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Chapter: 1

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Title: The Ties That Bind Us

Author: Faith Wood

Beta: Cheryl Dyson
Pairing: Harry/Draco
Rating: NC-17 (rated for sexual content, please heed the warning)
Word Count: ~28 000
Status: COMPLETE
Summary: An accident leaves Draco and Harry bound tightly together. Literally.
Warnings: EWE, the "Eight Year", forced bonding . . . no, wait, forced *bondage* fic, detention cliché, accidental kissing, spontaneous rimming, Harry on a leash (as part of a humorous accident, this is not a BDSM fic), experimental blowjobs . . . I swear this isn't crack. It's just meant to be humorous. :D
Note: As always, I'm neglecting this site, constantly forgetting to post here. There are many other stories on my LJ; if you want to take a look, the link is on my profile. Posting them all here would be impossible as I write too damn much. Sorry. But, hey, I remembered to post this, so yay! A huge thank you to everyone who reads and reviews. ~ Faith

The Ties That Bind Us

I

"Are you sure?" Draco asked and tilted his head so his ear was closer to Pansy's fast-moving lips.

"I'm *positive*," Pansy whispered a little too loudly. Several students looked their way, but the knot of Gryffindors standing on the other end of the hallway didn't appear to hear them. Pansy knitted her brow and lowered her voice. "Daphne swears it's what she heard. The Weasley girl point-blank accused Potter he was gay."

Draco sneaked a glance at Potter's morose expression. The renowned Defeater of the Dark Lord grinned at something Finnigan said. The late afternoon sun lit up his face making him look untroubled and content, but the mood swing had been too sudden to be real.

"But, he denied it," Draco mused more than asked.

"Well, yes, but when your own girlfriend claims you're gay . . ." Pansy giggled. "She would have noticed, wouldn't she?"

A wicked smile curled Draco's lips. "I dare not think what he asked of her to make her draw that conclusion." He gave an exaggerated shudder. Pansy covered her mouth with her hand to muffle her laughter.

Potter glanced their way, but looked at Finnigan again before he could meet Draco's eyes. His expression turned serious again.

Draco reached into his pocket to wrap his fingers around his wand. "You're *positive* they've broken up, though?" he asked, his gaze fixed on Potter.

"I heard the Weasley girl say so herself."

"Brilliant." Draco grinned widely.

Ever since the war had ended, bad things refused to happen to the glorified Chosen One. Draco hardly had anything to mock him about; except his glasses, his lack of fashion sense and his poor choice of friends, but no one found those insults amusing anymore. Other students tended to stare at Draco oddly when he commented on Potter's pitiful appearance. Blind idiots. Just because Potter defeated the Dark Lord — well, no, *annoyed* the Dark Lord until the latter couldn't stand it anymore and had no choice but to commit suicide — they refused to see that their hero was a scrawny, four-eyed mop. And a ponce, apparently.

Finally, Draco had the chance to provoke and ridicule the unsightly git. Smiling, Draco straightened his back and walked purposely toward the Gryffindors. He heard Pansy groan beside him, but he ignored her.

He reached Potter quickly, leaving a mere few feet of distance between them, and said loudly, "So tell me, is it true, Potter? I heard the Weaslette dumped you because you weren't a man enough for her." Draco paused dramatically. "Or should I say because she wasn't a man enough for you?"

The hallway went silent as Potter looked at him in confusion. Draco thought he could see Potter's cheeks losing colour. Silence lasted for a couple of moments and then Potter finally spoke.

"Go bully some first years, Malfoy. That's where your true talent lies." Potter turned around toward Granger in clear dismissal.

Draco's hand tightened around his wand. "I plan to do that later," he said. "I just wanted to give you my condolences. Why, the two of you were a heart-warming sight. Every time you walked into the Great Hall holding hands, my insides positively fluttered. Ask Pansy."

"They *fluttered*," Pansy said promptly.

"In fact," Draco continued when Potter turned toward him again, "sometimes they fluttered so much I had to run to the bathroom and vomit."

"Sounds like an indigestion problem to me," Ron Weasley commented. Draco ignored him.

"It seems horrid that you would break up just because Weaslette lacks some equipment. I'm sure there's a potion that would help her solve the problem."

A few snickers broke out and Draco was pleased to note that Potter's jaw clenched; his gaze was

fully focused on Draco.

"If that were true, Malfoy," Potter said, "you'd have grown a pair a long time ago."

Laughter echoed in Draco's ears.

Bloody hell. Why was it so hard to insult Potter these days?

"I noticed you didn't deny it, Potter." Draco raised his voice above the laughter. "So, it's true? The great hero likes it up the arse? Spent too much time with Dumbledore, I imagine."

The laughter stopped and Potter lunged forward, but several hands held him back and stopped him from charging.

"I can't believe you have the nerve to even say his name!" Potter growled.

Despite himself, Draco felt his cheeks flush a little. Perhaps he shouldn't have mentioned Dumbledore; perhaps he went too far considering he had tried to kill the old man. Something he was never charged for. Draco cheeks burned harder. Bloody Potter. He was so hard to provoke, lately. He acted as though Draco had become utterly irrelevant, and whatever he said was unimportant and unworthy of Potter's precious time. But now, finally, Potter looked at him with that same fire in his eyes that was always reserved for Draco. It was exhilarating to see he hadn't lost the ability to unsettle Potter. He might have gone too far, but it was worth it.

Draco looked at Weasley's hand splayed over Potter's chest as he held the Gryffindor hero back.

"Lower, Weasley. He wants you to touch him lower."

As expected, Weasley quickly snatched his hand away, his ears reddening. Potter looked hurt.

"Aww, Weasley," Draco cried. "Now you made him sad. Be a good friend and give him a kiss. Isn't that what you normally do? Potter does like them redheaded, freckled, dumb enough to stand him and poor enough to need him." Draco waggled his eyebrows at Potter. "All this time you were after the brother, not the sister, weren't you, Potter?"

Potter's eyes narrowed into slits and Weasley looked murderous. Draco grinned in satisfaction, but then another voice startled him.

"Jealous, Malfoy? Why so interested in Harry's sex life? Is there something you want to share with the rest of the class?"

A few onlookers giggled.

Draco shot a glare toward the idiot who had spoken. Surprisingly, it was Longbottom. Bloody Neville I-acquired-snark-and-balls-together-with-m y-long-hair Longbottom.

Draco sneered at him. "Don't worry, Longbottom. Weasley is your only rival. I wouldn't touch Potter if my life depended on it." Draco grimaced in Potter's direction in time to see Potter's gaze turn incredulous. Horrified, Draco replayed his own words in his mind, grasping their meaning and untruthfulness belatedly. He *had* touched Potter when his life depended on it.

The hallway looked too small and felt too stuffy, suddenly. Draco scrambled for something to say so he could leave with his dignity intact.

"I think I'll go and find Weaslette," he said at last. "Offer her some proper manly comfort. I hear she's not one to say no."

It happened in an instant. One second Potter was safely restrained by his friends and the next he was right next to Draco and his fist collided painfully with Draco's jaw. Draco didn't even have time to raise his wand, even though it was in his hand. He flew backwards and hit the floor as pain exploded in his head. His vision blurred and he tasted blood. Panting, he struggled to get up, but everything spun too much. He heard Pansy's worried questions, but ignored her in favour of opening his eyes and focusing on Potter. When his vision finally cleared, he saw Potter standing above him, his expression full of contempt.

"I should have left you in that fire," Potter said darkly and turned around.

Shame hit Draco like a Bludger. He had tried so hard not to think about that day, mortified that Potter had rescued him like some sort of damsel in distress. He always wondered if Potter regretted it. Draco supposed he now had his answer.

As Potter's words rang in his ears, Draco shot up, ignoring his dizziness and glaring at Potter's retreating back.

"You're a raving lunatic, Potter," he snarled. "You should be restrained! *Incarcerous!*"

Ropes flew from the tip of Draco's wand just as Potter spun around and yelled, "*Expelliarmus!*"

Draco tried to hold onto his wand, but it was wrenched savagely out of his hand. It flew up and spun in midair, sprouting long thick ropes. Draco stood frozen as his wand — his stupid wand, still confused about its true owner — sent the ropes in Draco's direction.

He had no time to run or duck. Ropes coiled around his thigh and pulled him sharply back down to the floor. He watched in amazement, despite the pain in his head and back, as the ropes wrapped themselves around Potter's waist and neck, pulled him forward, and sent him flying toward Draco.

Draco cried out as Potter landed squarely on top of him, knocking the air out of his lungs and slamming his head against the ground once again.

However, the ropes weren't done.

The rope around Potter's neck extended and snatched Draco's right arm, forcing it across Potter's back and tying it firmly to Potter's waist. And to make things worse, his left hand was yanked even lower. Potter choked and gasped, either because the rope around his neck was too tight, or because his left hand was bound firmly against Draco's thigh, pressing snugly against Draco's crotch.

The hallway went silent and the ropes went still, but not before squeezing their bodies as tightly together as humanly possible. Draco panted in pain and astonishment, staring up at shocked green eyes a few inches above his face. He could feel Potter's heart hammering against his chest as Potter's warm breath tickled his lips. He couldn't do much but hope desperately that no one — including Potter — noticed that his left hand was forced to cup Harry Potter's surprisingly firm arse.

II

"What is going on here?" Pomona Sprout cried, her voice distant as though coming from the other end of the castle. "Potter, Malfoy, get up this instant!"

Spurred into action by the order, Potter struggled to get up, squirming on top of Draco and in the process shoving his hand more firmly against Draco's crotch.

Draco yelped and growled, "Stop groping me, Potter!"

Laughter broke out at his words and Draco's cheeks flushed.

"Says the idiot who's fondling my arse!" Potter whispered furiously.

Embarrassed, Draco tried to free his hand but all he managed to do was grip Potter's buttocks harder. It was Potter's turn to yelp and he did so loudly, bucking and squirming, undoubtedly trying to knock off Draco's hand. If Draco hadn't been so utterly mortified, he would have found Potter's behaviour hysterical. Potter was making things worse by squirming; the sight of them must have looked terribly wrong. Draco groaned and hit the back of his head against the floor, hoping he'd manage to knock himself unconscious.

"Really now," Sprout said, sounding scandalized.

Potter squirmed harder and Draco groaned again. "Stop that, Potter. Honestly, is this doing something for you? Go find someone else to molest."

Potter stopped struggling and glared down at Draco instead.

"This is your fault," Potter accused, his eyes narrowing.

Surprised, Draco noted that Potter didn't have his glasses; they must have fallen off as Potter landed on top of him. Potter looked strange without them; his myopic glare wasn't as threatening and convincing as it usually was. He looked like a kicked puppy, the image amplified because of the rope tied around his neck.

Draco cocked his head and eyed the tight knot. "I bet if I twist just right, I could choke you to death," he pondered out loud.

"I bet if I squeeze hard enough, I could damage your precious manly equipment," Potter retorted and pushed his left hand a little higher up.

An undignified squeak escaped Draco's mouth and, not knowing what else to do, he quickly retaliated by squeezing Potter's arse savagely. Potter didn't make a sound, but he shut his eyes tightly, his head falling down in the crook of Draco's neck. In the next second they separated and gasped in horror, desperately trying to free themselves.

"*Relashio!*" Sprout cried.

Draco nearly shouted in relief, expecting them to be freed, but no such thing happened. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Sprout shake her wand and clear her throat before she tried again.

"*Relashio!*" she said firmly, but the ropes didn't budge.

Draco shut his eyes in misery. Merlin, he would die here; squished to death by Harry Potter's trollish weight.

"Let me try," a brisk voice said.

Draco's eyes snapped open. "No, not her!" he cried. "Don't you point your wand at me, Granger!"

Granger blinked at him and lowered her wand a little. "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realise you were having a good time. Should I leave you to it, then?"

"No!" Potter yelled, obviously distressed. "Please, Hermione, do try."

Draco rolled his eyes. Potter addressed her as though she was the answer to all his prayers.

"Oh, I'm having loads of fun, can't you tell?" Draco said sarcastically.

Granger's mouth twitched. "I can see that. I suppose that otherwise you'd remove your hand from Harry's arse."

"I can't, you idiot mu — ah, person," Draco wheezed as Potter pressed his hands against his balls

again.

"Are you sure, Malfoy?" Granger asked, grinning.

"Yes, I'm bloody sure!" Draco snapped. "See?" He pulled his hand sharply and the ropes inexplicably released it.

Draco looked at his freed hand in shock. "Er, Professor Sprout's spell must have worked partially. Good job, Professor." He grinned at Sprout, trying to avoid looking at Potter's suspicious gaze and Granger's amused one. Students around them were giggling ceaselessly. Draco noticed tears of laughter running down Weasley's red face. "Maybe you should try again," Draco said quietly and then added, "Not you!" when Granger pointed her wand at them.

However, the spell had already rushed toward them, the piercing whoosh of it electrifying the air. The spell was as powerful as they get, but the ropes remained unimpressed.

"Hmm," Granger commented.

"Neville, dear," Sprout said sweetly. "Go and fetch Professor Flitwick, would you? He should be in the staffroom."

Chuckling, Longbottom nodded and left, but not before winking knowingly in Draco's direction.

Draco scowled at his back, then looked up at Potter and scowled again. "Would you mind getting off, Potter?"

Potter's eyes widened comically and Draco cried, "Get off me!" He pushed up just as Potter pushed down and they rolled together until Potter landed on his back and Draco's mouth hit Potter's chest with an "Omph!" of surprise. Using his free arm, Draco quickly pushed himself away, but he couldn't get very far. Potter was still gripping Draco's thigh and Draco's right hand was stuck beneath Potter's back. Draco was forced to lie on his side, struggling to keep his head up and prevent it from leaning onto Potter's shoulder as it clearly wanted.

"Get up, you two!" Sprout said exasperatedly as the entire hallway roared with laughter.

"Maybe we should try to cut the ropes with a knife." Pansy's voice rose above the noise.

Draco hoped no one heard her.

"There's an idea," Potter said promptly and grinned at Draco, then at his hand between Draco's thighs.

Draco stared at his crotch, horrified by the thought of someone going near it with a knife. Surprisingly, Granger came to his rescue.

"A mere knife won't work," she said, "but maybe a very powerful blade. Oh, I know! We could try using the Sword of Gryffindor!"

Draco paled in horror.

"That wouldn't work, Miss Granger," Sprout said, sounding surprised that Granger didn't know that. "*Incarcerous* can only be broken by the Relashio Charm."

Granger, the horrid girl, burst out laughing. "I know! Oh, Malfoy, you should have seen your face."

"I hate you all," Draco grumbled, miserable.

"Well, not me, obviously," Potter said, sounding amused. "Since you're hugging me so tightly and all."

Draco looked at him sharply, feeling oddly betrayed by Potter's behaviour. Honestly, Potter should have been as upset as Draco was, not ready to laugh with everyone else.

Sprout appeared directly next to them and pointed her wand at Draco's nose. "Up. Both of you. Now!" she said sharply with an uncharacteristically annoyed expression on her face.

Potter stopped grinning and they both struggled to get up, Sprout's unexpected ire sufficiently encouraging. Granger hovered next to them, biting her lip as though worried, but Draco suspected she was merely trying not to laugh too much.

"Do you need a hand, Harry?" she asked.

"Yes, do you, Potter?" Draco growled. "You could touch me in so many more places."

Potter glared at him and then looked at Granger and shook his head. "We'll manage," he said stoutly, but stupidly, because Draco believed they would not, in fact, manage without assistance. He sneaked a glance at Pansy, but she quickly turned her head and pretended not to notice him. Her behaviour was hardly surprising — Draco knew she didn't dare to go near Potter.

Granger refused to give up. "Maybe I could Levitate . . ." She trailed off and shuffled her feet after Potter threw her a nasty glare.

"Come *on!*" Potter growled under his breath, trying to pull Draco upwards.

However, the only way they could get up was if Draco sat up first and pulled Potter with him. He did so, reluctantly, almost ending up with a lap full of Potter.

Potter jerked away and almost choked himself.

"*Bad* doggy." Draco snickered.

Potter looked murderous — possibly psychotic — and fearing retaliation, Draco redoubled his efforts to get up.

It wasn't an easy feat. They pulled on the ropes and Potter choked as Draco whimpered, but eventually they righted themselves and stood up awkwardly. Draco's right arm was still wrapped firmly around Potter's waist and Potter's hand was by then a familiar presence on Draco's thigh. Their position wasn't as bad as it had been when they were lying down, at least not until Draco's feet got tangled in the ropes. He flailed and clutched Potter's hip but eventually lost his balance and stumbled forward.

Potter yelled in surprise, but didn't fall as Draco smashed into him; instead, he used his free arm to catch Draco around the waist, preventing him from sliding back down to the ground. As Draco's forehead pressed against Potter's shoulder and their arms wrapped around their bodies in a firm embrace, the hallway resonated with shrieks of laughter and occasional whistles.

Draco pressed his eyes against Potter's shirt and wished the ground would open and swallow them.

III

"Walk!" Sprout barked as Draco managed to disentangle himself from Potter. However, since they were still bound tightly together, Draco was forced to hug Potter and grab his hip for support and he couldn't move his right leg forward unless Potter moved his left at the same time. After struggling for a minute, they managed to make one tiny little step.

"You should go to the hospital wing, Mr Malfoy," Sprout said, eyeing Draco's face.

Right on cue, Draco's jaw started throbbing. Reminded of Potter's vicious blow, Draco stepped sharply forward with his right foot. Potter cried out in pain as his left arm was pulled and he stumbled, choking, as he was forced to bend down. Unfortunately, that made Draco lean forward, as well, and as Potter suddenly straightened, Draco received a nose full of black hair and a punch in his sore jaw. He would have retaliated, but he was temporary distracted by the scent of apples that filled his nostrils. It made him feel . . . hungry.

