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Name: Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name
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Chapter 1 to 18

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Chapter: 1

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:
Summary: Harry's in his 7th year and secrets, lies and betrayals only add to the burdens of who he is. Can love and friendship help him overcome his trials or will he lose himself forever? (HP/DM, SS/RL/SB)
This is a 'challenge' fic. Again for those of you not knowing Severitus's work, go read A Father's Sin, a wonderful fic and will give you some ideas where this is heading (for those of you who don't already know what the challenge is anyway. For those that do...:whistles:). If I say it now I'm just giving away everything, and those of you who know me know I hate to do that! :grins:

I am slowly reediting this fic by the by, so you might want to check back for updates from time to time. I'll let you know which chaps have been reedited in the beginning of the chap, I felt it was time to do some revamps, and I see a few places I needed to change things round a bit now that I'm almost done with it to make sense in some other areas. Hence why the rewrites J Enjoy!

~~Chapter One: Midnight Strolls and Puppy Dog Tails~~

Rain. No matter how hard Harry Potter tried to fight it, the rain always seemed to bring out something in him that reeled with emotions. Sadness. Anger. Desperation. Hate. The inability to be able to control the rain only served to remind him of the inability to control his life. A life in which he wished sometimes that like the end of a rainstorm, that it would just go away and not return for hopefully a very long time.
For some people daily living was good enough, to just be able to blend in and not have to worry about where they were headed or who they were. Ordinary everyday human beings. But for him...it was nothing more than a wishful hope that someone like himself could hide from the

world. For him it was just a dream, for he could not hide from the world, not from the world he considered home anyway, that being the Wizarding World. No, Harry Potter couldn't just 'disappear' into a non-entity in this world, for a lot of very good reasons.
Reasons that over the last seven years had become a curse rather than a blessing. That had singled him out from the very beginning of his new life, that had brought him friends and enemies alike. Reasons that kept him in a gilded cage on display to all for something he didn't ask for, nor even remember. A wound that for six years had tormented him, and sometimes he felt like it was the only reason he existed at all. One small simple scar had defined his entire life and brought him as much unhappiness any one thing could. And there wasn't a single soul in the world he could really talk to that would understand that.
Harry sighed as he turned away from the window and glanced round the room, pausing to listen to the now familiar snores coming from one of the beds. This was his room, his dorm at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Six years ago he had come here after discovering who he really was, hope heavy in his heart that he could find a place of his own, long before he really understood what and who he was. Six years ago now he found out he was a wizard, and a pretty good one it had turned out after all if he was vain enough to even admit it, which in truth he wasn't.
It had been a heck of a ride in the past six years though he'd have to admit, and he'd made a lot of friends, two best friends even. He found out he'd had a godfather three years ago, even if that person was an escaped convict and to this day still was living life on the run. He had grown to really love and care for Sirius Black though, mainly because he was one of the last links to his parents. The family he'd never known, nor ever would get to know except through pictures and tales.
It hadn't all been roses since he'd gotten to Hogwarts however, not by any means. Every year like clockwork, except in his third year and his seventh year so far since it had just started, his worst nemesis in the world reminded him of why he was so miserable, and what had been taken from him. Why he had been left on his hated Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon's doorstep when he was just over a year old, alone and orphaned, and that miserableness came in the form of one Tom Marvelo Riddle, or rather an evil wizard named Lord Voldemort.
As if taking away his parents hadn't been enough, Voldemort was now slowly beginning to take away everything Harry held important, everything that he knew Harry would react to. Cedric Diggory's death in Harry's fourth year had only been the first incident in the chain, and even though Harry hadn't even really known the boy well his death had had a lasting imprint on him. The last three years had only gotten worse, far far worse, and looking round the dorm room was proof of that.
Where five boys should have been sleeping and doing nothing more then having happy dreams of life after Hogwarts, only three including himself remained. Harry again had been in the wrong place at the wrong time and suffered dearly for it, another reminder that Voldemort was going to end things on his terms, and Harry was going to pay for something he didn't even understand. He never had understood why Voldemort had killed his parents, or had wanted him killed so badly, and somehow he had a feeling there was more to his parents death and his first defeat of Voldemort than met the eye. Whatever the case was Voldemort was going to make sure Harry paid for whatever it was, and pay dearly Harry had.
While on a trip to Diagon Alley to get his school supplies in the summer between fourth and fifth year, Harry had meet up with Dean Thomas, one of his Gryffindor dorm mates. The two of them

were supposed to be meeting Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, Harry's two very best friends, but they were late so Harry and Dean stopped to have a peek at the new Quidditch supplies and the latest broom model coming out, the Firebolt 2002. It turned out to be very bad timing however as a group of Death Eaters came out of Knockturn Alley and made a surprise attack on everyone. Before anyone could even react and alert the authorities the Death Eaters were gone, leaving behind more than a few bodies in the process and the sign of the Morsmordre, Voldemort's personal symbol of destruction, high in the air.

Dean had sadly been amongst those bodies. He had gotten hit by the Avada Kedavra, the infamous 'killing curse', while he and Harry had been leaving the shop. Harry had tried to pull Dean back into the shop when he'd realised what was going on outside but it was too late. The moment the door had opened Dean went crashing to the floor, and Harry was left to pick up the pieces. Just like with Cedric, Harry had been powerless to stop a death, only Dean's death had hit him much harder since he was not only a dorm mate, but a good friend on top.

It had taken months before Harry finally recovered from Dean's loss, but even Harry's mixed emotions were no match for what Seamus Finnigan, Dean's best friend, had suffered. Seamus sunk into a state of such depression that by the end of fifth term everyone including the professors were worried for the Irish lad, and it turned out they had been right to worry as they had. When Harry had arrived back at term the following year it was to find out that sometime during the Summer, Seamus had tried to kill himself though thankfully an intervention from Minerva McGonagall, who had surprisingly decided to check up on Seamus herself, he had been saved.

Seamus never really recovered after that however, and his parents had decided not to send him back to Hogwarts again. Harry had wanted to visit him during the past Summer but his dratted Uncle Vernon had flat out refused to let him go to Ireland, even if it was with Hermione and Ron, not that Harry was really surprised. In the end Harry sent Seamus a care package via Hedwig, Harry's beloved owl, and the note back from Seamus's mum had been flowery with thanks, so Harry at least had felt good about that. He still sent Seamus care packages and assorted cards and posts when he could, even if it was only Seamus's mum who answered them.

Other things had happened too in the past two years since Voldemort's pronounced return, things that Harry had started to automatically take in stride. Which was wasn't really a good thing since it was clear to his close friends that it left too much room for Harry to think...and even worse...brood over what was going on. But there was far more going on beneath the surface of Harry Potter that not even Ron nor Hermione could possibly know, things that even Harry himself tried to bury.

One good thing at least was that Remus Lupin, one of his old Defence Against the Dark Arts teachers and good friend out of school had returned to teach DADA. The down side to that was that it had reminded Harry of third year when Remus had last taught at Hogwarts, and had told him things that Harry hadn't wanted to hear at the time, and still didn't. There were other things as well, like his godfather still being on the run, and Harry felt there was also more going on with Sirius then Sirius was telling, not that Harry would dare ask.

Then there was the fact that Remus's return brought back one other memory, one memory that Harry still had nightmares about. It had been the day Harry and his third year DADA class had faced a boggart, he remember that day like it was yesterday. At the time Remus hadn't let Harry face the boggart with the others present for a reason, but in a later talk it wasn't Voldemort Harry had feared as Remus had suspected, but the Dementors, the dark and evil beings that guarded

Azkaban, the wizards prison. The Dementors made Harry hear his mum's death over and over again, and he feared that most of all, because hearing her voice was a reminded of all he had lost, and how much he feared losing more. These days however Harry knew that if Remus were to put him in a room with a boggart it wouldn't be the Dementors that he would fear. No, he knew that if he were faced with a boggart now...it would be himself he feared the most.
Harry sighed again and got up off the windowsill and walked over to where Ron was sleeping. He thought how lucky Ron was these days, he had so much going for him now then he'd ever had before. Ron and Hermione finally had come to terms with the fact that they liked each other, and for the past year had been on again, off again, though mainly on with each other. By any means those two had a strange romance, but it worked for them, though Harry had been relieved when they finally had gotten together even with the strangeness.
Anyone else might have felt like a third wheel if two of their best friends started dating, but Harry didn't feel that way by any means. If anything it gave him more time to be alone, something he really needed right at this point in his life, maybe more than anything. Not that he admitted that to Ron or Hermione, he never would because that would give them cause to worry for Harry, and that was another thing Harry really didn't need right now.
No, he was content with the way things were truth be told, and didn't regret for a moment that it had been Ron that Hermione had ended up with. For a month after coming back after that fourth term Summer Harry had half a mind that Hermione had liked him instead, and on his part anyway that had been more than awkward. He truly liked Hermione, but never would in that particular way, she was more a sister to him as much as Ron was a brother.
During that same Summer he had also gotten over his 'crush' on Cho Chang, after realising that she was completely out of his reach. Cedric's death had been too terrible a thing to them both and it was all too clear how badly his death upset her. He didn't think she blamed him for Cedric's death, but he blamed himself and that had been enough to deter any more feelings he'd had for Cho. The Summer between fifth and sixth years however he had other reasons for giving up dating, but that was yet another part of his life that he had no choice but to bury deep within him, and not even Sirius would nor could he talk to on that issue.
The outside clock was now striking midnight, and Harry glanced once more at his redheaded friend before making his plans. They had only been back at school a few weeks now, the weather was still warm yet and that gave Harry the perfect opportunity he needed to really have his time to himself. Not that he couldn't be alone during the normal waking hours of the school day, but the nights were slowly becoming his sanctuary. The one time in which he could really and truly be free to think and reflect without distractions or questions. Something that in the past few weeks he had come to rely on and cherish.
The only hitch in his plans for his late night wanderings tonight was the blasted rainstorm currently going on. Though the rain was lightening up, it still meant that going outside the castle or flying as he sometimes liked to do under his invisibility cloak was out of the question. Which meant that if he wanted to get away from his snoring friend, that being Ron since Neville Longbottom his other remaining room mate didn't snore, he'd have to find somewhere inside the castle to roam instead.
Being indoors didn't create a problem for Harry really, though he preferred the outdoors during the few warm weeks they still had when he would get back to school. Tonight though it somewhat did bother him, since soon enough he'd be forced to stay indoors at night when it began to snow, so the rain right now wasn't helping his already dulled mood this evening.

Deciding which of his 'hiding' places he was now going to go to in order to get away from things, he grabbed up his invisibility cloak and his Marauder's Map. The Map and cloak were the second and third most invaluable things he owned in his meagre possessions, after Hedwig his owl of course, and getting his slippers on he headed down to the commons.
As he got to the portrait hole he quickly threw his cloak round his shoulders and knocked once on the back of the portrait that sealed the opening. The portrait quietly swung open and Harry stepped outside into the cooler air of the corridor, breathing in quietly for a moment at the fact he was once again freed from his 'restraints'.
'Don't be too late out there young one. And watch out for the west wing on the third floor, I heard Peeves is doing something up that way, and although it should occupy Filch for the rest of the evening you never can be sure,' the Fat Lady said in a motherly fashion.
'Thanks Lady, I'll be careful,' Harry said quietly from underneath his cloak and began to trot off, making sure first that Filch was really and truly occupied and glad to know the Fat Lady had been right.
It had been last term that Harry had began wandering nights like this, and though at first the Fat Lady had been startled when she would find no one outside when the portrait was opened she began to suspect who it could be. Years ago another invisible person used to wander out at nights, and she knew this new person had to be related to that other person, which meant it could only have been Harry Potter. Not that she was going to admit this anyone, but she always had had a soft spot for Lily Evans back then, poor girl though for all she had to go through. So if she could help Lily's son out, the Fat Lady was more then willing to do so.
Harry meanwhile was heading off in a direction as far from the west wing as possible, just in case Filch and Peeves finished off whatever it was they were doing and came in search of late night wanderers. For not the first time Harry actually felt sorry for old Filch for putting up with the likes of Peeves all day and night long. At any rate, better safe than sorry Harry thought now and instead headed to the east wing of the castle, something that later on in his life Harry Potter would chalk up to fate, since the east tower was the last place he normally would have been wandering off to.
The east tower was directly over the Slytherin dorms and the dreaded dungeons, only Harry being so desperate to get away from his own dorm had for the moment forgotten that. It wasn't till he got to the top of the east tower that he realised this, and by then it was too late to turn back and go anywhere's else. It seemed that right at that moment nothing on earth could avoid what his subconscious mind was thinking, and that fact scared Harry. Yet another aspect of Harry Potter's life that he wasn't in control of, another part of himself that was the reason of these late night wanderings, and what drove him into the solitudes he craved.
Making a turn into what he thought was another corridor he stopped in his tracks in surprise. The corridor simply ended, just like that, there was nothing but a brick wall now in front of him. He knew the corridors of the school were a bit odd sometimes, but then so was pretty much everything at a school built solely from magic, but he'd never just run into a dead-ended corridor shut up by a brick wall when by rights the corridor should have continued onwards. It took him a moment to remember he had his map on him so he took it out along with his wand and said the words to activate it.
'I solemnly swear I am up to no good,' Harry whispered, and then tapped the scroll once with his wand. Checking that Filch and Peeves were still occupied which thankfully they were, and that from the looks of it everyone was where they were supposed to be, he peered down at the dot

that read *'Harry Potter'* or rather, at the spot where the name Harry Potter *should* have been. But to his surprise it wasn't there, instead there was only a single black dot labelled simply *'Harry'* and nothing else.
What was even more surprising was that the 'wall' that was before was by no means a wall. The map clearly showed a room behind that wall, yet glancing again at the brick wall he saw no visible means of getting into the room. Glancing down again at the map he looked to see if maybe there was a password, like with the Humpbacked Witch a few floors below, however the map revealed nothing in the way of a password either.
Muttering in exasperation he cleared the map with the words *Mischief Managed*, and rolled it back up, putting it along with his wand back in his robe then turned and eyed the wall carefully. He ran his fingers up and down the stones of the wall, checking for hidden latches or anything, but yet again found nothing. For the next thirty minutes he spent trying to figure out the wall, the suddenly he realised his senses were picking up something was different, that someone was coming down the corridor.
Throwing back on the invisibility cloak it didn't take long for him to realize his senses were now going off like a giant alarm inside of him. Since he had come to Hogwarts only two people could trigger his internal instincts like this, not that he was ever going to admit who that was, not even to Ron or Hermione. He had begun to notice all of the times his senses had gone on alert as far back as first year, however Harry knew that his friends would probably think he'd gone daft anyway if he'd told them who it was at the time. Instead he kept that information to himself, some things were definitely better left unsaid, especially once he had learned to distinguish exactly which person had caused which reactions, and what those reactions ended up as.
Now however his instincts were easily telling him of the two people it was coming down the corridor, so he quickly hid in one of the small nooks near the wall, behind a statue of two people he couldn't quite make out in the dimmed hallway. Moments later he knew his instincts had been right on par yet again, only it wasn't exactly who he had been expecting, instead of one person there were two people now coming round the corner, and Harry nearly gasped in surprise at what he was seeing. Thankfully though the two people seemed to be having a bit of a row or something, and were paying no attention at all to anything else round them.
'...I'm telling you you're wrong. It's bat wings *not* cricket wings you insufferable git.'
'I think I know what *I'm* doing you fool. I've been making this godforsaken potion long enough to know the difference. It's *cricket* wings.'
'All right fine, it's cricket wings. After all, *you're* the potion's expert here. Now can we get on with this? It's not like we have all night you know. I've got plans for the rest of the night,' the first person said with a strange guarded look in his eyes.
'It only takes an hour to do this, so stop whinging already. By the gods you are impossible round the full moons. Now what's the blasted password for this week anyways?' the second man said harshly, though there was a look in his black eyes that was saying something far different then his voice was.
'At least I'm not impossible all month long like you are you daft arse. And I don't know what the password is, I thought *you* set it last you greasy git,' the first man grumbled.
'Oh, good come back, yousorry excuse of a human being. And I thought you set it,' the second man shot back.
'For Merlin's sake, why I put up with the two of you is beyond me, you're both bloody impossible so stuff it already. For the life of me don't know why I agreed to do this, week after week it's the

same thing, if you ask me it's utterly ridiculous. Besides, it was *my* turn to set it this week anyway if you remember,' a third voice now muttered from thin air to Harry's surprise, especially when he recognised the third voice all too well.
'Well excuse me for not remembering to care if that it was *your* turn,' the second person scowled. 'Now just say the damned password and let's go on with this. I also have better things to do then to stand here in a corridorfor the rest of the night.'
'Being touchy aren't we? Do I even want to know what your plans are for the rest of the night?' the third person said with a disgusted tone of voice.
'Yes, not that we were going to tell you anyway, you'll just have to wait and see now won't you,' the first person said with a hint of a smile. 'Now, the password please if you wouldn't mind?'
A muttered oath came from the air and seconds later the words *'Deleo Maleficus'* came from underneath what Harry assumed could only be another invisibility cloak. What surprised him even more then the fact the particular person had an invisibility cloak was what happened after the third person spoke those two words. In a matter of seconds the brick wall did exactly like it did at Diagon Alley and started to rearranged itself, though surprisingly a lot more quieter than it should have probably, in fact there wasn't a sound at all made.
Harry quickly realised a strong silencing spell must have be in place on the bricks, otherwise they would have made a horrible echo in the empty corridor. As soon as the bricks were moved out of place a door came into view, and Harry nearly choked at what he was looking at. It wasn't so much the door itself that made Harry stare, it was what was on the door, and he wondered what on earth these three people would possibly need to be doing in a place with a door that had that particular crest.
The three people obviously however weren't bothered by the crest nor were even paying attention to it, and a movement by the second person in the group distracted his attention. The second person was now removing a gold chain from round his neck, which Harry thought strange since he'd never seen this person wear any jewellery. Now that he thought it though he remembered seeing a bronze ring on the persons right hand, also with a strange crest on it, another crest that Harry had never seen before, but that ring addition had only been of recent.
Harry could see now that at the end of the chain was an ancient looking silver coloured medallion the size of a Galleon. Putting the medallion to a spot on the door it suddenly swung open, and the chain and the medallion were carefully put back on the person's neck, hidden away by the high black and white collar of the man's robes.
'All right, let's get then shall we?' the first person said jovially now, the misplaced crankiness apparently gone, and then he headed inside the doorway disappearing from view.
Just as the second person was about to head inside Harry heard a muttered oath and he saw the second person rubbing his leg. 'Watch were you're going you oafish mutt!' he grumbled and glared at the thin air.
'Call me that again and I swear to the gods I'll hex you when you least expect it. Actually that's something I might find enjoyable,' the voice said with a snort.
'Oh really? And with *what* are you planning on hexing me with? You're invisible wand? Don't make me laugh,' the second man smirked.
'Just because I still don't have a wand doesn't mean I can't fight you know. I do have enough strength these days to still pack a punch. If you remember I was the top in my field. There wasn't anyone would could best me when I was head of the Hand to Hand combat unit at the Ministry,' the hidden person muttered.

'Oh I haven't forgotten, but I can't really see that happening these days, can you? When you've stopped living off the rats and snakes let me know, I *might* get worried then,' the second person said just as icily, glaring at an empty spot in the hallway.
'Will you two quit bickering and get in here already? Otherwise I'll put you both in body binds again! Honestly, and you say *I'm* the annoying one,' the first person said sticking his head out the doorway now.
'*He* started it,' the second person said crossing his arms in a huff.
'If you weren't such a slimy bastard - ', the third person began but was cut off.
'*Enough*! Get in here and stop arguing. You're like a bunch of children, why I put up with you two is what I should be asking myself. Now both of you move it and I mean that! ***NOW***!' the first person said firmly and glared at both the second person and the invisible person, able to somehow pin point the exact location of where the person was just as the second person had been able to do.
The two men in the corridor complied, though not without grumbling at each other first, and moments later the door swung closed, the bricks realigned themselves and everything was quiet.
Harry didn't move from behind the statue yet, just sitting there taking in everything he'd seen and heard in both shock and surprise. He knew these three men, knew them well, but as to what on earth they would be doing here, and more importantly, *together* was something he didn't even remotely understand.
When he finally stepped round the statue and actually took a good look at it he gasped in pure surprise. The statue was of two people like he first had though, and if he was right, he suspected who they were though he didn't see how it was possible. The two people before him looked young, carefree, smiles on their faces and had their arms round each other as if they were best friends. His suspicions were confirmed however as the placard said as to who they were, and Harry didn't know what to make of it all.
Shaking his head in puzzlement Harry began to walk back towards the Gryffindor dorms, a lot on his mind. Somehow he felt as if he'd been somehow transported to that American Muggle telly show Hermione had talked bout once called the "Twilight Zone" in where everything appeared 'normal' on the surface but then you suddenly found yourself in something that was anything but 'normal'. Not that being a wizard by standards was 'normal', at least not from the world he'd grown up in, but by standards in the wizarding world, even this rated highly 'unusual'.
As he got back to the dorm and settled down in his bed his mind was still racing. He had a heck of a lot of questions for what should have been just a routine midnight stroll, and not a single answer. The mention of a potion requiring bat wings didn't help since Harry knew there were far too many potions out there that required them. The statue and the crest on the door were even more of a puzzle, and Harry knew that unless he were to confront Hermione on it, which by no means was he going to, he would have to be discreet in his investigations.
As Harry finally drifted off to sleep he suddenly remembered how he'd felt when he knew someone was coming down the corridor, what he'd felt when he knew exactly who it was, and how it still made him wonder why he could feel that way for that person. Also why he had felt the urge to stay and listen when he'd actually seen who it was, and not tried to just turn and run when he easily could have. The fact that over the last few weeks more then ever he could pinpoint the exact location of not only that person but another person no matter where in the castle they were bothered him, and it was just more questions on a huge pile of them that he wondered would ever get answered.

In his almost fully sleep-filled mind one last thought filtered though his barely awake thoughts. One that if he had been more awake he'd have thought he was definitely going daft for, or perhaps maybe the rain and being cooped up had been the cause of it, though even Harry knew it would have been doubtful. As it was however he was too tired to worry about what his mind was thinking, and when he finally gave in to the sleep he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt it certainly wasn't going to be a restful one.

"Deleo Maleficus" in Latin by the by means 'Destroy Evil' in basic translations.

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Chapter: 2

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

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This chap has been reedited. J

~~Chapter Two: When You Thought It Couldn't Get Worse...~~

*'Potter!*If you would be so kind as to join the *rest* of us this afternoon? Five points from Gryffindor for *your* inability to stay more than half awake while in *my* class,' Severus Snape, Potions Master of Hogwarts, barked out icily while glaring at the boy in question.
Harry looked up and blinked for a moment then felt a red crimson shade creep up his neck. Not because he had been singled out, that was far too common from Professor Snape. No he was embarrassed because of the fact that he *had* fallen asleep in a class, and mainly because it was the first time he'd ever done that. Not to mention the fact that of all the classes he could have picked to fall asleep in, it would just have to have been Potions at that. History of Magic he could understand, the ghostly Professor Binns could drive even the most stalwart of students to sleep, but Potions was another matter entirely.
'I'm sorry, sir...' Harry mumbled though it was barely audible.
Severus only glared at the boy again and walked over to him with a smirk on his face. 'Sorry is it? For what...being *born* Potter? Is *that* what you're sorry for?' he said in a silky voice causing a

chuckle to emanate from the Slytherin side of the room.
Harry wasn't going to take that comment lying down though, not today. Normally he could just ignore the barbs his professor flew at him, but for some reason today he felt something boil in him and he knew he couldn't let it go. Narrowing his eyes and focusing his gaze onto Severus Snape fully on he replied icily, 'Not for being *born* but for having to actually be in *this* stupid class with *you*.'
A gasp from both the Gryffindors and Slytherins vibrated round the room for a moment, and even Severus could see a look in Harry's eyes that was far more then the indifference or frustration he usually saw. However in the split second he thought he had seen that look it was quickly replaced by a different one, and one Severus wasn't sure he wanted to interpret. Going over he stood directly in front of Harry now and gazed his coal black eyes deep into the emerald green eyes before him. For a second his breath caught in his throat as it always did when he looked so deeply into those green eyes. How they reminded him of things he'd buried so long ago and of and time and place that nearly made him shiver. In that split second the two looked at each other however Severus knew he had to recover his emotions, or he would lose control of himself and his class.
'*Silence!'*Severus said in one of his most dangerous voices and glared round the whispering room, even at his own Slytherin students. Severus wasn't a man who needed to shout to get heard, the lower his voice was, by now his students knew that would mean he was at his worst.
'That just cost you ten more points, and a detention, Mr. Potter. I will *not* tolerate your attitudes in *my* class,' Severus said coldly, and giving him a glare turned to walk away.
'Fine, then I won't be in *your* class anymore,' a low icy tone said from behind him, and turning back in shock saw Harry glaring back at him with the coldest expression he'd ever seen from the boy, one that vaguely reminded him of someone else. Before Severus could even respond however he watched almost in slow motion as Harry got up without a word, and headed towards the doors of the classroom.
'*Potter*! Potter get back in your seat! Potter I'm warning you!' Severus yelled out and started to follow him to force him back to his seat, but before he could reach the boy he was already gone.
Severus stood there for a moment in pure shock at what Harry had just done, really not knowing what to do about it. For half a moment he wanted to run after Harry, however glances from the students near him alerted him that he had to do something in order to save face. To run after Harry Potter would throw away everything he'd done the last seventeen years, and he wasn't ready to do that.
He quickly walked back to his desk with a scowl back on his face and turned to face the rest of the class. 'Continue to do your work. Anyone, and I mean *anyone,* who dares say a word until class is over receives a weeks detention,' he said glaring at the Gryffindor's in specific.
Personally though his mood right now was so confused he'd probably have given even one of his own Slytherins a detention if they had so much had stepped a toe out of queue as well.
Severus sat down at his desk and pretended to grade some papers, however his mind was far away from those papers, in fact it was focused on only one thing - the green eyed boy who'd just left his classroom, and the looks that Harry had given him. He knew Harry's hatred of him was deep rooted, and not without cause. In the last six years Severus had gone out of his way to openly antagonize and belittle the boy, even if the reasons behind his open hostilities were valid, those reasons known only to a few.
Thankfully there was only half hour left of class, and with a deep scowl he dismissed his

gratefully silent class with a wave of his hand. Double Potions was the last class of the day for him today, and right at that moment that fact was a godsend more than any other time he'd ever remembered. Making sure the students were well and truly gone he quickly speed down the dungeon corridors to another area of the castle, and he silently prayed that who he sought out now would be available.

Knocking loudly on a door so as not to raise suspicion if anyone passed by he was rewarded when seconds later a voice called out, 'Come in!'

He opened the door and walked into the room quickly, then stopped short not more than two feet in. The man sitting at the desk looked at him and shook his head slightly as if in warning before smiling brightly and saying, 'Do come in Severus, what can I do for you?'

Severus didn't move for a moment, instead he took a quick glance at the person speaking and then to the person who was sitting near that person in a student's desk, surprisingly in tears. The person crying was none other then the person he'd wanted to run after, and seeing the boy like this a hundred different things ran through his mind at once. However there was no way he could let the boy see him in this confused state, even if the adult in the room knew all too well what Severus was feeling.

Schooling himself back into his traditional scowl he nodded slightly at the other professor and said, 'I only came to remind you there's a meeting later this evening in the Headmaster's office. This time try *not* to be late if you don't mind, Lupin.'

Remus Joseph Lupin, Hogwarts Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor for the second year in a row after having been convinced to return by Albus after no one else wanted the job thinking that it was jinxed, nodded his head back slightly. Though his expression was neutral, Severus saw the tiniest spark of concern in Remus's eyes as they shifted for a moment to Harry, who was at the moment keeping his face turned as far away as possible from Severus. 'Of course, Severus, I'll be there. And I will try this time not to be late.'

'Good. Some of us have better things to do with our time then sit round waiting for you to decide to finally appear,' Severus said in a cool voice, and with the barest of glances at Harry he turned on his heel and headed back out of the classroom in a huff.

It wasn't until he got to his private rooms a few moments later that he allowed himself to exhale a long drawn-out breath of air. He made his way over to the silver and green coloured sofa by the fireplace and sank down wearily, his mind in turmoil and suddenly he felt every bit of his thirty-eight years of life, if not twice that age even. Though it was actually warm in the room he felt a shiver go down his spine as he remembered the stained cheeks of the boy he'd just seen. It was all too blatant that he himself had been responsible for those tears, considering the way Harry wouldn't even look at him in the room.

For the first time in seventeen years Severus began to wonder if he really had done the right thing all these years ago in the decisions he had to make. Really at that time he had little options in the matter all told, there was nothing he could have done otherwise or years of work would have been ruined. He knew though if he really had wanted to accept fate, if he had wanted to accept the responsibilities of what his actions were and what had come of those action, he'd have fought harder for certain things. Certain rights that were undeniably his and his alone now, but that were as far out of reach as the moon and the stars when all was said and done.

Leaning his head back he closed his eyes and remembered a by-gone era. He remembered a time in which things had been better, when he still had choices, before his life taken a turn for the worse. He wished for the millionth time to go back to the time before the lies and betrayals

began, before he became powerless to stop them, and before friends died before his very eyes. He remembered the last time he had ever truly been allowed to be happy and carefree, to be able to have everything he could have ever wanted...before one man chose to destroy it all. And not for the last time he remember how to this very day he wished that he had a chance to change it all, to take back the pain and suffering, and to reveal the secrets he'd hidden for so very long to the person who needed it right now the most.

Meanwhile, back in the DADA classroom, Remus Lupin was having some misgivings of his own, and he honestly didn't know what to do about them either. He had known Harry now for nearly five years, and in all that time he really didn't 'know' what was going on with the lad. Harry had been pretty open with Remus on a lot of things over last year since Remus had returned to teach and had the means and time to spend with Harry, not that he was a replacement for Sirius however.

Remus know Harry loved his godfather more than anything on earth. He love Sirius for the safety and security his godfather's presence brought to him amongst other things. Whenever Harry needed Sirius he had been there in person if possible, if not then by post or Floo message. Remus was content in being a second father figure to Harry, and Harry had now adopted him in a way as a second godfather even. Remus knew that for those times Sirius wasn't there, or for whenever Harry had needed a physical being to talk to, or for when he just needed to have company that wasn't his friends, Remus would be there for the boy no matter what.

Remus knew that Ron and Hermione were very special to Harry, but even friends needed their 'time-off' sometimes. If it was one thing Remus knew that better then anyone it was that time alone could be more beneficial for a person than any friend could ever be. No matter how much Remus had in his youth adored and loved his friends, the very nature of what he was warranted his times of solitude, and like the werewolf side of Remus, he knew Harry needed that alone time to battle his inner demons. Sometimes however Remus wished he had had someone to fall back on when he had needed it all those years ago, which is why he had made special arraignments with Harry last year in private.

The agreement between them was simple. Anytime Harry needed to be alone, but didn't really want to be 'alone' persay, he could come to Remus, providing that Remus wasn't in middle of a class. They didn't even have to talk if Harry didn't want to, and sometimes they didn't, but Remus knew Harry appreciated the type of solitude he offered the boy. Just knowing Remus was there if Harry needed him was enough sometimes, but as of late that didn't seem even enough, which worried Remus deeply.

Since the moment Harry had flown into his classroom over half an hour ago Remus knew Harry was in one of his 'quiet' moods. That he needed the company' of Remus without the questions. Even when he saw the silent tears Harry was shedding, Remus knew not to ask, instead he waited patiently to see if Harry would fill him in. Sometimes when Harry was quiet like this he would break open and bear his mind, and those times Remus and he would discuss how Harry was feeling on the situation at hand. Lately however Harry didn't even want to discuss things anymore, another thing that had Remus worried, and tears like Harry was shedding today were very rare, so Remus had double reasons to be concerned.

