallowed at the thought and watched the class walk into greenhouse four.
The ebony- haired boy sighed and leaned his forehead against the cold glass. Outside, the wind was blowing fiercely, and foreboding clouds were swirling overhead, promising a good storm later on in the day. The windows whistled from the wind and Harry shivered violently as a slight breeze met his bare chest. As Harry looked up at the dark clouds, his thoughts wandered to his impending meeting with his friends. So, they did not exactly hate him before, but would they hate him now that he had done such terrible things? Knowing that they could possibly hate him of their own free will was worse than anything that Harry had felt since the whole ordeal began. Harry had figured from almost the beginning that the hate had been superficial. There was no counter curse for real hate. If there was anything that could be done to get Ron and Hermione to forgive him for everything he had done, Harry would do it in an instant.
Then to top it all off, Harry fancied Draco Malfoy, of all people. That was the just the cherry on

top of all the bitter ice cream. The trio's most hated enemy next to Voldemort for the past five years of their lives. Well, if Harry had to choose between his friends and Draco - he would pick his friends...
Then Harry's stomach clenched painfully at the thought of losing Draco. Draco had been the best during the school year thus far. Even when they were pulling nasty pranks on each other, Draco's were always mild, petty jokes, the way they always had been. Harry's jokes had nearly killed Draco. Shuddering, Harry felt another fear fall over him. What would happen if Draco rejected Harry because he was so mad at him for everything? What if Draco did not love Harry anymore? More importantly, was that dream the other night, real? Was Draco really talking to him in his sleep? Did they really confess their feelings toward each other? A warm feeling spread over Harry and he sighed with contentment, even though he did not know if the dream had been real. It felt real. It just had to be real. Draco just *had* to love him. Harry did not know what he would do if Draco did end up rejecting him. The only thing Harry wanted was for them to be together.
...To be each other's boyfriends.
"Boyfriend," he whispered aloud to himself. "Oh, god... Ginny."
Harry let out a frustrated growl and buried his fingers into his hair. Ginny would be devastated when she found out that Harry was not attracted to girls, that he was gay.…. That he was attracted to Draco Malfoy. His emerald eyes widened even further... What would everybody think when they found out he was gay? They would ostracise him from the group again. He would be even more of a freak to Uncle Vernon, and Aunt Petunia. Dudley might be a little more accepting... but that one could go either way. Harry's breathing started to become shallow, and he found it hard to breathe. A loud pop sounded by him, but he did not look up. His breathing was becoming more erratic.
"Harry Potter, sir! What is wrong with him?" Dobby yelled. Harry could not say anything; he just waved his hands around madly. Dobby looked extremely panicked and disappeared with a small pop, to only appear a few panicked moments later with a small brown paper bag. Harry grabbed it without hesitation and placed the opening to his mouth, calming his breathing. After a minute, still breathing deeply, Harry pulled the bag away from his face and slumped against the stone wall behind him, hands shaking uncontrollably.
"Oh, Dobby. My life is completely over. I've messed my life up so badly."
"Harry's life is not over yet, sir. He is still young and have lots of life ahead of him."
"I know, Dobby. I've just messed so many things up with my friends. I was grovelling on my hands and knees to Voldemort, I nearly killed Ron, I'm going to end up breaking Ginny's heart, I almost killed Draco, I'm gay, I'm about to be ostracised from the school again when people find out, and so many other things besides that I'll regret for the rest of my life."
Dobby just patted Harry's knee and jumped up onto the window to sit beside him. "How did you know to come here right now, anyway, Dobby?"
"Headmaster Dumbledore is telling Dobby to keep an eye on Harry Potter so that nothing is happening. So, Dobby is putting a charm on Harry while he is sleeping. It tells Dobby if there is something wrong with Harry Potter. Dobby is coming right away."
"Thanks. You actually managed to save me without mortally injuring me, or almost getting me expelled." Dobby offered a toothy grin.
"If Harry Potter is better now, Dobby will be going back to the kitchens now."
"No! Dobby, I can't handle being alone right now. I might start thinking too much again... can you - can you stay with me for a little while?. I'm sure Dumbledore won't mind. He does want

you to watch me."
"Harry Potter wants me to stay with him?"
"If you would, yes."
"Oh, Dobby will!" Dobby exclaimed happily. "This room is needing to be cleaned!"
"No, Dobby!" Harry cried as the elf jumped to its feet. "No cleaning right now. Do you know how to play Exploding Snap?"
Dobby's large eyes grew even larger and he shook his head vigorously, making his ears flap wildly. "Well, I'll teach you then. Come on." Harry pulled the elf to the couch and pulled out his cards. He then proceeded to teach Dobby the finer points in playing Exploding Snap. Harry had an altogether enjoyable day laughing at Dobby's surprise when the large pile of cards exploded in their faces, singeing hair off and making brown scorch marks on their skin. Dobby left an hour before dinnertime, saying that he needed to help the other house elves with the meal. Harry then did homework for the rest of the night, took the dreamless sleep potion and fell into a peaceful sleep.
When Harry opened his eyes the next morning, it was to find that Dobby had invited himself over once more and was opening up all the curtains. "Morning, Dobby. Are we going to make this a tradition?"
"If that is what Harry Potter is wanting. Headmaster Dumbledore is sending Dobby here to wake Harry Potter. Breakfast began ten minutes ago and he is wanting Harry there."
"I... I... can you just bring me it or something?"
"No. Dobby is sorry, but Dobby has been ordered to make sure that Harry Potter is attending breakfast. The Headmaster says it is good for Harry to go. Dobby is laying sir's clothes by his feet. Dobby will be back in ten minutes to make sure sir is going to breakfast."
"No. No, that's okay. I'll go."
"Dobby has orders to escort you there. Dobby is not wanting to let down his boss."
Harry smiled a little and climbed out of bed, putting his glasses on. "Okay. Come back in ten minutes," Harry said, forcing a smile onto his face.
Harry quickly dressed, and waited the few minutes for Dobby to come back. When he came, it took a few moments for Harry to get the courage to just open the door, but when he did, he made sure to hold his head up high and walk with his shoulders back. The two walked to the Great Hall in silence. Harry felt as though his heart was echoing throughout the entire castle for everybody to hear when the doors came into view. If it had not been for Dobby's presence, he probably would have turned on his heel and fled back to his room. But, Dobby was there, literally pushing him forward. "I got it, Dobby. Thanks."
"Dobby is watching here, Harry Potter, sir."
Harry sighed, defeated and walked to the doors, and cautiously opened one of them. To his horror, most of the school was assembled at the house tables, eating in a rush so that they would not be late to their first classes of the day. Dobby gave him one last push and disappeared with a pop. Harry took a few steps in before everybody noticed him and fell into a hushed silence. His proud demeanour fell as his head fell to look at his feet and his shoulders slumped in guilt and embarrassment. Whispers broke out as Harry walked to the end of the Gryffindor table where there were at least five empty seats. Every couple steps, Harry would take furtive looks around him and find people pointing, staring, and whispering behind their hands. It was worse when Harry sat down, only to catch Ron's eye.
The red hair boy looked at Harry with an unmistakable look of fury, and betrayal. Harry lowered

his eyes in shame and half-heartedly dug in to his food. Harry refused to look up anymore after that. The whispers became louder and somebody even yelled, 'Death Eater filth,' at Harry. An irritated 'tsk' sounded across the room, and a chair scraped across the stone floor making the whispers stop. Still, Harry refused to look up.
"You all know that Potter is perfectly harmless," drawled a condescending voice. "He's rather like a... smaller version of Hagrid."
Scattered chuckles sounded throughout the cavernous room and chattering started up again along with the sound of forks clanging against plates. Harry continued to poke at his food when a warm hand laid itself on his left shoulder. Breath hitching in his throat, Harry tensed, knowing to whom that hand belonged to.
"Anybody sitting here, Potter?"
A small smile quirked the corner of Harry's mouth and he looked up almost shyly to meet the shining silver eyes above him. Harry shook his head dumbly, unable to get out anything out.
"Mind if I sit by you then?"
"No," Harry croaked out. "Go ahead."
The two boys were so busy staring at each other that they did not even notice the silence that had descended upon the hall again, or even the surprised whisperings once Harry agreed to Draco's request. Draco set his plate of food down and sat down, reluctantly breaking eye contact. The two ate in silence, not looking at each other, or anybody else. Not long after Draco sat, Ron walked by and sent Harry a glare that made him shrink down in his seat.
"Ron," Harry said. He could not be sure if Ron just had not heard him or if he just chose to ignore him. Either way, he did not think there was anything that would make the aching in him to go away. That is until Draco placed a discreet hand on his knee. Then he was filled with a different sort of ache. Harry offered a small smile and twined his fingers through his.
Draco raised an elegant eyebrow. "Are you holding my hand, Potter?" he said quietly.
"I suppose I am," Harry said just as quietly, face turning a brilliant shade of red. Draco smiled, and squeezed Harry's hand in reassurance. They finished their meal with joined hands.
"We're going to be late for Care of Magical Creatures," Draco announced suddenly. Both of them stood in unison and, turned to leave but were stopped when Hermione called out to Harry.
Harry turned in trepidation, waiting for the blow to fall. He could also feel the underlying feelings of anger towards the girl. Resentment sneaked up on him so quickly that he was quite taken aback to be feeling them so suddenly. Why exactly hadn't Hermione and Ron known that there was something wrong? Couldn't they have felt something was amiss? Harry swallowed these feelings as best he could. After all, they were not to blame just as much as he wasn't to blame for almost becoming a Death Eater. They were victims just as much as Harry, himself was one. Hermione was standing directly behind him by the time he managed to get all his body parts working again. "Harry," she said, voice choked up.
"Hermione," Harry replied, looking down at his feet, unable to look her in the eyes in fear that he might not ever want to be her friend again, and in the fear that there would still be rejection in her eyes.
Her gentle hand was placed under his chin and she lifted his face up so that they could look each other in the eye. Harry let out a shaky breath when he saw the sorrow and warmth emanating from her brown eyes. "Don't you dare be ashamed of yourself, Harry Potter. We were all victims here. Nothing you did was your fault."
Harry felt his eyes well up with tears as a large weight was lifted from his chest. Hermione's eyes