Potter glared at him, so Draco glared in return as they panted heavily, nursing their injuries.

"Oh, never mind," Sprout said and sighed. Draco barely heard her over the noise the other students made by laughing and shrieking excessively. "Here . . ." Sprout strolled toward the nearest classroom and checked to see if it was empty. It must have been, because she waved her wand toward it, beckoning them inside.

It wasn't very far, but it took them forever to get there. Not to mention it was a painful trip. Draco's right leg throbbed and Potter looked like he would die of asphyxiation at any moment. Their first step into the classroom was greeted by cheers and a thunderous applause.

"Settle down," Sprout chided, but she, too, sounded amused. "Go on, take a seat," she instructed, indicating the nearest set of chairs.

Draco heard Potter groan and he couldn't help sympathising. It would have been so much easier to walk if Potter's hand wasn't stuck between Draco's thighs. Embarrassment aside, it was just plain uncomfortable. Draco wasn't used to being touched there. Sure, a girl or two had fumbled around his bits, but what bothered Draco now was the continuous male grip that wasn't fumbly or tentative but rough and threatening. It was Potter, after all, who had already threatened to castrate him. Draco couldn't escape the looming sense of menace that Potter's tight grip presented. He felt exposed and oddly vulnerable every time Potter's knuckles brushed against his crotch. And that happened a lot. Every tiny touch of Potter's hand disturbed Draco greatly, mostly because the almost caresses were oddly *stimulating*. Merlin, what if he got hard? Potter would feel it instantly and the git would draw the wrong conclusion. Because even if Draco *did* get hard, it would only happen as a result of a natural reaction to an intimate touch, not as a result of an unnatural reaction to *Potter's* touch.

Draco closed his eyes for a moment and tried to concentrate on reaching the damn chairs.

It was another long struggle. Potter reached them first and sat down, rudely pulling Draco with him. Their heads collided and Draco felt the softness of Potter's cheek beneath his lips for the briefest moment before they both pulled away and scowled at each other. They tried to sit as far away as they could but that was impossible. In the end, they had to pull the chairs even closer together because otherwise the rope around Potter's neck prevented the git from breathing. Which would have been fine with Draco, but Potter retaliated in his normal way — by pressing firmly against Draco's bits — so Draco had no choice but to snuggle up to Potter and let his right arm hug the ball-squeezing idiot.

"Stop groping me, Potter," Draco whispered furiously.

"Stop choking me," Potter whispered back.

"Stop leaning so heavily! You're squishing my arm!"

"Stop crushing my hip!"

Draco blinked and quickly released Potter's hip. There was no need to continue holding it. Draco should have remembered that. What was wrong with him? Potter's blow must have damaged his brain.

"No, no, everyone back away. You too, Miss Granger," Sprout ordered, but after Granger whispered something, she allowed her to step inside.

Granger rushed toward them and then leaned over Draco to hand Potter his glasses.

"Thanks," Potter grumbled and shoved his ugly glasses back onto his nose.

Granger looked guilty, undoubtedly because she had laughed earlier with everyone else. She bit her lip and reached forward to touch Potter's free hand.

"I'm sure Professor Flitwick will know how to detach this vermin from you," she said soothingly.

"Hey!" Draco cried and then growled as Granger's hair tickled his face. "You people have to stop shoving hair in my mouth," he fumed, noting distractedly that Potter's hair smelled nicer than Granger's.

Granger straightened immediately and twirled her wand in her hands. "Want me to shove something else in your face, Malfoy?"

Draco scowled at her but said nothing. After all, he was unarmed and not an idiot.

"Miss Granger," Sprout called and Granger jumped. After one last sympathetic look in Potter's direction, she hurried outside.

"Now," Professor Sprout said, eyeing them reproachfully, "you boys sit tight . . ." She paused, chuckled, and then continued, "I will lock this door and fetch the Headmistress." Draco felt Potter wince next to him. He understood Potter's apprehension. Since she had become headmistress, McGonagall was sterner than ever. Sprout pointed her wand at them. "Don't you even *think* about fighting. If I notice one new bruise or cut —"

"— or a love bite!" someone shouted and then burst into giggles.

Sprout snorted and then quickly rearranged her features and gave them a stern look. "You're already looking at detention and loss of house points, boys. Don't make it worse." With that, she slammed the door and locked them inside.

The moment they were left alone, Draco turned toward Potter and accused, "This is all your fault, Potter."

Potter spluttered indignantly, his mouth parting to form an *O* of surprise. "My fault? How is this my fault?"

"Obviously, you can't counter a binding spell with the Disarming Charm. Honestly, Potter, is that the only spell you know?"

"That's the most important *defensive* spell, you git. And speaking of defence, I wouldn't have to defend myself if you didn't shoot a spell — *at my back*. You *coward*," Potter spat, his eyes

blazing.

"You hit me!"

"You deserved it!"

"Oh, please," Draco scoffed. "Because I said I'd try something with the Weasley girl? As if I'd ever touch her."

"As if she'd ever let you."

"As if she wouldn't let everyone."

Potter's hand squeezed Draco's thigh. "You don't know anything about her. *Or* me."

"I know she thinks you're gay. And I know you don't want to admit it," Draco said victoriously, ignoring the pain that spread from Potter's clutching hand.

Potter looked stunned for a moment and then he leaned in, his face frighteningly close to Draco's.

"That's none of your business." Potter was breathing heavily; his cheeks were flushed and his eyes were ablaze with that fire Draco had been missing for months.

"It's interesting," Draco said and leaned in even closer; close enough for their breaths to mix. "You still haven't denied the accusation."

Potter cocked his head, his expression softening. "Why do you care, Malfoy?" he asked with genuine curiosity in his eyes. His big, intense, unnaturally green eyes.

Draco swallowed, suddenly at a loss for words. They were so damn close; it was affecting Draco's senses. He seemed to have retained his sense of touch, however, because he couldn't stop thinking about the warmth of Potter's back beneath his arm, the pressure of Potter's hand on his thigh and the gentle caress of Potter's breath on his lips.

"Malfoy?" Potter prompted, confusion filling his eyes.

However, Draco couldn't respond; his throat was too dry and he had bigger problems to worry about. What troubled him the most at the moment, besides Potter's unfailing nearness, was the horrifying realisation that he was getting *hard*.

IV

I could kiss that woman, Draco thought as McGonagall strode into the classroom, closely followed by Flitwick. She glared at them with her lips pressed into a tight line and Draco couldn't help gulping in fright; he felt Potter squirm uneasily next to him and felt a little better about his own fear. But fear was *good*. Fear chased away unwanted reactions; reactions that, Draco was certain, were merely a figment of his imagination in the first place. Honestly, what was there to be aroused about? Potter, fighting, ropes? Draco frowned and quickly concentrated on McGonagall's frightening glare.

Flitwick stared at them with a peculiar expression on his tiny face. He looked as though he was ready to burst out laughing. Draco couldn't blame him; they must have been quite a sight. Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter, sitting closely together, with Potter all but tucked snugly into Draco's embrace.

"Your hand, Mr Malfoy," McGonagall barked sharply and Draco's free arm flew toward her instantly. Draco suspected she had Summoned it. Illogically, he thought that McGonagall might slap him with a ruler and he gulped audibly when she reached into her robe pocket. However, she merely pulled out a handkerchief and a small vial that Draco recognised as a healing salve. She poured a small amount of oily liquid onto Draco's fingers and placed the handkerchief in front of him. Without a word, she walked toward the teacher's desk, set the vial aside, and sat down, glaring much too viciously.

Since no further instructions were forthcoming, Draco smeared the liquid over his jaw. It tingled, not unpleasantly, and the slight pain ebbed away. He wiped his face with the handkerchief, stalling as much as he could, but in the end he set it aside and sighed, guessing that was the end of niceties.

"Filius?" McGonagall prompted politely.

Flitwick shook his head. "I don't think there's anything I can do," he said sadly. "But let me try . . ."

Flitwick raised his wand and Draco waited with bated breath, hoping that the old professor would know what to do.

"*Relashio!*" Flitwick cried and Draco rolled his eyes.

Noting happened, of course, and Draco heard Potter grumble, "We kind of figured that doesn't work."

McGonagall rubbed her temples. "Why not, Filius?"

"It's because Potter used the Disarming Charm to counter it, isn't it?" Draco asked promptly, earning himself glares from both Potter and McGonagall.

"Er, no, Mr Malfoy," Professor Flitwick squeaked, looking a bit taken aback. "Your spell merely

malfunctioned."

Draco stared at him in shock and then stuck out his bottom lip. "I demand a second opinion. We should ask the new Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor. This is *his* area of expertise."

Flitwick grimaced, undoubtedly insulted, and McGonagall snapped, "You're in no position to demand anything, Mr Malfoy." She turned to Flitwick. "Do you think the effects will subside?"

"Oh, certainly," Flitwick confirmed. "Just give it a few hours. It was a very *poorly* cast —"

"Yes, thank you, Professor, you may go now," Draco said quickly.

"Mr Malfoy!" McGonagall exclaimed and Potter had the audacity to snicker.

"Thank you, Filius," she said with a tight smile. "You may . . ." she glared at Draco, "leave now."

Flitwick nodded and with a last glance and a chuckle in Potter and Draco's direction, he left.

Draco promptly looked at his lap, having no desire to face McGonagall. Of course, looking at his lap meant staring at Potter's hand splayed over his trousers. A rope was wrapped around Potter's wrist and Draco's thigh in several loops, so tightly Draco's leg was going numb. He could see Potter's pale skin reddening beneath the rope. Potter should have asked for some healing salve, the dumb martyr.

"I cannot even begin to express how disappointed I am," McGonagall said, her quiet voice more effective than yelling. "You are both eighteen years old. Under normal circumstances you wouldn't be in school. Young men of your age are considered adults. And here you are making a spectacle of yourself. Harry," Potter winced again, "you, at least, should have more sense."

Draco bristled inwardly, but made no comment.

"I considered you a responsible young adult. I can see now I was wrong." Potter positively shrank in his chair. Draco grinned. "And Mr Malfoy" — the grin left Draco's face in a hurry, and Draco bent his head lower, knowing exactly what McGonagall would say next — "your mother gave me very convincing arguments when she asked me to allow you to come back to Hogwarts and take your NEWTs. She promised me you have matured and that all you desire is knowledge. And she wasn't the only one to speak in your favour."

Draco blinked, confused, dying to ask who else had spoken *in his favour*, but not daring to speak. McGonagall's next question distracted him completely.

"Should I owl her and tell her you have broken that promise?"

Draco stared at Potter's knuckles. Bloody McGonagall. That was a low blow. Threatening to call his mother.

"Should I, Mr Malfoy?"

"No," Draco said quietly.

"I thought not. And, Mr Potter," Draco breathed a little easier as McGonagall turned her attention to Potter, "I believe there's a position at the Ministry waiting for you. You're not required to be here."

Draco scowled. Bloody, spoiled Chosen One. Of course, Potter didn't have to do anything to get into the Ministry. Well, except, supposedly kill a Dark Lord. But Draco had been the Master of the Elder Wand — whatever that meant — so he could have done it, too. In theory. Potter just got lucky.

"As I recall," McGonagall continued as Potter's hand on Draco's thigh twitched, "you insisted on receiving a proper education and taking your NEWTs just like everyone else, so no one could accuse you of receiving special treatment."

Draco rolled his eyes. Merlin, Gryffindors were such idiots.

"Has that ceased to matter to you?"

"No," Potter mumbled.

"Good." McGonagall's tone turned sharper. "Since we have determined that you both want to stay at Hogwarts, I would encourage you to start acting like it. This behaviour could have been forgiven when you were younger, but I will not have adults behaving like children in this school. If you are caught fighting one more time, you will both be expelled." She paused to let her words sink in. "I don't care which one of you started it, I don't care which one of you was hurt, I don't care why it happened. One more incident and you can pack your trunks. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Professor," Draco and Potter said unanimously.

"Very well." McGonagall stood up and waved her wand. Immediately, two parchments, two inkbottles and two quills appeared on the desk in front of them. "It's now nearing seven o'clock. You will be detained here until nine, or longer, if the charm doesn't lose effect. You will write, *I will never behave like a dunderheaded twelve year old again*, until you fill out your parchment. Do *not* stretch your handwriting, Potter."

Draco coughed a little. "Er, Professor?"

McGonagall shot him a glare.

"I'm right-handed," he pointed out.

McGonagall narrowed her eyes at him as though he had been born right-handed just to be difficult.

"Very well, then," she said finally and Vanished Draco's inkbottle, quill and parchment. "You don't have to write lines."

Draco grinned as Potter spluttered in indignation.

However, McGonagall paid no attention to them; instead, she tapped the bottom ends of Potter's parchment with her wand, fixing them to the desk. Then she tapped it again and the parchment curled into a scroll.

Draco watched her in confusion as she unrolled the scroll, holding the top end of it with her wand.

"Hold it, Mr Malfoy," she instructed.

"Pardon?"

"Use your left hand and elbow to hold the parchment so it doesn't curl. Potter will write, you will hold. You won't be able to complete the assignment unless you work together."

Mortified, but not daring to object, Draco leaned in and placed his forearm on the top of the parchment. The result of that movement was terrifying. Potter was completely trapped in Draco's embrace and their heads pressed together, their cheeks touching for a moment before Potter jerked his head away. The warm touch of Potter's flaming cheek lingered on Draco's skin. Draco looked down at the parchment and continued to stare at it intently.

"Goodbye, gentlemen," McGonagall said and Draco resentfully thought he could detect a note of amusement in her tone. She walked away and addressed them once more from the doorway. "I will return, and when I do, I expect to see many lines written on that parchment. And remember, you can give up at any moment." Draco looked up, hopeful, but McGonagall continued smugly, "But then remember to buy a ticket for the Hogwarts Express tomorrow morning." With that, she closed and locked the door.

Potter groaned pathetically and Draco felt like nodding in sympathy. Sweet Merlin, how did this happen? How could McGonagall be so cruel? Draco was doomed to spend the next two hours, possibly longer, intimately *hugging* Harry Potter.

V

Potter grabbed his inkbottle and placed it on the right top end of the parchment.

"Here, you can just hold this end," he mumbled and Draco quickly obeyed. It didn't improve their embarrassing situation by much, but Draco could at least straighten a little so his cheek wasn't threatened by Potter's touch. They were still too damn close, however. As Potter leaned in to write, Draco had to stare at his ear. *For the next two hours*, he reminded himself.

Potter's quill scratched on the parchment, getting on Draco's nerves quickly.

Scratch, scratch, scratch. It just wouldn't stop.

"This is ridiculous," Draco snapped. Both of his arms were going numb, especially the one tied to Potter's waist. He yanked it sharply, hoping to free himself.

"Ow!" Potter winced but didn't look up. "Stop it. It's pointless."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Potter, I didn't realise you wished to stay like this as long as possible." Draco lowered his voice, edged closer, and asked, "Is this doing something for you?" He leaned in and blew over Potter's ear. Potter rewarded him with a gasp and a shudder. "It does, doesn't it?" Draco grinned triumphantly.

"Urgh!" Potter shuddered again. "If by doing something you mean making me feel queasy, then, yes."

Draco breathed hotly over Potter's neck.

"Malfoy!" Potter spluttered and turned, trying to move his head away. He couldn't move very far and when he turned around to glare at Draco, their noses were only inches apart.

Draco stared at Potter's face, mesmerised. He had never been so close to Potter before. *Merlin, Potter's eyes were green*. Maybe it just seemed that way because of the lighting, or because Draco was looking at them through Potter's glasses, or because Potter's eyelashes were very dark and long, framing Potter's eyes with contrasting darkness, but it was the most intense green colour Draco had ever seen. Or maybe he had gone insane. Why the fuck was he staring at Potter's eyes, anyway?

"What are you doing?" Potter asked.

It was a reasonable question. Draco wished he knew the answer.

"I'm bored," he claimed. Now that he thought about it, blowing over Potter's ear had been a very odd thing to do. Entertaining at the time, but odd. Why had he done it?

"Really?" Potter asked in mock surprise. "Bored during a detention? But they're such fun, normally."

"Normally, I don't have to stare at the ugliest prat in school."

"I don't see how you could possibly do that without a mirror."

Draco narrowed his eyes and, failing to think of an appropriate quip, he yanked his body sharply to the right. Expectedly, Potter choked, his free hand flying to the ropes on his neck. Distracted though he was, Potter retaliated immediately by pressing his hand firmly to Draco's crotch, but Draco was ready for him. He grabbed Potter's fingers and twisted them backwards cruelly. Potter grimaced in pain, swung his right arm toward Draco and grabbed a fistful of Draco's hair, pulling on it savagely.

"Fuck!" Draco cried. "Really, Potter? Hair-pulling?" He panted as tears of pain gathered in the corners of his eyes. "You're such a girl!"

Draco grabbed Potter's hip and tried to crush his squirming body with his arm. He only managed to pull Potter even closer to his chest.

"Let go!" Potter said in a strained voice, obviously in as much pain as Draco was.

Draco squeezed Potter's body even harder, hoping he'd cause him enough pain to make him release Draco's hair. However, Potter refused to budge and he thrashed around savagely. In the midst of their struggle, Draco felt Potter's lips brush against his temple before Potter's warm breath tickled his ear. For a second, Draco thought that Potter would bite him, but Potter merely growled, "*Let go*," again.

"You let go!" Draco said, his head hurting something horrid.

"Oh, for fuck's sake," Potter grumbled and released Draco's hair. Draco nearly wept in relief; his head was on fire. He abandoned Potter's hand on his thigh in favour of rubbing his sore scalp.

"Malfoy," Potter said, his voice oddly muffled. He was hitting Draco's chest with his hand and squirming continuously. Draco frowned and then, horrified, realised he was still crushing Potter in a firm embrace, pressing the git's face into his shoulder. He quickly released Potter's hip and loosened the grip of his arm as much as he could. Potter pulled away at once and straightened his neck, greedily gulping for air. His hair was a mess and his cheeks were flushed, his lips parting as he panted heavily.