However, Severus's arrival just now, and the way Harry had stiffened up and reacted at his arrival, showed Remus all too clearly that Severus had been the likely cause of whatever was going on with the boy right now. But if Severus was the cause of today's tryst of emotions, then

he didn't understand the tears Harry was shedding. Why on earth would Harry shed tears over a row with his Potions Professor when Severus had clearly shown him nothing but hate for the past six years, and Harry had returned that hate in kind?
If Harry didn't want to talk about what was bothering him however, there wasn't much Remus could do but wait. To break the carefully laid rule of privacy that he gave Harry could do more damage then good, and that wasn't something Remus was willing to do. He watched Harry for a moment and saw he was still tense and facing the wall, though the tears had stopped at least for the moment. Mentally sighing in frustration he turned his attention back to the papers on his desk, though he knew at the moment it was of little help, his mind was too focused on Harry.
About ten minutes later Remus saw Harry wipe away the remaining tears and without a word or even a glance at Remus, the boy got up and walked out of the classroom, a bitter and saddened look on his face. When Harry was gone Remus sighed openly and got up from his desk with a stretch, and with a determined look in his eyes he knew exactly what he had to do now.
Putting the papers together on his desk neatly, as well as tidying up a few other things to occupy his mind he finally headed out of the classroom, one destination in mind. Without even knocking Remus opened the door of the room he was seeking, making sure to close the door firmly behind him, whilst uttered a locking spell and a silencing spell so he wouldn't be disturbed. Making his way over to another door in the back of the room he pulled the door open harder then he had intended, causing some jars to rattle, even a few to fall off the shelf and shatter to the floor.
'You could try knocking instead of half destroying my ingredients you know, Lupin,' a voice said thickly from inside the second room.
Remus scowled at the man and muttered a clean up spell replaced what had broken, then walked inside the room closing the door firmly but less aggressively behind him. He then walked over and sit down on the same sofa the man he had sought out was sitting on. 'You mind telling me what the hell is going on here today?' he said leveling a stern, angry gaze on the man.
Remus saw Severus look back at him for a moment with a strange look in his eyes, then Severus sighed and closed the book he'd been attempting to read. It had been a gift to the other man last year from Remus, and he was somewhat glad to see that Severus had actually enjoyed the book, despite it was written by a Muggle. *'The Collected Works of Sherlock Holmes'* was the title of it, it had actually been a first printing yet, and Remus had used nearly everything that had been left in his Gringott's vault at the time to get it for Severus, though he never would admit that to anyone.
Remus had always felt that Severus had a lot in common with the man named Sherlock Holmes, which was probably why Severus enjoyed the books as he did. Holmes was always leading a double life, he was always forced into playing deadly games that required disguising how he really felt, what he looked like, and what the real truths were. Like Holmes, Severus too had a passion for music, the violin in particular, though very few knew about this aspect of Severus Snape.
Remus knew that Severus had very carefully built up his reputation as the greasy haired slimy git Potion Master for very good reasons. Another thing that made him so much like Sherlock Holmes was that Severus was a man with passions and desires hidden well underneath his outwardly cold and harsh exterior. Inside however was also a man who had suffered greatly for his short amount of years, and Remus knew Severus had seen more than his share of death and destruction when he should have been doing nothing more than living his life to the fullest.
'He didn't tell you then I take it,' Severus said softly now interrupting Remus's musing, and then

leaned his head back against the sofa cushions, closing his eyes a moment.
'No, he said nothing to me, Severus. He only walked in, well ran in more like it, then sat down and then the tears started. Then just as suddenly he left with a look on his face that scared me. He was so sad, so torn up...and worse, terribly bitter about something,' Remus said with a wearied sigh and leaned back settling himself down into the sofa as well.
'I don't understand it, Lupin. All I did today was what I usually do and say to him. Nothing out of the ordinary,' Severus said thoughtfully, and reopened his eyes to look over at Remus.
'In other words, you were your usual bastard self to him,' Remus said with a bemused chuckle.
Severus snorted and shook his head. 'Certain things have to remain the way they are, Lupin, you know that. I can't just suddenly- ' he began but was cut off.
'Bullocks, Sev and you know it. How much longer are you going to let this continue?' Remus said in a wearied voice.
'As long as I have to, Lupin. We've been over this a thousand times, I don't have a choice here. I didn't have one then, and I definitely don't now,' Severus said surprisingly quiet.
'That's not true, you *do* have a choice now, you just refuse to make it,' Remus said argumentatively.
Severus shook his head and sighed deeply. 'No, Lupin, I don't. And don't start spouting off the same old crap you usually give me about this, because right now I am *not* in the mood for it, as if you couldn't tell,' Severus said with a scowl.
Remus looked at Severus tenderly, which would have surprised anyone who knew these two since they'd been enemies for as long as anyone could remember. Gazing his golden brown eyes deep into Severus's coal black ones he said in a quiet voice, 'All right, Severus, I won't push this further, I know it'll do no good anyways. But one day you'll *have* to make the choice, and maybe by then it *will* be too late.'
Severus looked back at Remus with a very unguarded and open expression then, one that had anyone else had seen would have made them wonder how this person could actually have emotions, let alone towards the person before him. 'You're the one who told me it's *never* too late. That it's never too late to have hopes and dreams, and to make them come true. Are you telling me now that I *shouldn't* believe in that after all?' he said back in a quiet and very revealing tone of voice.
Remus looked at Severus and a small but sad smile came across his lips. Shaking his head he said slowly, 'I've been known to be wrong before, Severus Snape.'
Severus did something then that no one would believe him capable of, he actually chuckled and then smiled at Remus. 'The day *you* are that wrong, Remus Joseph Lupin, is the day I *will* stop believing and I'll give up everything in it's entirety.'
Remus gave a chuckle himself and shook his head. 'You put too much faith in me sometimes, Severus. I'm not so sure I'm ready for that,' he said softly.
'No, in that you are wrong, Remus. I don't put too *much* faith in you these days...I don't put *enough*,' Severus said quietly.
'I just wish Harry felt that way too,' Remus sighed. 'I don't know what to do anymore Sev. I'm lost here, and honestly I don't know how much more I can take of this. Week after week, month after month. Potions, charms...how much more can the three of us do to keep it hidden from him? Are we really doing him any good with it all? Wouldn't it just be easier just to tell him the truth now?'
'Remus, don't even start this again. The two of us agreed on this more years ago than I care to

remember, before it all went to hell in a handbasket. We can't go back on what we agreed upon then, nor in what the three of us have agreed to continue with now. He hates me, and that's the way it should be. That's the way it needs to be, for all our sakes,' Severus said with bitter regret in his voice.
'That's just it, Sev, I don't think he *does* hate you. Honestly, I don't think he has it in him to really 'hate' anyone, except Voldemort of course,' Remus said with a slight shiver.
'Hate can be used in different forms, Remus, you and I know that better than anyone. Voldemort and I deserve his hate though...*I* especially deserve it for what I've done,' Severus said in a low, pained voice.
Remus sighed and shook his head and put his hand on to rest on Severus's arm. 'No, Severus, you of all people don't deserve hatred from Harry. You did what you could, then and now, what happened wasn't your fault. If Harry knew the truth I'm sure he would accept it, and agree on that as well.'
'It's irrelevant, because he *never* will know the truth, Remus. There's only four people alive now who know the truth and if any of you ever *dare* break the sworn words of secrecy on it I'll- ' Severus scowled though was cut off before he could finish his words.
'You'll what? Kill us?' Remus said cutting him off with a light chuckle. 'Oh don't worry, we have no intentions of betraying you, Sev. But this *cannot* go on much longer. Something is going on with him, something deeper then it appears. If something isn't said or done soon, I'm truly afraid we're going to lose him, or perhaps even worse.'
Severus glanced up at Remus sharply at those words. 'What in the blazes do mean by that, Remus?'
Remus looked at Severus speculatively, debating whether or not he should tell Severus something that Harry had told him not long ago. However, though he didn't want to break Harry's trust in him, he knew Severus would hold the secret, even at the cost of his life if need be.
'Harry's going through changes, Severus, very big ones. He's very much alone in what's going on, and I know he's very scared as well. Though I don't know exactly what it is, whatever is happening to him, it's eating him up inside. There's other things as well, things I've noticed since he came back from those dratted Dursley's. Don't tell me you haven't noticed *anything* at all?'
Severus had noticed things going on with Harry the last few weeks, but had tried to keep his distance. Nodding slowly however he said, 'I have noticed a few things, yes, but what could I possibly do about it? It's not like I can just award him house points for falling asleep in my class now can I, Remus? I have to take them away and give him detention for that, Gryffindor or not. Besides, if I had done anything other than that- '
'So *that's* what this was all about then?' Remus asked cutting Severus off again mid-sentence. 'I can understand then why he was upset, the tears I can't explain however. I realize that out there you *can't* exactly do anything to alleviate the situation but...still...what could have brought on tears?' Remus asked thoughtfully.
'I don't understand that either. You do know that I can't do anything *anywheres,* Remus, not in private and especially in public, you know that well as I do. Don't you think I wanted to run after him when he stormed out? Do you think I didn't see the look on his face in your classroom when I entered, the way he stiffened up and refused to even look at me? Do you think this is easy wanting to know what's going on with him, without it looking too suspicious?' Severus asked angrily.
'Calm down, Severus, it's no good to be angry at me. *I* know what you're going through

remember, I'm *here*, I see it every day. I know you aren't comfortable with things, I can understand that too, but by the Gods man, think about Harry here as well! Unlike you, Sev, Harry doesn't have *anyone* who could understand what he's going through right now. Not Ron, not Hermione...he has *no one*. If you for just half a moment remember how much trouble you had accepting in accepting the way you were back then, imagine what Harry's going through right now,' Remus muttered.
'What does that mean, Remus? Will you stop playing round robin with me here and just tell me what the hell you think is going on here already?' Severus said with a scowl.
Remus looked intensely at Severus a moment, and then sighed deeply. 'I promised Harry that I wouldn't tell anyone this, but right now I think it's needed. During last term Harry came to me in tears, so badly hurting on the inside that I ached just seeing him like that. Since Sirius was away if you recall for a few months in Russia on an Order assignment for a few months, Harry came to me with this 'problem' instead. At first he didn't really want to talk about, but I managed to somehow coax it out of him because I saw how much it was tearing him up inside,' Remus said hesitantly, remembering that day like it was yesterday.
'It...being?' Severus said leveling his gaze on Remus.
Remus sighed. 'It being...that...' he said unsure now himself if he was doing the right thing by telling Severus Harry's 'secret'.
'Will you just say it already for Salazar's sake, Remus!' Severus said impatiently now.
Remus drew in his breath and looked Severus full in the eyes. 'Harry is like...*we are*...Sev. And truthfully, he's so ashamed of himself because of it...that it's destroying him.'
Severus looked at Remus with a stricken look in his eyes and he whistled softly. 'By the gods...are...are you *sure* about this, Remus?' he asked slowly.
Remus nodded. 'Positive, Sev. Can you imagine what *we* went through being nobodies comparatively, over what he's feeling being who *he* is?'
'I believe Hell looked good to us back then too if I recall, especially when certain people found out about...well...certain things. But times have changed for our world, even if not completely for the best, it's at least better than it was,' Severus said with a sigh.
'Changed as they may be in acceptance for *us*, Harry was raised by Muggles when all is said and done, Severus. Muggles that have *not* changed, and the specific Muggles in question...well one can imagine what they must have brought him up to believe,' Remus said almost angrily.
'I'm not sure I want to imagine it actually, though it's my fault it's that way,' Severus said darkly.
'It's not your damned fault, Sev, stop being an arse about it. It's over and done with, and had there been other ways I know you would have chosen them. However, I suppose under the circumstances, it's inevitable that Harry would feel the way he does about all of this. As for us, considering things are what they are today, I dare say some things have gotten better, we just need to let him know that somehow without letting on too much ourselves,' Remus said softly.
'That's the pot calling the cauldron black hmm? To tell him that it's wrong to be that way would be hypocritical, but to tell him it isn't would give away secrets that need to be kept secret for the time being,' Severus said with a sigh.
'Neither way would be of much help really, considering his views and how he feels at the moment. Even if Sirius himself were to tell him it's all right to feel the way he does, I doubt he'd believe it. That's if Sirius knew about this in the first place.'
Severus stared at Remus in shock. 'You're not saying that Black doesn't know bout this?'
'That's exactly what I'm saying, Sev. Harry's so embarrassed and ashamed of himself that he *can't*

tell Sirius the truth, and I will not betray Harry's confidence in me either on this. He admitted to me that he thinks Sirius would hate him or abandon him for how he feels. By Merlin, if only he could know the truth about all of us hmm? Can you imagine how different things might be for him?' Remus said sighing deeply.
Severus groaned and muttered an oath. 'Unbelievable. How stupid can the boy be to think that way?'
Remus glared at Severus a moment for that comment. 'He's *not* stupid, Severus, he's scared. That's two different things. You of all people should know that.'
'Don't you dare, Remus Lupin. I am *not* being stupid nor scared in those particular matters,' Severus shot back coldly.
'Oh? Then what are you being, Severus? Harry needs something that you *could* provide for him, and you refuse to do so. If that *isn't* being stupid, then what the hell is?' Remus bit back icily.
'It's called caution, Remus. There's a war going on out there incase you've forgotten. A war we can win, as long as *Harry Potter* is in fit enough state to do so.'
'And how much longer do you think Harry will be in a 'fit enough state' to do so, Severus? He needs help, more then *I* can give, more then even *Sirius* can give. It's not just the revelations he's discovered of himself, or the scared feelings he's feeling. He's changing in *other* ways, and even you can't be blind enough not to see them!' Remus said angrily.
'Then forgive me for being 'blind' as you put it, Remus, but other then falling sleep in my class today, I fail to see any 'changes', please, do enlighten me!' Severus barked.
Remus looked at Severus astonished. 'Does the fact that he's turned a cold shoulder to people, that he's withdrawing himself away from everyone and everything going on round him lately say *anything* to you, Severus? Haven't you noticed that he's not even keeping up the pretenses of trying to keep a brave face on all the time like he used to? That his hair that used to be like *James'*...short and mussy...is suddenly looking a lot more like someone *else's* these days? Or that he's lost weight and become paler than normal? That he barely even wants to participate in his classes anymore, not even Quidditch seems to take his fancy lately?'
Severus's mind fleetingly brought up an image of Harry, and it was with dawning realization that Remus was right. With a heavy sigh and a body full of mixed feelings he put his book on a side table and got up from the sofa. He then walked over to the fireplace and drew out a picture from behind something on the mantel, looking down at it with a surprisingly tender expression as he put one hand up to the picture and rubbed it gently with his thumb.
'I promised her you know. I promised them both. I don't *deserve* to be trusted, Remus...not for what I did,' he said in a small, quiet voice.
Remus looked at Severus with a pained expression. Getting up he walked over next to Severus and peered down at the picture he was looking at, a small sigh escaping his lips. Putting his hand on Severus's shoulder he said gently, 'The past is the past' Sev, you can't change what happened back then. However you still have the chance to fix things, to make them better *now*...with Harry. He needs you more than he realises, probably as much as you need him right now.'
Severus closed his eyes a moment and shivered, ghostly images of the past creeping back in and haunting him. 'And what will happen when everything he knows...everything he believes in...when that's shattered and gone...'
'Then we will all pick up the pieces, Severus, as we always have,' Remus said softly.
'But we haven't, not always. I drove you away...I hurt you so badly...I still don't know why you're doing this, why you're still here...you shouldn't be,' Severus said sadly and turned to Remus.

'Because it was my choice to make this time, Severus, and I chose to make my amends for the past. I hurt you as badly as you hurt me, but we can't live in the past, only learn from it, move on from it, and build on it for the future. And right now you have a chance to give Harry a future which he deserves to have, don't make the same mistakes twice, Sev...don't throw it away this time,' Remus said softly.
'Will...you be here if I do make the decision to do this? Will you promise me that, Remus?' Severus said in half a whisper, looking very lost all of a sudden.
Remus nodded slowly and a small smile flickered onto his lips. 'You know I will, Severus. I'll *always* be here for you...even when you threw me away I didn't stop feeling what I did...I didn't stay away...I couldn't...not forever anyways I couldn't.'
Severus managed a small half smile himself at that. 'You *should* have stayed away, you both should have, it might have been easier for all of us if you had you know.'
'No, Severus, it wouldn't have been easier, you needed to feel again, he needed to live again, and I needed simply all of it. There's nothing wrong with needs getting fulfilled when they can,' Remus said firmly. 'You make your decisions as you will, but make them soon. I don't know how much more Harry can deal with what's going on, nor what he'll do next. Today was the first day I've seen him cry like that since he told me what he had half a year ago, and I'm worried he might do something he shouldn't...' Remus said, leaving that thought trailed off hoping Severus would understand what he meant.
'You...you don't think he'd...do what *I* tried to do back then, do you, Remus?' Severus said worriedly now, a stricken look in his eyes.
Remus sighed. 'I don't know honestly, but right now I can say he's very much like a certain person I once knew. For that matter, I wouldn't give it a seconds hesitation in thinking how very much like that person he's turning into so the possibilities are there.'
Severus actually chuckled at that even though the situation was dire. Shaking his head he put the picture back in it's hiding place then turned to face Remus again, who was looking at him questioningly. 'May Merlin help him then...for I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemies,' he said sadly.
Remus grinned at that. 'In the end though that person turned out not so bad if I recall, and I sincerely hope Harry will too. After all, it's in the blood you know,' he said smiling tenderly at Severus.
Severus smiled back and nodded, then put his hand on Remus's arm in a surprisingly tender manner. 'For all our sakes, I hope he does turn out all right, Remus. I sincerely hope he does.'

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Chapter: 3

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

~~Chapter Three: I Hate You...Don't I?~~

'Want to play some chess?' a voice asked.
Harry sighed and shook his head whilst gazing out of his dorm room window. 'No,' he replied quietly.
'Some Exploding Snap then?'
'No.'
A few minutes of silence followed before the person tried desperately to think of something else.
'I know, why don't we polish our brooms? We haven't done that in a while...'
Harry shook his head again. 'No, Ron. Maybe another time,' he said.
'Harry...come on mate...there's got to be *something* we can do while Hermione's up in the library studying. You want to look at our Chocolate Frog Card collection?'
'No, Ron, I don't,' Harry said irritably then turning to face Ron. 'I just want to be left alone all right? Can't you just leave me to that or do you constantly have to be hounding me?'
Ron looked at Harry worriedly. 'I didn't mean anything by it Harry, honestly. I'm just, I don't know...worried about you lately, that's all. You're acting a bit...well...'
Harry leveled a cool gaze at Ron and said, 'Acting a bit what, Ron?'
'Err...odd. You're acting really odd, Harry, and Hermione and me are concerned. This isn't like you, Harry, you're not like this usually,' Ron said lowing his gaze away from his best friend.
'Oh, I see. Now you and Hermione have taken it upon yourselves to examine my habits lately, is that it?' Harry said coldly.
'Yes...I mean...no...' Ron stammered and looked back up at Harry. 'What's going on with you, Harry? Lately you're either holed up here in the dorm speaking to no one, or you're snapping at the people who do talk to you. You barely even say two words to me and Hermione anymore either, and we're your best friends,' Ron said.
'Yeah...my *best* friends...' Harry said mockingly. 'So just because you *think* you are my best friends, that makes it all right to consistently be at my heels, marking my every action? Judging me for everything I do?'
'That's *not* true, Harry! Come on mate you know that's not it. We're not judging you for anything you're doing. We love you and that's why we don't understand why you're being this way. It's hurting us to see how much you are hurting right now...' Ron said quietly.
Harry stared at Ron a moment though it was almost as if he wasn't really seeing him. Slumping his shoulders and drawing his gaze down to the floor he sighed. 'I'm sorry Ron, you're right. You two *are* my best friends, you've always been there for me through thick and thin. I don't know what's going on with me right now, if I did I'd tell you. It's just that right now there's some things I need to work out for myself that's all, can you understand that?' Harry said almost pleadingly and looked back up at Ron.
Ron's eyes softened as he saw how torn up his friend was at that moment. 'Of course I can, Harry. Everyone needs time to themselves, you more than anyone,' Ron said with a half grin. 'Besides, if anyone knows what it's like to need quiet time it's me eh? With all my family round as they are hovering like bats, I never get a moment's peace,' he chuckled.

Harry chuckled himself and nodded. 'Boy is that true. I could barely think this Summer when I stayed that fortnight at your house. Not only were Bill and Charlie there, but Percy's girlfriend Penelope, Charlie's girlfriend Anna, Bill's friend Mark, Charlie's girlfriend Sarah, as well as you, Hermione, Ginny, your parents and me all in one house. It was like a zoo.'
'I reckon the zoo would have been quieter actually!' Ron grinned. 'Oh, I didn't tell you did I? About the post I got yesterday morning?'
Harry shook his head. 'No what post?'
'Seems Percy, straightlaced Perce, finally popped the big question to Penelope. Can you imagine that?' Ron said rolling his eyes. 'Mum said it was so romantic from what Penelope told her. He got down on one knee just like the Muggles do and recited a poem from Shakespeare or someone, then did the whole ring bit. Don't know where he got that Muggle idea from but it worked and she said yes. They haven't set the date yet though, but Mum said Penelope's opting for a Summer wedding."
'Wow, really? I suppose there's hope for Percy after all huh,' Harry grinned. 'What about Charlie and Anna though? I thought they were getting married soon.'
Ron shook his head. 'Nah, they decided to hold off till breeding season with the dragons is over. Too much work to do right now, so they're waiting till Yule or something. It's Bill and Mark that I'm wondering about really.'
Harry gave Ron a strange look. 'What do you mean by that?'
Ron looked strange for a moment and a slight blush crept up his face and he fidgeted for a moment. 'Err...that is...you mean you really *don't* know about them?'
'No, Ron, I really don't have a clue what you mean. What about them?' Harry asked curiously.
'Well it's not like it's really um...common knowledge. Not that Mum and Dad are upset mind you but...well Bill being oldest and all you know how they are protective and all...and they do keep it quiet when they're home and all...'
'Just spill it, Ron, honestly. What's the big deal about them?' Harry asked getting irritable again.
'Oh all right, I reckon I can tell you because you're family now. Bill and Mark...that is...oh heck...Mark is Bill's *boyfriend,* Harry. They're err...together...as in you know...dating each other,' Ron said blushing profusely now.
Harry stared at Ron with a shocked look on his face. '*D-dating*? You mean...you mean Bill's...well you know...*that* way?' he said in a strange voice.
'That's usually what 'dating' means, Harry, unless I missed something somewhere. So I suppose now you know the err...little Weasley secret eh? They've been dating for five years now actually, mainly in secret because of their work. Mum found out the hard way you could say, and boy was she surprised! She learned quickly not to just Apparate into Bill's flat without notice!' Ron grinned.
Harry slightly grinned himself though inside his mind was in turmoil. 'And...their being together...that's really all right with your Mum and Dad? They don't mind him being...that way?' Harry asked hesitantly.
'Well at first I think they were a bit upset only because Mum really wants tons of grandchildren. But the last couple of years she's warmed up to things, and is really happy for them. Dad gave Bill and Mark the 'lecture' bout err...well whatever it is you lecture bout to ahh...two men being together. Merlin knows *how* my dad knew what to say, but apparently he did and now everything's fine,' Ron said with a nod.
'It doesn't bother anyone else in the family?' Harry asked curiously.

Ron shook his head. 'Nope, not a whit. But then I've got a high suspicion Fred and George didn't say much cause err...well I think at least one of them if not both are gay too. Not that they'd say anything considering, I think they didn't want to give Mum and Dad a heart attack coming out at the same time as Bill did.'
'Wait a minute, how can they be gay? They've both dated girls for years! Heck they took Angeline and Katie to the Leaving Ball before they left Hogwarts even,' Harry said skeptically.
Ron shrugged. 'That means nothing, Harry. I bet they're bi then if anything.'
'Bi? What's that?' Harry asked puzzled.
'Oi, Harry! For a bloke who grew up in the Muggle world, don't you know anything about dating and stuff? Someone who's bi likes both men *and* woman,' Ron said.
Harry did look shocked now. 'B-both? You mean...you can really *do* that? Isn't that even worse then well...you know...even being gay?'
'Nah, I mean not really. I don't know about in the Muggle world, but in the Wizarding world it's not really that unacceptable I suppose. Not that being that way is easy, it's not. Bill sometimes tells me what he and Mark put up with if by chance they're seen holding hands or snogging in public. They're sneered at sometimes, but no one would think to hurt them like I hear they do in the Muggle world,' Ron said with a shrug.
Harry sighed for a moment in an oddly dejected way. 'So basically, being gay in either world is pretty much something to be avoided at all costs.'
'I wouldn't say that, Harry. I mean, you can't help who you fall in love with right? Even if that is another bloke or something, it's just fate. Just because it's harder doesn't make it really 'wrong' just...harder,' Ron said.
Harry looked at his friend for a moment and decided to make a huge step into something he probably would regret. 'Ron?'
'Yeah Harry?'
'If...if you found out that..err one of your friends were gay...let's say...umm...*me* for example...what would you say?' Harry asked hesitantly.
Ron looked at Harry for a moment with an odd look then laughed. 'Harry, I wouldn't have to say anything because I know you're as far from being gay as I am. Arrows couldn't be straighter then we are eh, mate? So why even worry about what I'd say.'
Harry slightly grinned then chuckled lightly. 'Yeah, you're right. Silly of me to even ask something stupid like that eh? The Boy Who Lived being gay...wouldn't that give Rita Skeeter a scoop of the century huh?'
Ron laughed and nodded his head. 'Though I have to admit she has been pretty good since Hermione trapped her back in fourth year. Not a single word of slander out of her, thank Merlin. I reckon she learned never to mess with a clever witch, even if she is a Muggle-born!' Ron grinned.
'Heh yeah, I actually feel sorry for Skeeter for what Hermione must have said to her after she let her out of that jar,' Harry said with a grin.
'I don't. If you ask me that woman deserved everything Hermione gave her, and then some. Anyway, what do you say, Harry, up for that game of chess now?' Ron asked.
'Umm...actually, I think I'm going to do some flying, Ron. I've really been neglecting my practice lately,' Harry said.
'As if you really need it eh?' Ron said. 'I just know you're going to be captain this year, Harry, you're the best one for the job. Well, I suppose we've got at least an hour till curfew, so it should

be all right. I'll go join Hermione up in the library, I still have that bloody git's Potion's assignment to do,' Ron muttered.
Harry chuckled. 'I did mine yesterday. It wasn't so bad actually.'
Ron looked at Harry as if he'd grown a second head. 'Not so bad? Are you daft, Harry? He wants us to list every single ingredient for the Curacion Potion, as well as how to *make* it. How can you say that's not so bad?' Ron groaned.
Harry laughed. 'Oh really, Ron, it *was* easy. All you have to remember is that it is made up with five nettles, three bats wings, two lupine beans, half a pinch of salt, two pinches of sugar, four drops of dragon's blood, another pinch of chamomile leaves and...what?' Harry asked as he noticed Ron staring at him again.
'Now you *are* scaring me, Harry. Since when did you start remembering what's in a potion, right off the top of your head? You *hate* potions!' Ron said oddly.
'Err...lucky guess?' Harry said trying to recover the situation.
'Lucky guess...*riiiight*. That was a bit *too* precise to be a guess, Harry. I know this is going to sound really dumb...but for a half a second there I swore you sounded exactly like...err...' Ron broke off hesitantly.
'Like what, Ron?' Harry asked puzzled.
'Well...oh hell, Harry, you sounded just like Snape when did you did that,' Ron said hesitantly.
Now Harry was the one who looked at Ron like he'd grown a second head and then laughed. 'I think you're the one gone mental now, Ron. Honestly, Snape of all people!' Harry said shaking his head. 'Look, I'm going flying now before you start telling me something like I'm beginning to act like him, or worse...look like him,' Harry said jokingly. Before Ron could say another word he grabbed up his broom he headed down the stairs and out the portrait hole. Had he not headed out so quickly he would have seen the strangest expression come across the face of his best friend, one that he wouldn't have wanted to even think about.
While on his way out to the pitch he went over the conversation he'd had with Ron back at the dorm. Bill's relationship with Mark had surprised him quite a bit, and Ron's words on it brought to the surface a lot of mixed feelings. It didn't help that Ron wasn't put off by people who fancied the same sex, and if Harry was honest it only made things worse. Suddenly Harry began to feel ten times worse about himself then he had in a while.
His mind didn't even want to dwell on the Snape comment though, even if somehow it was bothering him. Until Ron had said what he had, Harry hadn't even realised he just 'knew' what to put down for his Potion assignment, it had just come to him simple as that. Remembering the ingredients, even the process in making the potion hadn't even given him a moment's trouble. But now that Harry's mind was thinking on it, he realised that hadn't been the first time.
His mind then went back to what had happened in Potion's class only a few days back. How he had lost control of his temper, something which lately he was finding all too easy to do without even good reasons. Falling asleep had been bad enough, humiliating even, but to have stormed out of class not to mention what he'd say to Snape had only made things worse. Mainly because Harry, and only Harry, knew exactly why he had done it.
He didn't have to guess where he knew he was going after he'd left the classroom that day, his feet had taken him right to where he had needed to go automatically. He'd memorised Remus's schedule for each day's classes, and he knew that on that day the classroom would be empty, since Remus had only a single lesson for his last class with the Ravenclaws.
When he had walked or rather nearly ran in and sat down in a huff, he could tell Remus was

curious, but he hadn't been ready to talk, and thankfully Remus had understood that and let him be. For the first few minutes he sat there silently reflecting on what he'd done, and how he'd just lost control like he had, which is what started the tears in the end. For all the abuses from his Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia, for all the humiliations and sneers he put up with from his rival and enemy Draco Malfoy, for all the things he'd been the cause of all ready in his short life...not one of them had made him lose control or had made him feel like he had at that precise moment. The thing that got him the most was he knew Snape for what he really was and Snape knew it. A former Death Eater turned spy for the side of good, he'd even tried to save Harry's life innumerable times over the years, yet Snape was still nothing more than a cold-hearted bastard to him. And Harry knew that on that day he'd finally had enough of Snape's attitude, which is why he snapped like he had.

The burdens of being who he was, the secrets he was keeping from even his best friends, weighed on him like a brick cloak. And sitting there in the classroom Harry admitted for the first time in years it *was* what Snape had said that had really driven him over the edge. Because more then ever Harry truly *did* feel sorry to be alive. Sorry for the deaths he felt were his fault, sorry for the fact he was expected to be what he no longer felt he was.

As Harry now made his way to the end of the Quidditch pitch he realised he wasn't even really in the mood to fly anymore, but he certainly didn't want to go back to the dorms yet and face Ron or anyone else for that matter. His feelings were still too much in turmoil and even the comforting 'aloneness' of Remus's company would be no help to him at the moment. Choosing a spot in the stands that he knew he could hide away from any prying eyes, he was about to be surprised yet again for the day.

'M-Malfoy? What in the hell are *you* doing here?' Harry asked in surprise as he saw the silver haired boy slouching down in very the spot he had wanted to sit in.

Draco Malfoy, Head Boy of Hogwarts, son of a Death Eater, and Harry Potter's arch rival nearly jumped in shock. Recovering himself just as quickly however he adapted his usual sneer and gazed coolly at Harry. 'What does it look like I'm doing, Potter? I'm sitting, you have a problem with that?'

Harry scowled and nodded. 'I do as a matter of fact. These are the *Gryffindor* stands in case you hadn't noticed, not the Slytherin ones. *You* shouldn't be here,' he bit back just as coolly.

Draco looked over at Harry, settling his slate grey eyes on Harry's emerald green ones. 'Unless there's a match going on, Potter, I can sit anywhere I want to. Now go away and leave me alone,' he said, and turned back to look out over the Quidditch pitch.

'Well sorry to burst your bubble, Malfoy, but I have no intentions of 'going away' as you want me to. As you just said, I too can sit anywhere *I* want to, and I happen to like *this* spot,' Harry said with a scowl, then sat down about two feet away from Draco.

Draco grumbled and tried to move over more, but found he was all ready as far over as he could get. 'Well I'm *not* leaving either, so you'll just have to deal with it. Just keep silent and for the first time ever, we should get along famously,' Draco said dryly.

'Fine, just as long as you stay just as silent,' Harry scowled back.

'Fine,' Draco said irritably, and for a while neither boy did speak.

Harry went back to his thoughts but found they weren't going along in the way he wanted them too. Draco's presence here in his favourite hiding spot was beginning to make him wonder about things, too many things even. He was curious as to why Draco would pick the Gryffindor stands to hide out in, especially this particular spot. Then he realised that like Harry, Draco must have

figured out that it was really the one true place that one could 'hide' as it were without being seen from either the ground or the castle, if anyone had been looking that is.
Draco's being there got to him in other ways too, not that Harry really wanted to admit it. There was something different about Draco this term that Harry couldn't quite put a finger on, but he knew it was there. Looking back over the past few weeks Harry began to realize that the familiar taunts and prattish comments Draco usually reserved only for Harry hadn't been there. He still antagonised Ron and Hermione to no end, but for some reason Harry had escaped his barbed tongue as of late.
It wasn't just that either that Harry began to realize. It was other things, strange things, that now bothered him even more then the missing words. Certain looks Draco would send Harry's way that if Harry remember right, were different from his normal steely cold grey gaze. Also Draco didn't seem to be his usual happy, or rather unhappy self, and Harry had even heard rumours that Draco had broken up with his girlfriend of two years, Pansy Parkinson. Normally Harry wouldn't have cared at any of this, but right now with his rival sitting next to him, he had to admit he was puzzled.
Shaking his head and giving a tiny sigh he realised he wasn't likely to get any answers, not from Draco himself anyway. If there was one person on this earth he knew Draco Malfoy hated more than anyone else, it was himself. Not that Harry really would have blamed him at the moment, because lately Harry hated himself as well.
'I thought we agreed to be silent, Potter. Things like sighs are included in that,' Draco said thickly, cutting into Harry's thoughts.
'Well excuse me for not going over the full extent of the rules, Malfoy. It would probably please you if I stopped breathing as well wouldn't it,' Harry said wearily.
'Actually it would. If it wouldn't be too much trouble,' Draco said mockingly.
Harry sighed again and shook his head. 'You just might get your wish sooner then you think Malfoy,' he said in an odd voice, and began to stand up having had just enough of Draco Malfoy for one day.
'Hold on, Potter, what do you mean by that?' Draco asked in a suspicious voice.
Harry spun back round and looked Draco straight in the eyes. 'What does it matter to you, Malfoy? Since when do you care bout my well-being?'
'I don't, but that had to be the single most stupidest thing I've ever heard you say, and believe me I've heard you say quite a lot of stupid things over the years,' Draco said, surprisingly dropping the usual malice from his voice.
'You couldn't understand, Malfoy, *no one* could, so just drop it and leave me alone,' Harry said quietly and turned again to leave. He got only got about two feet when he felt a hand on his shoulder and he spun round again looking straight into a pair of cool grey eyes, eyes that were not filled with hate or malice, but rather instead were surprisingly soft and warm.
'Maybe...just maybe, Potter...I understand more then you think I do,' Draco said back in a soft tone of voice.
Harry stared at him for a second wondering what to make of this, unsure of what to do even. Slowly he shook his head and dropped his gaze down saying, 'You hate me, Malfoy, why would you even want to?'
'You hate me too, Potter. You could have made me leave you know. You're bigger than me, stronger than me, but you didn't force me to go,' Draco said quietly.
'So what does that prove? That I should have beaten the shite out of you and tossed you off the

stands broken and bloodied because you were sitting there minding your own business? That would have made me no better then...a Malfoy,' Harry said in a half whispered voice as he looked back up at Draco now. For some reason though he felt wrong for saying that, but this was Malfoy before him. The boy who had made his life miserable for the last six years now.
Draco sighed deeply and shook his head, a strangely sad look in his eyes. 'Believe what you will about my family, Potter, hell everyone else does. But I'm going to say this once and once only, do with it what you want...call it a freebie even. ..FATHER. Got it?' Draco asked, though his voice wasn't full of the usual snideness or anything else. He let go of Harry's shoulder and turned away, going back towards where he had been sitting.
Harry watched him sit back down and gazed back over the Quidditch pitch for a moment, then suddenly he knew he couldn't just walk away from that comment. Slowly walking back over to Draco he asked, 'Why do we hate each other so much?'
Draco didn't look, up only shrugged. 'Because we're supposed to. You're a Gryffindor, I'm a Slytherin, you're good and I'm...'
'Evil?' Harry filled in whilst sitting back down next to Draco.
Draco shook his head. 'I wouldn't say I'm 'evil', not really, but I'm not so sure I'm 'good' either, Potter. You were right in what you did that day by the by.'
'Right in what?' Harry asked confused.
'To not take my hand. To not be my friend...that's what,' Draco said glancing up at the setting sun now. 'I'm a Slytherin, Potter, and although I may not want to take over and rule the world...I sure as hell want what's in it. I want my share of it,' he said in an unemotional voice.
'That doesn't mean your bad though. You don't have to be Slytherin or be bad to get what you want,' Harry argued.
Draco snorted. 'It's so easy for you to say that, isn't it. You're handed everything on a silver platter, the respect and dedication of the Wizarding world at your feet. You have everything you want, respect is a given for you, not something earned, people love you for you, you don't have to prove anything to anyone,' Draco said bitterly.
Harry sighed and looked out at the setting sun himself, feeling the warmth of the last rays of sunlight on his face. 'Your wrong, Malfoy...more wrong than you can possibly imagine,' he said quietly and again he got up to leave.
'Tell me something...what is it that the great Harry Potter doesn't have by now that he can't just snap his fingers and get?' Draco said in a strange voice.
Harry lowered his gaze to the ground and sighed deeply then shook his head. Without turning back he said in a pained voice, 'There are some things that even the great 'Harry Potter' can't have, Malfoy...let's just leave it at that.' Without saying another word he continued his way back down the stands and across the pitch, not even realising that he'd left behind something important.
However Draco Malfoy had realised what had been left behind, and taking it gently in his hands watched the receding figure that was his nemesis. He could have called him back to get the item, but somehow he felt it wasn't the right thing to do at the moment. Somehow he would devise a way to give it back, but on his terms and his time. He sat there in the stands until the sun finally lost the last of it's reddish orange rays, reflecting on what had been said by them both.
It wasn't until he remembered the tone of Harry's voice that a sudden realization came to him and his mind reeled from the implications. Making his way back to his room he was grateful for almost the first time that he was Head Boy this year, which meant he had his own room. Even

though he technically did have to share the common area with the Granger girl, she usually spent most of her time in either the library or the Gryffindor commons.
He had been surprised that he had actually gotten the Head Boy position, but a little slip from Granger told him that he actually hadn't been the first choice. It seemed Harry had been picked first, but had strangely and without reason turned it down. Not that Draco would dare ever tell his father that of course; Lucius would never have accepted the fact that again Draco really had only won on a 'default'. And to his surprise, Granger hadn't been spiteful enough to reveal that information.
Right now she was obviously not in the shared commons, most likely she was either at the library with that boyfriend of hers or in the Gryffindor commons, so Draco quickly ducked into his room, item in tow and hid it in his wardrobe. Making sure his door was locked he went over and took something out from underneath his bed mattress, something that was very special to him. However it was something that if anyone had known about it he'd have been in more than a bit of trouble, mainly for what was inside of it.
Getting out a special type of quill and some ink he sat down on his bed and opened the small black appointment book that he'd bought for himself this past Summer. It had become his own personal sanctuary this book, and he wrote everything in it. All his pains, dreams, confusions and desires; all of his innermost secrets were in this small book. Chewing on the end of the black sugar quill (he'd become addicted to them since he'd found them this Summer in Flourish and Blott's, the same place he'd bought the appointment book) he focused himself to the task at hand, writing down carefully his thoughts at the moment.