were looking extremely wet. "Harry... I'm s..."
"Don't!" Harry commanded. "Don't apologise. There's nothing to be forgiven. I know that you would never willingly hate me... But I think you also must know that I still am feeling angry about all of this. I know it's unjustified to be angry with you, but I can't help but feel betrayed. You've been one of my best friends for five years, and then to just have you hate me one day with so much passion... God... it was terrible. I've never felt more alone in my entire life." Hermione opened her mouth to speak but Harry shook his head fiercely and she stopped. "I think that I owe you an apology. I knew something was wrong, and I knew that there was somebody in my head, telling me what was right and wrong, but I didn't do anything about it because I was afraid. If I had taken action... done *something*... I'd like to think that we would have had more time together this term as friends. I would like to think that things would not have gone as far as they did. And for that, I'm sorry."
"Harry... please let me speak for a moment. I will apologise now, because I feel I need to. I feel so *stupid* for not seeing that something was wrong. For the first time in my life, I failed to recognise that something was terribly, terribly wrong. I remember thinking a few times, though it was always foggy, that I shouldn't hate you, and I didn't know why I did. It was all so confusing, but there was always this fog in my mind, blocking me from seeing what was really there. It wouldn't let me see you for the great friend and person that you are. It wouldn't let me see that I love you just as much as I do Ron..." Hermione blushed. "Well, I suppose I love him in a different sort of way, but you get my point. So, I'm truly sorry for everything I said and did in these past months, Harry. I really am. I'm just kind of hoping... that we can work on getting things back to normal around here."
Harry hesitated, but when he thought of it, he couldn't see himself without the support of his two best friends. They were a part of his small family, and he could never willingly let them go... especially not without a fight. Harry nodded and let the corners of his mouth quirk up in a small smile.
A single tear fell down Hermione's face and she threw her arms around Harry's neck, hugging him fiercely. "I know it didn't seem like it before, but I've missed you terribly. I didn't realise it until the other day though," she added sheepishly as she pulled away, wiping tears off of her face.
"You have no idea how much I've missed you, Hermione." The two grinned stupidly at each other before Hermione threw her bag over her shoulder, and linked her arm through Harry's.
"Shall we go to class?"
"We shall. Come on, Dra... Where did he go?" Harry asked, looking around when he realised that the blond was no longer with them.
"I saw him slip out when I started talking to you. Come on. We'll be late." They started walking out of the castle towards Hagrid's hut, and Harry could feel Hermione looking intently at his profile.
"What are you staring at?"
"Since when did you call Malfoy, Draco?"
Harry fought off the blush that was threatening, telling himself that friends called each other by their first names, and that is exactly why he did…. Which was partly true. "Well, ever since he became my friend."
"And that would be since this morning?" Hermione asked, raising an eyebrow.
"Er - no. Since Halloween, I think it was."
"But... he was telling Ron and I just how much he hated you one time not too long ago. We..."

Hermione blushed but continued on. "We were even planning all these pranks against you together. They never worked... but that's beside the point."
"Tell me, Hermione... how do you suppose they managed to fail every time?"
"... Oh. He sabotaged them, didn't he?"
"Yes, he did. Professor Snape wanted to see why you two had just started hating me one day. Draco was that key since he could act like you were comparing notes."
"Wait, Snape?"
"Long story. I'll tell you later. Can you just be, I don't know, civil towards Draco? He's not nearly as bad as we've always thought. He's on our side, you know."
"I'll be civil as long as he is."
"Fair enough."
They stopped walking as they came to where their class was assembled, waiting for class to begin. Draco sauntered up to Harry's side and elbowed him lightly in the side. "All right over here with the Gryffindors?"
Harry elbowed him back with a shy smile. "With me and Hermione, so far. Yes."
"Hermione and I," Draco corrected with a smug grin.
"Shut up. Since when do you get to correct my grammar?"
"Since I saved you from becoming a Death Eater, that's when."
Harry looked to his shoes and frowned. "Yeah... thanks for that, by the way," he said quietly. Draco put a hand on his shoulder again, rubbing small circles, and slowly moving down his back.
"You're welcome," Draco whispered as his hand came to a partial standstill in the small of Harry's back, still rubbing circles. Harry fought to keep his eyes from fluttering shut. Warmth, comfort, and an unbelievable ache to fall into Draco's body were overwhelming him at the soothing touch. Harry found his body moving closer to the Slytherin's, and his own hand moving to Draco's waist, slowly snaking around his waist. Before anything became noticeable, Draco pulled away. "Class," he whispered to Harry's bewildered look. Harry came back to his senses and moved closer to Hermione again, who was giving them a calculating look.
"Hermione," Draco said, moving to stand in front of her. Hermione looked a little startled, and just stared at the boy in front of her, who was now holding out his hand. "I'm sorry for calling you a Mudblood and all the other things I have done to you over the years. Do you think we could make it official now? I didn't really want to be your friend earlier this year..." Draco swallowed hard with a pained look on his face. "But now I think I do."
Very slowly, Hermione took Draco's hand in her own and a small smile quirked the corners of her mouth. "And I'm sorry for slapping you, Draco." Draco lifted an eyebrow, and gave a lopsided smile, making Harry's breath catch in his throat. *So beautiful,* he thought disjointedly.
"What? That little slap? That hardly hurt at all. Besides, I probably deserved it... the arrogant little prat I used to be and all."
"*Used* to be?" Harry scoffed.
"Okay, so I still am. Can you blame me, Harry? I am damn gorgeous, have unmarred skin, perfect features, unusual eyes, *tame* hair," he added, looking pointedly at Harry's hair. Harry scowled and tried to flatten his hair. Draco laughed. "Keep trying, it won't get you anywhere. I already tried one time. It didn't work." Harry gave him a confused look but overlooked it as Draco kept talking. "Anyway, where was I? Tame hair, perfect lips. Wouldn't you say they're good for kissing, Harry?" Harry glanced at Hermione, and blushed to the roots of his hair when he saw the inquiring look she was giving both of them. "I know they are. The last boy I kissed

didn't have a problem with it. He was quite a grunter when we snogged."
Hermione let out a laugh. "Who was it? Crabbe, Goyle?" Draco gave her an offended look. "Do you think I'm *that* desperate?" Draco turned to Harry, wearing a devilish smile. "No. But I think that Harry knows who the boy is though."
Harry felt his face turn even more red and he adamantly avoided Hermione's gaze. "Oh... oh look, there's Hagrid. He's been talking all this time. Perhaps we should listen." Sneaking one last look behind him, Harry crept through the crowds, trying to get away from Hermione and Draco. He stopped at the front, sat down and started playing with a Kneazle. Moments later, Hagrid informed then to get a Kneazle, stooped down and picked Harry up in a tight hug. The rest of the lesson spent playing with the cats, and talking to Hagrid. Harry could not stop grinning for the entire class period.
After dinner, Hermione, Draco, and Harry were gathered in Harry's room. Dumbledore had granted Harry permission to use it until either the situation settled down, or the term ended. Hermione was currently busy looking around the room, fascinated that two Slytherins had actually combined Slytherin and Gryffindor colours together. Harry and Draco were sneaking sidelong glances at one another when the other was not looking, and slowly moving closer to each other on the couch. "So, Hermione, have you spoken to Ron today?" Harry asked.
"Yes. He pulled me aside after lunch today."
"Er - what did he say about me?"
"What makes you think that he did say anything about you?"
"Come on, Hermione. I know he did. I can't really miss those looks he keeps giving me."
Hermione sighed deeply and sat down onto a chair unceremoniously. "Okay, he did talk about you. In fact, that's all he talked about, or rather yelled about. He's furious with me for forgiving you so soon."
Harry slumped, defeated into the couch. "I don't know what I expected."
"Oh, come on, Harry. It'll get better soon," Hermione said.
"No, I don't think it will. I almost *killed* him, Hermione! Would you forgive me if it had been you?"
"I think so. I think I would have been really angry and felt more than a little betrayed, but I would also know that how you were acting was not really you, Harry. Sirius brainwashed you. Ron should know that you would never purposely try to kill him, and that is exactly what I told him. I mean, you almost killed Draco, and he's still here."
Harry looked down, unable to look the Slytherin in the eye. "That's because I'm not a Weasley. I don't let people go that easily, even if they do make an attempt on my life."
"My intent was not to kill you, Draco."
"Oh, yes. You wanted to see me bleed." Although Draco was trying to make his tone light, there was obvious anger and hurt in his voice.
"Let's just not talk about it. I said I was sorry already, and I'll never be able to stop apologising for the rest or my natural life. What more do you want?"
The two boys eyes met and Harry swallowed when he saw the look that Draco was giving him. There was longing, lust, and love in those eyes, telling Harry exactly what it was he wanted. Harry quickly looked away as Draco's hand discreetly moved behind Harry and began rubbing circles in the small of his back once again. Hermione cleared her throat and shifted uncomfortably in her seat.
"Anyway, Harry, Ron will come around. You know how he is, he'll realise just how much he's