Potter had nice lips, Draco noted randomly as he rubbed his head and stared at Potter's face through the hair that had fallen over his eyes. They were full and nicely shaped and they seemed *firm*. Draco found himself wondering whether they only looked firm or if they would *feel* firm as well.

Draco blinked, shocked by his own thoughts. What had caused them? Head trauma was the obvious possibility. He had suffered a severe head trauma when Potter hit him. That was why he had such silly thoughts.

Potter's tongue brushed over his bottom lip, leaving it shiny and wet; Draco unconsciously mimicked the movement, and then almost slapped himself. This behaviour was definitely the result of a head trauma. He was a goner. Next, he'd decide that hugging Potter was comfy instead of horrific. McGonagall might as well expel him; it hardly mattered — Draco would spend the rest of his days in the Janus Thickey Ward.

"Malfoy, do you want to be expelled?" Potter asked, obviously reading Draco's thoughts. "Because I don't."

"Why do *you* care?" Draco grumbled and then imitated McGonagall's brisk tone. "*You have a Ministry position waiting for you!*"

"It doesn't matter. I won't take it until I feel like I earned it."

"I hope you're prepared to be jobless forever."

Potter's eyes narrowed and Draco absentmindedly noticed that when he did that his nose scrunched up just a little. It was a funny sight. Not cute, though.

"Do you know this is my first detention this year?" Potter ranted. "I've been studying and staying away from trouble — that means you. If you can't stand me, then why can't you just ignore me like I'm ignoring you?"

Something painful twisted in Draco's chest. So Potter *was* ignoring him. On purpose.

Draco managed to keep his voice steady as he said, "Because you're an ugly, conceited git. Your very existence insults my sensibilities. I can't help it."

Potter's gaze turned cold. "Well, *try*. Because you do have a point. I have a Ministry position waiting for me — what do *you* have?"

Draco clenched his teeth so hard his jaw hurt. He unclenched them long enough to say, "Now that's the Potter I know and detest. I'm sure you're dying to gloat. Go on, don't hold back on me."

Surprisingly, Potter's glare softened and he closed his eyes for a second, looking tired. "I'm not gloating, Malfoy. I'm merely pointing out that everyone, including me, seems to care about your future more than you do."

"Of course. You're not gloating. You just care about my future. Well, I'm not insulting you, Potter. I just care about your appearance."

"Yes, I *do* care," Potter said snappishly. "If I didn't, I wouldn't —" Potter shut his mouth abruptly.

"You wouldn't what?" Draco asked. He could feel the vein in his temple throbbing furiously.

"I wouldn't say I did," Potter said quietly.

Draco's heartbeat was pounding in his ears as he wondered if Potter meant to say something else. He felt like snorting. Saint Potter cared about his future, did he? Honestly, one of them must have eaten some funny mushrooms today. Draco feared it had been him. That would have explained why he was almost willing to believe Potter was telling the truth. Except that Potter had previously stated he regretted saving Draco from that awful fire.

"Can't you just shut up and hold the damn parchment steady for two hours?" Potter said, almost pleadingly.

Growling, Draco clenched his fist and slammed it on the parchment.

"Write the damn lines and stop pestering me, Potter!"

Potter opened his mouth, looking indignant, but then he just closed them, turned around and picked up his quill. Scratching sounds filled out the room again.

Draco stared at Potter's ear, contemplating the possibility of biting it off. That would have probably earned him an expulsion, however. Though, really, he'd be doing Potter a favour; the git had funny ears. His earlobe looked too meaty and floppy and *biteable*.

"Malfoy," Potter sighed, "hold the damn parchment steady."

Blah, blah, blah, Draco thought irritably. Merlin, Potter was an annoying little bugger.

"Malfoy, I said — *mph!*"

Draco froze in shock and stared at Potter's wide green eyes that were inexplicably staring back at him even though Potter's head had been turned away just a second ago. Somehow, a terrible thing had happened. Draco must have leaned in too much and Potter hadn't been thinking when he turned to yell at him. That was the only explanation that could have clarified how Potter's lips ended up pressed firmly against Draco's.

Draco should have moved his head away and slapped Potter silly; he should have wiped his lips and yelled, "Urgh!"; he should have said something, *done* something, but all he could do was let his thoughts spin in circles as a tiny voice in his head panicked and gasped, *I'm* kissing *Harry Potter.*

VI

Firm. Silken but firm. And warm. So very warm. Possibly perfect. If only they weren't Potter's lips.

Draco blinked as Potter made an odd choking sound, his eyes widening impossibly. His lips moved slightly against Draco's before he turned away sharply. He all but stabbed the parchment with his quill and continued to write, though his words looked suspiciously like gibberish.

I should make a joke, Draco thought despite the sudden dizziness. He should have sneered and ridiculed Potter, claim Potter had done it on purpose, but Draco's lips tingled too much and he couldn't make them move to form words. Potter seemed determined not to comment on the event and Draco decided that was probably the wisest course of action.

A dark flush spread over Potter's cheeks all the way to his neck. It was fascinating to watch. Draco's gaze lingered on the rope that squeezed Potter's throat; it must have choked him because Potter was breathing heavily. He showed no other sign of discomfort, however, but merely continued his furious scribbling apparently no longer requiring Draco's assistance. His hand on Draco's thigh was clenched into a tight fist; so tight it quivered from the effort. When Draco looked down, he could see that the redness of Potter's wrist was spreading and darkening. It looked alarmingly unhealthy.

"Stop clenching your hand, Potter. You're severing my circulation," Draco said, appalled by the roughness of his own voice. He had meant to yell, but ended up almost whispering.

Potter stopped scribbling, the tip of his quill poised above the parchment as his hand froze in midair. Draco felt oddly guilty, as though he had broken some no-speaking rule. Eventually, Potter did as Draco said and unclenched his hand. Then he squirmed a little in his seat before he resumed writing lines.

Draco closed his eyes and cursed inwardly, aghast at his own stupidity. Why had he told Potter to unclench his hand? Potter's palm was now splayed over Draco's thigh, radiating heat that burned through Draco's trousers, heating up his skin. It didn't help that Potter's *entire body* seemed to radiate heat as though he had been transformed into a furnace. He even looked like a furnace with his flushed face.

A strange thought occurred to Draco as he eyed Potter's cheeks. Potter was most certainly embarrassed, as was Draco, but he seemed *excessively* embarrassed. Perhaps he had *liked* the kiss. It was a thought worthy of exploration.

Draco stared at the back of Potter's head, trying in vain to read his mind. Potter seemed determined to pretend that the incident never occurred, but Draco wished to know if Potter was disgusted or intrigued. The matter required some subtle investigation.

"You have a crush on me, don't you, Potter?"

Potter's hand twitched so hard he smacked the inkbottle. It tipped over; black ink oozing onto the desk before Potter quickly picked it up. He stared at it for a moment, as though to make sure the inkbottle didn't plan to run away, and then he turned toward Draco — carefully this time — and

whispered, "*What?*"

Draco gave him a slow smile; the one that Pansy claimed was irresistible. "You are crushing on me, Potter," he said confidently. "Why else would you kiss me?"

"I didn't kiss you!" Potter gasped, his eyes ridiculously round. "That was an accident. A terrible, *terrible* accident. You were leaning toward me too much."

Miffed though he was that Potter had said terrible *twice*, Draco still managed to answer. "Oh, I don't know, Potter. Here you are — gay and crushing on me, and here I am — tied to you with ropes. How convenient *is* this situation? Why, I'm beginning to think you not only kissed me on purpose, but that this whole thing is a part of your diabolical plan to seduce me."

Potter's jaw dropped. He closed his eyes and took a few breaths before he spoke, his voice steady. "Malfoy, I will now tell you the absolute truth." Draco leaned in closer, eagerly, as Potter continued. "Gay or not, I would *never* kiss you on purpose. And the only diabolical thing here is you."

Draco retreated backward as though slapped. That shouldn't have hurt. *And it didn't*, he decided, but he still searched Potter's eyes for any sign of untruthfulness. He found none.

"Good," Draco said, sure he sounded as convincing as Potter. "Because I would never want you to. I just wanted to make sure you know that you have no chance of seducing me."

"If I could, I'd go and cry in the corner right now," Potter said grimly and turned away. He placed the inkbottle on the top right end of the parchment, but it wasn't heavy enough to hold it down. Not willing to wait for Potter to order him again, Draco placed his hand on the desk, preventing the parchment from curling. Potter began writing again.

The word *terrible* resonated in Draco's mind. It troubled him that Potter used such a word when talking about kissing him. Draco had been told he was extremely kissable by many girls, and they had often praised his techniques. The almost-kiss had been an accident, obviously, but it was unfair to refer to it as a *terrible* accident. A simple brush of lips couldn't have been used as evidence for anything. If Draco had given Potter a proper kiss, Potter would have forgotten what the word *terrible* meant and he would retract his earlier statement of never kissing Draco on purpose. And then he *would* go and cry in the corner when Draco told him he would *never* kiss him again.

That was it — Draco had to kiss Potter properly and kick those silly notions of terribleness out of the git's head. Except, of course, he didn't *want* to kiss Potter. However, he decided he could live through it if he had to and, clearly, he had no choice. He had to make Potter turn around sharply again and kiss him *accidentally*.

Draco pursed his lips, thinking. His gaze fell on the parchment and he grinned before he edged closer to Potter, making sure his breath tickled Potter's ear when he said, "Your handwriting is

terrible."

Potter jumped a little, probably because he wasn't expecting Draco to be so close to his ear, but he calmed down quickly. He didn't turn around or say a word, clearly intent on ignoring Draco's presence.

Potter's unwillingness to swallow the bait had never stopped Draco before, and things weren't about to change. He leaned in even closer, pretending he wanted to inspect Potter's scribbles. His cheekbone touched Potter's and Potter froze and stopped breathing.

"There's no *t* in dunderhead," Draco commented.

"That's an *h*." Potter shook his head a little, as though trying to throw him off. He reminded Draco of a puppy again. *A flea infested puppy*, he amended.

Pleased that he had successfully annoyed Potter, Draco looked at the parchment again. "Well, it looks like a *t*," he insisted. "Honestly, Potter, has that Muggle school of yours failed to teach you how to write? You're supposed to write different letters *differently*." Draco turned his head a little and his lips almost touched Potter's cheek.

Potter shuddered and then whined, "Can't you be silent for two seconds, Malfoy?"

"I can," Draco claimed and then waited for two heartbeats before adding, "See?"

He thought he saw the corner of Potter's mouth twitch, but in the next moment Potter shook his head violently again. "Your hair's tickling me," he complained, a whining note still present in his tone. "Do you have to sit so close?"

"My arm hurts *terribly* if I move too far away," Draco lied and twisted the arm that was wrapped around Potter's waist. His fingers sneaked beneath Potter's shirt but quickly moved away after they touched warm skin. That was too much intimacy for Draco's taste. Potter squirmed, but didn't say anything. He was writing his lines dutifully, shaking his head now and again, as though he had a mental affliction that turned him into a twitching idiot.

Irritated by Potter's behavior, Draco backed off slightly, but Potter was still jittery. Draco noticed that a lock of jet-black hair had curled around Potter's earlobe, obviously tickling his ear. Potter should have put down the quill and brush the lock away but apparently he found it much easier to shake his head and sigh in annoyance every other second. Perhaps he was afraid that if he touched his ear he'd have to touch Draco in the process. Or maybe he just wanted to annoy Draco to death. Or maybe he was just dumb enough to miss the obvious solution to the problem.

Draco watched him squirm and twitch for long minutes before he just couldn't take it anymore. Ignoring Potter's complaints, he abandoned his parchment-holding duty and reached out to brush the insolent lock of hair away from Potter's tormented ear.

Potter went completely still as Draco tested the texture of Potter's hair between his fingertips, reluctant to part with the strands now that he had them in his grasp. The dark hair was softer than Draco would have thought, but not nearly as soft as the patch of skin just below Potter's ear that Draco's knuckles brushed over accidentally. Compelled to explore that softness further, but having no more hands available since his left had abandoned Potter's tresses and slid down to finger the rope around Potter's neck, Draco leaned in until his nose was buried in Potter's apple-scented hair. He breathed in deeply, closing his eyes and enjoying the scent before he gently pressed his lips to Potter's skin. He almost didn't hear Potter gasp from the loud pounding in his ears.

VII

Potter didn't taste like apples. He tasted better. Which was a silly thought because Draco *loved* apples.

He dragged his lips over Potter's skin, touching it tentatively with his tongue. However, Potter wrenched away, taking his delicious skin with him. It was only after Draco saw Potter goggle at him that he realized he had done something crazy again.

"What are you doing?" Potter asked, the tone of his voice brimming with shock.

"I . . ." Draco's voice broke and he had to clear his throat before he could speak again. "I fell asleep. And my head fell onto your shoulder. It was an accident." Draco's cheeks heated up in shame. That had been the lamest excuse he had ever given anyone. He expected Potter to laugh at him, but Potter didn't seem amused. He seemed *angry*.

"An accident?" he repeated. "Oh, you're funny, Malfoy. Truly." Glaring, he added, "Stop trying to be clever. I told you I didn't kiss you on purpose. That *was* an accident. What are you trying to prove? What do you *want* from me?"

Draco stared at Potter's angry face and said nothing. Potter had made some crazy conclusions about Draco's motives and Draco did not plan to dissuade him; they sounded more dignified than the truth. The truth being that Draco had no idea what he wanted from Potter and why he had the sudden urge to bite him and kiss him and *lick* him.

"You want me to confess that I'm gay?" Potter asked and Draco frowned, considered, and then nodded. But Potter had obviously intended it as a rhetorical question, because he continued speaking without confirming anything. "You do realize that even if I tell you right now that I'm gay, no one would ever believe you? You couldn't even use it to mock me in public because the moment you do I'll hex you and we'll end up fighting again. And then we'll be expelled. Don't you get it? You can't afford to provoke me, again. I don't think McGonagall was bluffing. She meant what she said; she thinks we shouldn't be here in the first place. We have no choice but to stay away from each other."

Draco frowned; he hadn't thought about McGonagall's threat much, but now that he did, he realized Potter was right. It hadn't occurred to him that McGonagall's warning meant he wouldn't be allowed to push Potter's buttons, anymore. If Potter lost his temper — and that was the whole point of Draco's baiting — and he hit or hexed Draco again, it was over. Draco couldn't even count on convincing McGonagall that it was all Potter's fault, because she said she didn't care. It was a distressing thought — annoying Potter was Draco's favorite pastime.

"You know," Draco mused, looking on the bright side of things, "you're right. Which means there's nothing stopping you from telling me the truth. I can't share the knowledge with anyone, as you've so cleverly noted."

Potter looked heavenward. "Why would I confess something like that to *you?* And why would you care, if you can't use that knowledge against me?"

Yes, I can, Draco thought, but managed not to say it out loud. Honestly, Potter was ridiculously naïve. Knowledge could always be used against a person.

"I'm merely curious," Draco claimed. "I think it would be funny if you were gay. Think about all those girls that are crazy about you — they would be *inconsolable*." Potter opened his mouth, undoubtedly to deny the existence of worshipping girls, but Draco quickly added, "Oh, please, Potter, I've seen the amount of fan mail you get. Not to mention you won the Witch Weekly's Most Charming Smile award this year. And to tell you the truth, it's hard to navigate the hallways after you pass through them. The amount of drool produced by your fangirls is positively alarming." Draco grimaced as he remembered the dreamy looks some girls adopted the moment Potter appeared.

Potter gaped at him. "I won the Witch Weekly's Most Charming Smile award?"

"Like you didn't know," Draco scoffed.

Potter looked pained. "I didn't," he claimed, blinking rapidly. "They've sent me some letters, but I always throw those away. And I don't know anyone who *reads* Witch Weekly."

"Pansy reads it," Draco said quickly. "She showed me the article." That wasn't *completely* true. Draco had seen Potter's picture and snatched the magazine from her hands. But Potter didn't have to know that.

"That's stupid." Potter shook his head in disbelief.

Draco nodded, agreeing. It *was* stupid. He couldn't understand why Potter won such a contest when the git rarely smiled. And when he did, his smile didn't reach his eyes. It was nothing but pretence; Potter's fans were highly unobservant.

Draco's lips quirked. "Are you worried your admirers won't admire you anymore once they find

out you're gay?"

"Don't be ridiculous," Potter snapped. "It's no one's business but my own, that's all. It's certainly not yours."

Draco cocked his head, fascinated. "You *are* gay, aren't you?"

Potter stared at him reproachfully for a full minute. He opened his mouth and then closed it, looking troubled.

"Come on, Potter. Don't be shy." Draco smiled. "You're not only gay, but also attracted to a certain devilishly handsome Slytherin, who, coincidently, sits right beside you."

Potter looked heavenward again. "You're so . . ." He sighed. Draco didn't find out what he was, because Potter abandoned his line of thought and said, "Fine, Malfoy, have it your way. I'll tell you the truth." Potter paused and took a deep breath, looking Draco straight in the eye. "I have no idea," he said, his expression turning miserable. "Ginny said I am, but I . . . I just don't know." Potter gave him a long, troubled look. "It's all so very confusing. It was easier when I had other things to worry about." He huffed and then added wryly, "Where's the Dark Lord when you need him? It was simple to know what I wanted, then. And I knew what people expected of me. I wish I *were* crushing on you. Then I'd know for certain that I'm not gay, but touched in the head." Potter sneered at him and then looked at the desk blankly. "Go on," he said resignedly after a long moment. "You have almost two hours to make fun of me. Better start now to cover all angles."