~~Sept. 30th~~

I saw him' today. Not that I don't always see him, but this time I saw him alone. I was in the spot I like in the Gryffindor stands, and he showed up unexpectedly. I thought I had pegged down his routines by now, he never shows up there at dusk, usually he likes to go there early mornings...but there he was. And though I swore if he ever found me there I'd leave in an instant, I couldn't do that today for some reason.
I won't go into exactly what was said, but now that I've gone over it I think something is very wrong. I know he's been steadily getting drawn into himself, I've seen him actually acting more like Snape lately in his words and actions, the way he's become cold and indifferent to people now. But that's not what's bothering me the most.
It was a comment he made tonight that I'm worried about. I won't say what it was but...what I will say is that I think he's going to do something...I'm not exactly but something really stupid, and I don't know what to do. If I approach Snape with it he'll think I've gone soft or daft, or flat out accuse me of Merlin knows what as to why I've even paid attention to him. I could try Lupin I guess, but then it might be the same thing. Lupin might accuse me of being the one that would make him do this, and I definitely don't need that either.
What I would give to wipe away the look of pain and anguish that I see in those emerald eyes of his these days. Those eyes used to be so full of expressions, happy and carefree...but now all they show is anger and sadness along with pain and bitterness. He said I wouldn't understand what it's like to feel like that, how wrong he is eh? I understand so well...and I wish to the heavens he would know that.

He never will though, because I have to keep my secrets don't I. As long as I am a Malfoy I have to play this little game, be what they want me to be. And since I can never stop being a Malfoy, then my secrets will go to my grave, you along with them. But if going to my grave means I can finally escape who and what I am...I would gladly go.
I fear for what he might do to himself though, I really do. What is it that troubles him so badly that would make him want to die? He's got everything I can never have...people who would die for him rather then see him hurt...friends who really love him. Why on earth would he throw that away now? I have to do something...it's obvious that Granger and Weasley along with everyone else in this hell school is blind to what's going on with him...but what can I possibly do?
If I watch him more than I already it will raise suspicions I cannot afford to have. If I try to go back to being the sadistic git I was to him, he'll only hate me more for it. Merlin I feel hopeless right now! I've got to save him...but how? I can't ever tell him how I feel but I know I can't lose him either...oh by the gods...help me here, please...someone...anyone...tell me what to do!
Draco looked down at what he'd last written with a deep sigh. He knew the appointment book couldn't really help answer his questions, but it felt at least a tiny bit better asking it for some reason. Closing the book now and putting everything back in it's place he went back over to lie down on his bed, closing his eyes to think. If he was right about what Harry was thinking, there wasn't much time to do anything about it. He had to act, and quickly, without raising suspicion or alarms on himself.
Draco fell into a deep sleep then, questions without answers plaguing his dreams. His dream was of a pair of emerald eyes, cold and distant, yet full of pain and torment, and they were saying good-bye. Then his dreams shifted, and he heard the sounds of sobbing as a body covered in blood was being lifted onto a stretcher, and of the complete sense of loss and agony that accompanied those sobs. Oddly enough in his dream it was Severus Snape who was shedding tears more than anyone else, though Draco couldn't understand why that was. He then saw Snape holding the body on the stretcher tightly, whispering words that came clearly into Draco's sleep filled mind...
'I'm so sorry, my son...I should have told you the truth...I should have told you everything...now it's too late...Merlin forgive me for what I've done...'

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Chapter: 4

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~
Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:
Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

~~~~CHAPTER FOUR: A Bit Of The Past Returns~~~~

Harry, Ron and Hermione were having dinner in the Great Hall just like every night and the usual conversations filled the air. It was coming up on October now and the picks for this years Quidditch captain were being tossed back and forth. This year they wouldn't need any new team members at least as everyone from last year was still at school, and by all rights they did have a pretty decent team. After all, they had taken the Quidditch Cup the last two years running.

"What do you think Harry, ready for it?" Ron asked nudging Harry in the ribs.

Harry looked up startled not having heard a single word Ron or any of the others had been saying. "Ready for what Ron?"

Ron rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Oi Harry pay attention will you? Are you ready to be team captain *that's* what. I mean come on, *everyone* knows your the *only* one that could be up for it."

"Oh...captain...right. Forgot bout that," Harry said distractedly and picked at his food.

Ron groaned and made a pretense of fainting. "Forgot? How on earth can you *forget* Quidditch Harry? I mean...it's *Quidditch*!" Ron said half horrified.

"Let off him Ron will you? I'm sure Harry didn't really 'forget' Quidditch. How *could* he the way you go on about it all day long," Hermione said wrinkling her nose. It was common knowledge that Quidditch was not one of her most favourite topics of discussion.

"I didn't really 'forget' Ron, I just...have a lot on my mind is all. Hermione's right, I mean how could I forget something *important* like Quidditch," Harry said with a slight chuckle to hide the fact he really *had* forgotten the upcoming tryouts.

"Awe don't start with me too Harry, I have to listen to 'Mione harping on me all day long as it is," Ron said grumbling.

"I do *not* harp Ronald Weasley! It's just that there are some things *more* important in life than chasing round a bunch of Quidditch balls and throwing them through a hoop," Hermione snapped back.

"Oh really? Like what...books and tests? You're all ready starting to study for the N.E.W.T.S. and those are months and months away yet!" Ron shot back with a scowl.

"Well at least *I'll* be ready when the time comes Ron, which is more than I can say for *you*. I happen to want more out of *my* life then just working in a dead end job in the Ministry thank you very much." Hermione huffed.

"Wait a minute...are you implying my father's got a dead end job? You think that's all *I'm* capable of too?" Ron said a bit upset.

"All I'm saying is that unless you make some *attempt* at studying harder that's all you *will* amount to Ron," Hermione said.

"Oh...so now *my* family isn't good enough for *you* is that it? I'll have you know my father did just fine raising *all* of us on that 'dead end' job as you put it and..."

"Will the both of you just shut up? For Merlin's sake you're not even married yet and you're all ready arguing about family life. Cripes," Harry said giving both his friends a glare.

Ron and Hermione looked at each other a second and then back at Harry astonished.

"M-married? Whatever gave you *that* idea? You mean to...to...Hermione?" Ron stammered.

Harry rolled his eyes and sighed. "No Ron to Snuffles. Of *course* I mean Hermione who *else* would I mean? You two love each other and have been dating for years now, so what's the big deal?" Harry said.

"Well yeah...*dating* Harry...but...I mean...m-m-marriage?" Ron said hesitantly and blushed a bit

before looking at Hermione.
Hermione however was looking at Ron in a way Ron wasn't sure what to interpret it as. "Er...that is...I...I wouldn't worry too much about *that* Ron. I mean we're still in school and everything right? We don't have to umm...think about *anything* like that yet. I'm sure Harry was just teasing us...right Harry?" she said turning to Harry.
"Umm...sure 'Mione I was just teasing with you two that's all. Hey...at least it got you to stop fighting though right?" Harry said with a grin.
Ron gave out a sigh of relief as well as Hermione. Suddenly they both began to chuckle. "Yeah, guess it did. Boy did you give me a heart attack mate. I thought you were *serious*!" Ron said giving his friend a nudge. "So anyway Harry, what bout the Quidditch team? You will go for captain right?" he said focusing his attention back to the real issue at hand.
"I'll give it a thought Ron, promise," Harry said but a movement overhead distracted him. "What's that?" he asked now looking up.
A mid-sized black owl with white spots was circling above the Gryffindor table for a moment, but it ended up heading for the staff table instead. For Severus Snape in particular. Harry saw Snape look up surprised when the owl came over to him and drop a letter right into his plate, nearly splashing him with whatever it was he was eating. Snape took the up the letter with a scowl though Harry was surprised when Snape offered the owl some of his food. Apparently the owl belonged to Snape then.
Harry saw Snape open the post and read it, then reread it and was even more surprised when Snape's face nearly drained of blood. Snape looked up and looked straight at Harry for a moment and Harry could swear there was almost a panicked expression in them, but Snape looked away so quickly he wasn't sure. He watched as Snape then leaned over and whispered something into Remus's ear, then surprisingly Remus turned to look at Harry as well with the same panicked look.
Harry wasn't sure what was going on, but by now it was painfully obvious he was somewhat involved in it. Whatever was going on for the rest of the meal Harry knew that both Snape and Remus were keeping a very strict eye on him, though why Snape of all people should do that was beyond him. However that did remind Harry of something else Snape related that made him somewhat groan and slump down in his seat.
"Harry? You all right? You don't look so good," Hermione said being the ever observant one. "What do you think that was all about?" she said glancing at Snape and Remus herself and noticing they were still keeping Harry under surveillance.
Harry shook his head and sighed. "Not a clue Hermione, but it does remind me I have detention tonight," he said with another groan.
Hermione gave Harry a look of sympathy. "Oh I'd forgotten about that. Well maybe it wont be as bad as it sounds."
"Hello...earth to 'Mione! He's not *only* got detention with Snape but with *Malfoy* too remember? That stupid prat would have to have gone and gotten a detention wouldn't he. So much his precious 'Head Boy' status," Ron said seemingly happy now about Malfoy's ruined reputation.
"I still can't believe McGonagall gave him detention yesterday. Just because he couldn't turn back that tea-pot from being a hamster. That's not like her at all, not to mention why did she have to have Snape be the one he served it with? It's just not fair, *she* should have handled it," Hermione said perplexed.
"Maybe she just didn't want to deal with Malfoy, I don't blame her for that. Well if Malfoy gives

you any trouble Harry at least you can just slither out if you want..." Ron said then quickly covered his mouth with his hand.
"*Ronald*!" Hermione said in a low whisper and looked round. Leaning in she gave Ron a glare that even Ron shrank from. "Watch what you're saying! You want the whole bloody school to *know*?" she said angrily.
"I don't think anyone heard Hermione...we're safe..." Harry said quietly. "Don't worry 'bout it though, I doubt Malfoy will give me any trouble. Be worth another detention anyway to see the look on his and Snape's face if I did *that* though eh?" he said with a slight grin.
Hermione and Ron looked at Harry and grinned themselves. "I'd give a *weeks* worth of detentions thought to see the look on their faces if you did!" Ron said grinning.
Harry chuckled and without even realising it glanced over to the Slytherin table and right into the face of the very person they were discussing. He noticed something a bit strange however in that Draco was glancing up the head table to where Snape and Remus were sitting, then almost as if he knew Harry was looking at him he turned to face him. Draco's expression when he noticed Harry's stare was strange, unguarded perhaps even, but it was just as quickly replaced with the all too familiar smirk.
Harry looked away and back down at his plate until he realised Ron had been speaking to him again. "Sorry Ron, missed that. What now?"
"I said what time's the detention?" Ron asked.
"Oh umm..." Harry said furrowing his brow to remember. "At 10 PM...in the err...picture room. Where's that at?" he asked puzzled and looked at Hermione.
"The picture room? That's an odd place to have detention..." Hermione said thoughtfully. "It's on the third floor in the east wing if I remember right."
"Maybe he'll make you clean off all the dust from those old photos of the school and stuff like Filch made me do in the trophy room back in 2nd year. Gods I hated that!" Ron said muttering.
"Knowing Snape that's probably likely. And with a toothbrush no less," Harry said with a sigh. "I suppose it *could* be worse..."
"Oh how?" Hermione asked.
"I could have to clean all the bedpans in the infirmary with a toothbrush!" Harry said with a grin and gave Ron a nudge.
"Oh right, *very* funny mate! You just *had* to remind me of that *didn't* you! You're a sadist that's what you are Harry Potter!" Ron said groaning loudly at that particular memory.
Harry and Hermione laughed and finished the rest of their dinner peacefully. The only thing was Harry knew something wasn't right because for the rest of the meal Snape, Remus and oddly enough, Draco Malfoy kept giving him sidelong looks. And to Harry those looks were saying an awful lot, yet at the same time he really had no clue what they meant. Whatever it was though it didn't bode well for tonights detention, that much Harry was sure of.
After dinner Harry, Ron and Hermione headed back up the Gryffindor common room where Ron finally got Harry into a game of chess. Half hour later Harry was grumbling yet again in defeat, and Ron was grinning from ear to ear. "Checkmate!" he said triumphantly.
"I give up Ron, you're just too good for me," Harry said leaning back in his chair with a dejected sigh.
"I guess some people are just not meant to be good at certain things eh?" Ron said.
"You know Ron, you really do have a great talent for chess. I mean your champion of Hogwarts, everyone knows that. You ever think maybe of going into a career playing chess instead of the

Ministry?" Neville Longbottom said. He'd been watching the game intently since last year Ron had been good enough to give him lessons.
Ron shook his head and started to clear up his well loved pieces. "Nah, I don't think that's really a great idea Neville. It takes a lot to be a really good chess master, I doubt I'm half as good as Karpov or Fisher or Kasparov were."
"That's not true Ron, I'd say your better even then they were," Neville said.
"They were muggles though Neville, not wizards. I don't know if it's the same in the muggle world," Ron said.
"Actually Fisher was a wizard Ron, just no one knew it. I mean really, you think a 6 year old could learn to play chess like that *without* magic?" Hermione said.
"So you think he cheated?" Ron said defensively.
"No, I didn't say he *cheated* Ron. I just said he was a wizard that's all. I read about it in *America's Guide of Prodigal Wizards and Witches*. He never went to a proper wizarding school, they didn't have any in America in the 1940's, but he *was* one according to the book," Hermione said.
"It doesn't matter Hermione if he was or wasn't, Ron still has incredible talent for the game. I think he should give it a go," Neville said.
"Playing chess *isn't* going to put food on a table or pay the bills Neville. It's common sense," Hermione said petulantly.
"Merlin your are an exasperating woman Hermione Anne Granger. Honestly! *Nothing* makes you happy does it," Ron muttered.
Hermione glared at Ron for a moment then turned to Harry. "You know what I'm saying don't you Harry? Harry?...oi Harry?" Hermione said peering over at Harry to see why he wasn't answering her.
"Hmm? Oh sorry Hermione what now?" Harry said distractedly.
Hermione gave Harry a shrewd gaze and watched him for a moment. Something was definitely going on with him lately but for some reason she couldn't put her finger on it, which for her was very unsettling. Normally she was the first person to know what was going on with her friend, he was usually so open with her and Ron. But lately trying to get Harry's attention for more than five minutes seemed impossible.
"Harry is everything all right? Ever since we got back from summer hols you've been acting a bit weird. Is there anything you..." she started to say.
Harry jumped out of his chair and cut her off however. "Don't you *dare* start with me too Hermione. I've all ready heard this from Ron and I *don't* need it from *you*. I'm *fine*, why can't you dunderheads just get that through your thick skulls? Now if you'll *excuse* me I'm going up to my room and I *don't* want to be bothered until I have to leave for detention," Harry said angrily and stormed off to the stairs.
Ron, Hermione and Neville watched him go with silent shock written on their faces. Soon as Harry was out of sight Neville turned back to Hermione and Ron with a strange look on his face.
"Did...did Harry just call us what I think he did?" Neville said.
"I think he did Neville..." Ron said with a sigh.
"But...only one person I know ever uses *that* word...and that's..." Neville began quietly.
"Snape," Hermione said thoughtfully and looked back towards the staircase.
Neville paled at hearing that name, Snape still could terrify the poor boy to no end even after all these years. "I don't get it. Why is Harry being so mean lately...and saying things like that? You don't think Snape's done something to him to you?"

"I don't know Nev, but whatever is going on with Harry...is definitely *not* good," Ron said with a deep sigh.
Hermione didn't say anything but continued to ponder things as she was seeing them. Suddenly something seemed to hit her and she gathered up her books and put them in her bag. "Listen I'm going to the library, there's something I want to look up. I'll be back in a bit," she said.
"But Hermione it's after curfew! What if you get caught?" Ron said worriedly.
"I won't, and if I did I can always say it's something related to being Head Girl. Don't worry Ron I'll be all right," she said and leaned in to give Ron a kiss on the lips.
"Hermione...not in the middle of the commons!" Ron said blushing slightly.
Hermione chuckled and rolled her eyes. "Oh honestly Ron Weasley you're impossible sometimes. I'll be back," she said grinning and waved good-bye to Neville then headed out the portrait.
Back upstairs however Harry wasn't in a very good mood anymore. He was getting really tired of everyone picking on him lately, and he wasn't completely oblivious to the looks and whispers he'd been seeing and hearing behind his back. Lying down on his bed with a sigh he thought over the things that had been going on with himself lately, and what it all could mean.
He knew something wasn't right with himself these days, that something odd was happening to him, but there was no way in hell he was going to admit that. Even his late night wanderings hadn't been helping much, more often then not he found himself back in the east tower hoping to figure out the mystery of what Sirius, Remus and Snape had been doing up there.
Without that medallion however he couldn't get into the room, and the few times since then he had caught them going there it was almost as if Snape could sense him somehow. He would stand guard letting Sirius and Remus go in first, then going in himself so quickly that the door would shut behind him and realign the bricks before Harry could slip in behind them. Harry noticed they would still banter back and forth with each other, but nothing again was said about potion ingredients or anything else. But that still didn't stop Harry's curiosity.
That wasn't the only thing that had gotten Harry's attention over the last month of wanderings either. In another part of the east tower wing he had stumbled across a strange room, one he'd never seen before. He hadn't even bothered to see if it was on the Marauder's Map, mainly because since a few days after he'd come across Sirius, Remus and Snape he didn't want anything to do with it. The fact that from the moment he'd seen those three that night, the map was still only showing him as simply *'Harry'*, and nothing else.
If it wasn't that he knew the map wasn't capable of malfunctioning, he'd have thought somehow it was. The fact that the map refused to show his last name suddenly after all these years bothered him, more than he wanted to admit. Therefore he'd decided to avoid using it, instead taking his chances that he wouldn't get caught and thankfully so far so good. He'd had a few close run-in's with Mrs. Norris, Filch's cat, but luckily he'd managed to get away from her somehow, though he still didn't remember how he'd done it.
Which led him to think on the fact that there were a few things lately 'missing' from his memory. It was as if bit by bit tiny pieces of his memory both past and present were disappearing somehow or being scooped up and locked away somewhere he couldn't get to them. On the other hand though, things that always had eluded him, like potions work or charms had started becoming all too easy for him.
He'd even tested his theory by getting hold of a particular potions book from the restricted section of the library, one he knew from back in his 2nd year. Leafing through it he found that he

just seemed to 'know' what was what, and what was needed as if it was something he had had ingrained in him when he was a baby. And it hadn't ended there either. Charms too had always been a hassle for him, and now he seemed to almost be able to do even complex ones without any trouble.
With the removal of some of his memories as it were, new memories seemed to come to him in their place. The nights he would wait by the statue it would even be worse, as the memories became more prominent and confusing. He now remembered being spoken to as a baby by someone with a low silky voice that would lull him to sleep with loving words. He remembered being held by his mother and she'd be crying sometimes, telling him she was sorry, but for what he didn't know.
The odd thing was that he could no longer hear his father's voice. That was one of the memories that had disappeared and no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't remember it. Only his mum's voice, and that low silky voice, along with sometimes voices he thought he recognised as Remus and Sirius's could he remember. And of course, the high pitched sound of laughter, horrible evil laughter that could only be Voldemorts still remained.
Shuddering slightly as he lay on his bed he tried to block out that laughter, and he curled into a tight ball feeling cold and alone. How he hated Voldemort for what he'd done, for what he still was doing to him. For taking away his family, for destroying everything he cared about. And mainly for turning Harry into someone he never wanted to be. *'The Boy Who Lived', 'The Golden Boy', 'The Saviour Of The Wizarding World'*...titles he hated more and more with each day. Titles for something he didn't remember doing, for something *he* really even hadn't done. It had been his mum who'd really saved him that day with the spells she'd preformed, *she* should have been the one to be canonised now, *not* him. But the world hadn't cared what Lily Potter had done to save her son...not in the least. They only cared that a 1 year old child had turned Voldemort away, and still continued to do so even now.
The thing was that Harry no longer wanted to fight Voldemort, he no longer cared even. He was so tired of it all, tired of being 'expected' to be an adult when he was still nothing more than a child. Tired of having the weight of the world on his shoulders and being scrutinised for everything he said or did. Tired of the fact that because of it he couldn't be happy, because he could never find freedom to be who he really was.
Not for the first time Harry wondered if that was the whole solution to his problems right there. If the wizarding world did find out who he really was, what *really* would make him happy, then maybe they would get disgusted enough to leave him alone. But that was really nothing more than a pipe dream, because deep inside he knew he couldn't do that, admit to anyone what he was really feeling. And over the last few weeks he knew he would rather be dead then have anyone know the truth. Which thinking about that lately he had come to the conclusion that it wasn't such a bad idea.
At least dead he wouldn't have to worry anymore, he could join his parents wherever they were, and maybe even find peace for once in his life. The wizarding world would still function without him, and probably they would just find a new 'saviour' in Dumbledore or something. All in all what it came down to was simple, Harry was tired of being the martyr. He wasn't going to let Voldemort win, if he was going to die it was going to be on his own terms and by his own hands. He knew that it was more difficult then it sounded though, especially now when everyone seemed to be watching him so thoroughly. Not to mention in a tiny way he was scared to do it. He'd thought a million times about maybe jumping off the top of one of the towers, but somehow

going splat on the ground didn't appeal to him. Cutting his wrists was also too slow and painful, so that ended that option too. Sometimes he even wondered how he could be a Gryffindor, when something so simple as killing yourself he suddenly had no bravery or courage at all.
That didn't stop him from thinking bout it though, and as he lay there on his bed it suddenly hit him. Of course it was so simple! There *was* a way to do this without dropping off a tower or bleeding to death. And it had been right in front of him all along! Without even realising what he was doing his mind burned the solution into him, and he began to make his plans. It would require a bit of doing, but if he was careful and subtle bout it...yes...it *could* work!
He realised then that it was nearly time to go serve his detention, and for the first time in his many years at Hogwarts he was actually looking forward to this. Not because he would probably end up polishing off old pictures with a toothbrush, but because he would have a chance to see Snape. And right now that was the one person he really *did* want to see, and somehow he would have to contrive to get Snape to talk to him. The only problem was getting round Draco Malfoy.
Harry knew all to well why Draco Malfoy got under his skin these days and it was another secret that he would take to the grave. Sometimes he thought how lucky Malfoy really was compared to him, and he was envious almost of Malfoy's life. Not so much in the fact that Malfoy probably was going to become a deatheater one day, though since that day in the stands Harry wasn't sure of that anymore. No it was the fact that Malfoy was able to do what he pleased without the scrutiny of everyone watching him, he was free to do what he wanted, so very much unlike Harry.
Malfoy had surprised him in what he said however that day at the pitch, and a tiny part of him almost wished he had confided in Malfoy that day. But to do that, to reveal so much of himself to his worst enemy was foolhardy and Harry knew that. He hadn't told anyone what Malfoy had said to him, he really didn't think it was anyone else's business. And Harry wasn't sure he believed him anyway, just because Malfoy 'said' he wasn't his father didn't mean he still wouldn't follow his father's footsteps. A Malfoy is still a Malfoy...right?
Harry put those thoughts on hold for the moment and got up to head to the picture room. Peeking down the staircase he saw Ron and Neville having a match of chess and thankfully were paying little attention to anything else. Hermione was already gone, probably back to her private room or the library knowing her. Harry managed however to slip by Ron and Neville without being seen and slipped out the portrait without any problems.
"Bit early for you isn't it deary?" the Fat Lady said in a motherly tone.
"I've got a detention tonight Lady that's why. I'll be back later all right?" Harry said smiling at the Fat Lady.
"Oh that's a shame m'dear. You be careful now. I'll make sure to stay awake for you," she said.
Harry nodded and said his good-byes then headed towards the staircases that would lead him to the East Tower and the picture room. The stairs ended up moving halfway up but thankfully not to far off from where Harry needed to go. He got to the room just as the castle clock struck 10 PM and noticed he was alone. He started to look round the room for a few minutes wondering where Snape and Malfoy were when he heard footsteps behind him.
"Figured *you'd* be on time Potter," Draco muttered and walked up next to Harry who hadn't turned round to greet him.
"Knowing Snape he'd probably have taken off points if I'd been even 1 minute late," Harry said muttering.
"Had you been 1 minute late I certainly *would* have," a cold voice said from behind the boys

causing them both to turn round quickly.
"Professor I didn't hear you arrive! I apologize that I was a few moments late myself however. I got delayed by some Head Boy duties," Draco said with a smirking smile at Harry, and walked over to his head of house.
Snape looked at Draco coolly for a moment then waved his hand in a dismissive gesture. "No matter you're here now. However you will not be serving your detention with me after all."
"I *won't*?" Draco said surprised.
"Unfortunately no. You have been reassigned to Lupin for the evening. Go there now, he's expecting you," Snape said giving Draco a curt nod.
"L-Lupin sir? I would much prefer to have my detention served with you..." Draco said hesitantly.
Snape gave him a surprisingly cold look for a moment before answering. "Unless you wish *another* detention Mr. Malfoy, you *will* report to Lupin *now*. Do I make myself clear?"
Draco backed up a few steps, surprised at how his head of house who usually favoured him, was acting. "O-of course sir, I'll go there right now," he said quietly. As he turned round to leave Draco gave Harry a strange glance, one Harry didn't quite understand, then he headed out of the room towards the DADA classroom.
Snape watched Draco leave the room then turned back to face Harry, a cold and calculation look in his black eyes. "Now Potter you will serve your detention...with *me*," he said in a low silky voice.
A voice that had Harry been really paying attention to, he would have remembered. One in which he'd heard before, that had once been a comfort not a torment. One that might have made Harry Potter reconsider his ideas for the evening possibly. Unfortunately for him, he didn't recognize the voice of the past even though a part of Harry suddenly did feel calm and a bit happier then he had been in a very long time.
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Chapter: 5

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~
Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:
Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
~~~~CHAPTER FIVE: A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words~~~~
Severus Snape watched Harry carefully while trying not to look too conspicuous. The fact that he was still in the portrait room in itself was odd, considering those who knew Professor Snape knew that 100% of the time he never stuck round once the detention task was assigned. Usually he only returned in a huff once it was done, sending the unfortunate party on their way. However in this case he had no intention of leaving Harry alone, not that there was any way he would
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admit that.
A little over an hour had passed since he had set Harry the task of cleaning off the dust on the old school portraits, deliberately guiding him to certain sections at a time. He had his reasons for this, reasons that soon enough would become apparent, but not yet. Severus was waiting. Waiting and watching the boy carefully, and he had one very good reason to do that.
The post he'd received this evening at dinner had both angered and terrified him to no end. But if the post was right, time was running out and he had to find out exactly what the boys intentions were. The only problem was how to do that without sounding either too caring, too curious, or driving him away completely. Not an easy task for someone like Severus Snape that's for sure.
Glancing at Harry to see he was on the other side of the room occupied thoroughly with the cleaning of a large portrait of Hengist of Woodcroft, Severus pulled out a well crumpled piece of parchment. Since the moment he'd gotten this at dinner, surprisingly delivered by his own owl Eranos, the words had burned into his mind like a branding iron. With one last check towards Harry, Severus looked down and reread the parchment for the hundredth time, his insides turning cold with terrified fear.
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*Snape-*
*I know the truth about you and your past, as well as who you sneak into the dungeons at night these days. As to how I found out that is irrelevant, for the moment however I will keep your secret. But you must do something in return, something only the three of you can. SAVE HARRY. If I am right in what I think, time is running out. If you don't save him soon from himself, we are all doomed and the evil will win. I would help him if I could but as things are I can't. But you and your 'friends' can...and I will only hope you are in time...because if he dies...you will be responsible for more than one death...for I too will follow him...*
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The fact that the note was unsigned meant little to Severus, it was the words more than anything else that cut through him like a hot knife. He could tell the writing had been magically altered as well, so the person who'd written it was indistinguishable. That meant that unless Severus wanted to make an all out investigation, he probably would never find out who wrote it. Whoever it was though obviously knew far too much and Severus was at great risk now.
He was torn into two different directions, unsure of how to approach either. On the one hand to actively pry into Harry's life meant trouble for him, not only because of his well honed 'dislike' for the boy either. Harry was a Gryffindor, Severus a Slytherin, and to cross the boundaries and rules of the internal house 'hatreds' would be too great a risk to the 'job' he was forced to preform. To show any type of interest in the boy at this point could blow up everything he'd worked so hard to create.
However on the other hand, if he *didn't* do anything and sat by idly he would lose far far more, he knew that. All the efforts he'd done would be for naught if Harry died, and even Severus knew that if the world had *any* chances left, it lay within Harry. But that wasn't the true issue of what Severus would lose, not by any means. And the thought of *that* loss made his heart stop and his blood run cold.
In the end the weight of the latter losses won, and Severus knew the time had finally come to do what he should have done a long time ago. Whether or not what he would say would have any effect remained to be seen, but if there was any way to do what had been asked of him, he had to

do it. And the detention here in the portrait room had been the perfect alibi for what he now planned.
"Professor?" a voice asked from across the room.
Severus looked up from his thoughts startled and quickly put away the piece of parchment back in his robe making sure it was safely tucked away. Looking up at the boy he schooled his expression back into one of indifference and managed to scowl out, "What do you want Potter?"
"I finished dusting this side of the room that's all," Harry said keeping his distance.
Severus only gave a cursory glance towards the work Harry had done and waved his hand in a dismissive gesture. "Very well, go clean over there now," he said pointing to the opposite side of where Harry was standing.
Harry looked at where Severus pointed before turning back to him. "Umm...professor?"
"What *now* Potter?" Severus said muttering.
"I already cleaned that side of the room," Harry said.
"Well then go find a place you *haven't* cleaned boy and stop nagging me!" Severus said in a surely voice. He needed to buy a bit more time...just a bit more until his carefully laid plans could take hold.
"Yes sir," Harry said a bit dejectedly and walked over to another area he hadn't done yet and began to dust off a portrait of Elfric the Eager.
Severus noticed Harry look at the portrait carefully as if he was thinking bout something, then saw him turn back to face him a question forming in his mind. "Having trouble completing your task Potter?" he said keeping a level gaze on the boy.
Harry shook his head and glanced back at the portrait. "Was Elfric really as bad as everyone said he was?"
Severus wasn't quite prepared for that question and he had to think for a moment . Truth was back in school he had been the worst magic history student, caring for nothing Professor Binns had discussed, and more often then not had feigned off in class reading potions books instead. He racked his brain quickly trying to remember everything he had heard bout Elfric so as not to appear completely stupid in front of Harry. Unfortunately there wasn't a single thing he could think of at the moment causing him to scowl slightly.
"Actually everything you've heard about Elfric was indeed true Harry," an amused voice said from the doorway. "He was a traitor who informed the enemy army to turn and run on the very night of what probably would have been a victorious battle."
"R-Lupin! What are *you* doing here?" Severus exclaimed in what he hoped was a suspicious manner and glared at the now grinning other man. The fact that Remus was now here however told him he'd bought all the time he needed after all.
Remus walked into the room and glanced at Severus a moment before turning to face Harry. "Oh I just thought I'd check up on the *son* of my *best* friend that's all. Make sure he was still alive up here and not half eaten by dust bunnies," Remus said smiling over at Harry who returned it in kind.
Severus however had not missed the implications of that comment. "I thought you were attending to Mr. Malfoy's detention," he said giving Remus a slight shake of his head.
Remus nodded back slightly then said, "He was needed *elsewhere* at the moment so I rescheduled his detention for another night. Drawbacks of being Head Boy I suppose," Remus said nonchalantly and walked further into the room to stand next to Harry and stare up at the portrait of Elfric now. "Shame about Elfric really. You know it took 16 years before they finally

found out who the betrayer was that night."
"Really whoa. That's a long time," Harry said glancing up at Elfric himself now. "But what made him do it? Turn to the side of evil I mean?"
Remus glanced back at Severus a moment while Harry's head was still turned before replying. "No one really knows why he did it Harry. Perhaps like some he wanted the fame and the power of what he thought evil was."
"Fame and power aren't always *everything* Lupin. Sometimes it's more a curse then a blessing incase you've forgotten," Severus said without thinking causing Remus to turned and give him a sharp look.
"I wouldn't know about *that* now...*would* I Severus..." Remus said in a cool voice.
Harry however had not missed the intonations of what that seemed to say. Turning to Remus he looked at him closely a moment as if he was thinking hard on something. "Does being good or evil really matter though? I mean in the end it's all the same thing...a struggle for something someone else wants. Even the side of good makes their sacrifices...will kill even...to get the intended goals. Sometimes I wonder if one side really *is* better then the other in that case," Harry said quietly.
Both Remus and Severus looked at Harry surprised at what he'd said. "I suppose you have a point in that Potter. Each side *will* do what they must to get what they want in the end. The only difference is that you're fighting for what's *right* instead of what's *wrong*."
Harry shook his head and sighed deeply. "But if it means losing everything and everyone you care about...then how *can* you say that it's still right? You're *still* losing either way...losing everything...parents...friends...people who have the foolish ideas that giving up their lives is the *right* thing to do. But it *isn't*..." he said in a pained voice.
"Oh Harry that's not true. Those ideas *aren't* foolish, not to the people who believe in them," Remus said softly.
"My parents thought they were doing what was right too. Knowing that they couldn't stand up to Voldemort they still had to die...only to prove a point? That they *believed* in what they were doing?" Harry said bitterly.
Severus got up and walked over to Harry and surprisingly put a hand on his shoulder squeezing it gently. "No, your mo- err...Lily and...James...*didn't* die to prove a point. But they *did* believe the world would be far better off *without* Voldemort in it. They were willing to fight for that...and die for that...because they wanted a better life for *everyone*," he said with a sigh.
Harry seemed to think that over for a moment then looked up at Remus with a tortured look in his eyes. A tear had started to slide down his cheek but he didn't even brush it aside. "Why? Why didn't they protect themselves like they did me? Why did they die and leave me alone when I needed them so badly...*why*?" Harry said through a choked sob.
Remus looked back at Harry with a deep gaze of pure sadness for a moment, then turned his gaze to Severus. "They *didn't* leave you alone Harry...not really. There were a lot more issues behind what happened then anyone knew. But maybe now isn't the best time after all to find that out..."
"No Remus...I think now is *exactly* the right time for him to know," Severus said softly and looked down at Harry who was noticeably surprised at hearing Severus called Remus by his first name. "However the truth might be harder to accept then the lies."
Harry deliberated over what Severus was saying then looked up at him slowly. "I want the truth."
Severus nodded to Harry then looked over at Remus who was watching them both closely. "It's time then. Remus, go get him and I'll meet you there shortly. This is where it all started, so this is

where it should end."
Remus nodded and without a word left the room leaving Harry slightly bewildered. Rubbing away his tears Harry turned back to Severus, a questioning look in his eyes. "What started here professor?"
Severus looked into Harry's eyes searchingly for a moment suddenly surprised at what he was seeing. He had looked into those eyes a thousand times, but now there was something different, something that hadn't been there before. A noticeable ring of black surrounded the green irises and Severus had no doubts in his mind, not that he ever had had any doubts before, of where it had come from.
The other changes as well left him no doubts as to their origins, he was just surprised that no one else had really noticed it however. The fact that in the past month Harry's hair had grown to nearly the middle of his back and hung limply round his head when it wasn't tied back in a ponytail should have been a huge giveaway, at least in Severus's eyes. The angry, coarse demeanour Harry adapted since the summer only added to the whole picture. Yet no one, not even the Granger girl had noticed oddly enough. Or if they had they had obviously not said anything to Harry.
Thinking back Severus now remembered something else from class. In the past few weeks Harry hadn't once gotten a single potion wrong. In fact, he remembered that the last time he'd tried to humiliate Harry in front of the Slytherin's he found he couldn't, simply because Harry had known the potion ingredients right off the top of his head without a single flaw even. If Severus's thinking was right, it wasn't just in potions Harry was now finding himself at ease. Without a doubt Charms would have been the second thing on Severus's list of the new 'skills' that Harry might be finding all too easy.
"Come, there's something you need to see," Severus said firmly now. He led Harry to the very back of the room to a semi hidden area before stopping at a portrait of a beautiful older woman with long black hair and sparkling black eyes. Bowing once he said, "Dobry vecher Marushka."
The lady in the painting smiled and nodded, obviously very pleased to see Severus. "Dobry vecher moj syn. Chem ya mogu tebye pomoch?"
"Liliya zdes'?" Severus asked.
The woman looked round a moment then said, "Da, odin moment"
Severus nodded and said back, "Ya podozhdu ejo. Spasiba."
The woman smiled then left the portrait apparently in search of something. Harry looked over at Severus questioningly. "What language is that professor? I've never heard it before."
Severus allowed himself a slight grin before replying. "It's Russian. Marushka was a very important Russian witch during the Grindelwald wars. She also was...my mother," Severus said quietly.
Harry stared at Severus in pure shock. Not that he thought Severus didn't have a mum, but this woman had seemed nothing like Severus...although in looks now that Harry did think bout it he did resemble her. "She...died?" Harry said hesitantly.
Severus nodded. "Yes. She choose to sacrifice herself during the second dark ages, rather then allow Voldemort to obtain her powers. It was a well worthy sacrifice however on her part, and I know she never regretted it. She and the Headmaster I believe had quite the thing for each other for a while." he said with a touch of a grin.
"Pr-professor Dumbledore...l-liked your *mother*? But he's so...old!" Harry said in astonishment.
Now Severus did chuckle. "He might be old to *you*, but I can assure you even the great Albus