missed having you around and approach you. Just give it a little time. In the mean time, you still have Draco and me."
"And Sev. Which reminds me, he wanted to speak with me after dinner. I had better go, otherwise I'll get an earful. Do you mind if I come back after I'm done, Harry? I won't take too long."
"Um... no, I don't mind. Come whenever you're done."
Draco flashed a dazzling smile that made Harry's heart jump and then left the room. Harry did not even notice that he had been watching the Slytherin leave until Hermione cleared her throat.
"Do you like what you see?" she asked casually.
"Hmm? What?"
"Well, I don't know. I was just making sure that you like what you see since you're in love with Draco and everything. Obviously you are, I mean you didn't look away from the closed door for almost a minute."
Harry blinked. "Um... excuse me? In... in love with Draco?" he laughed nervously. "Of course I'm not in love with him."
Hermione smiled softly at Harry and got up from her chair to sit next to him. "Don't do that Harry. I've been watching you two together all day. The discreet way you touch each other, the way you look when he touches you, the way you look at him. I saw that look you two were giving each other after you asked Draco what more did he want. I'm not blind."
"Er - I think you're reading a bit too much into this, Hermione."
"Am I?"
"Y... yes. You are."
"So, what exactly is the problem? Are you scared of what I'll think of you because you're gay, or the fact that you fell in love with Draco Malfoy? Or perhaps both?"
"I... I am not gay."
"I'm okay with it, Harry. Honestly, I am. You can't help that you like boys anymore than you can help that you're the Boy Who Lived. I won't love you any less because of it. I'll only love you more because it's what makes you who you are, Harry."
Harry let out a shaky sigh and hugged Hermione fiercely. "Thank you. Thank you for knowing me only as Harry. That means more to me than you being okay that I'm gay. I love you so much, Hermione. And believe me, that's completely platonic," he joked.
They pulled away and both laughed. "I thought you'd hate me if you found out."
"Don't worry, I could never hate you of my own free will. I just want you to be happy. So... how did you two figure out how you felt?"
Harry smiled widely, and began on the story of their first kiss. During the Christmas holidays when Draco had made the Gryffindor Common room into a winter wonderland, complete with big piles of snow for a good snowball fight. How Harry had run into the invisible wall and Draco had come over to check if he was all right, and then how they had just started kissing. Hermione laughed about their reactions afterwards, when they both exclaimed, 'you're gay?' Then Harry moved on to their painfully gentle kiss on Christmas morning and how it happened. Harry's heart fluttered as he remembered the feeling of the boy's lips on his. By the time he was done talking, Hermione had curled herself up into his body and they were holding each other tightly.
"It seems you've been extremely lucky to find him, Harry."
"Yeah," Harry breathed sadly.
"When did you two break up?"

"Um... when I went to Voldemort. I found out that he was a Death Eater. But at the time, I was more upset that he was working *against* Voldemort, and not for him. Now I'm just upset that he risked his life for me and became one."
"I never thought Draco Malfoy would risk his life for somebody, especially you. I mean, no offence, but well, you know."
"Yeah, I know."
"So, tell me Harry," Hermione began in a cheerful voice. "Is he a great kisser or not? I've always imagined he would be."
Harry laughed. "Hermione!"
"Well, can you blame a girl? You always kind of have to wonder."
"I do realise that you're trying to pull me into 'girl talk,' you know. Which I find very odd since you never girl talk."
"Honestly, Harry. I am a girl after all. I just don't go as far as Parvati and Lavender do. I only like girl talk when it's with Ginny or you. Ron stinks at it. Besides, we've already been having a 'girl talk' this entire time. You can't stop now."
"You just called me a girl... I hate you."
"But you love me." Harry only smiled. There was no denying it. "So... tell me. On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, what is he?"
"A thirty."
"That good?" Hermione laughed.
"Better than that. I just didn't want to cheat too much."
"Hmm... if you don't make your move on him soon, Harry, I think I'll have to find out for myself if you're telling the truth."
"Don't you dare!" Harry exclaimed, while Hermione broke out into hysterical laughter.
"Don't you dare do what?" asked an amused voice from the door. Both Harry and Hermione turned their heads to see Draco closing the door behind him, looking at the two of them. Harry immediately turned red.
"Um... nothing."
"I only said that I was going to..." Harry covered her mouth with his hand to muffle her words.
"That she was going to tell... Ron how dumb he's being and that he would have um... done the same thing?"
"Hmm... nice try. I'll let it go though," Draco replied as he sat on the other side of Harry. "So... what have you two been talking about?"
"Oh, you know, just what's been going on in my life since we stopped speaking to each other."
"Really?" Draco asked, raising an eyebrow. "Anything interesting?"
"Most definitely," Hermione said, winking at the Slytherin. "Well, I better get going. I have um... have to talk to Ron again? Yes, I'll go find Ron and try to talk some sense back into him."
"Have fun!" She then leaned up to whisper in Harry's ear. "If you don't tell him that you love him tonight, I *will* make my move."
"No, you won't."
"Don't be so sure, Harry. Ron hasn't exactly been nice to me lately."
"Hermione... I can't," Harry said desperately. "Not tonight."
"Tonight, Harry. I'll be very disappointed if you don't." She kissed him on the cheek, then leaned across him to try to kiss Draco's cheek, but Draco leaned back with wide eyes and she missed. Her lips smacked air, and she glared slightly at the Slytherin. "I'll see you two tomorrow then."

Hermione got up from the couch and opened the door. "Oh, and Harry? Change the password. It's really insulting."
"I like it!" Draco exclaimed.
"You would, you filthy Slytherin," Hermione shot back good-naturedly.
"Mortally offended, I am!" Draco cried as she shut the door behind herself. Draco fell back against the couch and sighed. "Gryffindors. I don't know why I put up with them."
"Slytherins. I don't know why I put up with them."
"You can't get enough of me," Draco said smugly.
"You really think so? What makes you think I want you here right now?"
Harry was surprised by the flash of emotions that went through Draco's eyes after that was said. Hurt and surprise were the most prominent, and Harry immediately felt bad for saying it. He put a hand on Draco's knee and squeezed it gently. "I was kidding, Draco. I'm sorry." Relief flooded the silvery eyes, but then the wall was put back up.
"Of course. I knew you were kidding."
Harry only smiled softly and removed his hand. "Five galleons to the winner of three games of Exploding Snap?"
"Raising the stakes, are you, Potter?"
"Well, I always win, I might as well make more money off of you."
"Arrogant one, aren't you?"
"I learn from the best."
Draco smirked and they continued to toss friendly insults back and forth the entire time they played cards. Harry won again and soon after Draco paid him, Draco had fallen asleep on the couch, lips parted slightly. The Gryffindor stood over the other boy for a few moments, studying him intently. His robe had fallen open, revealing the top edge of his trousers. The dark grey shirt that Draco was wearing, was riding up his side, and Harry had a hard time not kissing the bare skin that was exposed. But as Harry gathered a blanket from Draco's feet, something caught his eye.
Harry knelt down and examined the marks on Draco's otherwise, flawless skin. It was a rather large, fading bruise on the hip bone, in the shape of a hand. The tips of the fingers were pointing in towards Draco's middle, as if somebody had grabbed the boy from behind and squeezed a little too hard. The dark-haired boy glanced up at Draco to check that he was still asleep before he gently moved the trousers down a little to examine the rest of the bruise. Draco's body jerked, and he whimpered softly in his sleep upon the touch. Harry quickly removed his hand without looking further.
The Gryffindor then gently laid the blanket over the boy. He pushed back the blond hair and kissed the forehead. Draco began to snore loudly, and Harry smiled fondly.
"I love you, Draco. Sleep well."
Okay, I know... nothing evil, but well... I can't be all the time, now can I? ^.^ I just love the idea of Draco snoring loudly... teehee. It's so cute! ^.^
*Thanks to:(I'm sorry, I'm too tired right now to write long-winded replies like I usually do)***Werewolf Childe,Lover of Draco, Michael Serpent, dark*princess, Katy Kinneas, HironiKoshinha, frizzy**(You'll find out why I chose him in the next chapter) **Silver, Mak, Cassa-Andra, BlackDragon**(What? You don't want Harry and Ron to be friends? Did I read that correctly? Why wouldn't you want that? Ronnie-kins is Harry's best mate!), **Rin**(Don't worry. I don't want to risk getting stalkers... like you ^.^ so I'll always update. There is just chapter

sixteen, and then we're on to the sequel. So, one more.) **Rtael (a.k.a. Snape), Meemo**(I wouldn't really say that Draco was friends with them. He was just pretending. And yes, you'll find out what happened to Sirius. **Sailor Grape**(Voldemort is still lurking about and you'll see what he's up to in the next one. Yes, I will deal with it in the next one. In fact, I just wrote in a part of Voldie's revenge on Snape, Harry, and Draco. I think it's pretty good, but of course I would say that! ^.^ Go check out the summary in my bio! You'll find out what happened to Sirius in the next chapter. **redredredred, Shae Lynn, NayNymic**(Let's see... Harry tells Draco about his feelings in chapter 16, and the same goes for dealing with Sirius) **Nagini: c r i m s o n, madkornfan, kwazykitty, Thistle, Evil Story Penguins, Tiffany**(That's a lot of soda!), **Luna Yui**(I'll email you soon. I haven't had the chance to quite yet.), **mystic-flower, Sarah,** and last but not least, **Rain.**

Teaser:
"You sound like Ron," Harry laughed.
"It's not my fault you make me hang out with him so much. I swear I'll go blind if I have to look at that hair for another minute."
"Such a complainer," Harry said before sighing deeply.
"Hey. What's wrong?"
"Sirius."
Draco turned Harry towards himself and wrapped his arms around his waist. That odd, happy glow was back in the silver eyes, and Harry couldn't help but be confused. "What are you so happy about?"
"Just... I suggest you read the papers more."
"Why?"
"Oh, nothing. Just do it."
Harry nodded his head, kissed Draco once, then pulled him to keep walking. "Come on. Let's go inside." Just as they were walking into the front doors of the castle, a dog's bark sounded through the darkening sky.
I know... it's a bad teaser, but the last chapter isn't really going to give you many surprises. You know what I mean? ^.^ I really have to quit talking now and go wear off this energy that I have. Remember, next week is the last chapte

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Chapter: 16

A/N: Sadly, this is the last chapter. But we must move on! ^.^ For a summary and excerpt of the sequel, *Remember You*, read my a/n's at the end of the chapter. They seem long, but I promise, it's only the excerpt making it seem that way. ^.^ Enjoy!