Draco, however, could not speak. He had it all planned out. If Potter confessed he was gay, Draco would yell, "I knew it!" and tease him mercilessly. If Potter had denied it, Draco would yell, "Liar!" and tease him mercilessly. He had no answer ready for Potter's confusion. It should have been funny, but Draco couldn't laugh at it. There was something about it that troubled him. For a second, as he listen to Potter's pathetic whining, he felt oddly *sympathetic*. He knew what it was like — not knowing how to reconcile what you wanted to do and what was expected of you. Not knowing whether you wanted something because you were supposed to want it, or if you wanted something else out of some illogical need to be rebellious. It just wasn't *funny*.

Draco's silence must have aggravated Potter because he huffed in annoyance and turned as though he planned to write lines again, but the parchment had curled into a scroll and the inkbottle was nowhere in sight. It must have rolled away when Potter had twitched violently earlier.

After Draco had randomly *kissed* his neck.

Draco redirected his thoughts quickly; his cock was hardening again. It probably happened due to all that accidental kissing and the intimate touches they were forced to endure. Draco was a healthy young man, after all; reactions like that were perfectly natural. Mercifully, Potter had clenched his hand again, so he couldn't feel Draco's arousal. This time, Draco did not plan to tell

him to unclench it.

Potter was staring at the parchment morosely.

"I won't tell anyone you're . . . having a crisis," Draco said, surprising himself by meaning his words.

Potter snorted. "You already told half the school, Malfoy."

"True. But no one believed me," Draco pointed out.

"It doesn't matter. Maybe I should just tell everyone I'm gay. Then, at least, those worshipping girls would leave me alone." Potter snorted again.

"No! No, you shouldn't!" Draco exclaimed before he could stop himself.

Potter blinked at him. "Why?"

"Because . . ." Draco frowned, trying to assemble his thoughts. This was now their secret — just theirs — as soon as he figured out how to get rid of Weaslette — and he didn't want to share the knowledge with everyone. "Because you'd be targeted by every gay man in the country. They'd all rush to molest you."

Potter lips twitched. "Because all gay men are molesters?"

"I didn't say that! It's just . . ." Draco struggled to articulate his concerns. "It seems dangerous somehow. Weren't you just whining about how everything is *complicated*? Do you *like* to suffer?" Draco rolled his eyes. "Of course you do. Forget I asked." Honestly, Potter had a dangerous martyr complex. Did he not realize that various men would think they have a chance to seduce him? They'd be sure to proposition him and that was a very unsettling thought. Why couldn't Potter see that?

"I'm touched by your concern," Potter said solemnly, then added, "But, who knows? Maybe I'd want them to molest me. It might help me figure out what I want."

Draco's mind went blank and then a vision unfolded in front of his eyes. He saw Potter lying on a desk — a desk not unlike the one in front of them — as a man leaned over him, caressing his body —his *naked* body — and kissing his neck, and Potter didn't twitch and squirm away, but moaned in delight and demanded more.

"I'm *joking*, Malfoy," Potter said, sounding exasperated.

Draco saw Potter wave his hand in front of his eyes, but he couldn't shake off the vision of Potter, lying on the desk and enjoying the hypothetical molestation.

"Malfoy, are you alive?" Potter asked and then, *horrifically*, possibly intending to grip Draco's leg and shake him, he unclenched his hand on Draco's thigh.

Draco snapped out of his daze at once and reacted immediately, but there was nothing he could do. Potter's fingers froze on the hard line of Draco's cock — fully erect now — and his lips parted in absolute shock, his gaze falling down onto Draco's crotch.

A pleasant sensation rushed through Draco at the intimate touch, but he had no time to enjoy it. Potter's mouth was moving, trying to form words, and Draco could think of nothing else but preventing Potter from speaking. He didn't have an answer ready; he had no logical explanation for his arousal. Potter couldn't be allowed to ask. Draco had to shut him up.

In the next moment, he did so — by kissing Potter squarely on the mouth.

VIII

It was terrible. Potter had been right. Kissing simply didn't work for them. It would have been better if Potter wasn't frozen like a statue and if Draco could remember how to kiss.

The terribleness of the kiss didn't stop him, however. He couldn't stop. Potter's lips were made to be worshipped. Hard and unmoving though they were, Draco still shivered as he mapped them with his tongue and then trapped Potter's bottom lip, sucking on it lightly. Potter made a sound as though he wanted to say something; his lips moved and closed around Draco's upper lip. That was much better. It was almost a real kiss. Draco opened his mouth a little wider and slowly slid his tongue past Potter's lips.

Potter shuddered, then jerked his head back with a gasp. Draco half-expected him to wipe his mouth with his sleeve, but Potter simply traced his lips with his tongue as though to make sure they were still attached to him. The sight of that made Draco lean forward and Potter automatically leaned backward, but with Draco's arm around his waist he couldn't move far.

"Why are you doing this?" Potter whispered, his eyes frantically searching Draco's face for an answer. "Have you gone insane? Did I hit you too hard? Did someone hex you? Did someone poison — *mmph!*"

Draco pressed his mouth to Potter's again and buried his free hand into Potter's hair to prevent him from moving away. His hand wouldn't stay still; it insisted on caressing Potter's hair as his tongue moved in and out of Potter's mouth.

Potter tried to speak, and failing that, he grabbed Draco's wrist, pushing his arm away until he managed to twist it behind Draco's back. That hurt — *a lot,* but it didn't make Draco pull away. Even after Potter turned his head and Draco's lips ended up pressed against Potter's cheek, he couldn't stop kissing him. He attacked Potter's face with heated open-mouth kisses, moving

slowly toward his ear and that soft spot near his hairline. He almost reached it when Potter jerked his body and twisted his trapped arm. He pulled sharply and the ever-present sensation of Potter's fingers on Draco's thigh suddenly disappeared, leaving nothing but pain and emptiness in its wake.

Draco gasped and pulled away, shocked to see that the ropes around his thigh had loosened and released Potter's hand. Potter seemed equally surprised and he let go off Draco's arm, his hands flying to the rope around his neck. He pulled and struggled, but they refused to budge. Draco half-heartedly tried to free his right arm, but the ropes didn't miraculously release him.

"The Charm is slowly wearing off," Draco commented, wondering if that was true or if Potter somehow succeeded to beat the Charm when he had panicked. It was distressing to think that Potter had been bothered by the kiss so much he broke the rules of magic.

Potter stopped struggling with the ropes. "Do you know who I am?" he asked, glaring, making Draco blink in surprise. He expected Potter to start ranting about his status as the Chosen One and some unwritten rule that said ex-Death Eaters weren't allowed to touch the Hero's precious lips. Instead, Potter bombarded him with ridiculous questions. "Do you know what day it is? Do you know who's Minister? Do you know your name? Do you have a concussion? Do you have a fever?" He raised his hand as tough to touch Draco's forehead but then he changed his mind and did the oddest thing — he shoved two fingers in front of Draco's eyes and asked, "How many fingers?"

Draco blanched. "Are you insane, Potter? What are you doing?"

Potter's hand dropped onto his lap. He rubbed his injured wrist, wincing slightly. "Am *I* insane?" he asked furiously. "What are *you* doing?

It was a valid question, but Draco had no answer. He shrugged.

"Do you get off on torturing me?"

Draco raised his eyebrows and considered the question. "Possibly."

Potter huffed and apparently refused to accept that as a definite explanation. He stared at Draco unflinchingly; his gaze so intense Draco feared it would burn a hole in his skull. He wished he knew what to say. Perhaps he should have claimed he had been poisoned or hexed. Maybe he was. It would explain his behaviour.

Potter's eyes filled with some sort of understanding and he grinned. Draco almost gulped; it was a dangerous, sly grin, the likes of which Draco had never seen on Potter's face before.

Potter leaned forward. "Are *you* gay, Malfoy?"

"*What?* No!" Draco gasped, horrified. Potter raised an eyebrow, his hand sneaking toward

Draco's thigh. Draco quickly grabbed Potter's wrist, but Potter seemed untroubled. He had made his point. Draco was aroused and he had *kissed* Potter; even Draco had to acknowledge — it *looked* gay. It was still a crazy conclusion. "It's your shampoo," Draco said a bit desperately. "It's girly."

Potter stared at him. His wrist was still trapped in Draco's hand. Draco didn't feel like releasing it.

"And all this talk about sex . . . affected me," Draco added.

"We weren't talking about sex."

Oh. Draco frowned. No, he had been *thinking* about sex. "It's the ropes?" he asked more than stated, then burst out, "I don't know, all right? It's certainly not *you*, Potty." Draco imagined eating a plateful of Flobberworms and made an appropriate expression. He must have managed to look sufficiently disgusted because Potter looked almost hurt for a second, but in the next moment, his mouth twitched.

"All right." Potter grinned deviously. "I'll make you a deal, Malfoy. You don't tell anyone what I told you about my crisis and you *never* try to kiss me again and I won't tell everyone you have a thing for shampoos and ropes. Or that sometimes you kiss other boys in a completely heterosexual fashion."

Draco's jaw clenched. Potter was a sneaky bastard. All that talk about how he could tell Draco anything because Draco couldn't use it against him, and then he jumped at the first chance to blackmail him and ensure his silence.

"Well, Malfoy?" Potter asked, his voice turning low, almost *threatening*. It should have been terrifying, but the feeling didn't reach his eyes. Just like all those smiles.

Something clicked in Draco's brain as he stared at Potter's menacing expression, which conflicted with the haunted look in his green eyes. It was all fake, Draco realised. The sly grin, the confident blackmail, the threat — all of it. Potter was worried. No, he was *terrified*. Draco could see it in his eyes. Though he had no idea what Potter was so afraid of. He couldn't have been afraid of Draco. He was *never* afraid of Draco. And he couldn't have been afraid of everyone finding out he was gay, since he claimed he wasn't sure about that, anyway. Even if he had lied about it, Potter wasn't so easily intimidated by public opinion. Easily embarrassed, yes, but not cowed. The only thing that could have sacred Potter so much was Draco's kiss. And that would only scare him if . . . Draco's heart started pounding as though it just woke up. He could feel it hitting against his ribcage, throbbing in his throat. It was so obvious — Potter *was* crushing on him.

"Do we have a deal?" Potter's voice echoed in Draco's mind. Draco was surprised to discover that he was no longer gripping Potter's wrist, but Potter was gripping his — painfully. And yet, his thumb moved slightly against Draco's skin. Almost *caressing*. No, *definitely* caressing.

"No," Draco said, his thoughts awhirl. Potter was *crushing* on him. Harry freaking Potter had a crush on *him*. Merlin, when did that happen, and how?

A stray thought caught Draco's attention. He remembered wondering who had spoken in his favour to McGonagall. It seemed apparent now — it had to have been Potter. He had almost confessed it; right after he said he cared about Draco's future. Why had Draco ever believed that McGonagall would have listened to his *mother*? His mother, whose involvement in the Death Eaters activities ran far deeper than Draco's. Someone else had to have promised McGonagall that Draco was worthy of another chance. No one else but Potter could have done it; no one else *would* have done it. And that explained McGonagall's anger with Potter. First he had asked her to let Draco came back and then he had punched him in the hallway. She must have been shocked when she had heard the tale.

Potter's eye twitched. "What do you want, Malfoy? Why —?" Potter stopped speaking abruptly. He was losing his composure, his grip on Draco's wrist turning desperate and his gaze pleading. He looked confused and utterly lost. But his thumb still stroked Draco's skin.

Draco's kisses must have driven him insane. Potter wanted them, but knew he couldn't have them. But he *wanted* them. He had enjoyed them, but he didn't show it, not once. He must have been too scared, having no idea what Draco was doing. Perhaps thinking that Draco had figured him out and decided to torment him. Which almost happened after the *terrible* accident. And Draco had accused Potter of crushing on him, though he was *kidding*. But Potter could only suspect Draco was kidding, not know it. It must have horrified him. First his girlfriend had figured him out and now so did Draco.

Oh, how Potter had played him with his claim that he was confused. It had been such a Slytherin confession. Potter gave him enough so Draco could focus on teasing and ridiculing him, but not enough to make him suspect he was crushing on Draco.

I wish I were *crushing on you. Then I'd know for certain that I'm not gay, but touched in the head.*

Oh, but that was how one lied when cornered. By convincing your opponent that something else is bothering you much more that his silly irrelevant suggestion. How very, *very* Slytherin. Draco should have picked up on it immediately. But Merlin, no one sane would have dared to draw that conclusion. Potter *wanted* him. Potter was *in love* with him.

Draco stared at Potter's troubled eyes. For years he wanted to be the main source of Potter's misery and now he was. A heady sense of power overwhelmed him. He had done it. He had scared Potter. With *kisses*.

Draco leaned in closer, watching Potter's pupils dilate. Potter's gaze was fixed on Draco's eyes, but then, for a split second, something Draco wouldn't have noticed if he hadn't observed carefully, it fell on Draco's lips.

"What do you want?" Potter asked for what must have been the fifth time since McGonagall left. The desperation in his voice was music to Draco's ears.

It was a very good question. Now that he knew what *Potter* wanted, how would he exploit it?

IX

He had to see it, Draco decided. Suspicion wasn't enough, no matter how sure Draco was. He wanted to see it — Potter looking at him with utter lust, begging Draco to touch him, moaning as Draco kissed him, shuddering as he let Draco do whatever he wished to him. He had to experience it.

And he had to convince Potter to agree to it.

He could claim that he wanted Potter; say he had a crush on him, too, but he suspected Potter wouldn't believe him. Potter made no such conclusions, even after he had discovered that Draco was aroused. And he was right, of course; Draco wasn't crushing on Potter. The only appeal of all this was making Potter crumble beneath his touch. That wasn't love; that was rivalry.

Though it wasn't hate either, a small voice in his head told him. He didn't want to smash Potter's nose and watch him bleed as he once had — before Potter had reached down, grabbed Draco's sweaty hand and pulled him to safety.

"I want to make a different deal," Draco said quickly even though he made no decisions yet. He wanted to stop his line of thought. It didn't matter why *he* wanted it; *Potter's* wish was the important thing. *His* crush was what Draco wanted to explore.

Potter grimaced. "What sort of deal?"

Draco was thinking furiously. "Well, since we're here and have nothing to do and you're so confused . . ." Draco waited for the logical continuation of the sentence to come to him and, miraculously, it did. "I think we should try to resolve your confusion."

"I'm feeling more and more confused by the second, to be honest," Potter said dryly.

"Fear no more, Potter." Draco grinned. "I'm willing to offer myself as your test subject."

"Pardon?"

"You wanted to know if you're gay or not. Well . . ." Draco indicated himself with his free hand. "Find out."

Potter stared at him.

"It's a perfect opportunity for you," Draco insisted.

"You're . . ." Potter gulped audibly. "You're offering . . . sex?"

"Merlin, no, Potter!" Draco paled. He didn't want to have *sex* with Potter. Sex meant . . . pushing cocks into places where cocks shouldn't be pushed. Draco shuddered, though, oddly enough, not unpleasantly. Well, if Potter wanted Draco to do that to *him* . . . "I doubt we'll have to go that far," Draco amended. "You're so obviously gay. I think after a few kisses you'll see it." Draco considered the matter more carefully. "I suppose you can suck me off, if you wish."

Potter finally stopped blushing; Draco had forgotten how Potter looked without a flush decorating his cheeks. Paleness didn't suit him so well.

Potter slowly raised his hand in front of Draco's eyes again.

"How many —?"

"Two!" Draco snapped. "You're holding up two fingers. Please stop it. What does that even mean?"

Potter shrugged and lowered his hand. "You are utterly insane," he said with conviction.

"No, I'm merely bored. And I think that some kissing and a blowjob would cheer me up and amuse me. I'd rather do that than stare at the parchment for the next two hours."

Potter looked petrified. He stopped breathing and he even stopped blinking.

Draco frowned. Perhaps boredom wasn't a valid excuse for sex with your school rival. He had to think of something else. If only he could.

"Well, do you accept? I'm doing you a favor here, Potter."

Potter blinked once. "Out of the goodness of your heart?"

"Naturally."

"What *is* this?" Potter exclaimed. "Are you hoping to tell everyone that you turned Harry Potter gay? Are you after blackmail material?"

"You're being absurd, Potter. What does it matter what we do here? No one will ever know but us. I can just as easily make something up and claim it's true. It's your word against mine, and we both know which one of us people will believe."

Potter considered him for a minute. "Then why? Why would you offer . . .? Are you even attracted to men?" Potter's voice turned into a whisper. "Or *me?*"

"You're giving this too much importance. I'm attracted to *sex*. And orgasms. I can withstand quite a bit in order to get them."

It was the wrong thing to say. Potter stopped looking confused. "No need to withstand anything, Malfoy. I refuse," he said coldly.

Damn. Draco bit his lip. On the bright side, it had taken awhile for Potter to refuse him. That could have meant that he had considered accepting the deal. "Merlin, you're so sensitive," Draco huffed. "Don't be an idiot. This is a perfect chance for you. You can experiment all you wish and no one will ever know. I can even teach you some things."

Potter's eyebrows rose. "You've had sex with a man before?" he asked, looking somewhat amused.

"Of course," Draco scoffed, lying through his teeth. "Everything you heard about us perverted Slytherins is absolutely true. Except that part about orgies. Those never turn out well; we gave up on them a long time ago. But we are lovers of carnal pleasures and we have no silly misconceptions about sex like *you* people. There's no need to compartmentalize pleasure. How *limiting*."

"Right." Potter narrowed his eyes. "If you're so open-minded about sex, then why were you ridiculing my supposed attraction to men in front of everyone?"

Draco was stumped for just a moment. "The whole point was to annoy and embarrass you, Potter. It's not my fault you find these things insulting."

Potter stared at him for a long moment before he turned around demonstratively. "Oh, for fuck's sake, leave me alone. You're so full of it, Malfoy."

Draco rolled his eyes. No reason was good enough for Potter. He had to think of something else. Something more *plausible*.