Dumbledore is not without being human. They probably would have married if she hadn't done what she considered the *right* thing to do. My parents had me when they were much older then most wizarding families. Not because they didn't want to sooner, but they had things that always seemed to get in the way. When I was finally born my mother was near 70, my father well after 90. My father was killed when I was a child however, and my mother after a while moved on, she always was a charmer and Albus Dumbledore and her had much in common."
Harry was bout to respond when Marushka returned. "Ona zdes' Severus. Do svidaniya."
"Do svidaniya Mat'," Severus said bowing again as the lady disappeared and was replaced by someone else now. Someone that both of the people in the room knew, and knew well. Someone that made Harry gasp with surprise.
"Oh hello Sev! Didn't know it was you. You hardly visit these days..." the girl, for she wasn't more then 18 at best, said with a pout. She was dressed in the normal black school robes, but a red and gold Gryffindor crest was clearly pinned on them, along with a silver badge that read "Head Girl"
"Forgive me Lily, I do apologize, I should make more of an effort. Everything is well with you?" Severus said.
Lily Evans, for she was still an Evans and not a Potter yet, shrugged her shoulders. "As well as can be. Boring really, oh how I wish they had done a portrait of the boys, I miss them sometimes. They hardly come to see me like you do," Lily said with a sigh. "Anyway, so what brings you here Sev?" she said then spotted Harry off to the side. "Oh! Oh is that who I think it is? Is that *him*?" Lily said turning best she could within the confines of the portrait she was in to get a better look at Harry.
Severus nodded and to Harry's definite surprise, smiled at Lily. "It is Lily. It's Harry."
"Oh Sev! That's *wonderful*! And you said you would *never* tell him. Oh Harry! It's so wonderful to actually be able to *talk* to you instead of peeking at you from the walls!" Lily said beaming happily.
With a slight nod from Severus, Harry walked up to the portrait and looked up into the youngish face of his mother. A face that he had dreamed bout for 7 years now, and here he was actually talking to her! Or at least...a form of her, but for Harry that was good enough. "Mum? Is...is that...*really* you?" he said awed.
Lily laughed and nodded. "Well...sort of. It was my idea, the whole portrait thing. Mind you sitting for nearly 3 hours to get it done wasn't easy, but worth it I think now."
"I don't understand though...are...are you...alive?" Harry asked.
Lily shook her head. "No...I wish I was Harry, believe me I do. But I'm just a picture with...some memories that's all. Just like all of Hogwarts portraits, I exist in the past really, not the here and now. I remember only what I knew when I was painted and brought magically to 'life' as it were. Anything after that Sev, Remus and Sirius told me," she said giving Harry a sad look now.
"Why do you call him Sev? I thought you hated Professor Snape?" Harry ask puzzled.
Lily flashed Severus an odd look before replying. "We did, long ago Harry. But...times change, people change. When Severus first sought me out I wouldn't speak to him even. I still thought of him as the slimy greasy hooknosed git that gave us nothing but trouble. But over time...I watched him and I listened. He seemed sincere in his words...and in the end...we became friends, good friends actually. He needed someone to confide in and talk to, and I was there."
"Oh...I see," Harry said giving Severus a glance. "So...that means...you know everything?"
"I know enough Harry, if that's what you mean. I know what happened back then though yes. I

know I died...as did Jamie. But I'm very glad *you* lived. We all hoped you would, for so many reasons," Lily said softly.
"I don't understand mum...why? Why *me*? Why was *I* special over anyone else?" Harry asked close to tears again.
Lily looked over at Severus with a strange look in her emerald green eyes. "Are you sure you *really* want him to know Sev? You said the five of us did make an agreement on this..."
"I *know* what I said, but that issue is moot now. There's more at stake then we thought, and now *is* the time. Can you meet us at the portrait in the usual place? The others are waiting there by now I'm sure," Severus said.
"Of course. I'm sure Marushka want's her frame back by now. Although I'm positive she's taking this advantage to go visit Albus unless I miss my guess," Lily said with a grin.
Severus chuckled at that and nodded his head. "I'm sure of that as well. We'll meet you there then."
With a wave Lily leapt from the portrait and Harry couldn't see where she was headed off to.
"Professor? Was...is...that...*really* my mum?" he asked still a bit in awe.
"In essence yes, it is. Your mother had grand ideas as Head Girl, and when she was getting ready to leave Hogwarts she asked Albus to have her portrait done. That way any future Head Girls could come to her if they needed help. She used to hang in the Head Girl's room until the day before you arrived at Hogwarts. She thought it was too risky, so she asked to be removed to here instead," Severus said as he turned to head back out of the portrait room.
Harry followed but wouldn't give up the conversation. "But *why*? Why didn't she want me to know she was here?"
"I think it's because she felt that you might be more hurt if you saw her only as a portrait and not as a physical being that could touch and hold you. You had just found out who she was, and the thought of her like that could have done more damage then good back then. You were too young to understand, but Lily knew it was the only thing to do," Severus said.
Harry sighed. "She doesn't really know who I am though does she. I mean...she's not the person who did hold me as a baby and stuff."
"No, she's not in that respect. But she *is* still a part of your mother, and she knows enough to understand what it was like," Severus said quietly.
For a little while neither of them spoke after that, each reflecting in their thoughts until Harry realised where they were headed now. "The east wing?" he said surprised now.
Severus nodded and steered Harry towards the now very familiar corridor. "I know you've been here watching. I *always* know when your trying *not* to be noticed," Severus said with a slight grin.
Harry looked at Severus shocked. "You *did* know? I had a suspicion you might have...but...I wasn't sure. I just don't understand though Professor. Why are you being so nice to now? Why does my mum like you? What's going on with you, Remus and Sirius?"
"Slow down Harry, one thing at a time. All of that will be answered shortly. And again, I will warn you now. It's not too late to back out of this, you could just walk away here and now or I can put a memory charm on you to forget any of this. It's up to you," Severus said stopping for a moment to look at Harry carefully.
Harry thought bout that for a moment then slowly shook his head. "No, I want to know. Strange as it sounds, I really *do* want to know. I've been curious since the first time I saw the three of you up there and why you would all be together. And now with my mum..." he said with a slight

catch in his throat.
"Harry...I told you the truth could be harder then you think. Painful even. I'm not going to say this will be easy to hear, it won't be."
Harry thought hard for a moment then turned and looked at his potions professor in the eyes. "I'd rather die knowing the truth, then die with the lies professor."
"That's what I'm afraid of the most Harry..." Severus said in a low voice and then nodded his head. "Very well then let's continue. It's getting late and we have a lot to talk about," Severus said, and together the both of them continued down the passageway to where the truth and the lies would be sorted out. And Severus hoped when all was said and done, that it would indeed be worth it.
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The above conversation in Russian is translated roughly as this:
Dobry vecher - Good Evening.
moj syn - my son
Chem ya mogu tebye pomoch? - What can I do for you?
Liliya zdes'? - Is Lily here?
Da, odin moment. - Yes, one moment.
Ya podozhdu ejo. Spasiba. - I will wait for her. Thank you.
Ona zdes' Severus. Do svidaniya. - Here she is Severus. Good-bye.
Mat' - mother
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Chapter: 6

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~
Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:
Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
~~~~CHAPTER SIX: Truth Is In The Heart~~~~
"We were getting worried," Remus said as Harry and Severus finally arrived at the end of the east floor corridor.
"Marushka had to find her first that's all. Now if you wouldn't mind moving mutt we can start this," Severus said glaring at the big black dog that was blocking the way.
Seconds later Sirius Black transformed and gave Severus a glare back before moving out of the way and scooping Harry up into a huge hug. "Great to see you Harry," with a smile for him.
Harry smiled back. "Great too see you too Sirius. You really look good these days."
Sirius chuckled and put his hand up to his mid back length black hair, sweeping a few stray strands back behind his ear. "Helps when your not living off rats and rubbish eh?" he said giving Severus another slight glare.
"If you're quite done discussing your dietary habits Black I'd like to get on with this?" Severus
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cut in.
"Be my guest oh Great Potion's Master," Sirius said with an exaggerated bow and surprisingly gave Severus an amused grin.
Severus rolled his eyes but chose not to comment, instead he pulled out the same medallion that Harry had seen many times by now. Taking it off his neck he thought for a moment then turned to Harry and held out the medallion. "Take this."
Harry took it hesitantly and looked down at the medallion a bit awed. Now that he was up close to it he could see what was on it and he gave a mild gasp of surprise. For a second he glanced at the statue opposite the wall and then back down to the medallion reading the words on it carefully but they were in Welsh so he didn't quite understand them. Whatever it said however obviously had meant a lot to the two people that made up the statue and were on the medallion. Looking back up at Severus he asked, "What do the words mean?"
"At Gorchefygu Anhoffter Ond Yr Cyfoeth Cariad Brydiau Bod Chwithau Achubiaeth." Severus said quietly and looked at both Remus and Sirius with a very unguarded gaze. "It says basically - "To Overcome Hatred Only The Power Of Love Will Be Your Salvation."
"Can love really be *that* powerful?" Harry asked skeptically.
"Far more than anyone thinks it is Harry," Sirius said softly and tapped the bricks on the wall to realign them. "put the medallion in that circle there," he said pointing to an indented area on the door.
Harry did as he was told and the door slowly opened up. Severus took the medallion back and hid it underneath his collar, while Remus and Sirius walked through the doorway. Harry followed them silently then finally Severus came through, and the door and assumedly the wall closed up behind them. It took a moment before Harry realised they were actually in a short corridor not a room at first, but it was only a few feet before they arrived at a place that made Harry stop and stare in wonder and awe.
The room was unlike anything Harry had seen in the castle so far, beautiful barely even scratched the surface of the words he could use to describe it. It was far from that really...it was...magic. A room that vibrated and swirled with pure magic and colour. Reds, golds, greens and silvers seemed to fill every corner. Magically enhanced tapestries watched them as if in approval, some of the people in them even smiled at Harry.
On one wall above a huge king sized bed was two tapestries Harry knew well. One was the Gryffindor crest, one the Slytherin crest. There were bookshelves lining one of the walls that reached from floor to ceiling, end to end, a ladder like in Olivanders wand shop was attached to it in order to reach the top shelves. In another corner was a huge oak desk with stacks of books and papers on it. On the wall above the desk was a portrait of two men that Harry again recognised, and again was surprised to see how young and carefree they looked.
Harry walked over to the portrait gazing at up it a moment before realising the two men in the portrait were smiling down at him. Severus came up next to Harry and nodded his head slightly towards the two men who nodded back. "Evening Severus, so you've finally brought him eh?" the man with the jet black hair said.
Severus nodded again. "I believe it's time he knew Salazar."
"Salazar? As in *'the'* Salazar? Salazar Slytherin?" Harry said awed.
Severus gave a slight grin. "Yes, as in *'the'* Salazar Slytherin. As well as Godric Gryffindor," he said nodding at the reddish brown haired man.
"Godric Gryffindor? Really?" Harry said feeling a bit lightheaded at being round two of the

founders, even if one of them was Salazar Slytherin.
The reddish brown haired man chuckled and nodded back at Harry. "Well met young man. Good to finally meet you in person, heard quite a bit about you from these three," he said indicating Severus, Remus and Sirius.
"Er...it's umm...nice to meet you too sir," Harry said.
"Call me Godric, sir makes me seem so old doesn't it? Do look old to you?" Godric said with a grin.
Harry chuckled slightly less in shock now and shook his head. "No not at all. I just never have seen you look young before other then the statue outside."
"That thing still round eh? Never did like it much. Always said it was a waste of time to make it," Salazar said muttering.
"Yes well if you two wouldn't mind, we have quite a bit to discuss tonight," Severus said turning Harry away from the portrait.
"Not a problem, we'll just sit and listen as we always do. Unless you'd care for a bit of a wander would you Godric? I believe there's two very lonely good looking women down on the third floor corridor we can spend with some time with..." Salazar said with a grin and nudged Godric in the ribs.
"Ah we haven't visited Helga and Rowena quite a bit now, I think I'd enjoy the company. If you'll pardon us gentleman..." Godric said with a bow and the two men jumped off through a few other portraits before disappearing.
"They're...so different then I expected..." Harry said slowly as he watched them leave.
Remus chuckled. "Surprised us too the first time we saw them. Pranksters the both of them...now I see where James got it...definitely in the bloodline."
A cough from the wall made all four of them turn round quickly. "Salazar wasn't really as bad as everyone thought he was. At least not at this point when he was younger. He didn't turn bitter until much later on you know, that portrait of them was actually before Hogwarts was built, while they were still good friends," Lily said slipping into the portrait Godric and Salazar just left.
"Ah good you're here Lily. What took so long?" Sirius said smiling up at her.
"Sorry Padfoot, got delayed by Sir Cadogan. I swear that man is a menace! Why they ever allowed him to be painted is beyond me," Lily said muttering.
Harry grinned and nodded. "I agree with you mum. In 3rd year he had to replace the Fat Lady when Sirius...er...that is..." he said glancing sheepishly at Sirius.
"You mean when I slashed up the Fat Lady's painting hmm? Something I regret now believe me, and I've had to go down on my knees a hundred times till she accepted my apologies," Sirius said blushing a bit.
"Well now that well know what your capable of Black...do you mind if we begin?" Severus said in his usual silky drawl, though it was laced with a tiny bit of amusement.
"Harry why don't you take a seat on the bed all right? Be more comfortable and err...you probably will be wanting to be seated when we tell you what we're going to..." Remus said walking over to Harry and steering him towards the bed where Harry promptly sat down.
Remus and Sirius pulled over two chairs that had been by the desk, but Severus chose to stand near the fireplace that adorned one of the walls. The room was windowless, and the fire that now burned brightly warmed the room. Remus and Sirius looked at Severus a moment as if unsure how to proceed, but with some sort of unspoken signal Severus began to choose his words.

"I suppose it's best to start at the beginning...though I'm not even sure where that is anymore. But if I had to start to somewhere...it would begin here, at Hogwarts, in 1976," Severus said slowly. "We were 16 and a lot was going on in the wizarding world. Voldemort was steadily growing in supporters, and a lot of the Slytherin children were even being drawn into the folds of it all. Lucius Malfoy, Marcus Goyle, Vigaro Crabbe, Alistar McNair, Robert Avery, Vincent Lestrange, Patrick Parkinson...to name a few...were all supporters of his secretly. Though they were children they were the eyes and ears of Voldemort here at the school, reporting back to him anything of 'interest'."
"Were you too?" Harry asked hesitantly.
Severus sighed sadly for a moment and nodded his head. "In a way yes and no. As a Slytherin I had little choice to do what was expected of me. My father, though not a supporter of Voldemort because of my mother, was very deep into the dark arts. And in his rights an excellent potions master as well. Because of that fact I grew up knowing everything there was about dark arts and potions that he could teach me, and what he didn't I found out on my own. I was a very inquisitive child, mainly because I preferred to be alone."
"Was your father Russian too?" Harry asked.
Severus shook his head. "No, he was British and staid as you could get. He met my mother while travelling through Russia for some business of my grandfathers. I wouldn't say they 'fell in love' at first sight, I don't think my father was capable of being caught up in that emotion, however my mother came from a very wealthy and well known pureblooded wizarding family and she was the first woman I suppose he admired. The match was acceptable to both sides and 6 months later they married."
"But didn't your father care that your mum was working for the side of good during the Grindelwald wars?"
Severus gave Harry a wry grin. "Oh he cared, but not in the way you think. Despite the dark side of what my father's family was, even they were not insane enough to want to side against Albus Dumbledore. My family has always done that though, takes the easy way out so to speak. They side with whoever will benefit them most, and clearly in that case, Albus was going to be the victor."
"So they switched sides...just like you did," Harry said.
Severus gave Harry a strange look before responding to him. "No they didn't 'switch' sides, they waited until they could figure out who was going to win. As far as what *I* did, that was for very different reasons that I'll explain. However, that's not where it first started. It started like I was saying, here at Hogwarts. And it started oddly enough because of a potions assignment."
"Our professor back then, a man by the name of Baulder, was exactly what a Slytherin could be. Cunning, sly, ambitious and had the personality of ice cubes to put in mildly. Because I mistakenly showed my potions skills early on, he was I suppose a bit jealous that a mere child could best him in his own field. From I think my 1st year on Baulder made my life more miserable then it all ready was. If that was even possible."
"No offense professor but...sounds a lot like you and me..." Harry said quietly.
Severus chuckled slightly and nodded. "Yes it does, doesn't it. I suppose in a lot of ways the man rubbed off that skill on me somehow, unintentionally mind you, but he did. Back then however he and I would go rounds with each other, and I found myself more in detentions than out of them. Because of it, among other things, I became very bitter and angry...and even more alone then I thought possible. I hated everyone and everything round me. Including myself. But then

one day...all that changed..." he said and he glanced towards Remus a moment.
"What happened?" Harry asked.
"Baulder in his usual way did something he knew I would positively hate. We came back from Yule holidays 6th year and he suddenly decided to assign us all lab 'partners'. While the Gryffindors got paired together, and the Slytherin's the same, I and another student that Baulder had taken dislike to instantly for some reason, were singled out to work together."
"That doesn't sound so bad though," Harry said.
"It is when one is a Gryffindor and the other is a Slytherin," Remus said with a chuckle, cutting into the conversation now.
Severus nodded. "Exactly. Baulder hated Lupin as much as he hated me. He thought by pairing us together it was a sick sort of 'payback' to us both for just existing."
"That didn't exactly end up that way though now did it," Sirius said muttering.
Remus chuckled and shook his head. "No it certainly didn't. You see Harry, because of what I am I had spent most of my childhood as you know alone. That left me basically few options before I got to Hogwarts, but a lot of time to read and that was probably one of the only things that kept me sane before coming here. Werewolves by nature are dark creatures, and because my parents were a bit afraid of me, they did whatever I asked of them. Even taking me to Knockturn Alley to buy books I couldn't get elsewhere."
"Knockturn Alley? *You* Remus?" Harry asked surprised.
Remus nodded. "It was the only place to get what I wanted. Even from a young age I knew what I had become, and I need to know everything I could. I found very little of course, back then as now there is almost nothing on the 'truth' of what a werewolf is. However I found other interests as well...the dark arts. Being a 'dark creature' I found I had natural 'talent' or 'affinity' as it were with the dark side, so I began to teach myself."
"By the time I was partnered with Lupin for the assignment he'd learned quite a bit actually, and that's what ended up making the assignment quite interesting actually. Not that either of us would ever admit nor show any friendship outside of the unused classroom we'd found to study our assignments. But inside that classroom enemies turned into friends..." Severus said glancing at Remus questioningly.
Remus nodded slightly back and said softly, "And eventually...much more..."
Harry glanced from Remus to Severus and back to Remus, surprise and suspicions in his emerald eyes. "You mean...you and him...were..."
"Lovers yes. Though 'love' at first had little do with it. It was more a need on both our parts. Despite the closeness of James, Peter and Sirius...I was still very much alone in what I was. They protected me, cared for me...became animagus for me...but they could never really fill the needs that I had. Severus could however...and did," Remus said softly.
"So...I mean...how did you...know?" Harry asked.
"We just did. Neither of us had ever been with anyone at that point, we didn't even know we were interested in each other. One day late at night, that's when we would meet up in the classroom, we were waiting for one of our potions to cool down. Remus transfigured a nice sized sofa to sit on, I was always horrid at transfigurations or anything really needing a wand, and we were discussing things," Severus said.
"We hit a bit of a lull in the conversation and I began to fall asleep. The full moon had only been the night before so I was still a bit tired, though Severus didn't know why yet. I guess I did nod off for a few when I felt him shake me to wake me up, and when I opened my eyes he was

kneeling by the sofa practically inches from me. I still don't know what made me do it but...I leaned over still half asleep really...and kissed him," Remus said blushing a bit.
"Whoa, *you* kissed *him* first?" Harry said.
Remus grinned and nodded. "I did. I think we both were in shock really but somehow...it felt right. I mean it wasn't one of those classic 'story book' snogs you read bout no, more of an understanding. I pulled away in shame turned away from him embarrassed. I didn't even say anything to him, I couldn't I was too numb for what I'd just done. I was getting ready to leave figuring he'd not want to even look at me when..."
"When I knew that I couldn't let him go. That I needed him in a strange way to be complete. I pulled him back from leaving...and right into my arms...and well after that...let's just say the rest of the school term went all too quickly," Severus said gazing at Remus tenderly.
"And no one knew? I mean how'd you hide it?" Harry said.
"No, no one knew. It wasn't easy believe me, and we both regret we didn't be more open and honest with each other from the start. It would have saved us both quite a bit in the end. By day we were enemies, but at night..." Remus said softly.
"Until *I* found out that was. It was our final year at school and I had woken up one night when Remus was just slipping out of the dorm and decided to follow him wondering what he was up to. Found out the hard way *exactly* what he was up to though and I was beyond livid," Sirius said.
"Jealous was more like it Black if I recall," Severus said with half a scowl.
"Jealous of what Sirius?" Harry asked.
"Of them...well...of Remus. I..." Sirius began but couldn't seem to go one.
"Oh go on Sirius tell him. Believe me on this, he needs to hear it from you," Remus said urging his friend on.
Sirius sighed. "I was jealous Harry because...because I loved Remy. I had loved him since I don't know forever I guess, when I realised what love was. I wanted him for myself."
Harry looked at his godfather a mixed amount of shock and surprise on his face.
"Y-you...your...but...I thought...I mean you...always...the woman you dated..."
"He certainly did date his share back then, but we all knew it was a cover up because of how much he loved Remy. The only one that was *clueless* about it all was Remus himself," Lily said stepping into the conversation now from her spot on the wall.
"Well sorry but I did have *other* things on my mind then checking to see that one of my best friends was in love me Lils," Remus said muttering.
"And would oh...shagging Severus have been one of them?" Lily said amused.
"Lily! *Honestly*!" Remus said in a huff. "You see Harry? Sometimes woman just are *not* the way to go, *especially* the redheaded green eyed ones!"
Lily laughed and wagged her finger at Remus. "Oh come off in Remy if it *wasn't* for we women as you put it, *you* wouldn't be here now, would you."
"An unfortunate oversight that is correctable these days by potions and spells Lils," Severus said with a grin. "However don't you *dare* tell my mother I said that Lily Evans Potter," he said mockingly.
Lily rolled her eyes at him. "Believe me it's nothing she probably doesn't *all ready* know Sev. After all she didn't fuss when you introduced her to Remus and Sirius after the three of you...err...forget I said that...never mind..." Lily said suddenly finding something interesting to look at on the opposite side of the room.

"Wait, what does mum mean by that?" Harry asked turned back to Severus now.
"Well, err...that is...err..." Severus stammered for once at a loss for words.
"Oh bloody hell Severus at this point does it really matter?" Sirius said scowling. "What he's trying to say is..."
"That we were discussing the *past* at the moment Padfoot. *Not* the present. Certain things can *wait*," Remus said shoving an elbow into Sirius's ribs.
"*Owww*! Merlin Moony watch it! You know you get stronger when the moon's getting full," Sirius grumbled and rubbed his ribs.
"To continue this..." Severus said giving Sirius a strange glance. "Black's jealousy in the end drove us apart. As you have all ready heard about the incident in the willow that day I'll skip the details. I felt my heart break after that, I felt betrayed that as close as Remus and I were he couldn't have even told me what he was, and because of that I didn't want to see nor speak to him again. I was too hurt."
Remus sighed. "It was my own fault. I should have told you Severus but, I was too afraid. You were the last person I wanted to hurt."
"I know that now Remus, and I think of all those years wasted trying to hate you for something you couldn't help. Even the years I spent hating you Sirius because of that. I know now you couldn't help being jealous...if it was me gods know I would have been...if I found out someone was stealing away the person I loved..." Severus said softly.
"However, because of what happened I threw myself into my potions, and well...when Lucius approached me to join up with Voldemort after graduation...I accepted it. I thought it was the one way I could forget Remus, forget that I still in my heart ached for him, needed him. And for years I let myself fall down into the worst places a man can possibly go because of it," Severus said quietly.
"But...you came back. You didn't stay like that..." Harry said.
"No, I have Lily to thank for that actually," Severus said.
"Mum? What did she do?" Harry said puzzled.
"Lily? Do you want him to know?" Severus said turning back towards the portrait of Lily.
Lily nodded. "Yes, he should. If he's going to understand why it all happened, he *needs* to know Sev," she said quietly and gave Harry almost sad gaze.
Severus nodded to her and turned back to Harry. "Very well then..." Severus said slowly as if he had to really think of what he was going to say. "It wasn't long after I had started teaching here as Potions Professor when...when Lily came to see me. She somehow had found out what I was...a deatheater...and..."
"If you can't go on professor..." Harry began but was cut off.
"No, I have to tell you." he said swallowing deeply. Closing his eyes for a moment he said, "I was the one responsible for the attack that killed her parents Harry. You're grandparents...are dead...because of me."
Harry looked at Severus agast. "W-what? Y-you...you...k-killed my...my grandparents?"
"Believe me when I tell you this...I didn't know who they were. We were only told where to apparate to, what house on what street, nothing more. Muggles and muggle borns to attack with no names...I *swear* to you I *didn't* know. A neighbour of Lily's spotted me however coming out of the house...my mask had fallen off somehow and the woman...saw me. She told Lily in secret...and Lily came to see me here at school," Severus said.
"When Lily got here...she almost tore me apart. Your mother by Merlin, she had a temper as fiery

as a boiling cauldron if not more so. I thought she would kill me, I really did so...I put a body bind on her to try and calm her down. That only made her more angry of course, I could see it in her eyes even through the bind," Severus said.
"You...put my mum...in a body bind? She had *every* right to be angry with you though, you *should* have let her kill you!" Harry said angrily.
"Yes, I should have most likely. It would have ended the hell that I was in, and honestly I wish I had," Severus said. "I actually thought about letting her for a few moments after I bound her, thought about releasing her and letting her do whatever she wanted to get her revenge. I knew any apology I could make would fall on deaf ears, so I didn't even bother trying."
"Why would you even *be* sorry? You were a deatheater, they don't have emotions, they can't feel sorry for what they do," Harry said glaring at Severus now.
"You're right Harry, deatheaters for the most part have any emotions in them destroyed. I was no exception until the moment I had found out that it was Lily's parents I'd help kill. You could say that a part of me died that day too when she told me, and the past came back to haunt me. She brought me back to the time before all of that, when I was still happy with Remus...and this was the wife of Remus's best friend. And I couldn't forgive myself for doing what I had because of that."
"Up until that moment I had forgotten what it was like to be happy, to be needed and loved. I remember I kneeled in front of Lily, tears in my eyes begging her forgiveness. She hadn't know bout Remus and myself, Sirius and James had hid it from her, so I told her the truth. How much I still ached for him, how much I missed him. How I hated what I was and what I was doing. How it made me sick inside, and that I was tired of it all. And when I was done, I did the only thing I could do...I released her from the bind and asked her to kill me," Severus said quietly.
"You...you *really* asked my mum to kill you?" Harry said surprised now.
Severus nodded. "I begged her even, I sat there kneeling on the ground begging her to end it for me. I didn't care what she would do, just as long as it would end. But she wouldn't do it...she couldn't do it she told me. To kill me wouldn't bring back her parents, wouldn't make anything right. She kneeled in front of me and wiped my tears telling me that there had to be another way, any other way and if I truly wanted redemption I had to find that way."
"So that's why you switched sides then?" Harry asked.
Severus nodded. "Yes, that's exactly why. I didn't know what to do, I was afraid, alone...but someone very wise seemed to know my struggle. He came to me one night and told me that if I wanted to talk...about anything that might be bothering me...he would listen. Before he even left my room I had told him everything...about Remus and myself, about being a deatheater, about what I had done to Lily's parents. And in the end...he didn't condemn me for it, he offered me a way out and I accepted it gladly and gratefully."
"You're talking about Professor Dumbledore aren't you," Harry said quietly.
"Yes. He isn't just the most powerful wizard in the world Harry...but the wisest and kindest wizard I've ever known. He could have expelled me from my position, turned me in to the ministry...anything. But he didn't, he saved me and what was left of my soul. As I had once been sent to spy on him, now I was his spy and I was more than willing to do whatever he wanted."
"Something happened though didn't it...I can almost tell..." Harry said slowly.
Severus nodded. "Something very bad Harry, worse than anything any of us could have imagined. And it's the very reason in which you're here right now talking to us. Because what happened that night almost 18 years ago...no one could have stopped...not me, not Lily, not even

Albus. And if there had been *any* other way believe me Harry...we would have done it..."
"What was it?" Harry said in a whisper.
Severus gave Harry a look of pure tortured agony before responding. "Lucius began to suspect my loyalties might have been waning. He told Voldemort who in turn called me to him. I still had a role to play, a game in which was too important to back out of. I had to...accept...the...the task assigned to me. When I found what it was...I..."
Remus got up and went over to Severus and put a hand on his arm. "You don't have to do this Sev...he might be better off not knowing," he said quietly.
Severus shook his head and put his hand on Remus's. "I have to do this Remus. I've taken the easy way out since, I've been running from the past far too long," he said softly and turned back to Harry and gave a long deep sigh. "the task I was assigned Harry...was to...to take your mother to Lucius. Not to kill her, for some reason I never understood Voldemort didn't want her dead, but it was a plot against James in a twisted way."
"A plot for what? What was Malfoy supposed to do with her?" Harry said.
Severus looked at Harry sadly for a moment then continued. "Voldemort wanted James to join him Harry. He wanted the power of a Gryffindor heir under his control, and of course James refused. Voldemort was incensed by the repeated failure to get James to join him, so he did the next thing he could. If he could get Lily...then James might reconsider."
"And how was he planning to do that?" Harry said, a knot of suspicion growing inside him.
Severus sighed. "I was to take Lily to a prearranged place where Lucius was waiting. Once there Lucius would...would have his way with her. She was to be given a potion that would make her think she had done it willingly, giving herself over to Lucius and the dark being her own choice. Then she was to return to James and try to seduce him over to Voldemort's side."
"Didn't you warn her though? Didn't you do *anything*?" Harry said, his fists clenched in pure agony and anger.
"Of *course* I did! I did *everything* I could to try to avoid this from happening, don't you think I wouldn't have? But even after talking to Albus we all, including James and Lily, realised there wasn't anything we *could* do. If I didn't show up with Lily then both our lives would be forfeited, and they would have killed James anyway."
"***NO***, there had to be something, anything! How could you have just given her over to Malfoy and Voldemort like that! How *could* you!" Harry yelled now.
"Harry please, calm down. Let him tell you what happened. You said you wanted to know the truth...please just let him tell you," Sirius said getting up and going over to sit down next to Harry putting his arms round him.
"But mum...couldn't she have..." Harry said in a half choked sob.
Severus shook his head. "Harry in the end Lily *did* come up with a plan, and it saved us all. Neither of us wanted to do it, but it was the only way to save ourselves without dying on the spot."
"W-what happened? What...what did she do?" Harry said, tears streaking down his face.
"When we got to the meeting place Lily played the biggest role of her life. She fought Lucius like hell, as was expected, but in the end she 'pretended' to give in. However...she surprised him considerably. Lucius always was a big talker and I knew that, he liked to play with his 'conquests', telling them what he was going to do with them. Lily reacted by instead of being disgusted, she 'pretended' to get...err...well...turned on by it," Severus said looking away with a slight red tinge in his cheeks.

"She...mum...she didn't...tell me she didn't..." Harry said slowly.
Severus shook his head. "Lily's pretense seemed to put Lucius at odds, something I had expected. I knew no one had ever stood up to him that way, Lucius you see doesn't like his women pliable and agreeable. Lily's pretense in turn disgusted him and he no longer wanted her."
"So he let her go then? Without any problems?" Harry asked hopefully.
"Merlin Harry I wish he had, but it wasn't that easy. We both hoped he would have just let her go but...even though Lucius didn't want her, he still knew his duties to his master, the plan still had to go through. Even if it wasn't him that would take her, *someone* had to. There were five of us there that day, Lucius, Crabbe, Goyle, McNair and...myself. Crabbe, Goyle and McNair, gods they were brutal with their women, I knew that. To let them touch her...to know what they would do to her...I...I *couldn't* let that happen Harry..." Severus said, tears forming in his eyes.
Harry stared at Severus now realization dawning on him. "You...it was *you*...?"
Severus swallowed and nodded ashamed. "I *had* to Harry, I'm so sorry. None of them ever knew I was gay, I couldn't tell them. To do so well...I just couldn't. Despite Voldemort wanting all his deatheaters married and producing heirs for him to mould later on, I used my teaching position as a way out. He bought it thankfully. I'd never once in my life been with a woman, with anyone other then Remus...but I knew then and there if it *wasn't* me, Lily wouldn't stand a chance. She'd have been tortured by the others sexually, emotionally and physically, and I *wasn't* going to let that happen."
"Did...did my mum...did you...you and her really..." Harry said in a whisper.
Severus nodded. "There was no way *not* to. We had been order to make sure Lucius did what he was supposed to...meaning...we...were supposed to watch him err...and your mother...so in turn *we* were now watched..." he said an all out blush on his face now. "When it was over she understood why I had to do what I did. That I stepped in like that and later on she told me that she was grateful I had. If anyone of the others had touched her...she said she wouldn't have been able to deal with it."
"She *forgave* you? Even though...you did that to her?" Harry said.
"She did, because she knew it was that or death. She wasn't ready to die anymore than I was Harry. In war you have to make some sacrifices, and we both knew that," Severus said slowly.
"*Sacrifices*? Raping my mum I wouldn't call a 'sacrifice' exactly!" Harry said angry again.
"I wouldn't call it rape Harry, not in the way the word means. If it's any consolation I was...er...gentle with her. Considering I'd never been with a woman in my life I didn't know even what I was doing," Severus said defensively.
"And that was supposed to make it all right? Because you were *gentle* with her?" Harry said scathingly.
"Would you rather have had her beaten and destroyed by one of the others? We both did the *only* thing that we could at the time. Even the potion I gave her afterwards was nothing more than a healing potion, not the seducing potion she was *supposed* to get." Severus said trying to keep himself from losing it.
"Then what? When it backfired? When my father *didn't* go to Voldemort?" Harry said.
"You want to know? I'll tell you what happened. Voldemort blamed *me* for it that's what, blamed my 'skills' weren't up to task. I was subjected to the Cruciatus curse over and over again for nearly an hour. When I could no longer lift my head anymore I finally collapsed in blissful darkness, only to be reawakened and subjected to it all over again. Nearly three hours later I was finally allowed to return to the school...broken, beaten by the others, and dazed to the point I

didn't know my name." Severus said not angrily, but there was a very strange tone in his voice. Despite how angry Harry was all of it drained out of him when he heard what Severus had gone through. Knowing what even a few moments of the curse had been like when he himself had been placed under it, he couldn't even imagine how Severus could have felt after all that. For the first time ever in his life he actually felt incredibly sorry for what his professor had suffered.
"I don't...don't really know to say. I guess I should say...thank you though...for...for saving her life like that..." Harry said hesitantly.
"Don't Harry, because that's not *all* that happened that night. Something *else* happened...something *none* of us planned...so you may want to keep those thanks," Severus said quietly. And for the first time since he'd made the decision to tell Harry the truth, he wondered if he was really doing the right thing after all.
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Chapter: 7

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~
Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:
Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
Also, anyone interested in exploring another great place to read/post fics or other such things (especially all you original fic writers like meself who don't really think is meant for 'original's', check here: /authors/piriotessa This is me personal folder within , but from there you can access any and all of the wonderful things Stories has to offer. It's free to sign up and post, or if you want to sign up for a membership it's a nominal fee of 15$ for 3 months like here on , but what they offer is a lot of fun, great fics, great discussion groups, campfires, puzzles, and oh so much more. It's a great place to meet people with common interests and I have had a wonderful time over there this past month or so since joining up. Enjoy! :)