Let the Darkness Take You
Chapter Sixteen
Over the next couple of days, Harry could tell that a strain was being put on Ron and Hermione's

relationship. Hermione had been trying to talk some sense into Ron about Harry. So far, it had not been very successful, but the upside was, was that Ron had finally conceded to sitting with Harry and Hermione during meals and classes. Otherwise, he would go off somewhere with Seamus, Dean, and Neville. Harry, Hermione, and Draco would then spend their time doing things together, and Harry was very happy to see the two getting along very well. Though Draco would sometimes let something slip about Hermione's heritage, the Gryffindors would do their best to ignore it; it was due to the way Draco had grown up.
However, Draco would never get away without a reprimanding look or comment from Harry.
The fourth night after Harry's return to the school, Harry was walking from Dumbledore's office to his room, when somebody stopped him by placing a hand on his shoulder. Harry turned around, and was surprised to see Ron standing behind him.
"Ron! Er - hi."
"Hi. I was just wondering, could we just um... talk somewhere in private?"
Hope filled Harry's heart and he almost smiled. However, the thought that Ron could just want to talk to permanently end their friendship, made the smile stop before it had time to begin. "Er - sure. Let's go to my room then. I was just going there." Harry motioned with his hand for Ron to follow him, and they walked silently through the corridors, up a flight of stairs, and to Harry's room on the third floor.
"This is where you've been all this time?"
"Yeah. 'Slyfferin'." The door opened and Ron raised an eyebrow.
"'Slyfferin?'"
"Hermione did it. She thought my other password was a little... offensive. Which I suppose it was."
"What was it?"
"Erm - 'Gryffindor really sucks.' I wasn't really myself and I was still a bit sore on you, Seamus, and Dean trying to beat me up."
"Oh, right," Ron said, looking ashamed by staring at his shoes.
They started to walk in, Harry in the lead. Laughter erupted inside; and Harry found Hermione and Draco playing Exploding Snap together. Draco had singed his eyebrows pretty recently since all the cards were strewn all over the place. Harry snorted.
"Nice look. You should shave your head to complete the 'I'm a hairless cat' look."
Draco scowled as Hermione continued to laugh. "At least I don't look like a shaggy dog."
"A strangely attractive shaggy dog," Harry smirked.
"Oh, dear Merlin," Hermione said faintly. "You really have been spending too much time with this Slytherin git this year. You sounded and looked exactly like him just then."
Harry winked and sent her a dazzling smile, then turned around to look at Ron, who was still standing in the doorway, out of sight from the other two. "Come on, then."
"I... I wanted to talk to you in private."
"Just come in. They'll give us some privacy."
Reluctantly, Ron came in and shut the door behind him. Upon seeing him, Hermione sent him a bright smile, then stood up, tugged on Draco's arm and began to leave the room. "You two have much talking you need to do. Draco and I will go keep ourselves busy for a while."
"Hermione?" Ron asked confused.
"Don't worry, we won't be getting dirty with each other, Ron," Hermione explained, clearly amused.

"Yes, no worries, Wea... Ron. I'm interested in your best friend, but not the one on my arm right now."
Hermione smacked Draco upside the head, laughed nervously, and then left the room in a hurry. Harry felt himself turn red, so he turned around to hide it and went to the windows to watch his never-ending Quidditch game. "Um... I'll ask about that comment later," Ron said faintly after a few moments.
"And I'll be sure to answer it..." Harry turned and looked at Ron beseechingly. "I'm so sorry, Ron. You have to believe me, that that wasn't *me*. I would never purposely torture you, or try to kill you. I could never..."
"Stop. Please. I know that you were brainwashed. I know that Sirius did it to you. I know that Sirius did everything that has happened in the past months. But you have to understand that it's still hard to look at you the same way after seeing you point your wand at me, casting the Cruciatus curse on me, about to cast the Killing curse... I'll never forget it."
"I know. I'm so sorry, Ron."
"Stop apologising. It's not your fault. What I'm wondering is, how can you still look at me the same?"
"What do you mean?"
"I mean, after everything I've said and done this year, you still want to be my friend. You seem to be perfectly fine with it all. How could you still want to be near me?"
"It's *because* you're my best friend. You were the thing I missed the most in fourth year for a reason, you know. This year I actually got to know how much I would miss you. The things said and done to me did hurt. They hurt a lot, especially when you punched me." Harry cracked a small smile that was returned hesitantly as Harry continued. "But the thing is, I'm willing to be your friend again *because* I know that it wasn't really you. It was the curse and potion at work. I don't expect anything from you because what I did was ten times wor... umph!"
Harry was stopped in the middle of his thoughts as Ron attacked him with a very rough hug. Very slowly, Harry returned it. He was taken by surprise. Never in all the years of their friendship, could Harry remember Ron actually hugging him. Usually it was just a friendly slap on the back, or a handshake, but now, Ron was actually hugging him. Harry let out a relieved laugh and hugged his friend tighter. "I've missed you a lot, mate," Ron said quietly. "Get it straight, that if you apologise once more, I will finish the job that I started months ago with Seamus and Dean." They pulled away from each other when Harry laughed.
"You think you actually could?"
"Well, if you didn't play so dirty last time, I would have beaten you."
"If it hadn't been so serious, I wouldn't have kicked you there. Sorry for that."
"I'll let that one slide. I'm sorry for trying to beat you up."
"Apology accepted, you fat arse."
"No need for name calling now, you four-eyed geek."
Harry let out a genuine laugh and clapped Ron on the shoulder. "It's good to have you back."
"It's good to be back. Now... what is this with Draco Malfoy? Was he kidding about being interested in you?"
Harry started to steer Ron over to the couch and sat him down. "Ron, my friend. There's something I need to tell you..."
"What?" Ron asked warily as Harry sat beside him.
"For one, and I think I should get this out of the way right away. At the beginning of term, Ginny

was kind of my girlfriend."
"*What?*"
"Don't freak out, please."
"What do you mean *kind* of?"
"We were more like... snogging partners." Ron's blue eyes bulged out of his head, but Harry rushed on before he could start yelling. "For about one week, mind you. Then Sirius got to her as well."
"Good thing too. Do you still fancy her?"
"Not really. I think she's beautiful and everything, but redheads just don't do it for me."
"And who does?" Ron asked suspiciously.
"Er - I like blondes," Harry replied quietly.
"Not Pansy Parkinson?"
"No. Think of all the little pug puppies running around if I were to marry her. Ugh, no." Harry shuddered.
"Then... Lavender right? She isn't so bad."
Harry sighed. "I'll be a bit more specific. I like blondes... who aren't girls." Ron stared at Harry as if this information didn't enter his head completely and Harry was starting to fidget under his gaze. Harry waved a hand in front of Ron's face and got no reaction. "Ron... did you hear me? I'm gay, and I like blondes. *A blonde Slytherin.*" Still no reaction.
"Oh for Merlin's sake! I'm in love with Draco Malfoy, Ron! Snap out of it!"
"Are you sure?" Ron finally asked.
"Sure that I'm gay? Yes, I'm sure."
"No. I don't care that you're gay. Whatever makes your wand spark." Ron winced at the innuendo and Harry smirked. "Are you sure about Malfoy?"
"Draco," Harry corrected. "And yes, I am. He doesn't know that I love him, or at least I don't think he does."
"Does he love you?"
"He said he did the night I went to Voldemort, but then I broke up with him. You noticed all those fights we had? That was when we had broken up. I don't know if he still does though. He's still interested, obviously."
Ron looked at Harry with the most miserable look in his eyes that Harry just knew that he was going to break off their friendship. "Then, does this mean I have to try and get along with the bugger?"
Harry only stared for a few moments before breaking out into relieved hysterical laughter. "If you could," he replied after he gained control. "And I think his name is Draco. Not the little bugger, or Malfoy."
A deep sigh. "Bugger."
"You aggravating, little bugger. Go... go bugger off!"
"No. I like to stay here, Ginger. I'm friends with Harry and Hermione."
"So am I! And stop calling me Ginger!"
"I never said anything to the contrary. I'll stop calling you Ginger when you stop calling me little bugger. It's quite embarrassing you know, to be called from across the Great Hall, by 'hey, you little blonde bugger, get your fat arse over here!' I'm getting quite sick of the word."
Harry sighed from his chair in front of the fire. Ron and Draco had been carrying on in this vain for the past two days, since Harry and Ron's make-up. Harry now had a constant headache. He