An idea formed in his mind. *Of course*, he should have thought of it sooner. Potter would never believe Draco wanted to have sex with him because Draco *wanted* to do it, or because Draco would have sex with anyone, or because Draco was just trying to be helpful. Potter thought himself a hero, the favor he understood and accepted would be *gratitude*.

"Have it your way, Potter," Draco said offhandedly. "I just thought . . . well, I owe you one. I wanted to pay my debt."

"Owe me?" Potter looked at him sideways. "For what?"

Draco opened his mouth to say it, but the words refused to pass his lips. He promised himself he would never say it; that he would never acknowledge it in Potter's presence, or even to himself. He had no intention of feeding Potter's already humongous ego.

However, this was all right. He was being devious, not grateful. It was okay to say it if he didn't really mean it. *Wasn't it?*

Draco swallowed heavily and whispered, "My life."

Potter, Draco learned, had a strange ability to survive without air for a long time. Draco was sure he stopped breathing for a whole minute. After finally gulping some air, Potter looked away and spoke to his knees. "You don't owe me anything, Malfoy."

Oddly, that hurt.

"Because you regret saving me?"

Potter closed his eyes and shook his head. "I didn't mean what I said in the hallway. I don't regret it."

Draco breathed a little easier. He had made that conclusion when he had figured out that Potter was crushing on him, but it felt good to hear it.

"But you don't owe me anything." Potter laughed, a bit hysterically. "Especially not sex."

"What else can I give you?" Draco asked sharply. "It's unlikely I'll ever save your life. And I'm not giving you gold, Potter."

Potter was still laughing. "I definitely don't want gold!" he cried and then calmed down somewhat. "You could be a little nicer to me?" he suggested tentatively.

Draco sneered. "Right. What else? Should I kneel and crawl before you?"

"I didn't mean it like that." Potter sighed. "I'd just appreciate it if you didn't insult me at every turn."

Draco bristled. What next? Potter would suggest they should be friends? "You're missing the point, Potter. I want to repay my debt so I can continue hating you and insulting you with a clear conscience."

Potter snorted. "Actually, I figured that's what you wanted," he said dismally. "I'd rather you continue to hate me and insult me with an *unclear* conscience. At least you'd be forced to acknowledge you have one."

Draco pursed his lips in a pout. The whole thing wasn't amusing anymore. It should have been

hilarious and fun. When did it stop being funny? And why was Potter being so difficult? He should have jumped at the chance to have sex with the person he was crushing on. Unless Draco had been wrong about that. Draco sighed miserably. Or maybe he had insulted Potter too much. Potter did have an ego the size of the Hogwarts lake.

Either way, there was only one thing that seemed to unsettle Potter. Words were useless in this situation.

Draco cleared his throat and edged closer to Potter. "I find you reasonably attractive. Having sex with you wouldn't be . . . torture," he said quietly, deepening his voice. Potter stiffened and Draco quickly sneaked his hand beneath Potter's shirt before the git said something stupid again. He pulled Potter closer into his embrace — something that was extremely easy since he was still forced to hug him close — and trailed his fingertips over the soft skin of Potter's waist.

Potter reached to still Draco's exploring hand. "Malfoy . . ."

Draco was sure that was meant to be a warning, but it sounded suspiciously like a moan. Draco grinned.

"I won't offer again," he whispered into Potter's ear. "*Ever*. Are you sure you don't want to seize the moment and resolve your —" Draco took Potter's earlobe into his mouth, sucked on it lightly and then released it "— confusion?"

Potter shivered. His face was reddening again.

"I'll count to three," Draco said. "And then the offer is off the table. *One*." Draco's index finger toyed with the waistband of Potter's trousers as he pressed a small kiss just below Potter's ear. Potter never even stopped shuddering. "Two." Draco's free hand sneaked toward Potter's crotch; Potter's arm flew to intercept it, but Draco was faster and he managed to wrap his fingers around the hardness beneath the coarse fabric. Potter was rock hard, the warmth of his arousal heated Draco's sweaty palm. "Hmm," Draco hummed, trailing his fingertips over Potter's cock. "T—"

"I accept."

X

Draco closed his eyes and exhaled deeply. His breath ghosted over Potter's ear, making Potter gasp quietly.

"A wise choice," Draco praised.

He waited for Potter to turn his head around, which Potter did, slowly. Their faces were perfectly aligned — eyes staring at eyes, noses almost touching, their lips a breath away.

"You can kiss me now," Draco whispered, waiting.

He feared Potter would change his mind; he looked indecisive for a moment, but then he leaned closer and his lips pressed against Draco's lightly.

Draco held his breath, expecting Potter would close his eyes and move his lips, but Potter was frozen, staring at Draco without blinking. Draco could no longer bear to look at him, so he let his eyelashes touch his cheeks, then tilted his head and parted his lips in invitation.

Potter made a sound, a beautiful tortured sound, as though something broke inside him. His hands flew upwards and trapped Draco's face, warm palms pressing against his cheeks as the pressure of Potter's lips on his intensified and a tongue invaded Draco's mouth.

It wasn't a kiss; it was an attack. An attack meant to disorient Draco and make him forget he didn't really want to kiss Potter. It was working, too.

Potter kissed with the determination and passion Draco saw him employ on the Quidditch pitch. He always gave everything he had, even when he knew he wouldn't catch the Snitch.

Draco felt caught. Captured not only by Potter's hands, but by the persistent tongue that caressed the inside of Draco's mouth, taking his breath away. It slid over the backs of his teeth, the roof of his mouth, exploring ceaselessly, not seeking dominance but demanding a fight. And Draco gave it to him, as soon as he snapped out of his daze and remembered to breathe through his nose. He slid his tongue against Potter's, giving as good as he got, for once not caring if he won or lost as long, as the game lasted as long as possible.

How could he have ever thought that kissing Potter was terrible? Surely, he had forgotten the true definition of the word. And how ridiculous was his offer to teach Potter something? Potter needed no lessons.

Potter pulled back, gasping, and Draco opened his mouth to say the thing he'd been dying to say; to remind Potter that he had claimed he would *never* kiss Draco on purpose. But Potter's teeth closed around Draco's bottom lip, nibbling as Potter unnecessarily, but pleasantly, soothed the nibbles with small wet licks. Coherent words abandoned Draco, leaving him free to gasp and moan without any sense or logic.

"You don't taste like vanilla," Potter said randomly.

Draco wanted to ask how he tasted, then, and find out whether not tasting like vanilla was a good or a bad thing, but Potter groaned loudly and attacked his face with hot, desperate kisses and Draco figured he had his answer.

Potter wondered how I would taste, he thought, pleasure pooling in his stomach, warming him more than Potter's scorching lips.

He couldn't do much but clutch Potter's hip as Potter kissed every part of his face, clearly not caring where the kisses landed. He pressed his mouth to Draco's cheeks and jaw, trailed his lips over his chin, pressed them against his eyelids and even kissed the tip of Draco's nose, something that stretched Draco's lips into a smile against his will.

Potter gasped, pulling away and squirming in his seat before he pressed his forehead to Draco's, breathing heavily over Draco's lips and treating them to an occasional lingering kiss. His fingers treaded through Draco's hair, playing with the strands and sliding downwards until they rested on the knot of Draco's tie.

Draco opened his eyes and found himself subject to a questioning green gaze.

"Yes," Draco agreed immediately. He would have been embarrassed by the sound of his rough voice, laced with desire, if Potter hadn't shuddered when he heard it.

"Test subject, remember?" Draco added as Potter's fingers toyed with the knot. "Do as you wish."

Potter's hand clenched around the tie and he stared at Draco for a moment before he nodded, looked down, and deftly undid the tight knot.

It was eerily quiet in the classroom; the only sound their ragged breathing as Potter slowly unfastened the buttons of Draco's shirt. Potter's movements were sure and skilful, but he lost time on caressing the fabric and the newly revealed skin as well as fingering the small delicate buttons, as though he wasn't crushing on Draco but rather his shirt. Reaching the waistband of Draco's trousers, he yanked the shirt — tucked as demanded by school regulations — and pulled the ends free, before he unfastened the remaining two buttons. He parted the shirt completely by dragging his palms upward against Draco's chest, spreading his fingers wide to touch as much skin as he could.

Draco's eyelashes fluttered as Potter's fingertips reached his shoulders, sliding the shirt lower and leaving them bare.

"You're so . . ." Potter said.

Beautiful?

". . . pale."

Draco frowned, not sure what to make of that.

"Edible," Potter added, nearly *growling* the word.

Relieved, Draco exhaled slowly and then breathed in sharply again as Potter's hands moved lower, his thumbs brushing against Draco's nipples.

Potter looked up and then did it again, this time circling his thumbs lightly before he curved his forefingers and pinched the small nubs.

Unable to stop himself, Draco shuddered violently, his nipples hardening under Potter's firm touch. Potter took that as some sort of invitation to latch onto Draco's neck, kissing and biting Draco's skin feverishly, as his fingers slid over Draco's chest and stomach; Draco could feel the muscles there contracting at Potter's every caress. Potter's hands never stayed still; they teased Draco's nipples, rubbing them, pinching them, then moved lower to tread lightly over Draco's abdomen, almost tickling, and then sneaked even lower, to toy with the small patch of hair that peeked beneath the waistband of Draco's trousers.

That intimidating touch made Draco return to his senses and find his voice.

"Don't leave a mark," he said as Potter's lips trailed from Draco's shoulder toward his neck.

"Okay," Potter agreed readily and then pressed his mouth firmly to the tender spot on Draco's neck, sucking almost painfully.

Draco hissed. "Idiot," he accused, displeased that what was meant to be an insult sounded more like an endearment. Not to mention that his free hand was inexplicably buried in Potter's messy locks again. Draco leaned forward and breathed in Potter's scent, making a mental note to slap himself silly later for doing something as stupid as smelling Potter's hair.

Potter abandoned Draco's — undoubtedly bruised — neck and looked up with amused eyes.

"You really like my shampoo."

Draco's gaze fell on Potter's red lips, parted slightly as Potter leaned his head back to look at Draco. It seemed like an offer.

"I'm merely surprised you actually wash your hair," Draco murmured, no longer caring that his insults didn't sound harsh enough. He bent down and wiped the smile from Potter's face with a kiss, gripping his waist tighter and pulling him closer. He yanked Potter's hair and made him open his mouth wider so he could slip his tongue inside. Potter didn't complain, but accepted the intrusion, sucking on Draco's tongue before wrapping his own around it, turning the kiss into another pleasurable fight.

Just as Draco felt dizzy again, Potter pulled back and grumbled, "This is awkward."

An indignant complaint was already on Draco's lips, but then he realized that Potter meant the ropes, not the kiss, because he twisted around, trying to free himself.

Draco reached toward Potter's neck, intending to help, but his fingers ended up trying to undo the knot on Potter's red Gryffindor tie.

Potter stopped struggling. "What are you doing?" He looked at Draco through his lashes and added, "Do test subjects do that?"

Draco's hand stilled and he narrowed his eyes at Potter's amused expression. "You need to know whether you want to be touched — pardon, *molested* by another man."

Potter shivered. "Oh. Fair point."

Potter still looked as though he knew something Draco didn't and Draco yearned to wipe the smirk off Potter's face. An idea came to him immediately and Draco grinned as he trailed his hand downward over Potter's shirt, making Potter gasp as though Draco touched his skin and not mere fabric.

Reaching Potter's trousers, Draco held Potter's gaze and slowly trailed his fingers along the outline of Potter's cock. Potter's eyes darkened and he flushed as Draco pressed his hand against Potter's crotch, cupping him though his trousers. Potter's legs parted to give him better access and Draco wondered whether Potter was even aware of it. He closed his eyes and let out a low moan as Draco squeezed and caressed, exploring the warmth and stiffness and the dampening fabric that pressed against the tip of Potter's cock.

Draco tightened his grip around Potter's waist and increased the pressure and speed of his strokes, avidly watching Potter's flushed face. Potter groaned loudly, thrusting upward into Draco's hand, his jaw and lips moving soundlessly as he shut his eyes tightly. He grabbed Draco's wrist, but didn't stop him, just held him firmly so Draco couldn't move his hand away.

Fascinated, Draco watched Potter come undone, abandoning himself to Draco's touch without a thought. *I could make him come like this*, Draco realized. He could make Potter lose it in his pants with nothing more than a few strokes through his trousers.

That thrilling sense over power overwhelmed him again and Draco moaned as Potter managed to breathe out one word.

"*Draco*," Potter gasped with nothing but pure lust in his voice.

Draco shivered and closed his eyes. Merlin, he was *doomed*.

XI

"Wait," Potter said as he gripped Draco's wrist tighter and pushed his hand away. Draco would have complained if he wasn't busy yelping as Potter rose up a bit — choking, but obviously not caring about it — and swung his right foot over Draco's legs. Perplexed, Draco cringed as the desk in front of them tilted, wobbled on two legs for a moment and then tipped over with a

resounding crash that had to have shaken the entire castle.

Potter didn't seem to notice, however, and Draco forgot about it soon enough. It was hard not to forget silly things like demolished classrooms when one had a lapful of Harry Potter. And a very pleased-looking Harry Potter, at that. Potter seemed quite happy about straddling Draco's lap, even though Draco's hugging arm forced them to sit tightly together. Their chests were touching and Draco was forced to look closely at Potter's tie. He had to lean his head back to look at Potter's face.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

Potter bit his lip. "Um. You're my test subject. Well, I'm *testing*." To emphasize his point, Potter jumped a little as though he was testing to see whether Draco's lap was a sturdy, comfy place to sit on. He must have reached an affirmative conclusion because he did it again, slowly this time, rolling his hips and pressing down, relaxing his legs and letting himself sit with his full weight. Which was a very pleasant feeling. Potter was heavy, but Draco didn't plan to complain as long as Potter continued moving his hips because that part was not only pleasant, but absolutely *brilliant*. It made Draco wonder why Potter spent all those years sitting on chairs when he could have sat on Draco's lap to their mutual enjoyment. Granted, other people might have found that odd.

Merlin. *Other people.* What would other people say if they saw Potter sitting on Draco's lap? What would Pansy say, his friends, his parents? His *mother?* His mother's frown was suddenly clear in Draco's mind.

Really, Draco, have you no decency? his mother's voice asked and Draco cringed. What a fucking wrong time to think of his mother.

"Are you all right?" Potter asked, sounding worried. "I can get up . . ." Potter nearly did so, but Draco reacted quickly by grabbing Potter's tie and yanking him back to his lap. Potter all but fell on Draco's lips, which was convenient, but not very pleasant, since their teeth clanked together. Realistically, it should have stopped them from kissing, but it didn't. Potter made a small sound of relief and grabbed Draco's face again, kissing him soundly. It was completely unfair that even though Potter was trapped in Draco's embrace and on his bloody lap, he had the advantage of being temporarily taller, which made it easy for him to control the kiss. This time Potter demanded submission, holding the air captive until Draco surrendered, melted into the kiss, and let Potter ravage his mouth as he wished.

Draco wondered if Potter always kissed like that — pressing his palms to the other person's face, trapping their head so they couldn't move or run away. He wondered what it meant. When you grabbed something tightly, you did it because you were afraid it would disappear. He wished he knew whether Potter was always afraid that the other person would refuse to continue kissing him, or he was afraid that *Draco* would refuse him. Potter's thumbs caressed his cheeks gently, and Draco imagined that he was the only person Potter had ever kissed quite like that.

"Here, let me help," Potter said and Draco's eyes snapped open. He was surprised to find that the kiss had ended without him noticing — he could still feel the pressure of Potter's lips on his. "Er, you have to move your hand first," Potter added.

Draco blinked and let go of Potter's tie. He had apparently attempted to undo the knot, but failed to do so one-handed. Potter took off his tie and then slowly undid the buttons of his shirt, looking down, either because he was nervous or because he was simply concentrating on his task. He reached the ropes tied around his waist and stopped, toying with them slightly, possibly looking for a knot to untie.

Draco licked his lips, staring at the pale skin of Potter's chest and tracing the contours with his gaze.

"I was —" Potter said and then stopped talking as Draco looked up at him. At Draco's questioning gaze, he cleared his throat and said, "I was promised . . . *touching?*" Potter grinned a little nervously.

It was a request. Something Draco wanted to hear; though he wanted it with a little more begging. But his body must have taken it as permission, because Draco automatically nodded and leaned forward, pressing his lips to the middle of Potter's chest. Potter gasped, jumping on Draco's lap as his hands flew to clutch Draco's hair. That was nice — all of it. The sound Potter made, his fingers in Draco's hair, and the jump that made Potter grind pleasurably against Draco's crotch. Draco wanted *more*. He licked and bit Potter's delicious skin, twirled his tongue around the dark nipples, and trailed his fingers over Potter's contracting stomach, cataloguing the sounds Potter made and the strength of his grip on Draco's hair. Potter squirmed as Draco sank his teeth vaguely in the same place where Potter had marked him earlier. Gleefully, he returned the favor, pulling back to admire the dark bruise on Potter's pale skin. He looked up at Potter to see if he was upset because of the bite, but Potter wasn't paying attention; instead, he rocked his hips, his eyes shut as he grinded himself unashamedly against Draco. It was odd to see Potter like that; Draco had imagined that Potter would have more restraint, but he clearly had none.

Draco clenched his jaw as pleasure rushed through him; he reached to grab Potter's hip and still his frantic movements. Potter should be the one to lose it; he couldn't take Draco with him. With that in mind, Draco attacked the button of Potter's trousers; a vain attempt, since the ropes prevented him from accessing it.

Potter calmed down enough to try and help; he struggled with the ropes for a moment and then cried, "Fuck!" apparently losing patience.

As though frightened, the ropes loosened and Potter victoriously unfastened the button as Draco pulled down the zipper. Potter froze as though he didn't really know what to do now. Or he froze because Draco's fingers treaded unhurriedly through the coarse black hair of Potter's crotch, admiring the texture and thickness.