~~~~CHAPTER SEVEN: Some Strange Revelations~~~~

Harry looked up at Severus curious as to what he could mean by those last words. He didn't know why but he had a strange sense of foreboding, though oddly enough it wasn't necessarily a bad feeling. In a way it almost felt comfortable, relieving even, however he did feel a bit frightened by what he would hear next.
Just as Severus was about to finally tell Harry what he had kept hidden for so long a sound of a door opening distracted him, and as a group everyone in the room turned towards the doorway wondering what or who could possibly have found them. This room was a secret handed down to Severus, Sirius and Remus years ago by James, and far as the three of them knew no one else in the school should have known it existed. Except of course, for the person now entering the room.
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"*Albus*? For the love of Godric...*don't* scare us like that!" Sirius said accusingly, whilst releasing a heavy breath of air.
"I apologize for the interruption. Good evening Harry, Lily. I hope is well?" Albus said nodding towards both of them.
"Skip the pleasantries Albus and tell us what's wrong. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't important," Severus said half scowling at the Headmaster.
"Of course, I wouldn't have interrupted if it wasn't Severus. However, I need to know if any of you have seen Draco Malfoy this evening," Albus said, the usual twinkle in his blue eyes replaced by a tinge of worry.
"Draco? What has *he* got to do with anything?" Severus asked in surprise now.
"A yes or no will do Severus," Albus said almost testily now, the worry clear in his voice.
"I saw him Albus, but it was a bit ago. He was supposed to serve his detention with me tonight, however someone came for him and Draco excused himself on the basis of Head Boy duties. I didn't think much of it at the time so I let him go with the promise he would finish out his detention at another time. Is there a problem?" Remus said.
"Exactly how long ago was this Remus, do you remember?" Albus said giving Remus a sharp look.
Remus was a bit taken aback at Albus's manner and he tried to think how long it could have been. "Err...perhaps it was an hour and half ago now? Not more than two hours at best. Why is it so important?" he asked curiously.
"So it's not been that long then, then again it could be far too long," Albus said more to himself than anyone else.
"Are you going stand there and be cryptic or tell us what the bloody hell is going on Albus? If it involves someone of *my* house I think *I* deserve to know," Severus said giving Albus one of his typical glares, though slightly downgraded from the ones he gave his students.
"Very well, of course you do Severus, I'm not saying you don't," Albus said gazing back at Severus with a look that immediately made Severus feel guilty at his glare. "A little over an hour ago Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle came to my office asking me if I had seen Draco this evening. I hadn't of course since supper, and I wondered myself where he could be," Albus said slowly.
"He wasn't in the Slytherin commons?" Harry said curiously.
"No, nor was he in his room, nor anywhere within the Slytherin Tower either. According to Mr. Crabbe and Mr. Goyle, they last saw Draco heading towards the picture room to serve detention with *you* Severus," Albus said leveling a gaze on Severus again.
"Yes, he *was* supposed to serve his detention with me, however Remus and I switched it out for certain reasons," Severus said slowly, not liking where this conversation was leading.
"And I've already told you what I know, and I have not seen him since either. I met up with Severus and Harry in the picture room, then went to get Sirius in the err...dungeons...and we came straight here. Harry and Severus arrived together not long after," Remus said.
"And I'll vouch they were with *me* until then Albus, in the picture room. They weren't gone long enough to do *anything* to the Malfoy boy...if that's what you're implying," Lily said in a firm tone of voice from inside her frame.
"All right, I accept that, I didn't think any of you really did have anything to do with this. However the fact remains that Draco Malfoy is now missing, and has been for at least the last hour or more," Albus said, the worry back in his voice.

"Have you checked the Quidditch pitch sir? There's a spot he err...well that he likes to go in the Gryffindor stands..." Harry said quietly, remembering now how he'd found Draco there just recently.
Albus turned to Harry with a nod. "I have now had the *entire* school checked...discretely of course...including the Quidditch pitch, locker areas and broom shed. There is no sign of him *anywhere*," Albus said. Turning to Remus however he did say, "Do you remember whom it was that came to give him that message Remus?"
Remus closed his eyes trying to get a mental picture of the person who had come for the boy, surprised at himself since he knew all the students on sight by now. Finally in a moment of panic he opened his eyes again he shook his head saying in a worried voice, "Believe it or not..no...I *don't* remember who it was. I do remember however that Draco seemed a bit surprised by the message and practically bolted for the door when he excused himself..."
Severus and Sirius looked at Remus in total shock since they both knew Remus rarely, if ever, forgot the face of a student. Just as Severus had his internal clock with potions, Remus had a knack for matching faces and names. "*You*...don't...remember...Remy?" Sirius said in a strange voice.
Remus sighed and shook his head again, angry at himself suddenly. "No, I don't. Gods help me but I really *don't* remember who it was. All I know is that it was a boy, he came into the room apologising for the interruption, handed Draco a note and left. Draco read the note and came up to me telling me there was a problem and that since Professor Snape wasn't available due to Harry's detention and that he had to go instead. That's all, not counting how agitated he was. That I *do* remember," Remus said, a bit of worry in his own voice now.
"Is there *anywhere* in the school that any of you can think of that he would have gone somehow that I perhaps *haven't* checked?" Albus said giving each of the people in the room a glance.
They all tried to think desperately of where someone like Draco could go, but in the end they all shook their heads in unison. "Sorry Albus, much as I hate to say it I haven't a clue where Draco might go. If you say *you've* already checked over the entire school and found nothing, *we're* probably not much help," Severus said in a quiet voice.
Harry however was thinking of something that, although it might cause some comments, right now it was the only option they may have. Without even asking or thinking further on it he stood up and went to the doorway, put his hand out and in a quiet voice said, *"Accio Marauder's Map!"*
Sirius and Remus stared at Harry dumbfounded for a moment, then both of them grinned at Harry like two giant Cheshire cats. "You mean you still have that old thing Harry? *Unbelievable*!" Sirius said in awe.
"I thought Barty Crouch took it from you back in 4th year Harry, you got it back?" Remus said in complete surprise.
Harry blushed a moment than nodded his head however not more than a few seconds later the map slowly floated into his still outstretched hand. "I managed to swipe it back before the real Moody was able to leave the school in 4th year pretty much in the same way. I just called for it and there it was," Harry said giving the map a strange glance now.
"Well? You all going to stand there or use the blasted thing?" Severus said a bit testily now, giving the map a weary glance himself after remembering the last encounter he'd had with in back in Harry's 3rd year. The same year in which Sirius Black and Remus Lupin had come back into his life and it brought back both bitter and sweet memories.
Harry looked down at the map and shivered a moment, debating what to do. He truly did not

want to look at the thing after having avoided it for so long, but if Draco was anywhere on the school grounds...only the map would be able to know it. After all, the map *never* lied...
"Go on Harry, bring that baby to life," Sirius said quietly, confused why Harry would even hesitate at such an important moment.
Harry looked at Sirius wearily a moment then at Remus, then Albus, then finally at Severus. With a deep sigh he closed his eyes a moment and shook his head, opening them to focus again on Severus. Holding out the map now he said in a strange voice, "Here...*you* do it, I can't. Tap it with your wand and say *'I solemnly swear I am up to no good'* to activate it."
Severus looked at him oddly for a moment wondering why Harry would do this. "Harry? What's wrong?"
Harry shook his head and started to shake, his eyes unfocused for a moment. "Just take it professor...please. I...I know I said I was ready for this but...but I'm not. Not yet. I...I hope it tells you where Dra-Malfoy is. I...I can't do this...I'm sorry...I'm really sorry..." Harry said in half choked voice and thrusting the map into Severus's hand left the room before anyone could stop him.
"What in the name of Godric...?" Sirius said baffled, staring at the spot Harry had just been standing in, ready to go after him when he felt a hand on his arm.
"No Padfoot, let him go. Something on that map must have scared him, he must have seen something he didn't want to see..." Remus said in a sad voice, though not moving his hand off Sirius's arm.
"What on earth could make Harry *not* want to look at the map though? I don't get it Moony," Sirius said still slightly stunned, concern growing for his godson. Turning to Severus now he said in a tight voice, "Well for Merlin's sake man, activate that damn thing all ready and let's see what's got him so upset, not to mention if Draco's on there!"
Severus didn't need to be told twice and with a sharp nod of his head took his wand out, unrolled the parchment, put his wand to the map and in a low commanding voice said, *'I solemnly swear I am up to no good'*. Severus was amazed now as the entire Hogwarts, Forbidden Forest included, unfurled before his eyes.
He'd seen the map once before of course years ago, but it had already been open at the time. Seeing it come to life now before his eyes with the zigzag lines, then the words *Messrs. Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot and Prongs, Purveyors of Aids of Magical Mischief Makers are proud to present* - ***The Marauder's Map*** glowing across the top in bright silver letters made him stop and look at Remus and Sirius with a clearly growing respect. "You two *really* made this thing?" he questioned.
Remus and Sirius, looking again like the cat that ate the canary, nodded in unison. "Along with James and...err...Peter," Remus said screwing his face up slightly at the last name.
"Look, if Draco's anywhere on the grounds the map'll know it for sure. It *can't* lie, we saw to that," Sirius said walking over to peer over Severus arm at the map.
"Well well well, so that is the infamous Marauder's Map eh? Quite interesting, yes indeed. I take it you used Veritaserum as the main ingredient?" Albus said peering at the map himself now.
"Among other things. It took us nearly 6 months to get it right. It was Remus's idea actually to use the Veritaserum in the end so it could see past anything...including animagus forms, polyjuice potions and invisibility cloaks. Not bad for a couple of fifth year pranksters eh?" Sirius said with a chuckle.
"To be honest it was *you* Severus who gave me the idea. Remember before the err...well *that*

incident...when we were still study partners? We er...ahh...'borrowed' that copy of *Moste Potente Potions* from the ahh...restricted section?" Remus said blushing a bit at admitting he'd just admitted to breaking yet another law within the school.
Severus thought for a moment then with a grin himself nodded at Remus. "Ah yes, I *do* remember that now. I'd forgotten Veritaserum was in that book, so that's where you got the idea then," he said with a slight chuckle.
Remus nodded. "Exactly. We had gotten the map drawn up, the 'people dots' all labelled, but we still couldn't figure out a way to get it to show more than that. Whenever err...one of ah...oh heck, whenever James, Siri or Peter would become animagi it wouldn't show them. That's when it hit me to use the potion and as you can see...it worked wonders," Remus said almost proudly.
"How did you four manage to get it so detailed though? Or shall I guess that you spent far more days together wandering then just under the Whomping Willow during full moons than I originally was told?" Albus said, a faint amused twinkle back in his eyes now.
"Err...well...that is...oh never mind, you *don't* want to know Albus, trust me on this one. Let's just see what's on it all ready. I really want to know what made Harry bolt like that...and if Draco's on that thing," Sirius said coughing slightly to draw attention back to the task at hand.
"One day I would *really* love to hear the rest of this from you two, but for now I agree. Let's see what we have here," Severus said giving Remus and Sirius an appreciative yet stern glance, then looked down at the map.
It took him a few minutes to really get the hang of all the moving dots and such, however Sirius and Remus's eyes were scanning it with professional ease. After a moment he gave up even trying to pick out the tiny names and left the other two to see what was what. A few moments later however Remus sighed and shook his head dejectedly. "I don't see Draco *anywhere* Albus, I'm sorry. Strange at it may sound, he is definitely *not* on Hogwart's property," he said fully frowning now.
A gasp from Sirius however drew all their attention back to the map, and with a shaky hand Sirius pointed to a tiny black dot moving at a very quick pace towards the Quidditch pitch. A tiny dot that said only one word, although neither Remus nor Sirius really understood why because it didn't seem possible, yet the map never malfunctioned before, so how could it now?
"So that's it. *That's* why he didn't want to look at it," Remus said in a small, quiet voice.
"I don't get it Moony, we didn't programme it to do this. It *has* to tell the first and last names of the people on it. You told me that when you saw me dragging Peter and Ron into the willow back then that Harry wasn't labelled as simply "Harry", but as "Harry Potter". So how can this be?" Sirius said confused now.
Albus was thoughtful a moment then said in a quiet voice, "Tell me something, did you also happen to use powdered unicorns horn in the creation of this map?"
Sirius and Remus looked up startled, then gazed down at their shoes a bit guiltily, nodding to the affirmative. "Err...yeah, we did. We swear though we *didn't* steal it from old Potion's Professor Vitron, we bought it ourselves. Well...er...rather..err...that is...*I* umm bought it down in umm..." Sirius stammered and blushed hard this time, giving Remus a 'please-help-me-out-here' look.
Remus sighed and patted Sirius on the shoulder then said, "Sirius is err...well being serious actually Albus. We didn't *steal* it, we...rather he...*bought* it during 5th year Yule in Kn-Knockturn Alley when his err..." Remus stammered himself now, but Sirius picked back up the tale with a sigh.
"Oh bloody hell. I bought it Albus when my father took me there all right? I'm not proud that my

father was a Slytherin and into the dark arts like he was. All the same though, that Yule it just happened that he dragged me down to Knockturn Alley with him to get some 'supplies', for what I don't even *want* to know...and I used the chance to pick up a few err...'things'. Including the very illegal powdered unicorn's horn," Sirius said with a deep sigh.
"So that's where you get *that* side of you Black, always wondered why you had such a dark streak in you. As well as why you were suspected of going over to Voldemort over the rest of your *Gryffindor* friends," Severus said giving Sirius a strange glance, though not in malice but amusement.
"I *said* I wasn't proud of it Snape, no need to rub it in. My father was a bastard, and when I heard he'd died when I was Azkaban I said good riddance to bad rubbish," Sirius said hotly giving Severus a hint of a glare. Turning back to Albus however he said, "What does that have to do with the map though?"
"Ah well, can you tell me what the exact properties of powdered unicorn's horn really does Sirius? Or any of you?" Albus said in a teaching type of voice.
"Err...well when we used it we were under the assumption that it would add an extra 'purity' to the map, making it incapable of being recharmed and all," Remus said.
"Purity is only *one* aspect of the horn's true powers though Remus. It has a few *'other'* properties as well. Severus?" Albus said, and turned to Severus with a questioning look in his eyes.
"It's also the base of Veritaserum, that much I know. Which is why Veritaserum is monitored closely and really should only be use in the most guarded of circumstances," Severus said feeling like a school boy again.
"Hmm, yes, that's also right. Sirius?" Albus said now turning to the third member of the group.
"Honestly...I really don't know of any other properties other than those two," Sirius said ashamedly.
"Well, it's not really surprising that the three of you might not know some of the other *lesser* known properties of the horn, so don't worry I won't hold you at fault. As you know, Veritaserum forces a person, or object in this case, to tell the truth. The horn however, as an extra added ingredient into the map gave it the ability to in effect...to counteract that 'truth'," Albus said.
"All right...now I'm confused. *How* can truth be counteracted?" Sirius said slowly.
Albus thought a moment as if choosing his words carefully, then said, "I suppose it's not so much a 'counter agent' as the fact that the horn's addition allows the map to see what's more one's 'belief in the truth', not *just* the 'truth' of the name. In other words, all these years Harry has *believed* himself to be *Harry Potter*, therefore the map was showing what was in his 'heart', or in his 'belief'."
"Wait a moment...I think I'm beginning to understand. So what you're in essence saying is...that Harry has already begun to question his heritage before tonight, therefore the map is reflecting *that* indecision, am I correct?" Severus questioned.
Albus nodded at Severus. "Exactly. I think since Harry has already begun to notice he is changing, even if he doesn't know why yet, the doubts in his mind are enough to have influence on the map. That's why it's only showing his first name in which he *is* sure of, but not his last name...which he perhaps is no longer sure of."
"Well that's just peachy then isn't it," Sirius muttered thickly and suddenly gave Albus an accusing glance. "And just as we *were* about to tell him the truth *you* had to walk in and ruin it didn't you. Now he may *never* know because we may never have the nerve to do this again...or even *if* he'll ever want to hear the truth now. That's if he's even all right out there...wherever

'there' is," Sirius growled.
"*Sirius Artimus Black*! Honestly, it is *not* Albus's fault on this so stop putting your foot in your bloody mouth as usual will you?" Remus said sharply, giving Sirius a glare. "Unless you've forgotten, Albus had a *good* reason for coming in here to see us. Which reminds me of the fact that since Draco is clearly *not* in the school or on the grounds...*where* on earth could the boy be?" Remus said, concern now back in his voice.
Albus, Severus and even Sirius sighed deeply at the blatant fact Draco was not just missing, but not even at the school any longer. "I don't know where he is, but I assure you I intend to find out. Even if that means I have to go to Lucius or even Voldemort himself to do it," Severus said with a determined look on his face and in his voice.
Suddenly another gasp issued from Sirius who had been still looking at the map, and the other two people turned to him surprised. "Siri? What's wrong *now*?" Remus said, a bad feeling beginning to worm his way through his senses.
"I think...we have *another* serious problem on our hands...and I *don't* mean me either," Sirius said not tearing his eyes off the map. He lifted his hand up to a spot on the Quidditch pitch with a shaky hand, right over a spot where seconds ago a black dot had been. "He's gone too...I don't believe it! Harry's *gone*!" Sirius said panicking now.
Remus, Severus and Albus stared at Sirius in shock, then looked over the map themselves at the spot they had last seen Harry's dot. Sirius was right, there wasn't any dot there now. Nothing labelled as *"Harry Potter*" or just the word *"Harry*" as they had seen earlier. In a shaky voice Severus said, "How...how can this be? What...where did he go?"
"He was there and then...I saw the dot...it...it waivered a second then...oh Merlin...then it was *gone*, just like *that*!" Sirius said snapping his fingers harshly.
"Now calm down, everyone, we have to keep our wits about us at the moment," Albus said, though their was obvious traces of fear in his voice as well.
"Calm? ***Calm***? You expect me to be *calm* Albus? First Draco Malfoy goes missing, and now my *godson* is gone...and you expect me to..." Sirius began angrily only be cut off by Severus.
"Oh do shut up Black, you're not the *only* one concerned right now. If anything, *I* have more right to be worried then *you* should...considering the circumstances. So stop acting like a git and let us figure out what *we* can do to find out what's happened," Severus said thickly, giving Sirius a dark glare.
"He's right Siri, if we all panicked now it's not going to a whit of good. We *have* to keep our heads on straight and think this out. I know you're worried for Harry, but acting that way isn't going to help," Remus said quietly.
Sirius looked at Remus with pain in his eyes, but realised Remus, Severus and Albus were right, and nodded in defeat. With a deep sigh he said, "Fine, I agree, we need to figure this out *together*. Harry...and even Draco...could be in serious trouble here. But Merlin help me though, if *anyone* dares lay a hand on Harry I'll *personally* rip them apart piece by piece into tiny little shreds, don't think I won't," he said with a scowl.
Remus chuckled, Severus rolled his eyes and Albus grinned, all nodding at Sirius then. "I don't doubt you would Sirius, I don't doubt you would," Albus said patting Sirius on the shoulder in a fatherly way. "Now, I think our first course of action is to go out to the Quidditch pitch and see what we might find, since that's the last place Harry was at. Hopefully it will give us some clue as to where Draco has gone as well," Albus said, ever the voice of wisdom and reason.
"Agreed," Severus said nodding his head at Albus. Thinking for a moment he now turned to the

wall and said, "Lily? Can you check round the other portraits and see if they saw anything odd and peculiar this evening within the castle?"
Lily looked out from her frame in surprise, then slapped her forehead muttering a word that made even Albus blush. "Err..sorry 'bout that Albus," Lily said blushing herself now for a moment, then looked back out at the four men in the room. "Of course I will Sev, I should have thought of that myself. I'll also check with the resident ghosts, maybe one of them saw something. Gods help me though if it's Peeves, I hate that poltergeist as much as I hate Cadogan!" she said screwing her face up in disgust.
"Thanks Lils, and good luck," Remus said with a slight chuckle at her grimace, and without another word Lily fled from the portrait jumping to wherever it was she could go to next. "Now, let's head out to the pitch," he said with a determined look on his face.
Saying little else the four men silently made their way outside, whilst inside Lily was trying to cajole a picture of Bluebeard on the 4th floor corridor into telling her if he'd seen anything. Unbeknownst to all of them however, four people, two men and two women, who were enjoying a sunny day's picnic somewhere on the 3rd floor corridor turned to each other with knowing looks on their faces.
"Something's *not* right," a man with reddish brown hair said with a frown on his face.
"You can say that again old boy. Haven't felt *that* type of power in a while now," the other man with the dark hair said thoughtfully.
"You think it has to do with those two blasted heirs of yours?" one of the woman said turning to the dark haired man and the other woman sitting next to her.
The dark haired man closed his eyes and seemed to concentrate on something, then opened them again, nodding slowly and sighed. He then turned towards the second woman and said ruefully, "Explain to me again *why* we ever had children?"
The second woman snorted and gave the dark haired man a grin. "I think it was to torment us in our supposed to be 'peaceful' years. Ah well, not much *we* can do about it now is there. Tea anyone?" she said smiling now and holding out a beautifully enamelled teapot.
"Yes please, with and three," the first woman, a petite blonde, said happily holding out her tea cup.
The reddish brown haired man gazed up at the sky and groaned, shaking his head in wonder. "How can you think of tea at a time like this Helga? *Honestly*," he said, though it was more in jest than anger.
"Because tea is the forefront for calming one's soul Godric. And no one makes it better than Rowena," Helga Hufflepuff said with a dimpled smile at her husband.
"I second that. Another cuppa for me too m'dear, and be heavy on the milk and sugar this time will you love?" Salazar Slytherin said leaning in to give his wife a kiss on the cheek, holding out his own tea cup as well.
"Well, whatever it is we'll know soon enough. I can sense that our girl Lily is already running round the castle as we speak. I'm sure she'll remember us soon enough and pop her head over this way," Rowena Ravenclaw said gazing a moment at something the others didn't see. "Tea as well Godric?" she said now turning to her friend.
"Hmm? Oh yes, tea would be lovely thank you Rowena. Ah well, I don't doubt it, after all you always were the diviner of the group. Ah, without and two please by the by," he said handing her his tea cup as well. "I'll bet anything though it has to do with that more evil sided heir of *yours* though Salazar, I wouldn't put it past *him*," Godric said taking back his tea cup.

Salazar snorted and nodded his head, blowing on his tea to cool it down some. "Disgrace to the very name of Slytherin *that* one is," he said darkly, receiving a glare from his wife. "Oh now don't give *me* that look Rowena, I know perfectly well what those blasted history books say as to what supposedly *I* 'wanted' and how 'evil' *I* was. Rubbish the whole lot of it," he said with a bit of a sigh now.
"Oh Salazar, we all know that as cunning, sly and even ruthless you *can* be sometimes...you are nor ever will be truly *evil* in the sense of the word. We have had our disagreements, or rather we did, gods know we all were there at the time since we were painted before it all went haywire and saw it with our own eyes. But 'evil' was the wrong word to use when they described you," Rowena said gently and put her hand lovingly on her husbands arm.
"That's right Salazar, can't judge *today's* history, it's all been gotten wrong, *we* know that," Helga piped up.
"The fact remains that the 'history' got so twisted over the last 1000 years that it made you out to be a monster and little else. And this latest heir isn't doing much to make good on that," Godric said with a scowl.
"Well personally I think our young Harry will put that braggart in his place. I've watched him, he's got all the makings of a great Slytherin...too bad he's not got much of the Ravenclaw genes like his mother had. Now *there* was a woman of both cunning, slyness *and* intelligence! Makes me proud to call her bloodkin," Salazar said with a grin.
"Now now dearest, Harry has his fine points. He'll put Tom in his place you'll see. He's got more than enough of the Ravenclaw genes in him thanks to Lily, even if he doesn't always apply himself like she did. He does have enough to know right from wrong at least, and young Severus will keep him in his place as well I'd wager," Rowena said airily.
"Yes, Severus is a good man despite what he's been through I have to admit. Took a bit to convince him 'bout the *other* two however," Godric said nodding his head.
"I think Sirius and Remus have been a godsend for him personally. After all, it isn't every day three needing and tormented souls can come together in friendship and create what *they* have," Helga said dreamily.
"Ever the optimist Helga," Salazar said with a chuckle. "Well, we'll see what happens next. Ten to one says though they're *all* in for one hell of a rough ride after tonight. If what I'm sensing is anything to judge by."
"Oh that blasted evil Malfoy man! *Why* does he have to stick his nose where it *doesn't* belong is beyond me," Helga said with a slight pout.
"I feel sorry for his poor son, honestly I do," Rowena said shaking her head sadly. "I've seen what that man does to the boy, and personally I don't know how the boy has survived all these years."
"Well it's none of *our* business at the moment at anyrate. We'll just have to sit back and wait till Lily comes and go from there. Not that we have a lot to tell her, just our speculations," Godric said with a sigh and putting his tea cup down lay back against one of the trees in the painting. "I'm up for a quick nod off myself, wake me when she gets here will you?" he said with a yawn now.
"*Now* who's talking about being improper at a time like this. Honestly Godric Alexy Gryffindor, is all you ever think of is sleep?" Rowena said with a snort.
"As tea is to the soul, sleep is to the mind my dear woman," Godric said stretching and giving her a small grin, then moments later was fast asleep against the tree.

Rowena Ravenclaw shook her head in exasperation, as always amazed at how the man could just nod off so quickly when so much was at stake. "I give up with him, I really do," she said in a huff.
Salazar chuckled and put his tea cup down, taking his wife's hand in his and looking deep into her brown eyes with love. "Don't fret about *him* my darling, nor about our young Harry. Everything *will* work out, you'll see," he said softly.
"Are you sure Salazar? *Really* sure?" she said hesitantly, a touch of worry for her descendant.
Salazar nodded and drew his wife into his arms, wrapping them round her firmly. "I feel it in my bones Ro, and I swear to you now...Harry *will* restore the name Slytherin again, I know it. And maybe one day he will be able to tell our story, the *true* story, and Slytherin house will once again be great as it should have been," he said softly.
Rowena curled up into her husbands arms, loving as always at how much power those arms held. Though the hands on her were capable of horrible things at times, to her they had always been gentle and warm. "I hope so Salazar, I truly hope so. But what I wish most of all is that our young Harry finds his hearts desire before it's too late. And that the young Malfoy boy will be the one to save him...as it was meant to be..." she said sleepily, and in a few moments she too was joining Godric in a soft sleep. A small smile was now on her face as she felt a kiss upon her head, and there was a strong hope in her heart that everything would be all right in the end.
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Chapter: 8

~~~~***Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...***~~~~
Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

~~~~***Chapter Eight: Lost And Found***~~~~

Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off -

Not Harry! Not Harry! Please - I'll do anything -

Stand aside, you silly girl...stand aside, now...

Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead -

Stand aside, stand aside girl!
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Not Harry! Please...have mercy...have mercy...

"Mum...no...come back...don't leave me alone! Please come back! I need you...don't leave me!" Harry screamed out in agony as he woke briefly from a deep sleep, oblivious to where he was or what was going on round him.

"It's all right...you're safe...it's only a dream..." said a soft voice next to his ear, a voice that lulled him back towards sleep with comfort and gentleness. In the moments before he nodded back off Harry felt a cool, soothing hand lovingly caresses his cheek, and then a warmth pressed up next to him as he shivered slightly. As he drifted back off to sleep his mind never even registered who's voice it had been, yet somehow a stirring within him knew it was someone he knew. Someone whom he knew shouldn't be there, wherever 'there' was.

"Sleep Harry...I'll protect you...I'll always protect you...I promise..." the soft voice said now as warm arms wrapped themselves round Harry's body. Those arms made him feel so safe, so content that he snuggled tightly into the embrace, thought he wondered if this was all part of some dream rather than reality. The voice was so familiar but at that point Harry's fuzzy mind knew no more as sleep overtook him, and thankfully this time there were no more dreams.

The next time Harry woke up it was to a dry mouth and a splitting headache. He groaned and tried to get up, only to find himself unable to move his head more than half an inch off whatever it was he was lying on. He tried to open his eyes, but even the small amount of light that assaulted his vision made him nearly choke in pain. Shutting his eyes quickly his head began to swim with pain, and he whimpered wondering what was going on.

The same soft voice came to him almost like a dream than saying, "Lie still Harry...you're ill...you need rest. Go back to sleep..."

Even though the voice was gentle and kind Harry squeezed his eyes tightly, the voice grated his ears and head like giant drums. "P-p-pain..." he managed to rasp out, tears forming as he said that one simple word.

"Where?" the voice said softly, a tinge of worry clearly audible. Again the cool hand was on his skin, though this time on his forehead. "Oh Merlin...you're burning up badly..."

Harry had to keep from gasping out in agony as the words came to him. It hurt so badly...firebrands in his head and body is what it felt like. "E-e-every...where..." was all he managed to choke out as another wave of fire sailed through him.

Moments later he felt something on his forehead, along with a few muttered words too low for him to hear. The pain began to ease up oddly enough, and he began to feel sleepy again. Then he heard the voice speak again, and this time it didn't sound loud or grating. "There, that will help. Now rest Harry, you need it," the soft voice said soothingly.

The pain was easing up, and sleep was beginning to overtake him again. As he began to nod off he shivered, then yet again he felt the warmth of a body pressed against him, holding him in a tight embrace. As before he felt safe in those arms and snuggled himself against the warmth. Right as his sleep-filled mind was finally relaxed enough to rest he wondered again why the voice was so familiar, and why he felt so much comfort from it.

As he drifted off to another round of slumber he could have sworn that the voice said something along the lines of "*You'll be all right Harry...I'll take care of you I promise. I'm so sorry I couldn't stop this in time...I didn't know 'till now, but I swear to you Harry I will never betray you...I'll make him pay for this because...because I need you...because I love you...*" And with those words in his mind darkness once again claimed him, and he knew no more.

"Look Poppy, we *know* he's ill and we *promise* not to wake him for Merlin's sake. What *is* the problem with you? I just want to see my godson!" a voice said angrily causing Harry to wake with a start.

"The boy needs *rest* Sirius, and you and everyone else hovering over him is *not* conducive to that. He's only been here a few hours, and though I know you mean well, I will not have *my* patient becoming a peep show," Madam Poppy Pomfrey, head mediwitch of Hogwarts, said glaring at the men standing before her.

"Poppy what harm would it do if we just pop our heads in and take a quick peek at him? I swear on my honour we'll behave and leave in short time," a second voice chimed in quietly.

"I know better than to expect a quick 'pop in, pop out' from the three of you Remus J. Lupin, you can't fool *me*. I will let you see him when *I'm* ready to let you see him, and not a moment sooner. Now all of you *clear out*!" Poppy said authoritatively, giving each of the three men a stern 'don't-you-dare-mess-with-me' look.

"This is utterly ridiculous. Come, let's go see Albus, at least *he* won't throw us out," Severus said with a scowl at Poppy. He turned on his heel and headed out the hospital wing in a huff, Sirius and Remus following him promptly.

"Honestly, what *is* it with woman eh? Are they *all* just put on earth to torture us into submission or what?" Sirius grumbled as they headed towards Albus's office.

"I think *that* would be an understatement at the moment Black. That a woman gave me life I am grateful, but had there been any other alternatives I would have chosen them gladly," Severus said darkly.

"Well it's doing us no good to start balking at Poppy's administrations now you two. Personally I'd have been highly surprised if she *had* let us in to see him. I should let you know however that Harry had woken up whilst we were there, so that's a good sign," Remus said thoughtfully.

Severus and Sirius stopped short and looked at Remus in shock. "He was *awake*? Why in the

bloody hell name of Merlin didn't you tell us?" Sirius said scowling deeply at Remus now.

Remus shook his head and rolled his eyes, a tiny smirk on his face. "And what would you have done? Charged in past Poppy and have her hex you into next Tuesday?" Remus said mockingly.

"Err...well...that is...oh never mind," Sirius stammered, fully aware that he probably would have done just that. "You're *sure* he was awake?"

"The full moon's *tonight* Siri, my senses are picking up *everything*," Remus said with a scowl. "I could hear the shift in his breathing patterns after you started yelling at Poppy. After all these years I think I *know* the difference between someone who's sleeping and someone who's not."

"I'll have to give Poppy some Curación Potion then if he's waking up," Severus said thoughtfully and made a mental note to brew up another batch later on that night just in case. "That reminds me Lupin, you *did* take the Wolfsbane I left for you on the side dresser this morning I hope?"

Remus turned to Severus and nodded, a frown on his face at the remembrance of the potion in question. "Of course, thank you. You're mind wasn't in it this time was it though, it tasted even worse than usual," he said with another grimace.

Severus was startled at that and frowned himself. "I hope I didn't forget to add something then, or make it too strong for you," he said worriedly and gave Remus an odd glance.

"Snape you can make that potion in your sleep. If *you* forgot to add in some ingredient or something I think *I'll* eat the sorting hat," Sirius said with a snort.