leaned over the arm of his chair and grabbed Hermione's arm. "Help me, I'm going insane."
"You and me both."
"Do you mind if I go for a walk by myself? I need to walk off this headache, I think."
"Go ahead. I'll just put a silencing charm on them."
"Good luck."
Harry quickly vacated the room and walked around the mostly deserted castle, thinking about the past few days. All three of his friends had been trying to get him to open up a little about Sirius, but he retained that he was fine on the topic and told them to drop it. They knew he wasn't fine, and so did Harry, but he wasn't about to admit it. Just thinking of Sirius put an ache inside of him that he knew would never go away. Talking about him didn't seem too appealing. The last thing Harry needed was to break down in hysterical tears over the bastard. Harry was immersed so deeply in his thoughts that he wasn't paying attention to where he was going. As he rounded a corner on the fifth floor, he collided with somebody with his head. He closed his eyes and held onto his head.
"Oh, Merlin. That doesn't help this headache."
"Well, maybe you should stop hanging out with both Ron and Draco so much. It would be enough to give anybody a headache."
Looking up, Harry looked up at his crash victim. "Ginny," he breathed.
"Hello, Harry."
An awkward silence fell on them as they continued to stare at each other. It was finally broken when Ginny started to apologise repeatedly for being so dumb. Harry went through the process he had gone through about hundreds of times the past week. People were always approaching him and telling them how sorry they were for being so rude to him. He'd always tell them it wasn't their fault and they shouldn't be apologising, which is exactly what he did with Ginny as well. She seemed to accept it, but then as they fell silent, it became awkward again, this time for a completely different reason.
"Er - Ginny, don't be mad at me. I don't really know how you feel about me anymore, but the truth is... I don't have any feelings for you besides for friendship. I wanted to tell you before Sirius got to you. But I was a little late. That's what I was going to tell you when you pretty much told me to sod off."
To Harry's surprise, Ginny sighed and smiled. "Don't worry about it, Harry. I had been wanting to tell you the same thing, but I never would have told you, I think. You were already hurting from rejection so much, I just couldn't bring myself to do it."
"Really? But I thought you liked me?"
"Oh, I did. Then once something started happening, I just figured out that I didn't love you the way I thought I once did. So... is Hermione telling the truth? Did you really fall in love?" Harry blushed crimson and looked down.
"I suppose. Yes."
"It's Draco, isn't it?"
"What?"
"I guessed with Hermione. I asked her yesterday if you two had feelings for each other. She looked so shocked that I knew it was true. So, she told me how you two first kissed and everything. I'm really happy for you. I can tell by the way Draco looks at you that he really loves you."
"Really?" Harry asked hopefully.

"Yeah. Can't you tell?"
"Um... well, we're not actually together right now. I sort of broke up with him the night I went to Voldemort."
Ginny smiled and took Harry's hand in her own to squeeze it gently. "It's never too late." She kissed his cheek, bid him goodnight and walked in the direction of Gryffindor tower. Harry watched her go, smiling broadly. Having Sirius in his life hadn't gone the way as planned, but he could make Draco go right. It made Harry a bit nervous to think about. The two boys hadn't spoken about anything that had transpired between them, and Harry didn't know if Draco really was all right with what Harry had done. With it in mind to speak with the Slytherin, Harry set off at a fast pace to his dorm, hoping to catch Draco before he left to the Slytherin dormitories. After muttering the password, Harry went quietly in to find Draco sleeping on the bed, hands behind his head, and feet crossed. Harry stopped to look at him.
Draco looked every bit the sophisticated aristocrat. A moonbeam shone in from the window, lighting up his pale face and hair, giving him an angelic appearance. His chest rose and fell in a steady rhythm, making his robes fall off his chest to the bed, revealing his black jumper. Harry finally made his feet move to the bed, where he climbed on and sat on his knees beside the boy. He unnecessarily pushed back a piece of blond hair from Draco's face, and watched with bated breath as the silver eyes fluttered open.
"I'm sorry," he muttered groggily. "Did you want to go to bed?"
"No. I'm wide awake. Where did Ron and Hermione go?"
"Um..." Draco scratched his head as his sleep addled brain attempted to remember. "Hermione said she'd do his favourite thing if he would just shut up and leave me alone for five minutes. They left after two minutes."
Harry snickered as Draco's eyes fell shut once again. After a few minutes of watching Draco sleeping again, Harry couldn't help but run his hand along the smooth skin of the cheek. Draco woke again and mock glared.
"Was this your intention at coming back here? To keep me away from my beauty sleep?"
"No. Sorry. I couldn't help it."
"Oh. As long as you're sorry.
"Draco?"
"Hmm?" Draco replied, eyes falling closed again.
"Are we okay?"
"Well, of course we are."
"Good. I've really missed you."
"I'm right here, Harry."
"I know that. But I miss you."
Draco looked up at Harry again and studied his face. "I'm sorry. I don't think I understand."
"Neither do I," Harry breathed as he began to lean down. Their lips brushed together so softly that if they hadn't known better, it could have been mistaken as breath brushing across their pink flesh. "I love you so much," Harry whispered against his lips. Harry felt and heard Draco's breath hitch before he twined his hand into Harry's hair.
"I love you, too."
"Good."
Their lips met again. Harry wanted to savour this moment. He didn't want anything to go too fast. He drank in the softness of Draco's lips before he let their tongues meet in a slow, tender

kiss. Draco pulled Harry down so that they were both lying on their sides, arms wrapped around each other. When Draco sighed with content into Harry's mouth, they pulled away and stared into each other's eyes.
"I never thought you'd come around, Harry."
"What do you mean?"
"I was waiting for you to make the first move. You knew how I feel about you, I still wasn't sure how you felt about me. Even when you told me while you were dreaming."
"That was real?"
"Yes. I had to talk you back. Everything we said was real."
"Thank you."
Draco smiled softly. "You're welcome," he said quietly and kissed Harry again. "Let's go to bed. I'm so tired. You're keeping me up."
"Such a whiner," Harry joked as he sat up to pull off his and Draco's shoes. They pulled back the blankets together and climbed under, once again finding comfort in each other's arms. They shared a few more kisses, snuggled closer together and closed their eyes.
"Love you," they whispered in unison before falling into a peaceful sleep.
The next month passed by quickly for Harry. Things couldn't have gotten any better with Draco, and things with Ron were going just as well. Ron was still having difficulties with getting along with Draco, but the two were making definite progress with each other. Keeping in mind that Ron was still a little grossed out with seeing his best friend and former enemy kiss, Harry made sure that they kept that sort of stuff to themselves. Hermione was a lot better with it. She positively beamed at the two every time she caught them kissing, holding hands, hugging, or snuggling together on the couch.
For Draco's part, he was doing particularly well. The comments on Hermione's heritage were rarely, if ever heard anymore. Sometimes, Harry would catch him biting his lip to keep from saying something about it. At these times, it was the most apparent just how much Draco loved Harry if he was willing to push aside his upbringings for Harry. Draco was rewarded very well for these times. Harry wondered sometimes if that was more his motive for doing it than anything else.
For Harry's part, he was doing well with everything, if he didn't think about Sirius. It was a topic that was just not brought up around Harry, unless he did it himself; and it was something that his friends, and boyfriend respected. That is, until the middle of May sprout up on them. No news of Sirius had been in the papers, nor had anybody been talking about it in school. Dumbledore was keeping a tight lip about it, so Harry wasn't asking. He knew what would happen anyhow. The jury would convict Sirius, if he had not been already, and he would spend the rest of his life in an anti-animagus cell in Azkaban.
When spring became evident in the air, with flowers blooming, birds chirping, the sun shining merrily down on them, the squid coming up for air, so that he too could enjoy a little sun, Draco began to act increasingly peculiar and, more and more out of character. So much so, that Harry started to worry about him. One day after dinner, Harry had invited Draco for a walk. They weren't worried to be seen together, since the school now knew that the infamous rivalry between the Gryffindor and Slytherin had been put to rest. Of course, they didn't know the extent of the relationship.
Harry was walking slowly on the shore of the lake, behind his boyfriend, who was oddly, practically dancing along ahead of him. "Erm - Draco? Are you feeling okay?"

Draco stopped, turned around and offered Harry a beatific smile. "Of course I'm feeling fine! I love spring. Don't you?"
"Yes, I do. But seriously, what's up with you? You're kind of starting to worry me."
Harry took a few surprised steps back when Draco skipped to him. "Don't you ever read the paper?"
"Not lately, no. Why?"
"My father has been caught! Can you believe it? He's in the Ministry's custody and they're saying that he has no chance to get out of it. He was caught with the Death Eaters, shooting the mark up into the sky. That's one less person who wants to kill me!"
Harry smiled a little at his enthusiasm over such a depressing subject. "One down, fifty to go, huh?"
"Exactly. You should know how I feel. Voldemort isn't exactly happy with you either."
"Well, it's not like he's not the one who set himself up for a big disappointment. I didn't join him willingly. He should have known that somehow, I'd be returned to myself."
Draco kissed Harry sweetly, grabbed his hand and they began walking together. "Has he sent you anymore dreams?"
"Not in a couple days, no. The last one I was sent was with Sirius, when he was being initiated."
"He sends you things from the past?"
"Yeah. Anything that he knows will hurt me. I think he's trying to get me to join him again."
"Stupid bugger."
"You sound like Ron," Harry laughed.
"It's not my fault you make me hang out with him so much. I swear I'll go blind if I have to look at that hair for another minute."
"Such a complainer," Harry said before sighing deeply.
"Hey. What's wrong?"
"Sirius."
Draco turned Harry towards himself and wrapped his arms around his waist. That odd, happy glow was back in the silver eyes, and Harry couldn't help but be confused. "What are you so happy about?"
"Just... I suggest you read the papers more."
"Why?"
"Oh, nothing. Just do it."
Harry nodded his head, kissed Draco once, and then pulled him to keep walking. "Come on. Let's go inside." Just as they were walking into the front doors of the castle, a dog's bark sounded through the darkening sky.
The bright sunlight shining through the windows was what woke Harry again this morning. He smiled at it and rolled out of bed. As he was changing from his pyjamas to his weekend clothes, a groan came from the bed and the sound of somebody patting the bed. "Where'd you go, Harry?"
"I'm getting up."
"Are you going to read the paper?"
"After a walk. The sun is looking too inviting right now."
"I'd join you... but it's Saturday... and only eight. Goodnight."
"Good morning, Draco. I'll see you later."
After kissing Draco's forehead, Harry left his room, and started for the doors. He was once again