Something is missing here, Draco thought and then immediately realized what.

"No underwear," he murmured.

"Er . . ." Potter laughed a little, sounding embarrassed. "That's just an accident. I showered after practice and forgot I had no clean underwear. I don't walk around like this, normally. Honest. It's just . . . well, I don't have a lot of underwear and those I do have are my cousin's and they're really ugly and old. I think they belonged to him when he was, um, five. I should probably buy some. I just never thought about it. I do have the Galleons, but — *Oh God*."

Draco grinned, looking down at his hand. He now knew of two ways to shut Potter up — by kissing him and by grabbing his cock.

"That's disgusting," Draco mused and then gasped and looked up in time to see Potter's eyes widen and fill with pain. "I meant, wearing your cousin's underwear," Draco added quickly.

"Oh." Potter nodded, but he still looked unhappy. He was definitely no longer moaning and calling for a god. Which was a shame because Draco liked him better that way.

"This is . . ." Draco said and looked down again, trying to assemble his thoughts. He wasn't even sure why he was gripping Potter's cock, but it felt nice and warm and heavy in his hand. "Not disgusting," he decided finally. It was just a cock, not unlike his own; it even seemed to be of similar size, which was unfortunate because, ideally, Potter's cock should have been a lot smaller than Draco's. Though, perhaps it wouldn't feel so lovely in his grasp, then.

Draco trailed his thumb over the cock's head, smearing the drops of liquid that leaked from the tip. Potter shuddered and Draco looked up. Potter didn't look hurt anymore, but he still stared at Draco uncertainly.

Not knowing what else to do, Draco did what he knew. He grasped Potter's cock more firmly, just as he would himself, and trailed his thumb along the underside before returning to the tip again slowly. Potter gasped a little and Draco moved his hand, stroking him rhythmically.

"Oh," Potter said and grabbed Draco's shoulders.

That was much better. Desire returned to Potter's eyes, wiping away the hurt. Draco's hand gained confidence and moved faster. The angle was all wrong and he had to use his left hand, but Potter was moaning again. He shut his eyes and leaned forward, pressing his temple to Draco's and circling his hips, thrusting into Draco's hand.

"Draco," Potter gasped and Draco shut his eyes and moved his hand even faster.

"I'm going to . . . Draco, fuck, I'm going to . . ." Potter babbled, gasping into Draco's ear and twitching on Draco's lap violently.

"It's okay," Draco said and Potter cried out as though Draco's permission was the trigger he'd been waiting for. His entire body shook and he clutched Draco's shoulders painfully as wetness

spread over Draco's stroking fingers. That should have been disgusting, but it wasn't. Draco felt victorious, though he didn't know what he won.

Potter was jerking and writhing on Draco's lap as he rode out his orgasm, Draco's hand never abandoning his cock. He stopped moving it only after Potter sagged against him, heavy and panting, continuously murmuring something that sounded oddly like *Draco*.

Draco shuddered, his cock throbbing almost painfully, his sticky hand hurting, and his forehead sweaty. He wanted to tell Potter the get the fuck off him, but that meant Potter would have to move and sit beside him again and Draco preferred to have him on his lap.

Potter, however, moved with a sudden burst of energy, gave Draco a fleeting, awkward, wet kiss and a feverish gaze before he yanked Draco's right arm free as though ropes didn't exist and then slid down onto the floor, falling neatly on his knees, right between Draco's legs.

Draco blinked, staring at Potter's smiling face, shockingly close to Draco's crotch.

"What are you doing?" Draco asked as his legs spread wider, demonstrating that their capacity to think in advance was greater than that of Draco's mind.

Potter gripped Draco's thighs, stroking them firmly. "Preparing to give you what you're attracted to."

Draco frowned and Potter quickly added, "An orgasm." He grinned, then looked down and pressed a small kiss to the visible outline of Draco's cock.

Draco's leg twitched and he clenched his hands into fists, ordering himself not to come before Potter actually *did* something. However, when he looked down at the wrist of his right hand, he doubted he would last long. He wished he knew if Potter had noticed that the rope still tied around Draco's wrist was the very one that extended toward Potter's neck, connecting Potter — binding him — to Draco's hand with a relatively short but thick cord. As Potter stuck out his tongue and licked the fabric covering Draco's crotch, Draco wondered how it was possible that he had Potter on his knees and on a fucking *leash* and Draco was still the one tempted to break down and *beg*.

XII

It couldn't have tasted good — it was cloth for fuck's sake. But one wouldn't make such a conclusion when staring at Potter's face. Potter hummed as his tongue traced the outline of Draco's cock, dampening the material before he pressed his open mouth to Draco's crotch, making a sound that a person made when eating a particularly scrumptious piece of candy. Though really, you were supposed to unwrap the candy first, you didn't lick the bloody paper.

The touch of Potter's tongue was barely there; Draco almost couldn't feel it through layers of fabric. He should have complained, and he would have if he wasn't worried that Potter would be insulted enough to stop. And Potter stopping wasn't an option. Thinking about that terrible possibility, Draco wrapped his hand around the rope connecting his wrist to Potter's neck, his fingers edging slowly toward the knot pressed against Potter's skin. He gripped the rope tightly, shuddering from the overwhelming desire to *pull* it and make Potter suck his cock already.

He didn't dare to do it, however. He didn't dare to *move* out of fear that Potter would be startled by the smallest movement like a wild animal. He didn't even dare to wipe Potter's sticky come off his left hand. He didn't know where to wipe it, anyway, except on his shirt, which was an unappealing thought.

Draco could do nothing but wait and pray he wouldn't come just because of a couple of non-touches as Potter took his time. He licked and caressed as he slowly unfastened the button of Draco's trousers and slid down the zipper, tongued the silk of Draco's boxers — dark red, which was embarrassing because, officially, Draco detested red — and toyed with the dark blond hair of Draco's crotch, pressing his face into it and — *sweet Merlin* — breathing in Draco's scent. The first touch of Potter's fingers against the bare skin of Draco's cock made him shiver and say, "*Fuck!"* quite loudly — he said it, he most certainly didn't whimper it.

Draco's cheeks heated as Potter wrapped his hand around the base of Draco's cock and stared at it as though it was a never before seen miracle rather than a standard part of male anatomy.

"I thought it would be smaller," Potter said, his voice rough and his gaze fixed on Draco's cock. He didn't sound disappointed.

"That's because you're a conceited part and you think yours is the biggest," Draco couldn't help saying, though he regretted it immediately because he had forgotten that it was important not to insult Potter right now.

Potter looked up, his lips twitching and eyes dancing, and Draco realized that Potter was *teasing* him, and when Draco actually thought about it he found that there was a compliment hidden in that statement. Which was unusual and it made Draco grin stupidly as a strange feeling settled pleasantly in his stomach. Fortunately, he wasn't forced to ponder the bizarre reaction, because Potter leaned in and his lips touched the head of Draco's cock. Draco watched them stretch around it before a tongue brushed the sensitive tip, sending rivulets of pleasure through Draco's body. This time he couldn't deny his pathetic whimper and he clutched his shirt with his sticky hand to stop himself from intertwining his fingers into Potter's hair. Potter looked up, his lips still wrapped around Draco's cock, eyes smiling though his mouth couldn't, and he swirled his tongue again, teasing the slit before sucking lightly. Draco's cock twitched, as eager to push deeper into Potter's mouth as Draco was himself, but Potter refused them both, clearly intent on tormenting Draco like the cruel git he was. Potter looked down and stuck out his tongue, licking firmly and lapping the liquid that gathered on the tip. The sight of Potter's tongue and mouth sliding over the head of his cock was as maddening as the sight of the rope wrapped around Potter's neck; they were all there, as though designed to give Draco pleasure, but he couldn't use them. More

than anything he wanted to pull on the rope and force Potter to open his mouth and let Draco push inside, but he knew he couldn't do that, not without risking the complete loss of Potter's mouth. The mouth that kissed and tongue that licked Draco's cock wetly, which felt nice and looked *spectacular*, but it wasn't enough. Or maybe it was, but it shouldn't have been because Draco was determined not to lose it before he pushed at least once into that warm mouth. He felt as though he was standing on the brink, trying and failing to jump, and no one was willing to give him a push.

"Potter," Draco whispered, or at least he thought he did; the word didn't sound like it came out of his mouth; he didn't even know his voice could be so low.

Potter looked up and mercifully took the head of Draco's cock into his mouth. Draco held his breath, for a second caught off guard by a strange thought that wished to convince him that the image of Potter — messy haired and bespectacled, lips thin around Draco's cock, shirt all but hanging from his shoulders and the skin of his neck red beneath the ropes — was the most beautiful vision he had ever seen in his life. In that moment, Potter looked positively attractive. The thought was not only strange, but utterly insane, but it was right there in Draco's mind, as though someone had viciously Conjured it and forced it into Draco's head, because surely he couldn't have meant it. Simpering young girls found Potter attractive, and they were stupid and *wrong*; that was an empirical fact. Why had such a thought assaulted him; threatening to turn him into one of Potter's fans?

In the next moment, Draco stopped worrying he'd become a fan of Harry Potter, however. Potter pulled back, grinned, and then continued to lick the tip of Draco's cock as though that was the only thing he knew how to do; as though they had all the time in the world; as though Draco wasn't a shivering wreck that needed to fucking *come*. Draco's hand clenched into a fist, his left yearning to grab Potter's hair and push him forward and his right desperate to yank on the rope and pull the prat closer.

"Potter," Draco growled, pleased to find that it sounded quite intimidating.

Potter clearly didn't think so, however, because he looked up at Draco again with that same maddeningly amused smile before he took the head of Draco's cock into his mouth, not moving, not sucking, not even licking, just holding it in his mouth and looking at Draco as though he waited for something.

Fucking bastard.

"Please?" Draco asked quietly, telling himself it was okay to say it because no one except Potter would ever know that he had begged. Which was silly, because Potter should have been the first person Draco didn't want to witness his moment of weakness.

Potter swirled his tongue a little and then pulled *away*.

Draco felt like sobbing. Perhaps he *had* sobbed out loud; he was pretty sure he had said *please* a

few more times to no avail. Potter leisurely dragged his lips over the tip, pressing kisses — fucking *kisses* — over it. Draco's right hand twitched, pulling Potter's head sharply forward, his mouth pliant enough to let Draco's cock slip inside. Draco froze, terrified that Potter would pull away completely; kisses and licks were better than nothing, after all, but Potter didn't pull away — he *moaned*. Fucking moaned before he looked up at Draco again with that same expectant look that made Draco conclude earlier that Potter wanted him to beg. Confused and astonished, Draco pulled on the rope again, carefully, in case he was wrong, and Potter came closer willingly, letting Draco drag him forward.

Apparently, Draco thought hazily, he didn't need Potter to suck his cock properly in order to make him come. Draco pulled on the rope once more, his cock sliding into Potter's waiting mouth easily, and Draco's vision darkened as Potter made a tiny sound of contentment. It was the realization that Potter was well aware that he was bound to Draco's wrist and that he was waiting for Draco to use that link to drive himself into Potter's mouth that pushed Draco over the edge. His body seized up, pleasure rushing through him in long tremulous surges as his hand tightened around the rope, trapping Potter in place and making him stay still as Draco filled his mouth with his come. Draco shut his eyes, for a few wonderful moments feeling as though he was flying on his broom, soaring toward the ground, not caring if he would crash or not.

He didn't have to care; he wouldn't crash. Hands held him tightly, warm and strong on his thighs, and Draco was positive that Potter wouldn't let him fall.

XIII

Draco sagged in the chair, panting, until quiet coughs brought him around and made him open his eyes. He couldn't help groaning as he caught sight of Potter, choking slightly but still with Draco's cock in his mouth, still licking the dribbling come that ran down to soak Draco's pubic hair and slid over Potter's chin. Draco's hand had lost its strength, no longer gripping the rope tightly, which meant that he wasn't forcing Potter to do anything — Potter licked him clean because he wanted to. A whimper escaped him and Potter must have misinterpreted, thinking it was time to move away. With a long lick and a pop, he released Draco's cock and straightened, looking up at Draco. He stared at him without blinking for a couple of moments before he looked away and wiped his mouth and chin with his sleeve. A blush tinted his cheeks, somewhat belatedly, in Draco's opinion, but his voice was steady when he spoke.

"Um," Potter began and looked up at Draco through his eyelashes. "I'm still confused."

Draco frowned, his sluggish brain unable to process Potter's words.

"About my sexuality," Potter added helpfully.

"Oh." Draco blinked, thinking that it was a perfect opportunity to make fun of Potter by pointing out that when you licked another man's cock with that much enthusiasm you were definitely gay,

but that would have been unwise if Potter's persistent confusion meant Draco would get more spectacular orgasms. "So you want —?"

"I think I'd know for sure if you let me . . ." Potter searched for words for a moment and then concluded, "Fuck you."

Draco almost choked on his own tongue. Potter seemed displeased by that reaction, but he didn't say anything, merely waited for Draco to speak.

It took Draco awhile to find his voice. "I'm sad to say that in that case, this experiment has failed. Find yourself another test subject."

Potter scrunched up his nose and rose up on his knees. He gripped Draco's hips, curved his spine and peered up at Draco's face, now dangerously close to Potter's.

"But I'm rather satisfied with this *particular* test subject," Potter claimed, cocking his head, in that enticing way that made it look as though he was offering his lips for a kiss.

Merlin, Potter was *flirting* with him, and it was working — Draco's cock bravely expressed interest and Draco's hand flew to Potter's face. His thumb brushed a tiny speck of semen clinging to the corner of Potter's lips. Potter kissed the tip of his thumb and in that one bright second Draco was ready to say yes. But the moment passed and Draco was left feeling nothing but terror. How did he end up in this mess? He could hardly remember the trail of his thoughts that convinced him this was a good idea earlier. What Potter asked for was too much, too soon, Draco couldn't agree to it. *Too soon.* That sounded as though Draco planned to turn the experiment into something that would last longer. Though, if Potter was crushing on him then that *was* an option. A terrifying option that made Draco's heart pound, threatening to burst out of his chest.

Panicking, he opened his mouth to snarl at Potter and tell him that he would most certainly never agree to let Potter push something in his bloody arse, but what he said was, "I can't." It sounded miserable and regretful to his own ears.

"Hmm." Potter adopted a pensive look. "What about all those men you slept with during your Slytherin pursuits of carnal pleasures?"

Bloody git. Potter was well aware that Draco had been lying about that, but it didn't stop him from using it when the opportunity arose.

"I topped, obviously."

Potter's lips twitched. "Really? But you're so . . ." Potter squinted at him speculatively. "Blond."

Anger bubbled within Draco until Potter grinned widely, and what sounded like an insult was suddenly transformed into a flirty joke. That pleasant feeling assaulted Draco's insides again and he found himself thinking that Potter looked quite handsome when he was smiling.

He tried to push the thought away, but instead *it* pushed *him* closer to Potter, making him press their lips together.

"If there's anyone here who will get fucked, it's you, Potter," he murmured before kissing Potter soundly. His hands slid down Potter's back, pulling him closer before they slid even lower toward Potter's buttocks, cupping them firmly. The movement stretched the rope and Potter was forced to throw his head back with a gasp. The kiss broke, but Draco had nothing against nibbling the skin of Potter's neck.

"Okay," Potter whispered.

"Mmm, it's more than okay," Draco agreed mindlessly. "It's brilliant," he claimed as he pressed his lips to that inviting spot below Potter's ear, his nostrils filling with Potter's scent and his taste buds exploding in delight.

"I meant, I meant . . ." Potter panted, fisting Draco's shirt and pushing his arse backward into Draco's squeezing hands. "I meant, okay, you can top."

Draco's eyes flew open and he froze with his lips pressed snuggly to Potter's neck. He lifted his head slowly, raising his right hand so Potter could straighten. Potter looked at him, his eyes dark and filled with arousal, though he looked worried, underneath.

"Now?" Draco asked, sure that was an odd question, but it slipped past his lips before he could stop it.

Potter's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. "If you're up for it." He glanced down at Draco's spent cock.

"Give me five minutes," Draco said quickly and then thought about it some more. "Fifteen," he confessed. He stared at his cock, hardly believing that he had agreed to do it. The thought of that kind of sex always seemed disgusting, even with girls, never mind males. And yet, somehow, the only problem Draco could think of right now was the appearance of some unforeseen obstacle that would prevent him having sex with Potter. The thought of it actually happening seemed impossible.

"We need lube," Potter said.

Draco's gaze snapped back to Potter's eyes. "Lube?"

"Lubrication? To make it easier for you to—"

"I know what it is and what it's for," Draco snapped. "We'll just Conjure — oh."

Potter nodded grimly. "No wands."

There it was — an obstacle. Misery overwhelmed Draco. "I don't suppose you'd be willing to —"

"Forget it. No lube, no sex," Potter said firmly.

Draco pouted. "Fuck."

"Apparently not." Potter looked miserable, as well, and he reached for the rope around his neck, as though no fucking meant it was time for him to try and free himself.

Draco didn't feel like helping, so he just stared as Potter struggled with the ropes. The wrist of his left hand was still bruised and injured, and Draco opened his mouth to suggest the use of the Healing Salve, but instead, he ended up laughing at himself. He should have thought of it immediately.

"We can use *that*." Draco pointed at the small vial on the teacher's desk.

Potter turned to look at it and then he stared at Draco doubtfully. "That's for external use. And it's a Healing Salve."

"Don't be daft, Potter," Draco scoffed. "Healing Salve is just liquid when it has nothing to heal. I used to use it for wanking all the time before we learned Conjuring Charms."

Potter licked his lips as though he was considering Draco's words carefully. "That's still external use," he said finally, his voice a bit rough.

Draco wondered if Potter had imagined him wanking, and he blushed a little at the thought.