"Very funny Black, even if that is a praise from *you*," Severus said glaring at Sirius for a moment. Turning back to Remus he sighed slightly and in a softer tone added, "Well let's just hope I haven't. You're right however, my mind *isn't* quite on things I'm afraid."

Remus nodded his head in understanding and put his hand on Severus's arm. "It's okay Severus, I'm *sure* you didn't forget anything. It's probably just me, I'm always more sensitive on the day of the moon. You have every reason to be fretful at the moment," he said softly.

"Let's go see Albus already and find out what the bloody hell happened out there. It's killing me not to know anything," Sirius groaned adding in a frustrated sigh. Nodding in agreement they all headed back towards Albus's offices again.

"*Jelly Babies*" Remus said politely to the gargoyle, and moments later all three were in Albus's office seated comfortably, questions in their eyes amongst other emotions.

"All right Albus, what's the deal? What happened out there? Where's he been the last 4 days and why is he so ill?" Sirius almost demanded now.

"Now Sirius, I realize the situation is a bit out of the normal, but now is *not* the time to be angry. First of all I don't know exactly what happened, nor where he's been. As to why he is so ill...well..." Albus began, the normal blue-eyed twinkle was nowhere to be seen.

"Well?" Severus said in a deep, rough voice.

"From what Poppy and I have managed to discover...it seems our young Harry was...poisoned," Albus said quietly with a deep sigh.

"*Poisoned*? Are you joking? What *kind* of poison?" Severus snapped in horror, his face paling to even more shades lighter than normal.

"It seems to be a modified version of the Veritrum Poison, only this one had components of aconite, digitalis and barbital as well," Albus grimaced.

"Bloody hell, do realize what that combination can do to a person? The Veritrum *alone* can kill, and the others in single fashion can do 'bout that...combined though...it's not even imaginable thinking!" Remus said with a shiver. "How on earth did he get hold of something that deadly is what I want to know."

"I only wish I knew Remus," Albus sighed. "From what Poppy and I were able to gather, the potion has not been given in large doses. In fact from the traces we've found the reason why till now it hasn't manifested itself is because it seemed to be administered in an extremely small dose over the last few weeks. Obviously someone decided to 'step up' the process and give him more than he'd been receiving causing it finally come to a head so to speak."

Sirius sat there unseeing as Albus was speaking until finally in a thick voice he said, "*Malfoy*."

Remus, Severus and Albus turned to Sirius questioningly. "Malfoy? What do you mean Sirius?" Remus asked confused.

Sirius blinked as he realised he was being spoken too and leaned forwards, a dark look on his face. "That Malfoy brat...he's still missing right? I bet he left on his own because *he's* the cause of this. He *knew* he was guilty, and that note probably told him to run for it. He's probably living it up back at daddy's manor having the time of his life whilst waiting for reports of Harry's death," Sirius said in a strangled, pain-filled voice.

"Sirius you *cannot* accuse young Mr. Malfoy of something we aren't sure of by any means. Draco might not be exactly the easiest of children to attend to, but I don't think he would do something in *this* vein," Albus said slowly.

"It's *got* to be him Albus, I just *know* it! That boy has been nothing but trouble for Harry since the day they met. He's known for how much he hates Harry, and would *love* to follow in his daddy's shoes, killing him off for his so-called 'master'. I'll bet you odds that brat had something to do with this!" Sirius practically screamed.

"Black *enough*! Albus is right, we *don't* know that for sure. You of all people should know better than to make assumptions and accusations when there is *no* foundation what so ever. Or have you forgotten 12 years in Azkaban because of something *you* didn't do," Severus scowled, glaring darkly at Sirius.

"Severus is right Siri, it's not our judgement to make. And if you want my opinion, I don't think Draco *would* hurt Harry, in fact...that's a bet I'm willing to wager," Remus said thoughtfully.

"Have you gone daft Remus? Malfoy would love nothing more than to get rid of Harry, like father like son," Sirius grumbled darkly.

"Don't be to sure on that Sirius. I am curious though what makes you say that Remus?" Albus asked.

Remus thought for a moment, debating over what he was going to say considering he knew that his 'opinion wasn't going to be taken lightly. "Well...if you must know...I don't think Draco is *anything* like Lucius. In fact I think he's quite the opposite lately. He is certainly *not* the young man I first met four years back."

"Now I *know* you've gone daft Moony. Draco Malfoy is nothing short of his father, just as evil, just as stupid, and just as tainted," Sirius said in a huff.

"For Salazar's sake, down boy before I take a rolled up newspaper and smack you on the nose with it," Severus scowled completely irritated, though he earned a heck of a glare from Sirius for his words. Ignoring him however he continued, "and I also think Lupin is right. I too have noticed a few differences in Draco this term, though I didn't really think more on it until now."

"So you've both seen the changes too, not surprising considering," Albus said quietly.

"Seen what? What are all of you rambling on 'bout?" Sirius questioned.

"It's actually simple Sirius. I'm surprised I didn't see it clearer before now actually," Severus said thoughtfully. Suddenly he turned to Albus saying, "Tell me, when Harry was returned to the school, was there anything on him? Any papers or notes perhaps?"

Albus looked at Severus strangely, then thought for a moment. "I don't really know honestly. Hagrid hadn't said if he found anything when he found Harry, and I never thought to check with Poppy either. Hmm...let's see now..." Albus said and got up from his desk to walk over to his fireplace. Taking a pinch of Floo Powder he threw it into the flames and called out, "Poppy? A word please?"

Seconds later Poppy's head was in the fireplace. "What is it Albus? Something wrong?" she asked worriedly.

"No no, nothing's wrong. I just want to know...you still have the cloak there that Harry was found in?" Albus asked.

Poppy was surprised and curious as to his words, but taking a glance back at something turned back her head and nodded slowly. "Yes I do oddly enough. The house-elves haven't come to collect it for cleaning and darning yet. It's a right proper mess those robes though, not sure even worth fixing up really," she said.

"Yes, well right now we need that cloak. Can you hand it through the fire please?" Albus asked.

Poppy nodded and went to retrieve Harry's school cloak, the one that Severus, Remus and Sirius had see him wearing when they had last seen him four days back. Using a pair of tongs the cloak was transferred to Albus's office, and all of them saw that Poppy was indeed right. Harry's cloak was a mess, a sleeve was torn off, the hemming was pulled out, and there were twigs and leaves still stuck all over it. "Here you go, I did tell you it wasn't a pretty thing to look at. Even the crest's been torn off," she said shaking her head and clicking her tongue in sympathy.

"Thank you Poppy, much appreciated. How's our young Harry doing by the by?" Albus said as Severus took the cloak from his hands.

"Well I've given him a few different antidotes, and so far thankfully they seem to be helping. His fever's down a lot now, though not near normal. Oh and Severus, I will need a phial of Curación Potion if you haven't all ready thought of it, that stuff works wonders beyond a simple Pepper-Up Potion. And if you can manage it, I could also use a few phials of Dreamless Sleeping Potion. I gave you the last one I had on hand a few nights ago when you..." she began to say but was cut off by Severus.

"Yes yes woman I remember," he scowled not wanting her to go further into that train of thought. "I'll bring you the phials in a little while. That will be all," he said huffily and doused out the floo flames quickly, returning them back to their normal colour.

"Severus?" Remus asked quietly as Poppy's last words sunk in, and turned to give him an odd look.

"No Lupin. Right now is *not* the time to discuss that," Severus said in a strange tone of voice.

"I thought you were over using that stuff?" Sirius asked curiously himself now.

"I *said* I *don't* want to discuss it," Severus grumbled, and turning away from the two of them began to search through the cloak. Moments later he was rewarded when he pulled a small scrap of parchment from the inner pocket of the cloak. Apparently it wasn't meant to be found quickly, if at all since it had been obviously hidden inside the cloak rather than in an outside pocket where it would have been found faster.

"Now this is what I was looking for, and if I'm right..." Severus began then pulled another piece of parchment from his own cloak, one that was well worn and well read by now. Taking the two pieces of parchment he lied them flat on Albus's desk, scrutinising them both carefully. Nodding his head slightly he said in a hushed tone, "They're the same hand."

Remus got up from his chair and walked over to the desk, examining the parchments himself. Pointing to one of them he said, "This is the first one you got at the supper table right?" he asked of Severus.

Severus nodded. "Correct. That's the one that came the day Harry and Draco disappeared."

"The handwriting's definitely been altered. Looks like a Scripturus Charm if you ask me," Remus said thoughtfully.

"A Scripturus Charm? That's a highly complex charm Lupin, someone's taking great pains not to be found out obviously," Severus said frowning.

"Well there *is* a way we can find out," Albus said with the twinkle back in his eyes as he looked from Remus to Severus. "Of course I will make no note of either of you using the particular unweaving spells to do this."

Remus chuckled and shook his head, Severus doing nearly the same thing. "You'd have made a good Slytherin I think sometimes Albus. You certainly have the devious nature," Severus grinned causing Albus to chuckle himself. Turning to Remus he said, "All right then, let's get to work."

Remus and Severus each picked up one of the parchments and began to do some incantations whilst Sirius and Albus looked on. "So what exactly is it they're doing?" Sirius asked curiously.

"They're re-weaving the charms placed on the parchments to reveal the true nature of the handwriting. It's not as easy at it looks, and requires a fair amount of dark arts knowledge to unweave a complex spell such as the Scripturus Charm. I believe in the muggle world they would akin it to crytptology or rather de-encoding." Albus said.

"Oh...so...it's something like those err...komputters that Harry talks 'bout?" Sirius asked.

"That's *computers* you dolt, even *I* know what they are," Severus scowled at Sirius. "anyway this will be just another moment...and...aha, yes...it's done!" he said triumphantly.

"Mine as well," Remus said, then glancing down at the newly revealed handwriting gasped in surprise. "Well well well, do you see what I see Severus?"

Severus looked down at his parchment now and slightly gasped himself then nodded slowly. "It seems we *were* right than about him after all eh?" he said giving Remus an odd look.

"Why do I always feel so left out with you two, honestly! I'm not stupid you know," Sirius muttered. "So what was it you were right 'bout anyway?"

"Well, in a nutshell m'dear Padfoot, we were right 'bout Draco. *He's* the one who wrote these letters," Remus said thoughtfully and handed his piece of parchment to Sirius, Severus doing the same.

Sirius looked at both pieces of parchment and indeed recognised the writing. He'd seen it enough times on papers that both Remus and Severus would sometimes still be grading at night. What startled him the most though was what was written on the parchments, since he hadn't actually seen the first one, only was told about it from Remus and Severus. In a shaky voice he said, "What...what does it mean?"

"It means that we're not out of the woods yet with Harry. We've got to find Draco, and find him quickly. His life is in as much danger as Harry's right now if he should be found out for what he feels, and who he is. His life is worth nothing if he's caught," Severus said shivering slightly at the very thought.

"May I?" Albus asked Sirius, holding his hand out for the parchments. "Forgive me but since I have read neither of these I am a bit curious as to what is going on myself."

"Oh sorry Albus didn't realize. Here you go," Sirius said handing him over the parchments.

The first note Albus read over and it pained him how much young Draco was obviously hurting at Harry's distresses. The second note however almost made his blood run cold.

~~To anyone who finds this...~~

I've done all I could to prevent the poison from spreading further, hopefully it was enough. For the past four days I have used every means I could to protect Harry...but I know I can't any longer. Lucius (for I no longer will call him father) will come for me at the school within the week he said, and I cannot be there when he gets there or my life I'm sure would be over. I don't care what you tell him...tell him I'm dead...whatever you want...

I swear on the lives of the founders to whoever reads this that I, Draco Lucius Malfoy, had nothing to do with Harry's poisoning. Professor Lupin, if you read this...the note I received during your detention was from my mother, and the person who brought it was my cousin Viridian Malfoy. He's part veela like myself, but mostly vampire on his mother's side, and you won't have recognised him because he goes to a school somewhere in Russia. His vampiric side however has the ability to hypnotize, and I'm afraid since it was imperative he wasn't to be seen...he did that to you Professor to forget him. Please forgive us but it was necessary at the time.

Getting back to things...for nearly a year my mother has known my true feelings regarding one Harry James Potter. During Yule holidays last year my mother found on accident my

appointment book with all my hidden secrets, and came to me about it. She isn't really the cold, cruel, heartless woman she appears on the surface, at least not to me. Lucius controls her, but when he's not there she has a bit more freedom, and we have had our good times. She oddly enough was sympathetic to my feelings, and though sad that I am the way I am she still loved me anyway, and we grew I think a bit closer this past year because of it.

It was her who decided to keep an eye on Lucius and his 'activities' since she found out the truth of what was really going on. With Voldemort's return everyone thinks all Malfoys are the evil gits only too happy to rejoin him. I, my mother, and my cousin Viridian are not however. We are against that farce of an heir, and will do what we can to prevent him from turning this world into nothing more than his death ground. And the only hope we have is in Harry.

My mother found out too late however the horrible plot on Harry, which is what has him in the state he is now. I didn't know it, but somehow Lucius sent one of his own house-elves to the castle, and it was through the house-elf that the poison was being given to Harry. The house-elf was under orders to bring Harry a glass of warm milk nightly which Harry accepted apparently, and that's how he got hold of it. Until a few days ago it was only in small doses from what the house-elf told me, but Lucius somehow told him it wasn't working fast enough, and the house-elf put in a much higher dose.

The night of our detention was the night Harry got the bigger dose, and I don't know why but it was the fates that must have sent Harry to the Quidditch Pitch at that exact moment in the night. I was getting ready to leave the school to meet up with Viridian so we could go into hiding, and I should explain why. You see...I had no choice but I killed Lucius's house-elf. I couldn't let it live after I found out what it had been doing to Harry, and so I used the Avada Kedavra on it, then Viridian and I buried it in the Forbidden Forest. I know that should the truth come out I will go to Azkaban for it, which is why I had to go into hiding with Viridian.

When Harry appeared on the pitch though I could see the poison was taking it's toll, and so we took Harry with us to our first hiding place. I wanted to help him...to save him...but in the end Viridian told me that it was hopeless to think I could. He needed more help than the two of us could give him, and so whilst I am now going to move again to prevent being seen, Viridian will bring Harry back to Hogwarts. Hopefully he will be found quickly, I told Viridian exactly where he should place Harry so that Hagrid will most likely find him.

I beg of you to help him...please...please...don't let him die. Professor Dumbledore, no doubt you will probably be reading this as well if it's found, and please know that we do not wish to be found. We will stay in hiding until either Lucius or Voldemort...or hopefully both are dead. Or at least until it's safe for us, whichever comes first. I know that they say Hogwarts is the safest place on earth, but if Lucius can infiltrate there with house-elves, then I know I'm no longer safe. Not even my mother will know where Viridian and I will be, and we have casted Delocation Charms on us, so owling us would be futile.

I have only one more last and final word...and though I know it will be difficult to hear this it is the truth. I love Harry, I have for a while now, and I would never have harmed him. I do

ask...beg even again...not to tell him the truth. It's easier if he says good riddance to me and hopefully he won't even remember any of his ordeal. Never tell him the truth of how I feel, I don't think I could bear his rejections since I know he has no liking for boys. Least of all a Malfoy.

Good luck, and I pray that Viridian and I were in time to save him.

Draco L. Malfoy

PS. Professor Snape you shouldn't be so hard on yourself, and you're very lucky to be able to know the love you have from Professor Lupin and Sirius Black. You'd be a fool if you throw that love away again. I will never be able to love anyone but Harry...and I would gladly die for him. Don't make the mistake I am Professor Snape...don't run away from love...because it's a very lonely, painful thing to do as I'm sure you already know. And please...tell Harry the truth of who you are. How I know I can't tell you...but I do know, and I think Harry will come round to accepting it if you let him. It's the way he is...and I know he needs you as much as all three of you need him. Take care of him for me since I can't do it for myself...I know with all of you Harry is in safe hands...and I trust you all...~~~

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Chapter: 9

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

~~~~Chapter Nine: Hiding From The Truth~~~~

Harry awoke groggy and disoriented, not sure of where he was or what was going on. The world was fuzzy, but then he quickly realised it was due to the lack of his glasses more than anything else. Reaching his hand out automatically towards the right where he knew his dresser was in the dorm room he was surprised to find...nothing. No dresser, no glasses. For a moment he lie where he was confused, then somehow like a sixth sense he reached over to his left, and immediately found what he was looking for.

Putting his glasses on he now got a better look at where he was, and the suspicion from the

placement of the dresser was confirmed. He wasn't in his dorm, but in hospital wing, a place that over the past six some years he'd grown to know unfortunately quite well. Now the main question in his mind was simply why he was there. Not to mention why he felt like he'd been on the losing end of a Hungarian Horntail wrestling match.

It took him a few minutes but slowly events started to come back to him. He remembered going to the room in the East Tower with Professor Snape, Sirius and Remus. He remembered that right before Professor Dumbledore showed up Snape was going to tell him something...something which was important that he suddenly found he wasn't as ready as he thought at the time to hear. Then he remembered being told Malfoy was missing, and summoning the map, and in the end stuffing it into Snape's hands as he fled in fear of that same map.

The last thing he remembered was heading for the Quidditch pitch, and the safety of his spot in the Gryffindor bleachers. Only now he remembered he never did make it there, somewhere along the way by the time he reached the entrance of the bleachers he felt oddly ill, and he remembered now getting sick by the side of the pitch. Something embarrassing enough that he fervently hoped no one would have noticed or at least known it was him. He also remembered after doing that instead of feeling better he had collapsed to the ground feeling worse, then suddenly a pair of strong arms came from nowheres and scooped him up as he descended into a dark blackness.

Another thing he remembered now as well as he lie there in his hospital bed was something he wasn't sure was a dream or reality. He remembered a voice...a strong, soothing, almost caressing voice that had melted his fears and held his senses and mind in security. Blushing a tiny bit he also remembered now having that voice, along with a pair of strong, warm arms holding him, comforting him...and the last of it all were words...haunting words...yet words Harry felt meant more to him than anything else he'd ever heard in his short life.

For at least ten minutes Harry lie there thinking about those words and what they meant to him. Of course people has said they had loved him in the past...Remus, Sirius, even Ron and Hermione in generalised sense. Not one of them though was the love Harry *really* wanted, was desperate for even. Their love was more an unconditional love, friendship and family type of 'love'. It wasn't the love of the ages...the love of Byron and Homer, the love that would melt his heart and burn in his body. No, for all the 'love' Harry Potter received in his life, not one person had ever come close to offering him *that* type of love.

With a sigh Harry knew that the type of love *he* wanted could only come from one source, and that was a source that was as far reaching and unbelievable as possible. It would be wiser to ask for the moon and stars to fall to earth then to ever hope...dream even...that a love like he had for this person could ever be returned. Harry internally groaned as he wondered why on earth of all the people he could have fallen in love with, it would have to be the one person he'd have absolutely no chance at all with.

Yet...the loving tones of the whispery voice in his mind now made him wonder who it was that seemed to have *that* type of love for *him*. Why it had felt so right to hear the words from the unseen stranger, and why it had felt so right to be lying in a pair of arms that made him feel so

content. It had though, that much Harry knew, it had felt so right that for a moment Harry imagined the voice and those arms round him again as they caressed him, clinging to him in the embrace they had...and for a few moments he imagined that all of that belonged to the person he wished for so badly. But as the phrase goes 'If wishes were horses even beggars could ride', and right just then Harry sighed deeply knowing that even Ron would be riding that horse before he would get his wish.

A rustle of noise broke Harry from his thoughts as he saw the bed curtain move, and seconds later Madam Pomfrey peeked through, a huge smile at what she saw. "You're awake finally hmm? Well plenty'll be glad to hear that," she said briskly, putting a hand on Harry's forehead and nodding affirmatively. "Well your fever's gone looks like, good sign. How do you feel?" she asked tentatively.

Harry wasn't sure what was going on but said, "All right...I guess. What happened?" he asked curiously.

Poppy gave him an odd look then clucked her tongue at him. "You've been very ill Harry, and that's not saying enough. To be honest I was worried you weren't going to make it for a whilst there. Just like you though to pull through at the last moment when I've given up hope. You're *father* is the same way, annoying me to no end when he pulls stunts like this on me," she said in a strange tone of voice, though Harry could tell she wasn't really angry but actually covering up how worried she had really been.

"How...how long *have* I been...er...ill?" Harry asked.

"Long enough. If you must know however, I'd judge by now from when you disappeared 'till this moment...at least a fortnight," Poppy said figuring the time in her head.

"A *fortnight*? A *whole* fortnight?" Harry groaned in frustration. How could he have been down ill for so long! Thinking quickly he had a lot to ask, but Madam Pomfrey wasn't the one he probably should be talking to. "Ron? Hermione?" he thought out-loud now.

"Been here everyday asking 'bout you young man. Sick with worry those two were, especially after you disappeared like you did. Worse when you came back and we found out..." she began but someone cut her off mid-sentence.

"Thank you Poppy, I think I'll take things from here if you don't mind," Albus said coming round the curtain with a smile on his face, his blue eyes twinkling at Harry.

Poppy huffed and shook hear head, throwing her hands up in exasperation. "I don't know how you knew he was awake but trust you to do so. Right then I'll just go busy myself with *other* things, let me know if you need me. I assume if you're here the rest of the herd will arrive none too soon as well, just don't let them upset him will you?" she said giving Albus a haughty look, then making a last check on Harry walked away muttering something bout crazy know-it-all old wizards.

Harry chuckled slightly at her ramblings then when she was gone turned to Albus, questions freely floating in his eyes. "Professor? What did she mean?"

"Now Harry, it is perhaps not the best time to go into all the details of things. As Poppy has said you have been gravely ill the past fortnight, and the questions will still be there to be answered when you're more up to things," Albus said gently.

"Can you at least tell me *why* I was so ill?" Harry asked curiously.

Albus debated a moment then nodded his head slight, and sat down on the bed next to Harry gently. "Well Harry, what I can tell you is that somehow you managed to be given something that caused your illness. Through no fault of your own of course, and the err..situation has been taken care of. I want you to know that you're perfectly safe now, and that extra precautions have been taken for the future of your safety."

"It was Voldemort wasn't it..." Harry said slowly in a low voice, his gaze dropping down to stare into his lap.

Albus chuckled slightly and picked Harry's chin up in his hand, gazing into Harry's eyes. "Who and why is of no consequence at the moment. That you've been brought back to us safe and sound is enough at the moment, anything else can and will wait until the proper time young man," he said in a firm tone of voice.

Harry couldn't refuse to comply with those words, even though they both knew there was a slew of questions going to come later on. Nodding his head he gave in to the request, and lay back down against the pillows with a sigh. Suddenly Madam Pomfrey's words earlier came floating back at him and his head swam from the implications...not so much of what she said but in the tense of how it was said. Focusing his gaze on Albus he said in a curious voice, "Why did Madam Pomfrey talk 'bout my father as if he was still here? Did he also get ill as bad as this ever?"

Albus gave Harry an odd look, then smiled. "Ah, your...father...has...err...had...quite an interesting habit of ah...landing himself in hospital wing...to Poppy's annoyance I might add. I do however remember a few...times...in which he was very ill, yes. He always managed to recover though just when we'd almost lost hope, just as you have done. That is a story for another time though, not now," Albus said kindly and glanced at something off to the side. "Are you up for some company do you think?"

Harry sat up quickly and almost beamed at the thought of seeing perhaps Ron, Hermione or maybe even Sirius or Remus. He was more than surprised however when he saw exactly who it was that was coming round the curtain hesitantly. Green eyes met coal black eyes, one holding the expression of curiousness, the other holding an expression of almost fear and anguish. Neither Harry nor the other person even heard nor noticed as Albus got up from the bed and slipped away quietly, his blue eyes fringed with worry at what he knew was going to take place

now.

How long the two of them stared at each other they weren't sure, but it was Harry in the end who broke the gaze. He stared down instead at his hands which he hadn't realised were clasped together in a tight ball on his lap. A billion questions ran through his mind and he wondered where to even begin asking them. Finally he looked back up at the person and in a small hesitant voice said, "Professor Snape?"

For the first time in over six years that Harry had known this man he saw emotions begin to flood into those coal black eyes. Not the harsh, cold, calculating, leery gaze of a man who was unreachable, but a soft, warm glow of relief was now in those eyes. Harry's breath caught in his throat as he watched years of anger and hatred for him melt away and it was almost as if a stranger was standing before him rather then the professor who had made his life so miserable for so long.

A hint of a smile played at Severus's lips as he saw Harry's reaction, and in a soft voice so as not to scare him off too much he said, "Hello Harry. I see you're ah...feeling better now?"

Harry nodded slowly, unsure of anything anymore. Wearily he said, "Yes, thanks...but...why would it bother you if I was? You never cared before..."

Severus gave Harry a strange look, then sighed deeply and ran his hand through his hair nervously. He'd expected a reaction like that actually considering the way he'd treated Harry all these years. Glancing round a moment he saw a chair off to the side of the bed and pulled it over next to Harry and sat down, wondering himself what to do next. "You're right, I have made it *appear* as if I haven't cared all these years," he said finally.

"I don't understand Professor. Are you saying you *don't* hate me?" Harry asked confused again.

"It's very complicated Harry, all of it. In a nutshell though, yes, that's *exactly* what I'm saying," Severus said slowly.

Harry blinked to clear his thoughts the only problem was things were yet again flooding in that made him think even harder on all this. The night he'd oddly disappeared...the present rather then past tense in which Pomfrey and even Dumbledore had spoken in...the way Snape was calling him 'Harry' and not 'Potter'. Then of course there was something else that was even more of a proof then any of it, something that even Harry couldn't deny as real.

Looking up he stared deep into Severus's eyes and said in a strangely calm and quiet voice, "He...he wasn't...my father...was he..."

The sadness that came over Severus's eyes now was unmistakable, and slowly he shook his head and gave a long deep sigh. "No, he wasn't. I'm sorry that under the circumstances you have to learn it this way. I'm sorry for what I did to your mother, that I was such a horribly rotten person for allowing it to happen..." he began, but Harry cut him off.

"Stop, just stop it will you?" Harry said tensely. "You saved my mum's life, even if it was only for a short time. It wasn't *your* fault what happened to her, I'm *not* going to hold a grudge against you for *that*. I *am* angry though...because you...*all* of you...lied to me all this time," Harry did say angrily now.

"You don't know all of it Harry, we had no choice..." Severus began again, yet again was cut off.

"No *choice*? Bullocks you had no choice! For ten years I lived in hell before I came here, and still do every summer. I believed that my parents loved me, that they died loving me, that at some point in my life someone had actually cared enough to hold me and keep me safe. Then after I came here and found out how peachy wonderful my 'parents' were...now you tell me it was all a lie!" Harry said in a tight voice.

"Please...listen to me Harry...we *didn't* have a choice, honestly. Sending you to the muggles was all we *could* do, believe me *I* didn't want to. But what could I possibly have done to prevent it?" Severus said in a half choked voice.

"Anything...everything...I don't care! You could have told me the truth at least when I got here six years ago instead of waiting till *now* at any rate. You didn't have to pretend to hate me so much...you could have told me...*you could have told me*!" Harry cried out now then pulled himself into a tight ball with a sob, tears streaking down his cheeks.

Severus didn't know quite what to do next, he'd never been the 'fatherly' type, and though he was different in private, only Remus and Sirius had ever seen him without his facadés and masks. Well Albus of course too but not in the same way as Remus and Sirius had. He never had to comfort a child though, but somehow suddenly instincts kicked in and getting up from the chair he sat down next to Harry on the bed and pulled him into a tight embrace, holding him there whilst Harry's tears continued.

"Oh Harry...I'm sorry...I'm so sorry," he said quietly. "I *wanted* to tell you sooner, believe me I did. When I first saw you all those years ago looking so much like James though...I thought...I thought maybe Lily had been wrong. That James really *was* your father and not myself...but then Lily had been so sure back then. James himself even acknowledged it so how *could* she be wrong..." Severus said in a pained voice.

Harry sniffled and wiped his tears away, his anger spent for the moment, then looked up at Severus strangely. "Why? Why do I look like *him* and not *you* then? And what makes you so sure I'm *not* James's son after all?"

Severus looked down at Harry oddly for a moment, then a slight grin came on his lips. "Have you looked in a mirror lately Harry at all? You *do* look a bit like me now, whether or not you want to. Seems Lily used a clouding charm to change your appearance early on...she was always good at charms you know. Something must have begun to break it down over this summer, though I don't know exactly what yet. But...despite that, and the way you've been acting...so

much like me too...I've actually been 100% positive of the fact you *are* my son since your first year," he said.

"Since...first...year? How?" Harry asked surprised.

"Do you remember back in your first year that I had your class make a particular potion called the Paternalus Potion? If you recall I never actually gave the results back to anyone, just the grades. Nor have I ever nor will ever assign that potion to any of my other classes again. I only did it that one time because I myself had to be sure," Severus said quietly.

Harry tried to think back that far then nodded as he remembered that particular day. "Oh yeah, if I remember you barely let me pass my mark for it too," he said almost accusingly.

Severus chuckled and shook his head amusedly. "I had to in order to throw off any suspicions, especially from Granger. She is far too clever that girl is, and I knew if I were to give you of all people a higher mark it would have looked worse. Nor could I risk giving back the reports when I found out positively you were my son and not James's. That's why I worked so hard to save you from Quirrel, and still try to save you when I can without suspicions being raised."

"Is that the reason you didn't take me from the beginning when my pa-mum and James died?" Harry asked suddenly.

Severus sighed and nodded. "There's something I need to tell you about what happened that night with Voldemort. You see, *I* was the one who found out there was a traitor amongst the marauders. I wasn't sure who it was since the person never showed themselves...but I knew there was one. I went straight to Albus, Lily and James telling them what I knew. Albus was the one who came up with the idea for the Fidelius Charm, and between myself, Lily and James we started protecting the house...and most of all...you."

"Why?" Harry asked in surprise.

"You see...since we weren't sure who the spy was we had to be careful. Sirius, Pettigrew and Remus only knew that it was *possible* that you weren't James's son but mine instead, and with that information in Voldemort's hands it could prove fatal to all of us. Since I wasn't sure who the spy was, and what information was being passed down, Albus, James, Lily and myself felt you needed the most protection. Voldemort found out though, Pettigrew that slimy rat did tell him in the end and with that in mind...it's not that he wanted you dead back then Harry...he just wanted *you*," Severus said slowly, shuddering at some buried memory of those days.

"*Me*?" Harry squeaked. "Why on earth would he want...me?"

"If it was true that you were *my* son then you were a future death eater in the making, and that's not all there was to it I'm afraid. He also knew a little known secret about your mother, one that only a few people alive know. With that secret in hand, combined with the dark arts of the Snape bloodline...well let's just say it was something he wanted...and would do *anything* to get his

hands on," Severus said darkly.

"What was wrong with my mum?" Harry asked curiously.

"Nothing was *'wrong'* with her persay...other then the fact that...that she had was also an heir...a *Slytherin* heir Harry...just like Voldemort," Severus said softly.

Harry tensed and gazed in shock at Severus, not sure he was believing what he was hearing. "My...my mum was...an...heir? How? Why...why didn't anyone tell me?" he said dazed.

Severus sighed deeply. "Would it have made any difference if you had known Harry? It was better you *didn't* know actually, for a lot of reasons. When you were to be sorted for half a moment I thought for sure you'd end up in Slytherin, but just like Lily you proved just how obstinate you can be," he said now with a slight grin.

"Was she very stubborn? And I should tell you...the hat almost *did* put me in Slytherin...now it makes sense why," Harry said with a slight sigh.

"She was stubborn amongst other things yes, and I didn't know that about your sorting. I'm glad it didn't put you in Slytherin though, because it only made it easier for me to pretend to hate you all these years. Not that I wanted to mind you...when I saw you for the first time in ten years I remembered the tiny little baby I used to hold on my lap at Godric's Hollow. How I wanted those days back, but after so many years there was still too much at stake," Severus said quietly.

"Why did you let them take me away though? Why didn't you take me...or Sirius or Remus? Why does Pomfrey know that I'm your son? Does *everyone* but me know this?" Harry shot out in a rush.

Severus chuckled and shook his head putting his hands up in defence. "Whoa now, one at a time. *I* didn't want Albus to send you to Petunia, gods know that if I had been sent to kill that woman and that fat balding excuse of a husband I would have done so without hesitation, and gladly. I couldn't take you though, even if Voldemort was apparently gone. As a known death eater, and a professor here, I was in no position to have the 'famous Harry Potter' in my hands. As for Sirius and Remus...well you know what happened with Sirius, I don't need to explain that part. Remus however being a werewolf wasn't in any better shape then I was to raise a child. The ministry would never have allowed a werewolf to take you and raise you. Since only a few knew of your real lineage my hands were tied. The Dursleys by rights *were* your only 'known' family, so that's why you had to go there."

Harry sighed and nodded his head sadly. "I guess I can understand that. What 'bout the rest of it though? Why am I changing now of all times too and not before now?" Harry added thoughtfully.

"As for the rest...Poppy knows your my son but none of the others do. Not even Minerva knows the truth. Why Poppy knows is err...well..." Severus said coughing slightly for a moment and

oddly enough turned slightly red. "well you see...I needed her help on the err...Paternalus Potion results."

Harry looked at Severus in surprise, then a grin came to his face. "*You* needed help in a potion? Why does that sound just so wrong?" he said with a chuckle.

"Laugh whilst you can young man because it's rare that it happens," Severus said mockingly. "However at the time yes, I *did* need her help. I have to admit that you were all very good in making your potions...but frankly I was at a loss in how to 'read' the results. I needed a mediwitch for that part, something I hadn't counted on when I made my plans to do the potion. So I approached her and without trying to say why, asked for her help in it. Like Granger though Poppy's a clever witch, and she figured it out almost instantly."

"That's the second time you've actually admitted Hermione's not just a know-it-all. Maybe there is hope for you yet professor," Harry joked.

Severus chuckled and shook his head in dismay. "I must be losing my touch then if I can say that. You don't have to worry bout Poppy though, she's sworn to secrecy, or I'll hope so at least. As to why now you're changing I really have no clue. The charm Lily put on you should have lasted until either she herself removed it, or until you yourself had reason to remove it. Since you had no clue as to all of this until now, I can't honestly figure out why it would break down," he said thoughtfully. "I suppose that's a question for Albus since I am dreadfully awful at charms myself. Despite what everything thinks of my passion for dark arts...potions is my life Harry and I wouldn't trade it for the world. And besides, Remus makes a far better teacher of that then I ever would."

"What exactly is going on between you two anyway? And what does Sirius have to do with it?" Harry asked curiously.

"Oh...er...that...yes...well...ah...perhaps that's best left for another time..." Severus began but a familiar voice cut him off.

"Or perhaps we could tell him now and get it over with Severus, considering you've pretty much come clean on most everything else hmm?" Remus said stepping in from round the curtain, a hesitant look on his face. Seeing Severus sitting on the bed with Harry however he broke into a smile. Glancing back over his shoulder now he said, "Well? You going to come in or sit there with your tongue hanging out? Honestly!"

Harry laughed as he realised who it was Remus was talking to and moments later shot off the bed into his godfathers now human arms. "Sirius!" he said happily and hugged him tightly. Even though he'd just seen Sirius a fortnight ago he felt like he hadn't seen his godfather in ages, and right now he was just the person he needed to see.

"Oi! Hey there kiddo! Ooofff...not so tight eh? Man's gotta breath you know!" Sirius said hugging Harry back nearly just as tight and holding him for a moment. "So...guess now you

ahh...well...you know...*know* that is..." he said shuffling his foot against the flagstones as Harry sat back down next to Severus on the bed.

Harry nodded though his smile didn't wane a bit. "Yeah...he told me everything...well...*most* of everything...I think. I still have soooo many questions though, I don't even know where to begin," Harry said sighing for a moment at the complexity of all that this day had brought him.

"That's perfectly understandable Harry considering things. I know it's not going to be easy...but if anyone *can* handle it, it's you. Just like Lils your a tough fighter, and I know in the end it'll be worth it," Remus said softly and sat down in the chair Severus had been in recently.

"Are you sure you *really* want to know what is going on between us though Harry? It may be a bit much at the moment on top of everything else..." Severus said giving Harry a strange glance.

Harry thought it over then nodded in affirmation. "I don't think this day could get any weirder actually. So whatever it is you have to say...well...I suppose it'll just fit right in with the rest of it eh?" he said with a shaky chuckle.

"Well then...Remus? Perhaps you would do the honours?" Severus said giving Remus a knowing look.

Remus looked at Severus intensely for a moment, then nodded slightly. Turning to Sirius he in turned received a slight nod of approval from him, then turned back to face Harry. Choosing his words carefully he began, "Well you see...it all started back in our 7th year of school..."

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Chapter: 10

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

Ohhh I have been neglectful in me thank yous haven't I! :sniff sniff: So to make up for it here we go! :)

Draco N Harry - :beams: hugs: You are most definitely brill m'dear! Glad you're liking this hope

it's up to standard and passes the challenge! :)

Spunky, Myr, Jasmine, Arundel and Amber - :hugs hugs hugs: as well! Cheers mates!

Forgive me for being so 'out of it' as of late...allergies are back yet again (and again I ask meself why on earth I chose to live in the US over UK...I never had this back home! :mutters:). I will do me best to update reasonably on this fic, but I can't neglect the other two I'm doing as well (It's Called A Heart Sev/OC, and You're Always On My Mind (Sev/Remus/Siri, H/D). Though I might be pulling off On My Mind for something else...a different Remus/Siri/Sev fic I've been tossing round. Anyway hope you enjoying this fic so far!

So you know, I won't just spring any pure surprises on you here. This chapter takes place a bit after one month after Harry was brought back (so roughly a month and half since Harry/Draco first 'disappeared'. I'll be explaining things as to what's going on in the chapter and next chapter as well :)

Oh for the person who emailed me (sorry of top of me head can't remember now who it was) I know I use the US quote system in me typing rather then the normal quote system (rather I'm using " " marks rather then traditional European ' ' marks). After almost 7 years of playing Gemstone it got ingrained in me to use them is why, and it's a hard habit to break I'm 'fraid :sigh:

~~~~Chapter Ten: Finding One's Soul~~~~

"Dray? Oi Drake wake up, we gotta go!" a voice spoke with a slight tinge of panic.