immersed in sad thoughts of Sirius, with his head bowed. So much so, in fact, that he didn't notice when a person walked right into his path in the entrance hall, until they nearly collided, but the other person grabbed Harry's arms to make him stop.
"Wha'?" Harry pulled out of the grip and looked up. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "Um - hello, Remus," he said awkwardly.
"Hello," he said so quietly that Harry could have sworn that it almost was not said at all. The two shifted in awkward silence for a few moments before Remus pulled Harry into a tight hug. Harry tensed up at first but quickly relaxed into it.
"I've missed talking to you, Remus."
"I've missed talking to you as well, Harry."
"What are you doing here?"
"Oh. Well, I did come here to see you, to apolo..."
"Please don't. Everybody else has and it's not anybody's fault... except for... Never mind. It's not your fault."
Remus smiled sadly. "Yes. Well, that wasn't the only reason I came here. I'm sort of here as a mediator."
"For what exactly?"
"I've brought somebody else here with me. He insisted on it actually because he doesn't think you'll want to speak with him."
"Who is it?"
"Before you see him, promise you won't do anything you may regret later."
"Um... okay," Harry replied, completely bewildered. Lupin's eyes looked past Harry just as somebody else placed a hand on his shoulder. Harry turned around to be faced by Sirius Black. Emerald eyes hardened and he backed into Remus, who pushed him back. Sirius's eyes had so many emotions running through them. He was scared, beseeching, and apologetic. But none of this mattered to Harry.
"Aren't you supposed to be in Azkaban now?" Harry spit out.
"I feel like I should be, yes."
"Well then get out of my sight! Why do you think I should talk to you? You're nothing. You're a filthy Death Eater. I don't know why I ever wasted my breath on you."
A pained look flashed across Sirius's face, and for a moment, Harry stopped, wondering what was going on. "I deserve that."
"You're bloody right, you do! Does Dumbledore know you're here? Remus, why did you bring him?"
"He needs to talk to you."
"I don't think he deserves that chance. I bet you were laughing the whole time you were gaining my trust, weren't you, Black?" Harry felt the tears starting to form, so before he could let Sirius see them fall, he ran out the door of the castle, in the general direction of the lake. Down at the shore where he and Draco had been the night before, Harry sat, and started picking through the grass for rocks hidden so that he could throw them in the water. Once he had a good-sized pile, he crossed his legs and began skipping the rocks across the water. The ripples would disappear and the lake would become calm again before Harry would throw another one in, to watch it skip two or three times before sinking to the bottom.
"Who taught you how to do that?" asked a voice behind him after his fourth rock.
"Draco. We were out here for four hours a couple weeks ago, skipping rocks. I was lousy at

first."
"Hmm... are you talking about Draco Malfoy?"
"Yes."
"I didn't know you were friends."
"Mmm... He's my boyfriend," Harry found himself saying, not really caring anymore who he was talking to, or that somebody else was in on their secret. He was sick of hiding it.
"Boyfriend, huh? I never knew you were gay."
"Me either."
"When did you find out?"
"When I started to like Draco this year. Do you have a problem with it or something?"
"No. Of course not. I'm not about to tell you that you're in the wrong and that you should force it down and start liking girls."
"Good. Because I wouldn't. I've already tried with Ginny. I didn't even have time to tell her I didn't really like her when that bastard got to her." With a small grunt, Harry threw another rock in the lake. It sank like a rock on the first hit. With a new wave of fury, Harry kicked his foot out, sending his pile of rocks into the waters that were lapping the shore. "Well, it's been a pleasure, but I'm going to go eat breakfast with Draco, if he's..." Harry stopped because at that moment, he looked at his companion. "Oh, bloody wonderful. I really needed *you* to know that I'm gay. Are you going to use this as more ammunition for me with Voldemort? I can just imagine you going to him on your bloody hands and knees, snivelling to him, saying 'My lord, Harry Potter is a faggot with Draco Malfoy.' You'll enjoy seeing him killed off, won't you?"
Harry stood up and was about to walk away but Sirius pulled him back down. "Please. Just listen to me, Harry. Please."
"Fine. Five minutes, then I'm leaving."
"Fair enough... Harry, I know that I don't deserve your forgiveness. It would be nice, but it's not what I'm here for. I'm here to at least try to make you understand."
"Try to understand why you willingly went to the man who killed my parents?"
"Please, let me speak. I do have a limited time here."
"Wait, no! I don't want to hear you speak right now. You have no idea what I've been going through this past month and a half, Sirius! Actually, scratch that, you have no idea what I've gone through since my *birthday* last year. I was so excited to come live with you, but then you came to the Dursley's telling me I looked like a ponce, that you didn't have room in your *manor* for me. A manor for Merlin's sake, Sirius. Even the Dursley's spare me a room in that box they live in, and they hate me more than you do." Sirius opened his mouth to say something but Harry clapped his hand over it, stemming any protestations.
"You have no idea how much I wished that it was just an act for the Dursleys. Then when I got on the train, Ron and Hermione were acting the same way as you. Then you came, acting all happy towards them, but nasty towards me... I didn't know what to think. Then I went to find another compartment, but the only person who would let me sit with them is Draco Malfoy. And he was my enemy. My *enemy* let me sit with him before my closest friends did. *You* did that Sirius. You made them hate me.
"To top it all off, you almost killed me in the process of getting people to hate me. Just for a little blood! I still don't know how you managed to put that spell on me, but I know you're the one who was brainwashing me now. I don't know how I didn't recognise your voice, but I didn't.
"Sirius, I don't think you realise all the things you did to me. You made me become the thing that

I have most despised since finding out who I really am. You... you made me become a Death Eater. I almost killed Ron because of you! I..." Without warning for both wizards, Harry burst into tears. They weren't the sort of tears that had escaped almost unnoticed when Sirius first made it known how he felt for Harry, they were terrible gut wrenching sobs that shook his whole body. It was the sum of all the times that Harry had held back the tears, all the times he had held back his rage. They all came out in one moment in front of the one person that he had never wanted to cry in front of. Harry buried his face in his hands, trying to hide, though he knew it was impossible.

Sirius' warm arms embraced Harry in a tight hug. Anger started to build again, though it only came out in more sobs. Harry wanted to cause bodily damage to his godfather, but the only thing he could muster was him punching Sirius very weakly in the chest, repeatedly.

"I hate you," he sobbed out. "I trusted you and you did this to me." He stopped so that he could take in a very chopped- up breath. "I hate you!" he yelled out while still feebly pounding his fists into Sirius's chest. Harry's sobs slowly started to become quieter and quieter, until they were mere sniffles. His body felt exhausted and he fell into his godfather's body, trying to pretend that Sirius hadn't betrayed him in the worst way possible. But, in the end, he knew this wasn't true. This would be the last time they ever hugged, because this would be the last time Harry ever saw, or spoke to the older man. So, in knowing this, Harry let himself be hugged, if only for the minimal amount of comfort it provided. "I hate you for making me love you," he finished quietly.

Sirius sighed and ran a hand through his godson's messy hair. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry for all of those horrible things I did. But, Harry, please listen to me. I *never* wanted to do those things."

Harry pulled roughly away and hugged his knees to his chest. "So, what was it that made you do it then? Voldemort offered you tons of power, did he? Or maybe a nice fat pay-off? Though I can't really see that happening."

"No. He didn't offer me anything. The only thing he did for me... or rather *to* me, was to take my mind over. I was under Imperius, Harry."

Harry snorted. "Right. Now that is just an easy and convenient excuse to get you back on my good side, isn't it?"

"No. It's not an excuse. It's the truth. And something like the Imperius is never an easy excuse when you've actually experienced it. It makes you feel foolish and weak for not being able to fight it off. I was under the Imperius, Harry," Sirius insisted.

"You don't have proof. You're a Death Eater; you have the mark on your arm. There isn't any reason for me to believe you."

"You're right. I don't have proof, but the Ministry does. Don't you ever read the papers?"

"Why does everybody ask me that? No, I haven't read the papers in the past month."

"Maybe you should read yesterday's paper, then."

"I don't have it, thanks. Have any more foolproof evidence, oh smart one?"

"Please stop with the remarks, Harry. Just for now. If you don't want anything to do with me after today, then make all the remarks you want, okay?"

"Fine," Harry agreed reluctantly.