"It's fine, Potter. Honestly," Draco said. He wasn't lying, either. There were times when he had wanked in his bed and his salve-slicked fingers slipped lower, behind his balls, exploring, pushing, and probing with no undesired side effects. Unless one counted having a spectacular orgasm during that act an undesired side effect. But it wasn't gay if one played with one's own arse, surely. Draco decided to omit that piece of information, nonetheless. "I'm a potion expert. I know these things."

Potter still looked doubtful. "An expert, are you? Oh, you're just full of various talents. Or useless words."

"I'm not lying," Draco said, a bit desperately. It wasn't fair. Potter dangled fucking in front of him, and now when Draco warmed up to the idea he wanted to take it away. Potter stared at him. Draco sighed. "I'm not lying *this* time. I swear."

Potter smiled a little. "All right. I believe you."

And there was that feeling again, in the pit of Draco's stomach, warming him, lifting him,

making his heart beat faster. Draco quickly ran through the Healing Salve's ingredients in his mind, afraid that he had forgotten something and it would cause him to lose the trust Potter had just given him. But he was positive that the salve wouldn't hurt Potter in the slightest; if anything it would soothe the burn not cause it.

Potter grabbed Draco's thigh and his wrist, stood up and yanked Draco's arm upwards. Draco rose out of the chair, but only after he took a moment to stare at Potter's fully hard cock that jutted out of his parted trousers. He nearly stumbled as Potter pulled him toward the teacher's desk, and that was bloody annoying because Draco should have dragged Potter there, not the other way around. Potter was the one on the leash.

As soon as they reached the desk, Draco grabbed the vial and uncorked it.

"Slow down, you maniac," Potter said, sounding half-amused and half-worried. He cleared his throat nervously as Draco smeared some liquid over his fingers. "We haven't thought this through. McGonagall could show up at any moment. And if she catches us — Ow, what are you doing?" Potter cried as Draco grabbed his left forearm and then gently smeared the salve over Potter's injured wrist.

"Oh, don't worry, Potter," Draco said as the salve worked its magic and healed Potter's skin. "McGonagall forced us to hug and she left us lube. I think she wants us to have sex."

Draco grinned at Potter, expecting to receive a grin in return, because his statement was *bloody hilarious*, but Potter wasn't looking at him; he was staring at his healed wrist. When Potter *did* look at him, his green eyes were filled with wonder and some warm emotion that made Draco's pulse race.

Draco looked at Potter's wrist and bit his lips. "No, I just . . ." he said, then paused, not knowing what to say; Potter had clearly made some girly conclusion about Draco's sudden wish to heal his wounds, but Draco only healed him because . . . because . . . Well, he didn't even know why. It just seemed logical at the time. It wasn't a conscious decision. "It was just ugly, that's all. I've wanted to do that for an hour."

Potter's eyes widened and Draco groaned inwardly. What was wrong with his mouth? He constantly said the craziest things. Draco yelped as Potter lunged at him, grabbed his shoulders and pulled him close for a fervent kiss. A kiss that made Draco's toes curl and his knees buckle, and that left him swaying even after Potter pulled away.

"Well, I would have done it sooner if I knew that was the reward," Draco said, this time not even regretting that his disobedient mouth said something stupid again. Potter was smiling at him happily and that was the only important thing in that moment. Well, that and impending sex, obviously. "You haven't changed your mind, have you?" Draco asked worriedly. "Because of McGonagall?"

Potter shook his head with that warm emotion still present in his eyes. "No."

"Good." Draco breathed a sigh of relief. He looked at Potter and took two steps back, extending the rope that bound him to Potter's neck. He stared his fill, feasting on the sight of Potter's cock, the dark hair above it, the bare chest expanding as Potter breathed, the rope around Potter's neck and Potter's flushed face. "Well then," Draco said, trying not to sound nervous. "Strip. "

XIV

Potter grimaced and then scratched the back of his head self-consciously, messing up his hair horridly with the nervous gesture. Draco waited, not quite patiently, his blood rushing south and his cock filling at Potter's every movement. Watching Potter toy with the waistband of his trousers was a bit too much and Draco almost snapped and yelled, "Today would be nice, Potter!" but if he were to be honest with himself, he didn't really want Potter to rush. Draco's nerves might not have survived if Potter demanded speed.

Finally, Potter toed off his shoes and lowered his trousers. They slipped down and pooled around his ankles and Draco's gaze was drawn to Potter's legs, locking on his knees, knobby but oddly endearing. So endearing, Draco was possessed with the sudden urge to touch and lick them, which was probably the oddest thing that had ever come to his mind — one shouldn't be attracted to knees, surely — but the need to know if Potter tasted good *everywhere* was overwhelming.

Potter stepped out of his trousers and then stood still, one of his hands in his hair again and the other tugging on the hem of his shirt. He looked as though he was awaiting Draco's judgment.

Draco wondered if it would be considered acceptable if he grabbed Potter and threw him on the desk, or at least yanked the rope and pulled Potter toward him, not that Draco had anything against *staring*. Potter still had his socks on, gray and patched, and his unbuttoned shirt swayed slightly around his hips, his cock heavy and pointing at Draco. Grabbing him and pulling him closer was surely the most logical thing to do, but Draco's limbs refused to move.

"You're not naked," Draco pointed out after a while.

"Um, the less clothes to put back on, the better. In case McGonagall shows up," Potter said and took a tiny step forward. "Er . . ." He looked at the teacher's desk as though to ask, "Will we do it there?"

Draco swallowed heavily. "Bend over any surface you wish, Potter," he said, unable to keep a smile of his face. It was hard to believe that a day had come when he was in a position to tell Potter something as crude as *bend over*, and Potter would listen to him rather than hex him.

"As if." Potter glared.

Draco sighed. Of course, it couldn't have been that simple.

"I'm not taking my eyes off of you," Potter grumbled, but took another tiny step forward.

It could have been a romantic statement, but it actually sounded threatening. Draco rubbed his temples, displeased. Did that mean Potter planned to look at him while they fucked? Because that sounded nerve-wrecking. And honestly, didn't gay men do it with one of them bent over? Would it work otherwise? Annoyed enough to be petulant, Draco pulled on the rope, though he did it gently. Potter made a small sound of surprise and rose up on his toes, but he didn't complain, so Draco pulled again, until Potter had no choice but to move forward or stumble. Or, obviously, grab the rope, wrap it around Draco's neck and strangle him, which fortunately, he hadn't done. Slowly, Potter approached as Draco grabbed the rope with both hands, pulling and gripping it closer and closer to Potter's neck until Potter stood right in front of him. Without a thought, he pressed his lips to Potter's and gave him a lingering kiss. Potter responded, but pulled away quickly. He grabbed Draco's bound wrist and peered into his face.

Draco shifted his weight uncomfortably.

"Do you know what to do with that?" Potter asked and tilted his chin toward the vial Draco had deposited on the teacher's desk.

"Of course," Draco scoffed, insulted.

"Really? What?"

"Potter, I know what to do."

"Then say it."

"Potter —"

Potter's grip on Draco's wrist tightened. "Spell it out, Malfoy," Potter said through clenched teeth.

Draco rolled his eyes. "For fuck's sake! I smear it over my prick and shove it into — *What?*"

Potter looked pained. "You're supposed to use your fingers first. One by one, to make it, er, easier. It would hurt, otherwise."

Draco scowled. "I haven't taken your delicacy into account."

"It's pretty standard, Malfoy."

"Well, excuse me Mr Gay All-knowing."

Potter sighed. "If you don't want to do it, I can do it myself."

Draco's eyes widened as the image of Potter lying on the desk and pushing his fingers into his own arse appeared unbidden in his mind. He would have *begged* Potter to do it himself, but judging by Potter's displeased expression, the delicate git would have been insulted.

"I'll do it, Potter, stop moping," Draco said and gave Potter a little push toward the desk.

Potter grimaced and mumbled something that sounded like, "not moping, you uninformed prat," but then he turned and sat on the desk. He shifted around and squirmed, clearly uncomfortable sitting on the rough wood with his bare arse. The teacher's desk was taller than the others in the room — of perfect height, in Draco's opinion — and Potter's feet barely touched the floor.

"We can't do it like that —" Draco said and then yelped as Potter lay down suddenly, pulling Draco with him by his wrist.

Potter — the evil bastard — laughed breathlessly as Draco was forced between Potter's legs, his head all but slamming against Potter's stomach.

"Really, Potter," Draco said reproachfully, but his lips did not appear to be bothered and they took advantage of the situation by trailing over the skin of Potter's stomach, pressing a few small kisses there. Potter stopped laughing, gasping a little instead, and Draco grinned against his skin, pleased that he at least still knew how to shut Potter up. Potter's fingers ran through Draco's hair and Draco sighed a little at the pleasant caress and then, a bit reluctantly, he shook off both of Potter's hands and straightened slowly, testing the length of the rope. He could reach Potter's hip with his right hand, but couldn't move it any lower.

Lovely as the sight of Potter lying down was, the backs of Potter's thighs were pressed to the desk's surface, his legs enclosing Draco's body, and Draco might have known little about anal sex, but he was sure that this would not work.

"Um." Draco looked at Potter's face. "Shouldn't you . . ."

"Right," Potter said quickly, clenching his jaw, his expression tight. He raised his legs a bit and Draco moved to the side, so Potter wouldn't smack him with his knees and feet.

Potter, apparently, wasn't someone who did things half-way. Draco was caught off guard as Potter swung his legs upward, spread them and bent them at the knees, pulling them toward his chest. It left him shamelessly exposed in a way no one had ever exposed themselves to Draco's gaze. His position was one Draco would have thought funny if he had merely imagined it, especially with Potter's too-big socks on his feet, but now he couldn't bear to describe the position as anything but incredibly erotic. Dazedly, Draco edged closer and stood directly between Potter's spread thighs. He maneuvered his right hand, stretching the rope over Potter's stomach, so he could grip Potter's leg below the knee, helping Potter keep his legs in the position they were in. After a few steadying breaths, he trailed his free hand over Potter's thigh, pale and perfect, leading a path to Potter's arse; his very firm male arse that shouldn't have been referred to as beautiful but that was the only epithet Draco could think of at the moment. Draco's gaze

swept over Potter's cock that fell heavily on Potter's stomach, his balls that looked ready to be pulled into Draco's mouth so he could suck them, and his arsehole, dusty pink and tiny, so fucking tiny Draco suspected that whoever claimed it was possible to push one's cock in there was insane.

"Malfoy," Potter said, his tone impatient.

Draco looked up just as Potter quickly turned his head and studied the classroom's wall.

"Are you going to do something or are you going to stare?" Potter said quietly, his cheeks pink.

Draco exhaled slowly; amazed to learn that Potter was embarrassed. He should have realized it sooner, but Potter had so boldly displayed himself, Draco was sure Potter had no shame. Obviously, that wasn't true. Potter simply followed the silly Gryffindor rule of "do it first and think about the consequences later." Draco wondered how that must have felt — spreading oneself to the other's gaze. He tried to imagine himself in that position as Potter stared at him. The thought filled him with terror and faintness and — sweet Merlin — *arousal*.

Gulping and shaking his head to clear it, Draco grabbed the vial and switched it into his right hand and poured a small amount of the slick colorless liquid over the fingers of his left hand. Or at least he planned to pour just a small amount, but he ended up coating his entire hand as well as Potter's stomach. Potter's muscles convulsed and shuddered and Draco mumbled an apology, embarrassed by his sudden clumsiness.

His hands were shaking, not because of nervousness exactly, though that was a part of it, but because it hit him suddenly that they were really going to do this. That Potter would let Draco fuck him. That he would let Draco look, touch and — Merlin — violate the most private — the dirtiest — part of him. Draco waited for the feeling of power to overwhelm him, but this time he didn't feel powerful, he felt *humbled*. As far as Draco could tell, Potter had never let anyone else do that to him, but here he was, waiting for Draco to push inside him. It made Draco wonder what he had done to deserve it.

Draco set the vial aside on the desk and trailed his slick hand over the smooth skin of Potter's arse, moving toward the furrowed opening that shouldn't have been that interesting to look at but was. After staring at it for another long moment, Draco bit his lip and touched the tip of his forefinger to Potter's anus. Potter gasped, his body jerking, and Draco quickly pulled his finger away, startled by the violent reaction. Only after Potter calmed down — though his breath still came in short gasps and his gaze was still fixed on the classroom wall — did Draco dare to touch him again. He dragged his fingertip against the cleft, giving Potter time to anticipate the intimate touch, though Potter shuddered even before Draco had reached his objective again. Potter's reaction wasn't as violent the second time, but he gurgled something incoherent and shifted as though trying to run away from Draco's exploring finger.

Potter wasn't crazy if he was trying to run, Draco thought. Pushing something past that tightness simply couldn't be done. Bravely, Draco experimentally pressed his finger firmly against it, and

his fingertip pushed in, but only a little before it felt resistance. Potter made a small sound that didn't sound as though he was distressed or in pain — that at least was encouraging. Draco's throat went dry and his forehead dampened as he caressed Potter's anus, for a second daring to imagine Potter doing that to him before his mind shied away from the thought. Draco moved his fingertip in tiny circles, pushed a little and then pulled away, unable to tear his gaze away from what he was doing. He was fully aware that his cock was painfully hard again and fifteen minutes couldn't have passed. Merlin, he wanted this — *desperately*. He didn't care that it was declared dirty and wrong by many of his friends; he didn't care that the mechanism of the act seemed impossible; he had never been so aroused in his life. Being with girls never came close to what he was feeling now. For fuck's sake, he thought that Potter's arsehole was *pretty*. Pretty and touchable, and Salazar forgive him, *inviting*. Not just begging for Draco's cock, but his *mouth*.

Draco felt a sharp pain in his knees, but it was only after Potter's loud cry of "Malfoy! Malfoy, *what are you doing?*" did he realize he had knelt down onto the floor, which explained why Potter's arse was now mere inches away from his face. Potter twisted as though trying to get up and Draco distractedly patted Potter's thigh and made a shushing noise. Surprisingly, it soothed Potter; though, for how long, Draco didn't know. He didn't really want to waste time thinking about it, not while his finger was allowed to treat Potter to such a personal touch. The intimacy of the act made Draco's head spin.

Potter was enchanted, Draco concluded as his breath ghosted over Potter's hole and it *fluttered*. Someone had charmed him to make his skin pull Draco's lips toward it. It didn't matter which part of Potter he was staring at: his lips, neck, chest, cock or arsehole, Draco was drawn toward it, forced to yield and press his mouth to whichever alluring part of Potter's body was presented to him. It was the only explanation, the only possible reason that could have made Draco feel compelled to touch Potter's hole with the tip of his tongue before he opened his mouth and kissed it as he had kissed Potter's lips.

Potter bucked wildly and positively hollered, sounding shocked to the core. Draco pulled away slightly, but had no desire to move too far. It was possible he had done something very, *very* wrong; in fact, he was sure of it, but he couldn't make himself care. Just as he couldn't have stopped himself from licking Potter's neck and smelling his hair earlier. It was clearly a vicious enchantment, but that meant it was pointless to try and fight it.

"What are you —?" Potter gasped, twisting around before he whimpered, "Sweet God. Malfoy, that's . . ."

Draco didn't know what Potter wanted to say, but he supposed it was something positive since his last word trailed into a tortured moan. Emboldened, he caught Potter's flailing hand and gripped it tightly, intertwining their fingers, though considering that Draco's right hand was stretched taut and pressed against Potter's thigh, it seemed unlikely that he was the one who had initiated hand-holding. Regardless of which one of them made the first move, it calmed Potter down somewhat, though he was still chanting *Malfoy* and occasionally crying out for God. His thigh shivered beneath Draco's left hand, the muscles in his arse clenching in front of Draco's face. It was a good reaction, Draco decided, one he would like to prolong. So Draco did it again,

licking a long stripe over Potter's cleft, moving toward Potter's hole as a long moan escaped Potter and he dragged out the name *Draco*, purring the r and moaning the o just as Draco reached his hole again.

It didn't taste sweet and delicious as the skin of Potter's neck, but he didn't taste bad, either. He tasted Potter-like, which was a flavor Draco was rapidly becoming attracted to — *addicted to*. As addicted as he was to Potter's moans and gasps, and the tight grip Potter had on Draco's hand. The sounds that Potter made were the most beautiful part of it, Draco decided as he licked the wrinkled skin of Potter's hole with short firm licks, then flattened his tongue against it and dragged it firmly up and down, occasionally pressing his lips to the skin and sucking as harshly as he dared. Potter's cries were a beautiful melody to Draco's ears, interspersed with whimpers of disbelief, moans of pleasure and Draco's name that was gasped with wonder.

Draco's tongue slipped inside Potter with ease, though after it did, Potter clenched and cursed indecently, bucking against Draco's mouth, nearly pushing him away. The desk squeaked in protest and Draco squeezed Potter's hand and trailed his fingertips over Potter's sweaty thigh, trying to calm him down without moving his mouth away from Potter's arse. It worked incredibly, or Potter had simply lost all of his energy, because he stopped fighting. He's body sagged as though defeated, becoming pliant beneath Draco's touch; he even stopped yelling — all he seemed capable of were tiny choking whimpers, though his grip on Draco's hand remained strong.

It was incredible, Draco though giddily, that he had managed to reduce Potter to that, but it still didn't make him feel powerful, just satisfied and oddly grateful to whatever deity allowed him to do it. He moved his tongue in and out of Potter with ease, which shouldn't have made him happy, but it did, and he pushed as deep as he could, remembering only after a long while that he could push something else even deeper inside.

Draco slowed his movements, planning to move away, though he did so reluctantly. The fear of McGonagall made him speed toward his goal, which was pushing his cock where his tongue had been. His lips made an embarrassing smacking sound as he pulled away, and Draco cringed but wasted no time thinking about it. He pressed his finger to the reddish skin, rubbed it a little, and then pushed inside firmly. The digit slipped into Potter's arse easily, and Potter made no sound of discomfort; Draco wondered if he was even aware that he was now being penetrated by Draco's finger and not his tongue. Potter seemed utterly lost, moaning ceaselessly and shuddering so much the desk shook with him.