Draco opened his eyes and got up quickly, wondering what was wrong then turned to look at the person who was speaking. It was another boy round 19 years of age, similar in appearance to Draco but with subtle differences. Instead of grey eyes this boy had vivid blue eyes the colour of the sea, and his hair was more blonde than silvery. He was round 6'2 in height, and tan unlike Draco. At the moment his good looking features were brought together with a large frown causing Draco to wonder what was going on.

Rubbing his eyes of sleep he muttered still sleepily, "Hmm? Viri? What's wrong? Go? Where?"

Viridian Malfoy rolled his eyes and smacked his cousin upside the head to wake up him up more. "Stop acting like a git and wake up Dray. I mean it, we have to go. *Now*," he said moving towards a corner of the small shack they were in to collect their things and threw Draco's rucksack at him.

"Hey, don't smack me you oaf!" Draco muttered and rubbed the back of his head whilst his rucksack landed on him causing him to mutter a few choice words and glare at his cousin. "All right I get the point. *Why* though? We still had at least two more days to stay in this spot before we had to move on," he asked curiously now as he got out of bed and quickly dressed.

"I did a perimeter sweep, there's aurors out there to the north, and a pack of tired but I'm sure still

hungry werewolves to the south. Full moon last night I forgot," Viridian said with a low groan. "Anyway I don't want to risk it so we're moving."

Draco nodded in understanding. Last thing they needed was to get caught by either party, especially the aurors. That would be more explaining than he cared to do right now. It had been a month and half since they'd left Hogwarts behind and made their journey through the Scottish Highland Territories, and in Draco's mind it had felt like forever instead. It was getting colder, the nights seemed longer, and inside he was aching with a pain he couldn't stop feeling. Shaking off the now familiar burst of sadness he stuffed his nightshirt into his rucksack he zipped it up quickly, threw his overcoat on and within the next few minutes the two boys headed outside, debating what to do next.

"Well which way?" Draco said glancing to both east and west, the only two directions left now to go.

Viridian stopped and seemed to be listening to something on the wind then pointed off to the west. "That way, we'll make for Loch nan Eun and from there to Cnoc Eillie Mór. I've got a friend there that will help us," he said firmly.

"That'll take half the day though Viri, do we have food at least? I'm *starving*," Draco said grumpily as his stomach rumbled with hunger pangs.

Viridian's face fell a moment as he realised how vulnerable his cousin really was out here. Unlike himself who could feed when he needed to, Draco was all human and therefore under the whims of that breed. "Oh geeze...sorry Dray I forgot you'd need to eat again," he said with sigh.

"Yeah well, it's all right just as long as at some point I *do* eat cousin. Unlike you the thought of err...the stray creature as food doesn't exactly excite my tastebuds you know?" Draco said with a slight chuckle.

Viridian chuckled back though he still felt a touch guilty. Draco was used to a pampered life full of everything, not being on the run like himself. Not that he wasn't spoiled he was a Malfoy after all, but since the day he'd turned 18 almost a year ago now he'd decided to strike out on his own way for a while being what he was. He had access to his vault at Gringott's anytime he wanted, but he chose instead to live off the land and what nature provided for him...that being blood and animal meat. Both his veela and vampiric sides relished the drawing of blood, though to be honest it sickened the man. He hated what he was, and unknown to his parents his real quest wasn't so much to be 'on his own' as to hopefully one day find a way to avoid being what he was.

Right now however what he was had come in handy since he and Draco had decided to be on the move. When Draco and his Aunt Narcissa had approached him long ago to help Viridian was more than happy to give it. He never liked the assumed 'dark lord', and like Draco never wanted to become the puppets that his own father and his uncle Lucius were. He agreed to help Draco because he knew it was the right thing to do, and he didn't want his cousin to fall pray to what he barely had escaped from. Draco was a good guy, even if few knew it, and didn't deserve the

treatments he would sometimes be subjected to be being a Malfoy.

Viridian now rummaged inside his own rucksack and pulled out a long bar of chocolate, handing it to Draco sheepishly. "Sorry, s'all I have at the moment. There's a town 'bout three kilometres from here though, we can probably find something there."

Draco took the bar of chocolate wordlessly, threw his rucksack across his back and they started walking west towards the town. Draco munched on the chocolate for a few moments before putting it away in his pocket of the muggle trousers he was wearing. It had been decided that since they would most likely have to encounter muggles along the way that robes wouldn't do for this journey.

Draco was now feeling more awake thanks to the chocolate bar, the 'reviving properties' in chocolate though nothing for muggles was evident in wizards. His mind now a bit clearer wandered for a few moments, and with a deep sad sigh he said, "Viridian?"

"Yeah Dray?" Viridian asked back not taking is off the path.

"Do you think we'll ever be able to go home? I don't mean back to the manor but...you know..." Draco asked softly.

Viridian sighed and stopped, turning to look his cousin square in the eyes. "You really miss Hogwarts don't you cousin," he said softly.

Draco nodded and glanced up towards the now fully rising sun. "Yeah, I do. I wonder..." Draco began thoughtfully but Viridian cut him off in mid-sentence.

"Don't Draco, don't do this to yourself. We did the best we could for him...it just wasn't good enough I guess. He's gone Dray, there's nothing more you can do for him now. At least he's not in pain or torment anymore," Viridian said quietly and put a comforting hand on his cousins shoulder.

Draco lowered his head and a choked sob came from him. "Why though? Why did he leave? He wasn't supposed to Viri...he was supposed to stay and fight...he was supposed to win. It's not fair!" Draco said heavily, his fingers balled up tight into fists in both sadness and anger.

Viridian shook his head and sighed deeply. "Draco life *isn't* fair, you and I both *know* that. We're born, raised then we die, simple as that. For those of us still living we move on...we have to in order to survive. That's the way of it cousin. We did all we could..."

"Did we? Did we really? I shouldn't have brought him back there...I should have kept him near me always...this way...this way when he did die...I'd have been there damnit!" Draco cried out, tears flowing down his cheeks now.

"We *had* to send him back Dray, we couldn't have taken him with us it was too dangerous and he

was too ill. We would have been risking too much to do more," Viridian said firmly.

"No, that's *not* good enough! What good is it *now* hmm? What good is it to be out here running from everything when I *don't* care anymore? Why couldn't have been *me* who died?" Draco sobbed.

"Now you listen to me Draco Malfoy and listen well. He's gone, he's *not* coming back. There is nothing...*nothing*...we can do now for him now. Wherever he is I'm sure it's a far better place than what he left behind. However *we* are the ones left in the behind and we *will* move on from this. We *have* to survive Dray, for your mum's sake, and for our own sake. I'm sure he would have wanted us to also," Viridian said looking Draco deep in the eyes.

Draco looked back at his cousin and closed his eyes a moment trying to fight down the nausea and pain that had invaded him ever since two weeks ago when they had first heard the news. It had taken him days just to be able to crawl out of bed and even then he hadn't wanted to. He remembered all too well the morning his cousin had come ashen faced into the small room of the house they were hiding in and showed him the article.

*****Flashback two weeks prior*****

"Draco I think you should wake up, there's something you have to see..." Viridian said in a hushed voice whilst giving Draco a look of sympathy.

Draco wasn't sure why his cousin seemed so subdued but sat up and took the offered newspaper from his cousin's hand. He didn't know why but a sudden sinking in the pit of his stomach warned him that there was something in there he didn't want to see. When he looked down at the headlines a strangled cry came from him, and he knew then he definitely didn't want to read it, but had to.

*~~~~**The Daily Prophet, November 2002**~~~~*

THE DAY THE WORLD MOURNS

It is with great sadness that this reporter brings the story of the century to you the readers. It has just been discovered that our hero in training, the Boy Who Lived, has tragically had his life cut short in a series of strange bizarre circumstances. Seventeen year old Harry James Potter was found by Hogwarts Groundskeeper Rubeus Hagrid just two weeks ago after having disappeared for nearly a fortnight. After a long struggle of two more weeks in which he was very ill the lad succumbed to the strange illness that plagued him.

According to sources inside the school it was rumoured that young Mr. Potter had been the victim of a terrible plot which ended his life. Albus Dumbledore however said it was "stuff and nonsense" and said there was "absolutely no plot at all. He merely got hold of something he shouldn't have which is what caused his illness and tragically we were too late to save him."

Hermione Granger, one of Harry's best friends sobbed, "I still can't believe he's gone, but he's with his mum and dad now and I know they'll take good care of him. I miss him so much already though!"

Ron Weasley, son of Arthur Weasley, Head of the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Department, and the second of Harry Potter's best friends said, "No comment...if I did I'd start crying again and I don't want to..." (though sadly he ran off and was found half hour later crying in the prefects bathroom and had to spend the night apparently in hospital wing under a dreamless sleeping potion due to 'undo stress of losing his best friend')

What will the world do now without it's saviour though? Who will help defeat You-Know-Who now that our dear Harry Potter is gone? According to Professor Remus J. Lupin, Defense Against the Dark Arts professor at Hogwarts and werewolf (which we are obliged to say even though he is listed in the department as 'perfectly harmless due to the wolfsbane potion and classed as a 'tamed' werewolf') had this to say, "The world will move on after we all stop mourning, and when we do we'll realize how foolish it was to put the fate of the world in one boy's hands. It's time for we adults to take up the reigns, and take back what's ours."

There is an air of sadness over the school more than anywhere's else in the wizarding world. Black banners hang from the turrets and within the school, and even Peeves the resident poltergeist is subdued. We all mourn but none so much as those who knew and loved him at Hogwarts. His muggle family, the Dursley's of 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, were unavailable for comment.

What this reporter wonders now was where young Harry was for the fortnight he was missing, for that is still a clouded mystery. Since the lad had not woken up to speak on his ordeals no one knows for sure, however sources inside the castle say that Draco Malfoy, son of Lucius Malfoy may have had something to do with it. Draco has been missing since the time Harry disappeared a month and half ago, and has not been seen since. It's assumed that he is either been kidnapped or possibly dead, though some think otherwise. If anyone does see him immediately contact Lucius Malfoy at the Ministry or at Malfoy Manor. A reward is offered for the return of his son of 10.000 Galleons paid on spot.

The funeral of Harry Potter will be held privately at Hogwarts in two days time. No press is admitted so therefore I will not be able to bring you the events, however I will interview those I can afterwards to see the reactions of how things progressed. It is rumoured that even Potions Master Severus Snape will say a few words, though the hatreds between the boy and man were clear cut, so I will keep that in the rumour queue.

This is indeed a dark, black day for the wizarding world as we say good-bye to our prince and saviour...young Harry James Potter. We shall all mourn him greatly, and we will have to hope that within the ashes of this defeat will rise a new hope for the future. Rest well young Harry, you're finally free to be yourself.

Shana Branford, reporter for the Daily Prophet~~

*****Ends Flashback*****

Draco sighed deeply as he brought his mind back to the present, knowing it would do no good for him to keep relieving that day. The pain inside his body, mind and heart had nearly destroyed him when he'd read that article, and he knew his cousin was right in respects. It did him no good at the moment to wish for what couldn't be, he couldn't bring Harry back even if he tried. For the first time in Draco's life since that day two weeks prior he'd felt human. Not a Malfoy...just human...and he let himself cry until he couldn't shed a single tear more.

A low growling sound drew his attentions back to the here and now however and with a start his noticed his cousin tense visibly and look round. Using his extra heightened senses of the vampire, Viridian's eyes narrowed as he glanced off to a spot just east of where they were standing. "Don't move," Viridian hissed.

Draco didn't dare move, even he could tell something wasn't good about all this. A few minutes later he knew things were bad when a large black wolf littered with scars and smelling of blood suddenly came out of the underbrush. The wolf gazed at the two boys sharply though surprisingly kept it's distance yet.

"Umm...Viri...what do we do now? Can't you talk to it?" Draco whispered to his cousin, his face pale at the sight of the large wolf before him.

"I'm a vampire you dolt, not a werewolf... Just keep still though, if we run it'll surely attack us," Viridian whispered back tensely.

How long they all stayed there Draco wasn't sure, but it was long enough for his stomach to start rumbling again. "Damn!" he muttered, and shot a 'I'm sorry' look to his cousin. Apparently the sound of his stomach's rumbling had been heard by the wolf as well, and it was now slowly padding over their way.

Draco closed his eyes almost in prayer when he saw this. He wasn't a religious person, his parents rarely if ever discussed the pure wizarding religion of paganism with him. He knew some of the muggle borns were of all different types from Christian to Jewish to even a few Buddhists, and right at that moment Draco wished he had something, anything even to pray to that would save their lives. A gasp of surprise from his cousin however forced him to reopen his eyes, and he too gasped out loud in shock.

Where seconds before had been the wolf now stood a man in tattered winter robes, and he was giving both the boys strange looks. Walking over to the boys he sniffed at them, as if he was assessing who and what they were, then faced Viridian and did something very odd in Draco's eyes. The man held his hand out palm facing upwards and gave Viridian a shrewd look, one which his cousin seemed to understand. Then to Draco's surprise Viridian put his palm face down on top of the man's, and a nod of understanding passed between them.

"Come, we've much to talk," the man said now pulling his hand away and motioning for the two boys to follow.

The two boys followed the man down a winding trail wide enough for them to walk side by side. Draco kept his eyes wearily on the werewolf man, and whispered to his cousin, "What was that all 'bout Viri?"

"It's a sign of greeting amongst werewolves. I'd forgotten 'bout it till just then, it's been years since...err...well we won't go into it now cousin. Basically it means he won't hurt us, though what he has up his sleeve I don't know," he whispered back to Draco.

"You sure he's friendly?" Draco whispered.

Viridian shrugged. "Nope, not sure, but he hasn't eaten us or anything so I don't think he's bad. I smell the blood on him from last night so he's a wild if anything. Werewolves aren't exactly the most friendly of beasts though Dray," he whispered.

Draco thought back to his DADA professor Remus Lupin who he knew was also a werewolf. From what he'd seen of the man however he'd never been more than nice really, though he wagered that deep within still lie the beast and he certainly didn't want to ever really anger the man just in case. Still though, if Professor Snape had seen fit to be 'civil' to the man he couldn't have been all that bad.

Talk was cut short as they arrived at a small clearing about half a kilometre from where they had been recently staying. Walking up to a tree that was almost two sizes bigger than the man he said a few words in a language neither of the boys had ever heard and seconds later a door opened within the tree. "Inside," the man said in his deep voice, the man's jet black eyes focusing on the two boys.

The boys headed inside the tree only to find yet another surprise waiting for them. It wasn't a tree by any means but a home, a very nice almost elaborate one at that. As the boys looked round they could clearly tell there was much more going on here then they first thought. Lying round lazily on the various settees and sofas near the fireplace it was clear these were no ordinary werewolves.

The man came inside the room in a huff and barked a long string of foreign words at someone the boys couldn't see. Moments later the rest of the pack took off, and a small woman with black eyes, black hair streaked with grey and three small balls of grey fur in her arms walked out of a side room. There was clearly a questioning look on her face when she saw the boys. "Machashaifehs Meyer? Bist sei dos men?" she asked hesitantly.

The man nodded and gave the boys another strange look. "Jo. Remus fregn mich in kukn far sei, un ich trepn sei arum helft an meil awek nit weiniker!"

The woman shook her head and smiled at the boys now, petting the grey fluff balls in her hands.

"Azoy gich? A broche weiter! Mir redn english izt jo Meyer?" the woman asked.

The man nodded again and said to the woman, "Jo, English." Turning to the boys now he said, "Sit, I will not hurt you."

Draco and Viridian sat down on a beautifully carved chair with gold painted framework, putting their rucksacks down by their feet. Draco turned back to the man and said wearily, "All right, what's the deal? What's going on here? Who are you people and what do you want from us?"

"*Dray*! Honestly, give them a break will you? Forgive my cousin sir, he doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut I'm afraid, a bit spoiled," Viridian said giving Draco a sharp glare.

The man and woman didn't get angry, in fact they chuckled at what had been said. "No need to fear us young Draco Malfoy, we have no intent on hurting you," the man said. "I am Meyer Malokov, this is my lifemate Dorisha and our two sons and daughter are in her hands."

Now Draco saw that the grey fluffballs the woman had been holding were indeed werewolf pups, and he had to admit that when one of them peeked round it's mum's arms they were adorable. He let himself relax then, for if these people had meant to hurt them, they would have by now. "All right, fine. How did you know who we were? Are you going to turn us into the Ministry...or...my father?" he asked now a bit quietly.

The man chuckled deeply and shook his head, whilst his lifemate put the cubs down on a small settee and came over to sit down herself. "No, I am not going to turn you in to them Draco Malfoy, do not worry. I was told to look for you by someone else, a friend."

"Who?" Viridian said curiously, putting his hand down as one of the cubs came over and began to sniff him.

"Vampire yes?" Meyer said looking closely at Viridian now, causing him to look up sharply.

"Yes, doesn't it matter?" he said sharply.

"Have you fed recent?" Meyer said giving him a deep gaze.

"I have, so you're in no danger from *me* I can assure you," Viridian said in a hard voice.

"You're scaring the boychiks Meyer, stop that," his lifemate admonished and swatted him on the arm. Turning to Draco she said kindly, "You eat?"

"Err...no...not recently other than some chocolate if you want the truth," Draco said a bit sheepishly as his stomach rumbled again.

Dorisha chuckled then got up from her chair and went towards another room, coming back moments later with a dish of food and a goblet of what looked like pumpkin juice. She sat both

things down infront of Draco and said, "Eat, it is good. Is borsht with meat and potato in it. Will warm you."

Draco eyed the food hesitantly for a moment but then hunger overtook him and he dove in greedily. "Mmm...not bad at all! You should try this Viri!" Draco said holding out his spoon.

Viridian looked at the red soup on the spoon and his stomach turned a bit at the sight, it reminded him too much of blood. "Err...no thanks Dray, I've eaten yesterday. I'll be fine," he said shakily. Turning back to Meyer now he said, "All right, so if you're not going to turn us in...who sent you to find us?"

Meyer gave the boy an odd look, then glanced at something behind Viridian and nodded slightly. Getting up from the table slowly he said, "Perhaps I am not the one to tell you. Come Dori, we go to other room now. Pups come!" The three balls of fluff followed their father and mother out to another room, and a door closed firmly behind them.

Draco looked at Viridian and vice versa wondering what on earth was going on until Viridian felt another presence in the room just behind them. Turning round quickly he wondered why this person felt so familiar to his senses. The person was leaning nonchalantly against a door frame, a smile on his face and a twinkle in his brown eyes. He felt rather then saw Draco swing round to see who it was, and an audible gasp of surprise hit him, then he remembered why this person was so familiar.

The man nodded in the two boys direction though he didn't move, just stayed leaning against the door frame looking at them curiously. Finally he said, "We were worried you know...and we've got a lot to discuss."

Draco looked at the man in total shock not understanding why he was there, or more or less why he had been looking for the two of them. Draco had said they hadn't wanted to be found, yet despite everything this man had deliberately found them, but without a clue why. Finally he found his voice and though he intended to sound sharp and very Malfoyish, he was only able to manage to barely say, "Pr-professor Lupin? What are *you* doing here?"

Translations for above Yiddish are as follows:

"Machashaifehs Meyer? Bist sei dos men?" - "Witches Meyer? Are they the ones?" (there is no word for 'wizard' in yiddish)

"Jo. Remus fregn mich in kukn far sei, un ich trepn sei arum helft an meil awek nit weiniker." - "Yes. Remus ask(ed) me to look for them, and I find (found) them about half a mile away no less."

"Azoy gich? A broche weiter! Mir redn english izt jo Meyer?" - "So soon? A blessing then! We speak English now yes Meyer?"

A boychik is a somewhat enderment term meaning 'young boy'.

July 26, 2002 9:01 PM ©Piriotessa/Piri Lupin-Snape/Piri Malfoy

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Chapter: 11

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

Jasmine - Nae fear m'dear, all in good time! I have never written an unhappy ending, don't plan on starting to now! :grins:

Viper - yeeps! Remind me not to get you too upset at me eh? Though the whips a nice touch! :giggles: (oppps! As Hagrid would say.."I shouldn't have said that!")

Anarae- yup yup! All will be explained promise luv!

Myr - :hugs and hugs:

So you all know, this chapter will pick up from the place Remus walked in on Draco and Viridian, time frame wise that is. Roughly Draco and Viri have been 'missing' for nearly a month and half now. As for Harry...well...you'll find out soon enough! :smiles sweetly:

~~Chapter Eleven: Revealed Truths~~

"Merlin I'm bored, I wish I could just go out for a bit!" Harry grumbled and flopped down onto the bed in his well hidden room deep inside the hospital wing.
"I know, it is rather annoying having to be so secretive. Wanna play some chess maybe?" Ron said with a yawn.
"Nah, maybe next time. We don't have the time right now, it's almost seven and you two have to get back in a few," Harry said dejectedly.
"Oh, Harry, you know this is for your own good. Just have to make the best of it is all. At least Ron and I can visit, can you imagine how much worse it would be if we couldn't?" Hermione said giving Harry a sympathetic smile.

Harry weakly smiled back and nodded. "Yeah, hell would actually look *good*. Still...being 'dead' is downright boooooring. I haven't been out of this room in weeks now 'cept for the hour of flying time 'he' gives me nightly," he said sighing.
"Hey at least you can do *that* mate, surprised 'he' even lets you though. I mean, it *is* a bit risky," Ron said.
"Cripes, Ron, I think Hermione's been rubbing off on you lately. Since when have things been too risky for *us* eh?" Harry said with a grin and winked at Hermione.
Hermione laughed and nodded her head in affirmation. "So true! Look at all we've been through together by now. Personally though I think it's good Ron's having a more positive influence on things. He's far less reckless nowadays," she said impishly.
"Oi, I am not! I just...er...toned it down a bit. 'Sides, without Malfoy here to annoy it's downright unbearable I tell you!" Ron joked.
Harry wasn't going to admit it but that comment struck a nerve with him, an admission that he still hadn't told Ron and Hermione...or anyone else for that matter. "Err...yeah...I can see that. Must be awful not having anyone to pick on, Ron," he joked back though his heart really wasn't in it.
"He's probably dead by now...or in Azkaban and just no one's told us. Far as I see it good riddance either way, just another death eater who won't be round to take over the world and all," Ron said almost cheerily.
"Ronald Weasley that's so mean to say! I mean really...Malfoy's a bad seed yeah, but he's still human you know. He has feelings...somewhere's in there anyway...I *think*..." Hermione said huffily.
"Oh right, and this is coming from the girl who slapped Malfoy in the face more than a few times because the kid is such a stupid git? *Puh-lease*!" Ron said rolling his eyes and getting a pillow throw at him for the effort.
"Give it up you two, let's not have a row on this all right? We've only got a few more minutes before you have to go. So, anything good in the gossip today?" Harry muttered trying in vain to get off the topic of one Draco Malfoy.
"Hmm...oh yeah, forgot to tell you! Get this...me dad told me that they're actually going to open a section in the Wizarding Museum...and it's all on *you*! Can you believe that tripe? Honestly it's a bloody *nightmare*!" Ron groaned.
"*Whaaat*? A museum area...for *me*? What on earth for?" Harry asked stunned.
"Oh come on, Harry, it's like a compliment really. It's supposed to be some sort of memorial tribute to the "Boy Who Lived". Remember I told you that before Dumbledore could get all your stuff out of the dorm something odd happened? Well what *really* happened was that err...someone...broken into the dorm room and..." Hermione said sheepishly whilst gazing down at some imaginary fluff on her robes.
"And what? What are you trying to say, Hermione?" Harry asked still dazed.
"Oh, Harry, your school trunk wasn't 'lost' or anything...it was flat out stolen. What they didn't physically take they made copies of somehow." Ron said sadly.
"Copies? Of what?" Harry asked.
"Well...of your parent's photo album mainly. Remember the book had gone missing for a few days? Seems someone *had* taken it and then returned it, but not before making copies of every single photo...even the recent ones with us in it," Hermione grumbled, not at all happy at having her face plastered in a museum for all to see.

"Oh no, you mean...*all* the photos? Even the ones of us as animagi?" Harry groaned.
"Oh, not *those*...thankfully no! I had those remember? Good thing too, we'd have been in a heapload of trouble if *those* photos had gotten out!" Hermione said with a groan herself.
"Thankfully it was just the 'normal' photos of your pa-err...well of James, Lily, Remus, Sirius and the lot. Nothing too bad anyway I don't think, mainly they just took your old junk, clothes, books, etc. Dumbledore didn't want you to know so he sort of replicated back anything they did take," Hermione said.
"Oh man, this is just *unbelievable*! They really think people will want to see a pair of my trainers or school robes or Dudley's hand-me-downs?" Harry asked.
Hermione and Ron actually grinned at that and nodded their heads. "You *kidding,* Harry? Me dad says they can't get the museum wing opened fast enough...tourists *already* want to see it all," Ron chuckled then quickly stood up on the bed and with a bow he cupped his hands like a microphone and said in a flowery, fake voice, "Step right up wizards and witches of all ages...for only seven Sickles you can see the entire world of Harry James Potter unfold before you eyes!"
Harry and Hermione couldn't help but laugh at that, it was pretty funny actually to hear it put that way. "Oi, Ron, you'd make a spot on carny that's for sure!" Harry grinned.
"Thank you, thank you...and for me next trick..." Ron began but was cut off before he could get any further.
"For your next 'trick', Mr. Weasley, that would have to be your 'disappearance' from this room. Understood?" a voice said from the doorway, though harsh in words, the voice was more amused than angry.
Ron however blushed and climbed down off the bed sheepishly. "Err...sorry 'bout that, professor. Was just telling Harry 'bout the new museum thing."
"Amusing and enlightening as it may be, Mr. Weasley, it will have to wait until tomorrow at six o'clock in the evening. You two are already running ten minutes late if you hadn't noticed," Severus said stepping into the room now and giving both Hermione and Ron strict glances.
"Oh no! Professor, we're *really* sorry, just lost track of time is all," Hermione said jumping up from the chair she'd been sitting in and pulled Ron towards the door. "We'll see you tomorrow then, Harry!" she called.
"Yeah tomorrow, Harry! Keep your chin up!" Ron called out, though he was halfway out the door at that point since he was being dragged by Hermione.
"Tomorrow guys!" Harry yelled back, hoping they would still hear him. He then went over and sat back down on his bed with a long, saddened sigh.
Severus sat down in the chair just occupied by Hermione, and gave Harry a soft look with his coal black eyes. "I am sorry it has to be this way, Harry, you *do* understand right?"
Harry nodded and sighed again. "I know, it's just so *boring* here all alone. Do you know that I've helped Ron die four different ways this week for Divinations...including stoning, plague, being burnt at the stake and hanging...and I actually *miss* that?" he groaned.
Severus's lips twitched at the statement finding it actually a bit funny. "Well, leaves him still time to die from other things yet hmm?" he said mockingly.
"Oh very funny, ha ha. At least he's *doing* something...all I get to do is sit here, pace the room, fly for a bit at night...and be bored. Was this *really* all worth it?" Harry asked sullenly.
"Would you prefer to have died for real, Harry? I can always arraign that you know," Severus said nonchalantly.
Harry looked up and gave Severus a dark look, then realised he was only joking. "You're really

no help what-so-ever you know," he muttered back. "Least you can do for me is tell Dobby to stop sending me bloody chicken for supper. I'd like something a bit more than that for a change," he grumbled.
Severus did laugh then and nodded his head. "I will, I promise. It's a good thing Dobby is so loyal to you and Albus or we'd be in a lot of trouble."
"Why's that?" Harry asked.
"Oh...it's nothing really. It's just good to know that Dobby is the one house-elf in this castle I *know* we can trust with *your* life. That's all," Severus said looking away for a moment.
"I get the feeling there's a lot more behind that then your telling me, Severus, however I won't push it right now," Harry said accusingly. He had started calling Severus by his first name simply because he wasn't sure he could call him by anything else yet. He did sort of want to call him 'father' or 'dad' or something, but both of them needed time on that issue. As for professor, it seemed just too formal at this point, not when he knew Severus was his father now, so Severus worked out nicely in the end.
"There are some things that you don't know yet for your own benefit, Harry, that's all I can say to you. Sometimes knowing everything *isn't* always the best thing," Severus said.
"Perhaps, but at least it beats being in the dark all the time as to what's going on with me," Harry said exasperated. "How long are we going to have to keep up this pretense anyway? When can I go back to school for real instead of hiding up here in a hidden wing of hospital? And have you seen Sirius and Remus lately?" Harry demanded.
"By Salazar you are so much like me at that age sometimes it's unnerving," Severus muttered. "No, we're *not* trying to keep you in the dark, Harry, you know that. I wish there *was* another way, but it's too dangerous yet. Remus, Black, Albus and I all felt this *was* the right thing to do. 'Harry Potter' died, so *you* can be saved," Severus said quietly.
Harry sighed. "I know, I know...it's just so *unfair* is all."
"Life *is* unfair, Harry, no question there. We get over it though, we have to move on. Do you remember when you held the medallion what it said?" Severus asked slowly.
Harry thought back and tried to remember, then nodded and recited, "To Overcome Hatred Only The Power Of Love Will Be Your Salvation."
"Right, and then you asked if love can really be *that* powerful remember?" Severus asked.
"Yeah so?" Harry asked confused.
"Harry...think about it. As Harry *Potter*, you held fears, whether you wanted to or not. Worse of it was, there was far more hatred for you *as* Harry Potter, which almost cost you your life yet again. A life that love itself saved sixteen years ago. You're mother's love was your salvation *then*...and now it's *our* turn to do that. Remus, Black and myself are giving you the chance to know love as you *should* have...so you won't be bitter, angry and sad...especially towards *yourself*," Severus said quietly.
Harry sighed understanding now what Severus meant. "I was going to do it you know...kill myself I mean. That night at detention...I was going to ask you 'bout potions that might do the job for me. I'm really not noble and brave like everything thinks I am...I couldn't bear the thought of killing myself the easy way like jumping or stuff," he sighed.
Severus put a hand on Harry's shoulder and looked him in the eyes deeply. "That's *not* true, Harry, you *are* noble and brave...even if you aren't a Gryffindor by blood. You have faced, fought and won situations that people twice your age would have died in fear of."
"So why am I locked up in here now then hmm? Why am I not out there fighting and doing what

everyone thinks I *can* do?" Harry said almost angrily.
"Harry, being noble and brave *doesn't* mean you should be stupid either. All that has it's limits, and you are a *child,* Harry...just a child. A damn lucky one albeit, but a child none the less, one who hasn't had time to do what children do. To have the life other children have. You've been neglected, abused, hurt, chased, poisoned, and gods know what else I may not even know about...and you're still here. And I am personally going to make damn sure you stay here. I lost you once, I am *not* going to again. Not to mention I think Remus and Black would kill *me* for doing so," he muttered.
Harry's anger abated at that and he actually chuckled nodding his head. "I *know* they would," he said grinning. "Why do you call him 'Black' and not Sirius though when you three are err...well you know...together? I mean you call Remus by his name and not Lupin in private, or at least not anymore...so why not Sirius?" he asked curiously now.
Severus leaned back into the chair and thought on that, something he hadn't done in a while. "I don't know honestly if you want the truth. Despite the fact we all share the same bed at night...for some reason I am always jealous of him. It's my defence I guess in getting too close to him even though we are lovers."
"That...has got to be the *stupidest* thing I've *ever* heard you say, Severus. What on earth do you have to be *jealous* 'bout? I mean, you're *all* lovers right? Makes no sense to me," Harry said giving Severus a strange look.
"I don't know why I should be discussing my love life with *you*, even though you are my son...but..." Severus said in a huff, "well what it comes down to is...I suppose I feel as if I was back in school and never could try to compete with your godfather. Sirius Black had *everything* back then, he had the looks, any girl or boy he wanted, hell he had the moves. I had *nothing*...except greasy hair and a knack for potions and dark arts. As for Remus, he was the type of person that was beyond the stars to even dream of, Harry. A personality unlike anyone I've ever met or ever will."
"So...he ensnared your mind and senses eh, Severus?" Harry joked.
Severus chuckled and nodded. "Exactly. I had my eye on Remus since the day I first saw him at the sorting ceremony. I was sort of disappointed he was made a Gryffindor actually, I had hoped he'd have been a Slytherin. Of course it wasn't love, not back then, more admiration. He was so quiet, so proper, studious...yet there was something about him that was far more too, I could see a darker side as well within him. When I got older that admiration turned to love simple as that. When we got assigned to be study partners I was over the moon, until that fateful day in which Black tried to kill me."
"He didn't...I mean he didn't *really* want to kill you did he?" Harry asked.
"Nope, just was *insanely* jealous of the git was all..." a new voice said from the doorway causing both Severus and Harry to nearly jump out of their seats.
"For Salazar's sake, Black, don't *do* that!" Severus muttered and shot Sirius a dark glare.
Sirius only chuckled and walked over to give Harry a hug, then sat down on the bed next to him. "I was a stupid kid who had grand ideas of what was best for Remus, and that didn't include slimy greasy Slytherin gits at the time," Sirius said.
"Sounds to me like you were both jealous without basis. Seems stupid really when you think 'bout it though. Look how many years you wasted hating each other because you both wanted the *same* thing? Even now you can't even call yourselves by your first names because you don't want to get close incase one of you gets hurt," Harry said.