"Proof," Sirius started and looked out across the lake, a look of deep thought on his face. "I nearly fought the curse off of me at one point. You know, when I... well, when I made you fall down the stairs. I knew what I had done, and told myself that it stopped there. I thought that if I kept going to visit you in the hospital wing that I would be able to, and I nearly did. Then Voldemort called me when I was speaking to you when you woke, and I still wasn't strong

enough to fight him off... so he placed it on me again, and I was back where I had started off. After that, they had to place it on me a couple times a week."
"I'm not saying I believe you, but when was the first time it happened? When did Voldemort take you?"
"I think it was about two days after the end of term. They took me from Diagon Alley, placed the curse on me and let me go. They didn't tell me to do anything until your birthday. Well, except to decline any social outings with friends. I only left Black Manor once that entire month, besides for your birthday."
Harry looked down from the lake to his shoes. It was too easy. There was no way that Sirius could have been under the Imperius. He had to have been a Death Eater by choice. The man had plenty of reasons to be...
Harry sighed. No, he didn't have plenty of reasons to be one. He had plenty of reasons *not* to be one. Maybe the easy story was the truth. The hard way was just too... complicated. Why would Sirius become a follower of the one man who had basically destroyed his life? The man who had killed two of his best friends, left his godson to become an orphan. Then consequently be sent to Azkaban for actions that he never committed. Then if this story was true, the man who almost made Sirius kill Harry, made him become a Death Eater, made all Harry's friends hate him... Sirius had every reason to not become a Death Eater.
Thinking on everything that had happened since Harry's birthday the previous year, it all seemed to fall into place. At the beginning of term, when Remus had paid a visit to Harry, he had said that Sirius had practically been bouncing off the walls with excitement. Excitement because Harry was going to live with him. Remus had also said that Sirius had declined all his invites to do something, a thing that Sirius would never normally do, because he was Sirius Black, after all.… A person who never turned down the chance for fun and mischief making. Then, for Sirius to show up on Harry's birthday, claiming to hate him, and to not have room in his manor for a boy his age...
And another thought hit Harry... the dream with the Death Eaters dragging in a man with a hood on. Voldemort had questioned the cloaked figure as to why he was disobeying him even with Imperius on him. That very well could have been Sirius. In fact, it was most probable. Then, there was the fact that Sirius *had* been nice to Harry in the hospital wing, and had told him to not let "it" get him. Which Harry was quite sure now that Sirius had been speaking about the darkness. Since Sirius had been the one brainwashing him and everything.… He had known what he was talking about.
Inwardly, Harry smiled. It just had to be true. Sirius did not hate him. He was not a Death Eater, and hopefully... he still wanted Harry to live with him.
"Harry?" Sirius asked suddenly, making Harry jump. Harry turned slightly and raised his eyes to look at the man beside him. He swallowed and looked back down at the ground.
"I'm sorry," Harry whispered.
"What are you sorry for? I should be the one grovelling down at your feet, begging forgiveness for the rest of my pathetic life."
Harry raised his eyes again and made eye contact. "I'm sorry for doubting you."
Sirius stared at Harry for a few moments, his eyes beginning to shine with unshed tears. "You believe me?" he asked in a relieved sob. Harry only hesitated for about a second before he nodded his head.
"I believe you."

Sirius let out a relieved sigh that cracked a little. He reached out tentatively and placed his hand on Harry's shoulder, and squeezed a little. Sirius concentrated his stare on his hand. He swallowed thickly. "I know-" he began but was cut off by Harry hugging him fiercely. Sirius let out a surprised grunt, but returned the hug.
"It won't be the same," Harry mumbled against Sirius's shoulder. "I know it wasn't you and all, but you're still the one who did it. It won't be the same for a while... if ever."
"I know. I didn't really expect it to be."
"It'll get better though."
"I hope so... Harry, I'll understand if you don't want to... but would you still want to live with me?"
Harry let out a relieved laugh and hugged Sirius even tighter. "I was worried you wouldn't want me anymore."
"Can I take that as a yes?"
"Yes, you can. I want to live with you." Even as Harry said this, he could feel the nagging doubt in the back of his mind. What if Sirius wasn't telling the truth? What if Sirius really did hate him? Harry shrugged this feeling off the best he could. For the moment, he wanted to enjoy the feeling of elation that this revelation gave him.
Harry felt Sirius smile widely against the top of his head before Sirius kissed his head. "Thank Merlin!" he exclaimed quietly. "You know that I really do love you, right?"
"Thanks for reassuring me. And you know that I don't really hate you?"
"Thanks for reassuring me."
The two finally pulled out of their hug and smiled at each other. They both began to stare out at the giant squid, propelling itself across the surface of the water, enjoying the warm morning sun.
"So, Harry. Tell me all about Draco. Is he still an annoying prat? Is he good to you? Is he good to your friends? Do you love him? Does he love you?"
Harry blushed and began scrounging for more rocks to throw in the lake. "To answer your questions in order: yes, of course he is. Would that ever change? Yes, he's wonderful. He's getting better, and yes I do, and so does he." With a big pile of rocks in front of him, Harry took a rock and skipped it across the water.
"That's good. Tell me more," Sirius asked as he too skipped a rock across the water. "How did it happen? How long have you been together?"
Harry smiled as he skipped another rock, and began to tell the story of how he and Draco first kissed.
Over the next month, even more things started to fall back in place. Dumbledore reinstated Sirius as the Defence Against the Dark Arts professor, and Harry couldn't be happier about that. Now that Sirius was back to himself, the classes were extremely fun, with odd things happening in the middle of class. One day, a week after Sirius's return, Sirius had been lecturing about what makes a dark curse, dark, when Ron gave a terrified squeal (which people were still giving him a hard time about). The entire class had turned in his direction and either squealed in horror along with him, or laughed.
"Nice look, Medusa," Seamus had said, trying to control his laughter.
"Get them off!" Ron yelled.
"I'm afraid that hex takes a while to wear off, Mr. Weasley," Sirius had commented calmly. "About two hours to be exact. You'll just have to wait it out. You'll just have to live with a group of snakes coming out of your head."

"At least stun them or something! I don't like them moving!"
"Mr. Potter, if you would."
Harry shrugged, turned to the snakes and hissed at them to go to sleep. They immediately obeyed his command and curled up on the top of Ron's head. Ron looked at his friend with a beseeching look.
"Help me out here. There has to be a counter-curse," he whispered as Sirius continued lecturing.
Harry merely shrugged again.
"At least they aren't spiders."
Ron shuddered and turned his attention back to Sirius, without further complaints. Harry followed his lead just in time to see Sirius wink in his direction as he turned to the board to write something.
After that particular class, more strange things began to happen. Things around the room would explode at sporadic intervals, and Sirius would pay them no attention. Each time, he would simply wink at Harry and continue teaching. Everybody's attention would always be on the newest explosion to take notice of the gesture, so Harry was still the only one to know who was doing it in his class.
Sirius didn't stop at the sixth year class or explosions. It seemed as though strange things were happening in every class. People's hair would change colours in rapid succession, clothes would be swapped in a second so that a Slytherin would be wearing a Ravenclaw garments, or a Gryffindor would be wearing a Hufflepuffs uniform. The only people that Sirius left out of his pranks were Harry and Draco. They of course, being the only people who knew. Harry had to admit, it was quite funny to see Hermione's skin turn scarlet without her noticing for an entire twenty minutes, when she finally demanded to know what everybody was laughing at. In fact, the only days that Harry noticed that Sirius was actually not playing practical jokes on everybody were on the days of the end of term exams.
The last day of term found Harry and Draco in their shared 'classroom' packing Harry's things. Or to be more specific, Draco was lounging on the couch, watching Harry pack all of things into his trunk. Because as the Slytherin put it, 'Malfoys do not do work meant for house elves.' Personally, Harry thought it was time that his boyfriend put away those thoughts that Lucius had instilled in him, since the man was now imprisoned in Azkaban for life. Though Harry supposed that it was hard to get rid of your values, no matter how inconsequential they were. As the Gryffindor closed the lid to his trunk and locked it, a long, suffering sigh came from behind him, causing him to turn.
"What is it, Draco?"
"Nothing... Well, I hate the fact that I have to stay here, like some common... house elf, or groundskeeper, or Filch... or teacher."
"Even for you, that wasn't very nice, Draco. Your godfather happens to be a teacher."
"Yes, well, Sev wouldn't be staying here if it weren't for Voldemort. We could go to his home and stay. If it weren't for Voldemort," he continued more bitterly. "My father wouldn't be Azkaban, and my mother wouldn't hate me for it. It doesn't make any sodding sense. Sure, she loves him, but she never seemed adverse to sending him to Azkaban if she had the chance."
...Which she probably did have the chance many times, but she never did, now did she? Harry thought to himself, but he couldn't bring himself to say it. It would only make Draco very irritated. "Well, there isn't really anything you can do but hope she'll come around. Besides, staying at Malfoy Manor wouldn't be very safe for you anyhow."