Only after Draco carefully pushed two fingers inside him did Potter react, his hips moving and arse pushing towards Draco's fingers as though he was trying to pull them deeper inside. Draco groaned, regretting he didn't have an extra hand to squeeze his cock with, because the sight of his fingers moving in and out of Potter's arse was too much to bear, especially when Potter so obviously enjoyed it.

"Draco," Potter gurgled, sounding as though he was on the brink of orgasm.

Which wasn't good. Draco feared that Potter would change his mind if he finished before Draco had a chance to do as he wished. He pulled his fingers away and shot up much too quickly. His vision blurred for a moment and his legs refused to support him properly. When he finally focused his gaze on Potter, he couldn't help gasping. Potter stared straight at him, his face red and sweaty and eyes wide and dark. He no longer looked embarrassed, just aroused and disbelieving.

Shivering from the need to be inside Potter *right now*, Draco pressed his fingers to Potter's arse again but Potter shook his head violently and squirmed as though trying to get closer to Draco.

"It's fine," Potter gasped. "It's fine. Just do it."

Draco's hand froze and he nodded so vigorously he made himself dizzy. "Right. Okay," he said breathlessly. He grabbed his cock, stroking it with his slick hand, trying hard not to come, which was difficult because Potter was *looking* at him, moaning and trying to spread his legs even wider, which was actually impossible.

Draco closed his eyes for a moment and then pressed the tip of his cock to Potter's arsehole, his whole body shivering harder than Potter's.

"Are you sure?" *This will work?* he added in his mind.

"Yes." Potter nodded, then moaned. "Yes yes yes. Just . . . f*or fuck's sake!*" Potter pushed downwards, trying to pull Draco's cock inside. The sight of it made Draco whimper pathetically, and he grabbed Potter's legs, right below his knees, and slowly pushed forward.

Nothing could have prepared him for the feeling of having the head of his cock wrapped with something so tight; the only reason he didn't come right then and there was his determination to do this *right*. Potter's long moan and his quiet gasps of, "It's fine, it's fine, it's fine" prompted him to push forward more firmly. It wasn't easy. He pushed in a little and pulled out a little, each time penetrating deeper, stopping when Potter gasped and shivered. When his balls finally pressed snugly against Potter's arse, Potter cried out and clenched around Draco's cock so tightly Draco was positively in pain, though complaining about it was the last thought on his mind. He opened his eyes, unaware he had closed them and looked at Potter's face. Potter was staring at the ceiling; his lips shaped into an O and his eyes wide and round. For one terrifying moment, Draco thought that Potter had fucking *died*, but then he noticed that Potter's chest was moving up and down.

"Are you okay?" Draco whispered, but Potter didn't acknowledge him. "Potter, are you okay?" Draco said louder, panicking.

Slowly, Potter looked at him and blinked once. 'Yeah," he said finally, sounding surprised. "I'm okay. More than okay. I'm brilliant," Potter babbled almost frantically, then added, "And very gay, apparently." He laughed, breathlessly and a bit hysterically; Draco could feel the ripples that shook Potter's body in his cock. It occurred to Draco that Potter was acting as though he really

was confused about his sexuality until that moment, and that required some reflection and revision of Draco's earlier conclusions, but then Potter said, "*Move*," and Draco stopped thinking.

His hips moved, as ordered, and he pulled out and pushed back in, slowly at first, but he couldn't maintain the slow rhythm. Potter twisted on the desk, pressing his palms against the surface to support himself as he pushed back and circled his hips, welcoming Draco's every thrust. He cried out suddenly, and Draco froze and was about to ask if something was wrong, but Potter moaned, whispering, "Don't stop," with near panic in his voice and Draco readily obeyed him. Potter gasped louder, pushing his legs against Draco's arms so hard Draco feared he would lose his grip on them. But there was little time for fear. Draco gasped as his orgasm rushed through him, surprising him with its suddenness and intensity. He barely remained standing, leaning heavily on Potter's legs as his hips pumped furiously.

He couldn't stop moving, even though his thrusts lost their intensity. Potter's choking gasps made him struggle to open his eyes, and he felt guilty that he had forgotten about Potter's pleasure. Potter, however, hadn't forgotten about it; his hand was wrapped around his cock, stroking furiously. Blinking and trying to gather his bearings, Draco pulled out of Potter carefully, and reached to steady Potter's hand. As Draco grabbed his wrists and tugged, Potter groaned in protest.

"Hey," Draco said in a scratchy voice, waiting for Potter to look at him. When Potter finally focused on his face, Draco tugged on his hand again and said, "Come here."

Potter frowned as Draco yanked the rope, and pulled Potter upwards with his left hand. Potter lowered his legs, wincing, and then sat up, his head falling heavily onto Draco's shoulder. He shivered a little and squirmed, probably not very comfortable sitting on his sore arse. Draco gripped his hair and made him raise his head, pressing a small kiss to Potter's lips. His cheeks burned hotly when he remembered where his mouth had been, but Potter made no comment. He did gasp loudly, however, when Draco reached down to wrap his fingers around Potter's cock and then fell on his knees again.

Potter had done this to him, Draco thought as he stared at the swollen red head of Potter's cock, returning the favor was only fair. Gulping, his nose full of Potter's heady scent, Draco leaned in and licked the dripping tip, gasping a little as Potter twitched, his hands flying to grip Draco's hair. Not dissuaded by the bitter taste in the slightest, Draco licked it again, more determinedly, at the same time moving his hand up and down the length of Potter's cock. Potter's fingers clutched his hair painfully, though Potter had tried to ease his grip and failed every time.

"You're trying to kill me," Potter said in a small voice, sounding as though he would be perfectly happy even if his accusation turned out to be true.

Draco paid little attention to him, trying to pull as much of Potter's cock inside his mouth as he could and make his hand move at the same time. It was difficult to achieve, but Draco found his rhythm, moving his head and hand together, not minding the taste, but loving the feel of the warm weight on his tongue. He sucked experimentally and Potter shuddered, so Draco did it

again and again, cupping Potter's balls and tugging on them until Potter's grip on his hair turned painful.

"Malfoy, *Malfoy*, I'm going to come," Potter gasped and shuddered again.

Panicking slightly, afraid that he would choke if Potter spilled himself in his mouth, Draco pulled away, stroking Potter harder with his hand and licking the tip as it spouted sticky bitter liquid. He could feel it dripping over his mouth and hand, but kept licking, remembering how he had loved it when Potter did it to him.

Potter stopped shuddering and he whimpered a little, so Draco moved away, daring to look up. Potter's gaze was fixed on him, wide and hungry, as though he hadn't just come. Draco bit his lip, Potter's taste still heavy in his mouth, and pulled his head away, shaking it to make Potter release his hair. Potter let go, but didn't move his hands. He stroked Draco's hair gently, as though he wished to show his gratitude. Draco's heart began hammering again; Potter's tender gesture was too much for him to take. But he couldn't bear to stop Potter's caresses. His eyelashes fluttered as he tried to let the soft touches soothe him.

It wasn't meant to be, however. Just as Draco closed his eyes, he heard the most terrible sound in his life. It was just a tiny click, but it resonated in Draco's mind like a bang. As the door squeaked open, he supposed he should have felt pleased that McGonagall had at least allowed them to finish.

Potter gasped a little, his fingers in Draco's hair stilling, and Draco closed his eyes tighter in some sort of childish belief that if he didn't see anything, no one would see him.

"Is it McGonagall?" Draco whispered, aware that even though he had asked it quietly anyone in the classroom would hear him. "Is it?" he asked again, cringing.

"Um. No, actually," Potter said, sounding embarrassed but a bit relieved.

Hopeful, Draco opened his eyes and slowly turned his head to see who was standing quietly in the doorway. The moment he caught sight of the wide-eyed person gaping at them with a wand in his hand, Draco groaned and looked away.

Bloody Longbottom.

"Er . . ." Longbottom cleared his throat. "All right there, Harry?" he asked and Draco resentfully thought he could detect amusement in his tone. Of all the people to find him in this position . . . Well, Draco didn't really want anyone to find him on his knees in front of Potter, but the fact that it was Longbottom was especially irksome. Draco considered standing up, but he wasn't sure if his legs would support him. Besides, having Potter's hands in his hair was soothing even in that terrible moment.

"Um." Potter pulled one of his hands away and tried to cover his crotch with his shirt, not quite

successfully. "I'm very well, thank you," Potter said primly.

Draco groaned and pressed his forehead to Potter's thigh. "Leave, Longbottom, you bloody pervert," he said, surprising himself by sounding quite firm.

"Professor McGonagall sent me," Longbottom said a bit defensively. "Told me to check if you were fighting or not. Wise woman, not coming to look herself. Slightly evil, though." Longbottom paused, then added, "I always knew I was afraid of her for a good reason."

"We're not fighting," Potter said quickly and then cleared his throat. "Obviously," he added more quietly.

"Obviously," Longbottom repeated, now definitely on the verge of laughter.

"What will you tell McGonagall?" Potter asked and Draco held his breath.

"Well, the truth, of course. I have to," Longbottom said seriously and Draco cursed under his breath. However, Longbottom added, "That you're not fighting but, er, working very hard." At that, Longbottom burst out laughing.

Draco sighed in relief but refused to feel gratitude toward Longbottom.

"Thanks, Neville," Potter said brightly.

"No problem, mate." Longbottom cleared his throat. "Well, I see you have everything under control, Harry, so I guess I'll —"

Draco scrambled upwards and waved his bound wrist wildly, showing Longbottom that it was tied to Potter's neck. "I'm the one who has everything under control!" he exclaimed.

Potter laughed and Longbottom nodded and said, "That's nice, Malfoy."

Draco glared at him and Longbottom chuckled, winked, and stepped backward, preparing to close the door. Just as Draco thought he would leave them alone, Longbottom said, "Oh and, Malfoy?"

"What?" Draco growled.

"That whole kneeling in front of Harry thing? Good look on you." With that, he closed the door and locked them.

Potter laughed again and Draco turned to glare at him.

"Neville won't say anything to anyone," Potter promised.

"Oh, I'm sure he won't," Draco said furiously. "I have to say he's acting very suspicious. Giving me those looks and *winks*."

"Er," Potter began but Draco cut him off.

"I bet you two planned all of this, didn't you?"

Potter blinked and stared at him in amazement. "You say the craziest things," he said. "Planned what? And why?"

"Everything!" Draco burst out. "The ropes, the detention, the sex! I bet McGonagall was in on it, too. I feel violated."

Potter looked gobsmacked. "Um," he said after awhile. "May I ask, *why* we would do that?"

"Because." Draco leaned in closer to Potter. "Because they were helping you get what you so desperately wanted – *me*. Because you're madly in love with me."

"I am?"

"It's so obvious, it's ridiculous."

"It is?"

"Yes, Potter, it is. I figured you out an hour ago," Draco ranted, upset that Potter refused to admit it. "All those things you did. You saved my life, you talked McGonagall into letting me come back to Hogwarts, you said you care about my future, you agreed to have sex with me — jumped at the chance, I'd say. You let me . . . well, you know, er, fuck you." Draco pressed his lips together and decided it was time to shut up, especially since Potter's eyes were widening by the second.

Potter scratched the back of his head and looked like he didn't know which allegation to address first. "I also talked McGonagall into accepting Pansy back. Do you think I'm in love with her, too?" he asked finally.

"Really?" Draco asked, distracted. "She thinks you hate her. She's convinced you'll try to murder her. I hear she sleeps with her wand and wakes up in the middle of the night shouting, 'Is he here? Is he here?'"

Potter grinned. "Yeah? That's . . . *good*," he decided.

"But that doesn't prove anything," Draco said quickly. "You do realize you made love to my shirt and all but worshiped my cock, earlier?"

"It's a nice shirt. Not a bad cock, either," Potter said, still grinning.

Even though Potter's last statement made him a bit giddy, Draco didn't plan to give up. "Oh, *please*. You planned this. The ropes do whatever you want them to. Even *this*." Draco raised his wrist.

Potter stopped grinning and looked at the ropes in surprise. He stared at them for a few moments and then said pensively, "Hmm, could be. I think your wand just likes me. *A lot*."

Draco scowled and then almost choked when Potter added, "Like its owner."

"I don't *like* you," Draco said, though the statement sounded odd to his own ears.

"You're right. That's not a good description. It would be better if I claimed that you're crushing on me. Which you *are*." Potter raised his eyebrow smugly.

"You and your sneaky tactics, Potter. How very Slytherin of you to try and confuse your opponent with crazy talk. Much like your claim that you were confused about your orientation."

Potter sighed heavily. "Malfoy, I promise you, I told you nothing but the truth. I *was* confused."

"Sure, so confused you pounced on me the moment I offered sex."

"Well, what did you expect? You were kissing me and *sniffing* my hair. And *licking my neck*." Potter swallowed. "And well, obviously, I'm gay and I never did anything with another male before and it *affected* me."

"It affected you," Draco said slowly, then raised his voice and added, "because you're *crushing* on me."

"I admit that I was . . . physically attracted to you and you *were* the main source of my confusion — which was very distressing, by the way — but . . . you're *Malfoy*. It never crossed my mind that you and I . . . well, it crossed my mind, in a strictly sexual sense, but I wouldn't crush on someone who hates me and I thought you did, and I thought you were a git." Potter frowned. "I suppose you *are* a git and a bit mental, but you're surprisingly *funny*. Sort of charming, really. In a strange, crazy way. And . . ." Potter looked at him and smiled a little uncertainly. "Oddly cute." Potter looked as distressed by that proclamation as Draco was himself.

That was all very nice, except for the git part, but Draco wanted Potter to be blunt and to say clearly what they both knew was true. "Why won't you just admit that you're in love? It's okay, I won't tell anyone."

"*You* admit it," Potter said stubbornly. "You're the one who . . ." Potter's voice turned lower, his cheeks reddening. "*Licked my arse*," he whispered.

Draco winced, but then remembered the event clearly, which made his blood rush south. "That

was a spontaneous reaction."

Potter laughed and shook his head. "*Oddly* cute," he repeated in wonder.

Distressed by Potter's inability to see the truth, Draco looked at his feet and then said, "*You're* a git," a bit belatedly.

"Does it matter what we thought of each other before? I didn't plan anything, I swear."

"It matters because you're a liar and you won't admit it." Honestly, why couldn't Potter just say it? If Potter said it then it would have been easier to . . . *believe* it.

Potter bumped his sock-covered foot against Draco's leg. "Does that mean you don't want to experiment with me anymore?"

Biting his lip, Draco glanced up. He tried not to sound hopeful when he asked, "I don't know. Does it? You resolved your confusion successfully."

Potter shrugged nonchalantly. "It was a successful experiment, for both of us. But I think the matter requires further study."

Draco smiled a little, liking the thought of further study very much, but he hurried to say, "I decided I'm bisexual. Not gay, though."

Potter nodded seriously, then smiled. "Okay, then." He swung his legs and hooked his heels behind Draco's knees, pulling him forward between his parted thighs. Draco yelped, nearly falling, but Potter caught him and grinned at him happily once he had him trapped with his arms and legs.

"Honestly," Draco complained, but couldn't find it within himself to feel angry. Not when Potter was smiling at him like that. And not when there were *studies* to perform.

"So we've agreed on further experimentation?" Potter asked in a businesslike tone, his eyes dancing as he leaned forward so their lips were almost touching.

"I suppose. If you *insist*," Draco said a bit breathlessly and then moaned as Potter kissed him as though to seal their deal. They shared a long, slow kiss that melted Draco from within, until he found himself feeling boneless in Potter's embrace.

Something important occurred to him and he pulled away reluctantly.

"You meant *now*, right?"

Potter gaped at him and then closed his mouth with a snap. He pursed his lips in thought. "Now sounds good," he said at last. "Though, well, there is so much we still have to try — to make sure

we've covered everything. We can't do it all *today*."

Draco wrapped his arms around Potter's waist. "So, we'll meet again? Voluntarily? Without the ropes?"

Potter frowned. "We could bring the ropes."

Draco's lips stretched into a wide smile, but then he asked a bit worriedly, "But no one will know about this?"

"Naturally, it's a secret." Potter nodded. "But we'll discuss that part of the deal again in a . . . month." Potter gave him a furtive glance. "Until then you're on probation," he mumbled.

Having no idea what Potter meant by that, Draco concentrated on Potter's first statement. "A month?" he asked. "That's a lot of . . ."

"Orgasms?"

"Time." Draco chuckled. "But, yes, a lot of orgasms, too." And a lot of kissing, and touching, and licking and . . . Draco's mind spun as he thought about the number of possibilities. "Just so we're clear, Potter — I don't bottom."

"Of course not!" Potter gasped as though scandalized, and then grinned angelically. "We'll discuss that in a month, too. Or sooner."

Draco opened his mouth to complain, but Potter kissed him again, which was unfair because that was *Draco's* shutting-up tactic, but he couldn't complain when Potter's tongue slipped into his mouth, demanding a response. Groaning, Draco kissed back, losing himself for a few wonderful moments, but then he had forgotten to breathe again and had to pull away.

Potter looked equally smitten, pressing his lips to Draco's with his eyes half-closed.

"For the record," Draco said between answering Potter's kisses, "because I don't want you to think that I'm not aware of it . . ."

"Mmm?" Potter moaned more than asked, grabbing Draco's arse and pulling him closer.

Draco leaned in and buried his nose in Potter's hair, sighing contentedly as he realized he would be able to do it again and again for who knew how long. It was a comforting and exhilarating thought.

"It's my duty to inform you, Potter," Draco murmured against Potter's ear, "that you are completely and *utterly* in denial."

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