"Yeah. It's her bloody loss anyway if she wants to lose her husband *and* her son. I don't know how she'll handle it, being all alone in the Manor. She always went crazy even when Lucius and I was there."
"I'm sure she'll manage. She is a grown woman," Harry said softly, but Draco glared.
"I know she's a grown woman, Potter!" he snapped. "But if she would just-"
"Draco, stop. I don't want to fight with you right now because I won't be seeing you for who knows how long. Maybe not even until next term, and I don't want to fight. Okay?"
Draco glared as he looked away. "Fine. You had better go then. The carriages will probably be outside soon. Have a nice bloody time at your new home." Harry sighed inwardly. So much for trying to make things right.
"Okay, then. If you're going to be like that, I'll just leave."
Harry went and collected his trunk and levitated it into the air, making it follow him. Just as he reached for the door handle to leave, Draco grabbed his arm and spun him around. "What do you think you're doing?" he demanded angrily.
"I'm leaving," Harry replied slowly. "Remember? It's the last day of term..."
"I know that you sodding idiot," the blond said quietly, smiling just a little bit. "You were going to leave without saying goodbye."
"Well, I thought you didn't want to - mmph!"
Draco had pushed Harry roughly up against the door and kissed him just as roughly. "You're such a moron sometimes, Harry," Draco breathed as he pulled away for a moment, only to kiss Harry more. Trapped as he was, Harry could do nothing but return the kiss... Not that he *wanted* to do anything else at the moment. Harry ran his hand up to Draco's cheek, caressing it, feeling the smooth complexion, the little hill that was his cheekbone, his strong jaw line, back to the little pool right behind Draco's earlobe. Harry's hand stopped and he drew small circles in it before moving to the silky threads of Draco's hair. He sighed into their kiss as he entwined his fingers in the hair, mussing it up slightly. The Slytherin pushed Harry further into the wall even as their kiss became gentler. Harry wrapped his arms around Draco's neck and lifted his legs up to wrap them around his boyfriend's waist, pulling him impossibly closer. The Gryffindor gasped as he felt the result of their heated kissing pressing into each other and he moved his hips forward, hoping to make more contact. But Draco gave a very undignified squeak for a Malfoy and stepped away, making Harry nearly drop to the ground. Luckily, he caught himself just in time and stood up, brushing down his robes.
"I'm sorry, Draco," Harry sighed tiredly, trying to keep the frustration from his voice. It wasn't the first time that something like this had happened. Whenever one of their more heated snogging moments got out of control like that, Draco would get surprised, and move away and when Harry would look at him, Draco always looked beyond terrified. Draco always refused to talk about what it was... Or rather, Harry figured he'd refuse so never asked. He rationalised with himself that if Draco wanted to talk to him about it, he'd talk, if there werewas anything to talk about. The whole thing confused him. It seemed that Draco was all talk. He'd laugh and joke about sex, but when it came to the real thing, he'd run away like a puppy with his tail between his legs.
"Y... you better go, Harry. The carriages will be here soon."
"You're right." He leaned forward, trying to place a small kiss on Draco's lips, but he turned his head at the last moment, and Harry got his cheek. He sighed aloud this time. "I'll write."
"I'll write back." Draco offered a smile and pushed him towards the door. "You're going to miss

the carriages."
Harry nodded and left the room, Draco trailing behind the Gryffindor's trunk. When they got to the entrance hall, most of the students were milling around, waiting for the carriages to arrive, and Ron and Hermione were straining their necks, looking for their third appendage. "Harry!" Hermione yelled triumphantly once she saw him. He waved and put his trunk by the others before going over to them. Draco disappeared into the crowd without another word. Harry couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.
"Hey, guys," he greeted. "Been down here long?"
"No, only a few minutes," Ron replied. "Sirius was down here a few minutes ago. He said he had one last teacher's meeting, then he was going to the manor to get things ready and he'll be at King's Cross to pick you up." Ron offered a big grin. "How does it feel to not be going to the Dursley's this year?"
"Strange, and in a way, a little sad. I mean, I did grow up there and Dudley has been great for the past year, surprisingly."
"You said you've been writing him?" Hermione inquired.
"Yes." Harry wrinkled his nose. "I wrote to him at the beginning of May but he hasn't written back. Which is odd. He usually doesn't take more than a few weeks to write back. Hedwig hasn't even been back yet." Harry felt a twinge of sadness at this thought. He hadn't really realised this until about a week before. He had been so caught up in everything that had been going on, that he hadn't realised his owl's absence. With a shrug, he offered a small grin. "Well, I'm sure she'll be fine though, right? As well as Dudley."
"Yeah, they'll be fine," Hermione said confidently. "It's not like anything too bad could happen to them."
"You're right. Oh, the carriages are here! Let's go get one." With the carriages in mind, the trio hurried out of the castle, forgetting for the moment all about Dudley and Hedwig. As the carriages trundled down the bumpy path, Harry couldn't help but look back at the intimidating castle. It was another year gone, and the next would be his last. It was a sad thought, but Harry felt he was ready to give up all of these dangerous misadventures that he had had along the way. Perhaps... perhaps Harry would get a quiet life after Hogwarts. But, that was too far off to even think about yet. Seventh year was looming over the horizon and Harry couldn't see anything but more adventures, more danger coming his way. He smiled grimly to himself as the castle disappeared from view. He had met everything head on before, and he would do it again, no matter what it was. After all, he had been given the name the 'Boy Who Lived' for a reason and he would make people believe, but more importantly, he had to make himself believe that he deserved that title. Harry was confident that he would.

Okay, my eyes are all grainy and threatening to close on me, so I'm just going to list everyone's names who reviewed the last chapter. Just know, that I'm not any less thankful. It is just that I'm now working 65 hour weeks at my summer job and can't really find enough brains to... okay... just lost my train of thought there. No joke. I think my point was that I can't think. And I think I proved that. Luckily, I already had the summary and a small excerpt from the sequel ready for this.
Special thanks to: **madkornfan, HironiKoshinha, lollipozz, Meemo, Thistle, redredredred, Sailor Grape, Rain, Tsuyuno, MalfoySlave, caliadragon.** I think there might have been more than that, but they aren't all showing up on the review board, so if you're not listed here, I'm

really sorry, and I do thank you!

Summary and excerpt from the sequel, *Remember You.*
The summary sucks right now, so bear with me. *Harry's seventh year is just around the corner and his life couldn't be better. But at his birthday party, he receives a mysterious gift that gives him something he has always dreamed of. With the gift, Harry's life seems to become even better, but not everything is as it seems when two mysterious people come into his life. Why exactly is Harry the only one able to see them? And who or what is making students and teachers alike disappear without a trace? These are just two problems Harry will need to deal with as the wizarding world is collapsing under the hands of Voldemort.*
Excerpt: (This is a bit long, but oh well. It also doesn't have anything to do with the larger plot because I don't want to give anything away, so this part is about Harry and Draco's relationship).
...as Harry climbed up onto the raft, he stared at his boyfriend with admiring eyes. He just couldn't get over how great and beautiful Draco was. The blond stood straight on the raft, looking down at Ron and Hermione bickering, with a slight smile on his face. His face was adorned with newly formed freckles that had sprouted in the extensive time they had spent in the sun, as well as a slight burn from the midday sun they were under. Harry chuckled softly. No matter how many times Draco burnt, he would just burn the next day all over again. It annoyed the Slytherin to no end how Harry and Hermione could tan so easily, but he was stuck with burning. But as Ron had pointed out, it was better than freckling so much that it looked like he had a constant tan. Draco had frowned and pointed out his new freckles, saying that he was well on his way.
Now, Harry laid a gentle hand on his boyfriend's elbow causing him to jump slightly. "You're starting to like them," Harry whispered happily.
"What are you on about?"
"Ron and Hermione. I saw you just now, smiling at them."
"Well, it's hard not to think their petty fights aren't amusing. It doesn't mean I'm beginning to like them," he drawled.
"You'll never admit it, will you?" Harry sighed. "I wish you would."
"There is nothing to admit, Potter," Draco said clearly irritated and dove gracefully into the water. Harry stared sadly at Draco's form swimming underwater, looking as though he was trying to get as far as possible from Harry. If one thing was for sure, Draco had kept to his promise of keeping Ron and Hermione around at all times. The two boys had not had one moment of alone time for the past three and a half weeks, or rather twenty-four days and five hours, and since Harry didn't have a watch with him, he couldn't really be sure of the exact minutes and seconds since they had been alone. It frustrated, angered, and saddened Harry every time it was apparent just how far Draco would go to keep away. The blond had recently reverted back to calling him Potter every time the Slytherin referred to him. Out of everything, this act hurt the most. In fact, Harry was now so unsure of himself, that he rarely even approached Draco anymore. He honestly didn't know how he was supposed to when he was snarled at or ignored every time he did attempt a conversation.
Harry continued to watch as Draco emerged from the water behind Ron and he grabbed the red head's side, effectively startling him out of his mock fight with Hermione. The three started a large water fight as the lone boy on the raft watched on sadly. He felt his heart constricting painfully inside of his chest. Why wouldn't Draco let Harry near him anymore? What had he

done? "Hey," a low voice whispered into his ear, making him jump back. Harry turned around and found Charlie hovering on a broom above him with a sexy grin planted on his face. "Why are you just watching them? Jump in and have some fun," he suggested.
Harry turned back to where Charlie gestured and watched his friends. "No. I think I'm done now," he replied even as he shivered in the afternoon sun
"Well, then it's a good thing I have a broom. I saw your towels on shore. I can give you a lift there and we'll grab yours and go back to the manor." ...
"Hey guys!" Harry yelled to his friends in the water but he received no response. "Hey! I'm going in with Charlie!" The three continued having a fierce water fight, oblivious to Harry's words. He shrugged, slightly hurt that nobody even bothered to notice where he was, but climbed onto the broom and was soon in the air. He noticed that the speed wasn't quite as fast with the extra weight, but he found that he didn't mind clinging to Charlie. His presence was oddly soothing and warming to Harry's chilled body. He never turned back so he never saw Draco climbing onto the raft, glaring after them.

Okay, so this is the end of Let the Darkness Take You. I appreciate and thank all of you for reading and enjoying my story, and I invite you all to read the sequel, *Remember You* ^.^ I'm sort of sad to see this story end, but we must give the sequel the spotlight now. *Remember You* will not be posted for a couple weeks, however. I have two betas for it, and my 2nd beta only just send me chapters 1 and 2 tonight, and I like to be ahead for beta'd chapters. I am making no promises on when it will be posted, but I believe the latest will be in about two months. I have 10 chapters written, so let's all cross our fingers for speedy betas! ^.^ Thank you all again! I'm glad you enjoyed my story enough to read to the en