Severus and Sirius gazed at Harry stunned and then turned to each other. "He's damn right you know. We *have* wasted these last few years despite everything we've gone through. I just don't want Remus caught in a choice I guess...because I don't think I could take the rejection if he chose you over me. I *do* love him...so much it hurts sometimes. I don't want to hurt him again...I've done far too much of that over the past sixteen years," Sirius said with a sigh.
"We've both hurt him, Black...both of us are guilty of that. I drove him away when I should have never let him go. When we'd finally overcome things and rekindled our relationship three years ago when he was here teaching...and I hurt him because of stupid anger and jealousy of you. Hatred even because I though with you back he'd leave me in a second to go back into your arms. I don't know why he ever agreed to take me back two years ago though after what I did to him," Severus said quietly.
"If you ask me, and yes I know you *don't* really want me to really butt in here but I am anyway...if I were you two I'd first come to terms with the fact that since *both* of you love *Remus*, it's time to start loving *each other* too. That way there *won't* be any more jealousy or feeling like you're worthless or anything," Harry said thoughtfully, and gave both Sirius and Severus a stern look.
"I think it's clear to see where you get your logic from, Harry, even if I don't always apply it for myself," Severus said then with a slight grin. "Harry is right...Sirius...we do *both* love Remus, and we know he loves both of us equally."
"I wouldn't say that I'm logical at all, Severus, Hermione's the one that got past your potions puzzle back in first year when we were trying to get to the stone. I was totally stuck," Harry said with a chuckle. "However, now I think it's time you two figured out what you feel 'bout each other and go from there," Harry said nodding firmly.
"Hmm...kid's got a point. Well...what do you *really* feel for me, Severus? I know you weren't exactly thrilled when Remus err..made his proposition to you for me to join you two in your bed..." Sirius said hesitantly.
"For Remus's sake I said yes, but also because I *agreed* with him. You were lonely, on the run most times, and needed warmth and caring for. And truthfully, I had always wanted *you* as much as I'd wanted Remus. So you could say...it was a very mutual decision on that *particular* proposal," Severus said with a grin.
Sirius blinked now in shock. "You...had always wanted...*me*?" he asked.
Severus nodded. "I think over half the school, both male and female, wanted *you,* Sirius, and that's not saying enough."
"You're...joking...right? Remus was the one *everyone* drooled over...well..not everyone obviously but almost everyone...but they always wanted *Remus*...not *me*. I just got lucky now and again was all," Sirius said subdued.
Severus shook his head and gazed at Sirius with a strange look. "Remus was the type that everyone might have wanted, but knew was unobtainable. He's like the flower that is under glass...there to be looked at and admired, but never picked. You on the other hand were wild, untamed. Anyone who had nighttime dreams had them about *you,* Sirius Black," Severus said firmly.
"Merlin...I didn't even know that! I mean...I was sort of well wild...okay and very untamed," he said with a grin, "but still...dreams? Oi...suddenly I feel sick wondering what on earth people would be dreaming 'bout me!" Sirius groaned.
Harry laughed and threw a pillow at his godfather. "I'm sure whatever they were it's a good thing

you *didn't* know 'bout them. Might have made you more conceited or something than you already were," he grinned.
"That wouldn't be the half of it, Harry," Severus said chuckling. "Well then? I don't believe we finished finding out the truth here...what is it *you* do feel for *me,* Sirius?" he asked and gave Sirius a deep gaze.
Sirius looked back at Severus a few moments, debating what he was going to say. "You really want to know eh? Fine I'll tell you. I think you're the most arrogant, conceited, obnoxiously rude person I know amongst other things...and I wouldn't change a single part of that. I have grown to admire you, adore you...hell...yes, even love you, and not just because of Remus. The past two years I have spent lying at your side have been like heaven to me, and I wouldn't know what I would do without your daily barbs, wit, and dry humour. And hopefully I've made you happy in a way. Does that answer your question, professor?" Sirius said with a grin.
Severus was a bit taken aback, then let it all sink in fully. Shaking his head he said, "As for you...I think you're also rude, as well as inconsiderate and annoying. You leave dog hairs on my sofa when you're not out and about in the castle doing whatever it is giant black dogs do. However...I also wouldn't change a single thing that makes up who *you* are. And I am in as much love with you as I am with Remus, and always will be. Tack in the fact that I have managed to fulfil the fantasies of half of Hogwarts by being in the same bed with the two most eligible men of our youth does have it's advantages," he said with a coy grin.
"Pity the fact that no one knows eh? Boy what a headline *that* would make!" Sirius said with a laugh now. "So...I guess...that means I'll start calling you Severus all the time now eh?"
"I suppose...Sirius...that would work, though perhaps in public of course we will maintain our ahh...distance. For safety reason," Severus said.
"Of course, we certainly can't let the world know any of us, Remus included, actually do have feelings for each other now can we," Sirius said teasingly.
"Oi, now it's getting just toooo sappy," Harry said faking a groan, only to get hit by a flying pillow aimed by Sirius.
"Well *you* started it remember!" Sirius said chuckling.
"So I did. Well, I'm glad that you two finally are going to be actually 'nice' and not so stuffed up with each other. It was getting downright infuriating, especially when Remus isn't here as a buffer. Speaking of, where has Remus been the past few days? He hasn't stopped in at all," Harry said with a slight frown. "The moon was last night right? He's all right?"
"He's fine, trust me. He's err...well away at the moment. On school business," Sirius said sheepishly.
"Away? You didn't say he was going anywhere! Where'd he go? When's he coming back?" Harry asked surprised.
"He'll be back soon, and we had reasons for not saying where just yet. If all goes well though, you'll find out soon enough. Which brings me to wonder something now...since you're so curious as to our love life...pray tell, who is the special person in yours?" Severus said giving Harry a strange look.
Harry blinked at that, totally unprepared to be cross-examined. "Err...l-l-love life? I-I don't err...have one..." he said blushing slightly and turning his gaze down to his feet.
"Oh come on, Harry...when you were still Harry Potter there had to be tons of girls round you. I thought you were with Cho for a while weren't you?" Sirius asked curiously.
Harry shook his head and sighed. "No, that ended 'bout as fast as it started really. I didn't want to

well...it's a long story. Can we *please* just skip this?"
"We could yes, but we aren't. You got us to open up our hearts and drag things from us we didn't want to say, now it's your turn. Surely you realize by now, Harry you can tell us anything?" Severus said giving Harry another odd look.
Harry leveled a gaze at Severus and suddenly it hit him like a lightning bolt. He knew! He had known all along what had been making him so miserable for all this time. "You know...don't you," he said quietly then.
Severus nodded slowly and gave Harry a look of understanding. "Remus told me a while ago, Harry. Don't blame him, he thought he was only doing the right thing. I know you two have had a confidence that I won't intrude on even now, but I...and Sirius obviously, will understand. You're free now, Harry, don't you see that? You don't have to be afraid of it any longer," he said quietly.
"Harry? What's Severus talking 'bout? What are you afraid of?" Sirius asked curiously and gave Harry a questioning look.
Harry closed his eyes and felt himself sigh deeply, more in relief than anything else. For the first time in his life he realised he didn't have to be afraid of his feelings anymore. The only problem was...what were they going to say when he told them the full truth? "Are you sure you want to hear all of it? I don't think you're going to like it..." he said hesitantly, and opened his eyes to stare at his godfather fully.
"Harry...whatever it is you can tell us...me I mean. I promise you I won't judge you. Hell, I'm definitely *not* the one to judge here right? Look who *I* am in love with!" he said with a grin and gave Severus a playful glance.
Severus snorted though it wasn't in anger. "The day the two of us stop our cheerful banter is the day I think everyone will know we're actually in love instead of mortal enemies," he said with a grin. Turning to Harry again he said, "I too promise you I will not judge or anything else, Harry. I believe it is a err...a father's umm...job...to understand his child? Or am I led wrong?"
Harry gave Severus an odd look, debating over that statement, then nodded slowly. "I reckon I wouldn't really know that though would I...having never had a father...before now that is..." he said thoughtfully. "I guess it's time to accept the fact that...well...I *do* have a father who's really there...don't I?" he asked hesitantly.
"Only if you really want me to be there Harry. You are my son, by blood even if not in name. I won't force you into accepting more if you don't want to. It's all up to what *you* want now. "Harry Potter" is gone, now you're just "Harry" until you decide what you want. Whatever it is though, I swear to you I *will* support your decisions," Severus said quietly.
Harry nodded and thought on that a few moments before replying. "All of this has been a lot I give you that...but...I *do* kind of like having a 'dad' round now and then. It's weird, but nice. I know you're not the 'cuddly, huggy' type, Severus...but I'm glad to have gotten to know this side of you too. Do...do you think...that...well...I mean...maybe I could...er...start to call you...umm...dad...just to see what it would be like...you know and all. I mean...I might not like it or you might not but...well sort of a 'test run'?" Harry asked quietly.
Severus sat there blinking in a bit of shock at hearing those words come from Harry. He had hoped that one day perhaps he would hear that word from his son and have it really *mean* something, but he never expected it to really be more than a pipe dream. To hear the word 'dad' now put a different touch to the beating of his heart, and with the other new revelations of the day from Sirius, the ice that he'd built up all these years began to heavily crack.
"You...you...*really*...want...that, Harry?" he asked, his voice cracking a bit.

Harry nodded slowly and gave Severus a slight smile. "I think I would. I can't keep calling you Severus forever now can I? Like you said...I *am* your son...and I do look forwards to the time we get to spend getting to know each other lately. So...is it all right?"
Severus looked at Harry just then with such a look of love that it made Harry almost blush. "I...I think...I'd like that...son...if I can call you that?" he asked hesitantly.
Harry's face almost beamed than, hearing that word for the first time in his life and really having it also mean something other than in casual passing, and it made his heart burst in joy. Nodding happily he said, "Yeah, yes! I'd...I'd like that!" he said. Though he knew Severus wasn't the hugging type, suddenly he felt the urge to jump off the bed and threw himself into Severus's arms for a giant sized hug. One in which he actually received back.
Harry knew then that whatever happened next, whatever he would tell his new father and his godfather would be all right. That they would accept him no matter what, even if his choice of things might not be what they wanted for him. What he didn't realize was that from that moment on, he wasn't going to be the only one affected by these new changes. A certain hard-hearted Potion's Master was going through some changes of his own just then as well, and all for the better. Things were from now definitely looking up for everyone, except perhaps for two teenage boys currently in discussions with one Professor Remus J. Lupin. For them, things were only just beginning.

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Chapter: 12

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

Sorry that this took a bit to get out. Me Jarte is acting wonky and erasing me files for some unknown reason. Going to have to do double backups to prevent this it seems :sigh: I had the entire chap 12 already done and ready to go when it got erased on me :grumble: Ah well, I hope this will work this time!

This chap dedicated to Spunky for being so very very patient with me :)

And of course for everyone who's being patient with me lately as I'm rewriting, editing and trying to finish all me fics :sigh: I promise I will soon!

Just as a warning, there are translations at the end of the chap...I don't like to put the translations inside the chap as you probably know by now, to me it's a disruption, though a few have told me that if I do it that way it's annoying. If it is I apologize, and I'll make changes :)

~~~~Chapter Twelve: When Things Are Not As They Appear~~~~

To say that Draco was stunned wouldn't be saying enough actually right at this moment. Seeing his DADA professor in front of him, especially after he'd been so adamant about not being found was a bit unnerving. Draco didn't know why but suddenly he was getting the feeling that something was wrong with the picture before him, however he just couldn't quite put his finger on it. That was until he really looked carefully at his professor, and then he knew something was definitely wrong.

At first glance Remus appeared to be just casually leaning against the door frame watching him and Viridian carefully, but that wasn't it that made Draco worry. A sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach began to worm it's way through him as he saw that Remus's posture betrayed the normal mild and meek mannered professor. Vibrations in the air even he could feel weren't the usual kindness of Remus Lupin either, but it was his eyes that gave it away. Where usually Remus Lupin's eyes were a warm golden brown, at this moment they were yellow and narrow slitted...wolf's eyes. And then Draco remembered that last night had been the full moon, and something began to click in him.

He remembered something he'd read about werewolves on the days before, during and after a full moon. They were at the height of their powers on those days. Normally a werewolf at all times of the month had exceptional scent and hearing, but on those particular three days they had the strength, agility, speed and their full dark sided nature was in full force. Werewolves were definitely creatures of dark in all ways, and that's what scared Draco the most right now.

'P-professor? Is...is...everything...all right?' he said timidly now, squirming a bit under the sharp gaze of Remus.

Remus was still leaning casually against the door frame, but now his gaze settled on Draco, and there was now a slight smirk on Remus's lips. One Draco had never seen before on his professor. It gave him a very wolflike appearance, and Draco wanted nothing more then to bolt out the door of the treehome, and bury himself somewhere where this man couldn't find him. Unfortunately he couldn't do that at the moment, so he sat there hoping that he wasn't going to be this wolf's next meal.

Now why would you think anything's wrong, Mr. Malfoy?' Remus asked smoothly, and walked over to the table sitting down in the chair next to Draco, focusing his yellow-eyed gaze on him intently.

'See here, what do you think you're trying to accomplish by scaring my cousin, Lupin? I don't know how or why you decided to find us, but if I were you I'd leave us be. We don't need you,' Viridian said angrily and settled his gaze heavily on Remus.

Remus looked up into Viridian's eyes a smirk back on his lips. 'You may have been able to pull that with me once before boy, but you won't again. This time I'm not falling for your vampiric gaze, and I won't be taken in,' Remus sneered.

Viridian's gaze didn't waiver however, he still kept his eyes on Remus's, his body tensing. After a few moments however he blinked and looked away, a scowl on his face. 'Very well, so you did something so you can't be hypnotised this time, clever of you.'

Remus snorted and gave Viridian an icy glare. 'For being a dark creature as well, it's obvious you know little about werewolves. I'm still governed by the moon right now, which means I am *immune* to your kind. Even if you were to try and turn me on this day I couldn't be turned, my blood still holds the wolf and would reject your blood. I'm not here to play your games however, though you two have been playing games with us,' Remus said in a cold voice.

'Games? Professor we're not playing anything. All we want is to be left alone, why can't you just do that? Why did you have to do this now?' Draco said angrily, though he tried not to show he was still deathly afraid of the werewolf.

'Why? You ask stupid questions, Malfoy,' Remus spat out, his yellowed eyes now refocused heavily on Draco. 'Why do you think I was looking for you?'

'I...I don't know. I don't know why you would deliberately seek us out when we asked to be just left alone...' Draco said truly afraid now at what he was beginning to suspect.

'Does the Ministry or Dumbledore know you're here, Lupin? I hardly think that they would sanction you - ' Viridian began but was cut off midsentance.

'You keep *those* people out of this! They are doing *nothing* to avenge Harry's death! Sirius just sits there pining away for his godson, Severus hasn't taught a class since his death...the entire school sits there in mourning and tears...and not a single one of them even thinks about revenge against the person who killed him!' Remus said slamming his fist into the heavy wooden table, his yellow eyes blazing in anger.

'R-r-revenge? B-but Professor...t-the *Daily Prophet*...it said he wasn't...that he wasn't killed by anyone...that h-he ate s-something in the f-forest...' Draco stammered but Remus cut him off.

'LIES! All of it lies because no one wants to see the truth...lies to fool everyone. But I'm *not* fooled...oh no, Malfoy. Let them all be fooled...but not *me*...you *cannot* trick or hide from a werewolf's *sense of smell*,' Remus said coldly.

'Sense of smell?' Viridian repeated softly then his eyes grew round and he jumped out of his chair as far from Remus as he could get and backed against the wall, even paler then his usual vampiric paleness. 'You know don't you...but...didn't you get the note? Didn't you read it?' he said in a small voice.

'Note? What note? I don't know what you're talking about,' Remus said staring at him coolly.

'The damn note we left in Harry's robe pocket...that's what note!' Draco said now afraid again.

'Harry wasn't wearing a robe when Hagrid found him, Malfoy, only the clothes we had last seen him in. Not that it matters, what matters right now is how *you* fit into all of this,' Remus said keeping an eye on both the boys.

Draco and Viridian passed a look of shock between them. They had assumed the note that Draco had written would have been found by now, and that it would throw off any suspicions from themselves. If the note hadn't been found however, it would explain why Remus had deliberately looked for them instead of letting them alone. The problem was now that if Remus was saying what they thought he was saying then the two boys were in a heapload of trouble.

'We don't fit into any of this anywhere, Lupin. Why we chose to leave has *nothing* to do with Potter,' Viridian said now trying to throw off Remus's suspicions.

'Tsk tsk, trying to play games with me again boy? I already told you that you can't trick a werewolf's sense of smell. When they told me that Harry had been poisoned by something in the forest, I did a second check on him, and what I smelled on him told me *everything* I needed to know. That in fact Harry had *not* eaten anything in the forest at all,' Remus said icily.

'How would *you* what's in the forest, Lupin? You know every single plant there?' Draco said sarcastically now.

'As a matter of fact, Malfoy, I do. I spent enough time in that forest as a werewolf when I was a student, and now as a teacher at times, to know *exactly* what type plants grow in that forest. The type of poison that killed Harry is not found even in the UK, but in Nova Scotia. The poison came from the Fabaceae family...a toxic bean that can be taken as a whole or ground up and slipped into something drinkable or edible unnoticed,' Remus said.

Draco paled at hearing that, now he knew why his father had been going off on 'business' trips to that part of the world recently. 'If...if that's true...h-how would Ha-Potter gotten hold of them hmm? Who would have given him something without any of his f-friends or anyone else not noticing? Seems a bit farfetched to me, Lupin,' Draco said in a cool voice, though he was trying to not faint at this point.

'I haven't figured that part out yet, Malfoy. However you 'dissappearing' at the *exact* time Harry did, and the fact that when we found Harry *you* still hadn't returned to school led me to the conclusion you were *not* kidnapped as your father thinks. Perhaps you left because you know who did do this...or perhaps you yourself were the one who's guilty of killing Harry!' Remus said angrily and turned his gaze solely on Draco now.

'No! I mean...I swear to you I had *nothing* to do with it!' Draco said afraid again at the look of

pure rage in Remus's eyes.

'You're lying, Malfoy, I know because I can smell your sweat and practically taste how nervous you are, something only a *guilty* person would feel. You cannot lie to a werewolf, Malfoy. *You* killed Harry and *you* will pay for it by *my* hands!' Remus said and before anyone could do anything he leapt up from his chair and wrapped his hand round Draco's throat lifting him up out of his chair.

'Lupin...Professor...p-please...p-please listen to me! I would *never* hurt Harry...I love him...I *couldn't* hurt him!' Draco said through tears now.

'Love? What does a Malfoy know of *love*? Malfoys are cold, cruel and hateful, caring for no one and nothing. Killers...all of you are *killers*! You're the only one who had access to Harry's food and drink at the castle...the only one with the motive and the means to have killed him. Do you deny that? Everyone knows how much you hate Harry, you're the only one who *could* have killed him!' Remus spat out in rage.

'NO! *I DID NOT KILL HARRY, IT WAS LUCIUS! HE DID IT, HE KILLED HIM NOT ME! I'M INNOCENT!*' Draco screamed out through choked sobs.

'***GET OFF HIM! LET HIM ALONE***!' Viridian yelled now and made a move to try and get his cousin away from Remus, however Remus was the quicker one.

Before Viridian could even get more then two steps closer Remus had his wand in his free hand and yelled, *'Stupefy*!' at Viridian, effectively stopping the boy in his tracks. Remus watched as Viridian crumbled to the floor in a heap then turned his gaze back on Draco. 'Now tell me what you did again, Malfoy or I'll kill you on the spot...*who killed Harry Potter*? Who was it if it wasn't *you*?' Remus said in a low threatening growl.

'It was Lucius, I swear it on my own life, Professor...I swear it...I *love* Harry...I would *never* have hurt him. I tried to *save* him...I...I *tried*! Oh Merlin I tried but I *couldn't* save him...I didn't know until it was too late...please...please believe me...*I did not kill Harry*!' Draco sobbed now as tears slid down his cheeks and a feeling of emptiness overtook him as he realised Harry really was gone and he'd never see his love again.

Remus settled his gaze on Draco and he shook his head, a dark look on his face. 'I wish I could believe you, Malfoy, but your father was nowhere near the school when Harry disappeared, only *you* were. Lucius was in London for the whole two weeks Harry was missing, and we have a dozen witnesses to prove that. Albus and the others may not care for revenge but *I* do. Revenge will be sweet in this case...I finally get to kill the killer. Good-bye, Malfoy, see you in hell,' Remus said bitterly, and before Draco could even say another word Remus lifted his wand to Draco's forehead, muttered a few words quickly, and Draco knew no more.

Remus stood there a moment before putting Draco down on a nearby sofa, then lifted Viridian and put him on a lounge chair. He stood there for a moment looking at the two boys sadly, his

eyes turning back to the soft golden brown they usually were, then realised there was a sound coming from behind him. 'You got it all?'

'Enough to put Lucius Malfoy away for life, yeah,' Alastor Moody said with a sniff.

'I know it was hard for you, Remus, but we needed to do this. The note was good...but not enough to convict Lucius. They could say it was tampered with, or that Draco wrote it under duress,' Arabella Figg said softly and put her hand comfortingly on Remus's shoulder.

'She's right, Remus, this *had* to be done. Now all we have to do is set stage three of the plan in motion and get Fudge out and I will handle the rest. Charlie and Bill already have my allies ready to fight, and we will...then it'll all be over,' Arthur Weasley said nodding at Remus.

'You'll make a good Minister of Magic, Arthur, of that I have no doubts,' Remus said with a smile at his friend. Sighing again he turned back to the boys and nodded towards them. 'I hated having to be so rough on them...' he said quietly.

'I know, Remus, but you had to make it believable so that Draco would confess in our hearing. Not that we didn't believe the note...but with our special Ministry tamperproof dictoquill of Draco's confession here, that will hold the most water against Lucius in court. Not that he even deserves a trial that bastard,' Arabella said in disgust.

Remus chuckled and turned to Arabella with a grin. 'Now I know just how much you do hate him, Ara, you never use that language unless you really have antipathy for a person. Not that I disagree mind you, I just hope everything will work out now. It's so clear how much Draco loves Harry...and I have a pretty good feeling Harry loves Draco too,' he said thoughtfully.

'How is Harry holding up by the by? Severus barely will say two words to me, and Sirius has been on edge about this whole thing. He is all right?' Arthur asked.

Remus nodded. 'Bored as all hell poor kid, but surviving. Ron and Hermione at least can see him for an hour a day, and Sirius and Severus spend time with him when they can. I don't know what they plan on doing about the rest though, if it wasn't that we needed your help we never would have told you about Severus being Harry's father.'

Arabella snorted and shook her head. 'I still can't believe that man *is* Harry's father, it seems so unlikely. Harry is nothing like that cold, hearted - ' she began but Remus cut her off effectively with a glare.

'Ara, you know full well Severus only puts up a mask for the world because he has to, not because he wants to. He is *not* a cold hearted anything when you get him in private. He's had his burdens, but believe me, he is a very warm, caring individual more than capable of loving and being loved,' Remus said firmly.

Alastor chuckled and Arabella only hmphed. 'If you had told me that a year ago I'd have say you

were off your rocker, Remus Lupin. But I have seen that side of Severus as of late that is caring...at least as far as Harry goes. I just hope you all know what you're getting into. The boy is like a son to me too remember, I would hate to see him hurt,' Arthur said.

'Trust me, Arthur, Severus will come round one day when he's no longer playing the games he has to play. It's just a matter of time is all,' Remus grinned. 'Now, let's get the boys back to Hogwarts and talk with Albus. We have to know now what the next steps will be.'

'Right. Alastor you get Viridian, I'll take Draco. We'll pop them into the room in the infirmary that Harry is staying so they won't be seen. I think Severus should have the potion ready to bring Draco out of the spell you put on him right, Remus?' Arthur said.

Remus nodded. 'I hope so, they didn't know how long it would take me to find the boys, but I did owl Albus soon as Meyer found them. Which reminds me...give me a moment would you?' he asked now.

The others nodded to him and Remus went off to another room where he knew Meyer would be waiting for him. Knocking on the door lightly he entered and said, 'Meyer?'

'Ah, Remus, arein biteh. Nu? Vos iz? Shtuk?' Meyer said in Yiddish and looking concerned.

Remus shook his head. 'Nein, alzding is gut. Ich gerecht hobn kumn in zogn zeit gezunt.'

'Ich farshetein. Ich wil feln du. Du bist unser meshpucha, Remus. Du bish tomid bagrisn alter,' Meyer said with a smile.

Remus nodded and smiled. 'Danken ir, mein freind.'

'Nito farvos. Tu mir a toiveh, Remus?' Meyer asked.

'Jo?'

'Machn nit sein a fremder wider. Kumn zurik bekorew,' Meyer said firmly.

Remus smile and shrugged his shoulders saying, 'Vos vet zein, vet zein, Meyer, but I'll try. Maybe even bring Sev and Siri for a holiday eh?' he chuckled.

Meyer nodded and grinned. 'You do that, Remus. More than velcome here. Now go, they wait. Zeit gezunt, Remus.'

'Zeit gezunt, Meyer. Give my love to Dorisha and the cubs, I'll see you soon,' Remus said and hugging Meyer left the room with a happy expression on his face. Meyer was like a father to him, he'd practically raised him when Remus's own father had shunned him, taught him the truth of what being a werewolf was. This place had been like a second home to him, and though he never wanted to impose, he knew he would always be welcomed here anytime.

Walking back to the salon he nodded at the others. 'Ready then? Who's got the portkey?' he asked.

'I do...somewhere in here,' Alastor said and began to dig round in his pockets. Moments later he pulled an old scrap of twisted metal from his pocket. 'There we go. Ready then? Everyone hold on now,' he said and soon as everyone put their fingers to the metal he said the words that would take them to Hogwarts.

As one they portkeyed out of the wolves den treehouse, and seconds later arrived back at Hogwarts safe and sound. Only from the sounds of it, things at this end were not going quite what they had thought they'd be.

'No no no! I'm telling you it's *lacewings*, not *bats* wings!' a voice said in frustration, one that sounded all too familiar.

'And I'm telling you it *is* bats wings. Oh for the love of Godric, I read the damn book three times now and I remember it exactly. It's *bats* wings!' another voice said exasperated.

'Who is the Potion's Master in this room? I don't recall seeing *your* name on *my* certificate young man. I have been doing this - '

'Yeah yeah I know, longer than I'm alive. Fine go 'head, put in the lacewings...we'll see who's right,' the second voice said in a lazy tone of voice.

Arthur and Alastor put Draco and Viridian down on the two beds that had been prepared for them whilst Arabella slipped off to get Poppy. Remus on the other hand was trying not to laugh at the exchange going on behind the closed curtain from the people who obviously had not heard them arrive. Just as he was about to open the curtain however a loud pop filled the air and an even louder oath filled the room.

'I *did* try to tell you dad...would you listen...noooo...*I* can't be right after all, I am only a Potions Master's son,' the second voice smirked now.

'Oh *very* funny, Harry. This is *not* amusing! Hoisted by my own petard is that it?' the first voice grumbled.

Remus couldn't help but to open the curtain now and see what was going on. Stifling a laugh he just shook his head by the sight before him. 'Well...seems you two have been up to something eh? However...I have to say, Sev, pink is definitely *not* your colour,' he said trying to keep a straight face, though Harry couldn't help but to nod and giggle at that comment

Severus glared at Remus then at Harry a moment then suddenly began to laugh. 'I guess I need to listen to my son more often eh? So you're back then, it went well?' he said and took his wand out to clean up the mess he had made.

Remus nodded and moved over to help pick up the now tipped over cauldron. 'Well as expected anyway. We got the confession on the dictoquills. With that and the note hopefully we can put Lucius away for a very long time...if not get him the kiss.'

'We should only be so lucky,' Severus muttered and sighed. 'The boys are all right?'

Remus nodded again and pointed to the two beds the boys were laying on. 'Viridian's only stunned, had to stupefy him. Draco'll be fine once you get the potion in him I'm sure. That is...if you ever finish the potion,' he said now with an amused grin.

'We *would* have had it done by now if dad didn't keep adding in the *wrong* ingredients. That's the third time he's done that so far,' Harry said teasingly.

Severus rolled his eyes and huffed at Harry. 'Too many damned distractions that's all. This isn't an infirmary anymore it's a fair ground!' he muttered.

Remus shook his head and chuckled, patting Severus gently on the shoulder. 'Never thought I'd see the day your son can outbest you in a potion, Sev. Maybe you should take a break and just let him do it hmm?'

'Yeah dad, can I? Please? At least it'd be something to do to fight off the boredom,' Harry said with a pout and sighed, then looked pleadingly up at his father.

Severus couldn't help but to notice again how much Harry was now looking so much like him at that age. A soft smile came across his face and he nodded his head, moving aside from the cauldron. 'Perhaps it would be best if you do it, Harry. You've got the all the markings of a great Potion Master you know,' he said.

Harry smiled at his father. 'Like father like son eh? Now go on and take a break, I'll finish out the potion and when it's done I'll call you to give it to Draco...' Harry said then let his gaze slide over to the sleeping boy in concern. 'He *will* be all right, won't he dad?'

'Does it matter to you that much if he wasn't?' Severus asked curiously.

Harry sighed and looked up at both Severus and Remus a bit guiltily, then nodded slightly. 'I know we got side tracked on it earlier but...remember when you and Sirius were asking me 'bout my love life?' he asked hesitantly.

Severus nodded. 'I do...and you avoided the topic very well at that.'

'Why do I get the feeling something happened whilst I was away?' Remus said curiously now.

Severus and Harry looked at each other and grinned, then Severus turned to Remus. 'It seems my son finally has opened my eyes regarding the third person in our trio, Remus.'

'Yeah, I *finally* got these two dunderheads to admit they love each other,' Harry said grinning broadly.

Remus stared at Harry in shock for a moment, then began to laugh. 'You mean...that it took *you* only a bit over a day to accomplish what *I* have been trying to do for years?' he said awed.

Harry nodded. 'Yup! 'Bout time too if you ask me, maybe now I'll get some peace and quiet instead of Sirius always muttering under his breath 'bout what 'annoying' thing dad did last, or vice versa,' he chuckled.

Remus shook his head in wonder and then moved over and wrapped his arms round Severus gently. 'You amaze me sometimes Severus Snape. You really do. You have no idea how happy you've made me you know,' he said softly.

Severus smiled at his lover and held him tightly for a moment, then leaned down and brushed Remus's lips for a moment. 'Not nearly as happy as you make me, Remus my love,' he said quietly.

'Ugg...will you to please *quit* that? Honestly...if I can't snog Draco then I don't want *any* more snogging in my room!' Harry said rolling his eyes.

Remus and Severus laughed though they didn't split apart despite what Harry had said. 'So you do love Draco I take it? Is that what's been eating at you lately?' Severus said now.

Harry coughed a moment then a blush came on his face and he nodded slowly. 'Yeah...I do. You think umm...that's going a problem? I mean...I doubt he likes me...hell I know he doesn't...yet...I can't help loving him,' he said quietly and went over to where Draco was lying on the bed, then reached down and brushed a lock of hair out off his forehead.

Severus and Remus looked at each other knowing the truth of course, but it wasn't their place to tell Harry what Draco felt in return. Separating now Severus walked over and put a comforting hand on his son's shoulder and said, 'Never give up your dreams and hopes, Harry. Who knows what tomorrow brings...after all you are a Snape, and we have a tendency to keep going after what we want until we get it,' he said, and gave Remus a soft smile.

Harry turned and looked at Severus a moment, letting what Severus said sink in. 'I *am* a Snape...aren't I...' he said slowly.

'Only if you want to be one, Harry. You are in blood...but it's still your choice who you want to be by name, I told you that. If you want to stay as Harry James Potter...that's your decision and I will live with that,' Severus said.

'And if I didn't? What name would you have picked for me?' Harry asked.

Severus thought on that a moment, wondering exactly what he would have picked for a child of his. 'I don't know honestly...I never really gave it much thought to tell you truth. I never thought I'd have a son to worry about it,' he said hesitantly.

'Yeah...guess you're right. I *am* sort of attached to the name Harry though...I doubt I'd *ever* want to change that,' Harry said reflectively.

'Harry *is* a fine name, no question there,' Severus said with a nod.

'It's the *rest* of the name though...I'm not a Potter...and James wasn't my father. It doesn't seem right anymore to be called that,' Harry said with a small sigh.

'Harry...whatever names you choose, you are still my son, you will always be my son. And I will love you no matter what name you call yourself all right?' Severus said softly.

Harry nodded and gave his father a quick smile. 'I know. I have to think on that still, all right? I'll let you know what I decide...besides...Harry James Potter is dead now anyway...at least for now. I can't very well stay locked up in this room either for much longer, I'll go completely insane if I do,' he said with a grimace. 'We've *got* to come up with something...I miss being out in the world,' he sighed.

'I know you do, and believe me, as soon as it's possible you will. Now that we have Draco and Viridian here though, at least you won't be so lonely...hopefully that is. If you can get Sirius and I to realize our feelings for each other, I have full faith that you can let Draco know what you feel...and I have a feeling you might be surprised in return,' Severus said with a knowing grin.

Harry looked back down at the unconscious Draco and sighed a moment. 'You think so?'

'I know so. Now go on and finish the potion, we'll be back soon. Need to catch up with the others and Albus and see where things stand now. Besides I think Poppy's waiting on us to leave so she can come in here and check up on the boys,' Severus said.

Harry groaned. 'She is driving me batty as often as she checks up on me, dad. Can't you tell her to lay off for a while? This morning she walked in just as I was getting out of the shower for Godric's sake!' he said blushing a bit.

Severus and Remus laughed at that and poor Harry only blushed harder. 'I'll see what I can do, Harry,' Severus said.

Harry nodded. 'Right, I'll get back to work then. I won't let you...or Draco...down.'

Severus and Remus left the infirmary then via the secret passage that they had to use now in order not to raise suspicion. As they headed down towards the dungeons Remus stopped and looked at Severus speculatively for a moment. 'Sev?' he asked hesitantly.

'Yes?' Severus asked puzzled at why Remus had stopped.

'You're really are enjoying being a father aren't you,' Remus asked curiously.

Severus thought on that a moment then smiled softly and nodded. 'I guess I am. Can you believe it? Me of all people...a father. The last few weeks have been like a dream...sometimes I wake up at night and wonder if it's all real. It *is* real though isn't it, Remus? Harry...you...Sirius...I'm not...not dreaming am I?' he asked in a half pleading tone of voice.

Remus smiled and shook his head. 'No, Sev, it's *not* a dream. If it was...I don't want you to *ever* wake up...that much I promise you,' he said softly.

Severus smiled and even though he was in the middle of the corridor couldn't help but to lean in and kiss his lover on the lips, praying this was indeed all real. 'Come on...Sirius is I'm sure waiting all to impatiently for you to return, as was I. I missed you...' he said softly as they broke their kiss.

Remus coyly grinned at his mate and nodded, his body already responding to the kiss and the prospects of meeting up with his other lifemate. 'Mmm...I'm sure he has been very impatient knowing Sirius...how long will it take Harry to finish the potion anyway?'

'Oh a good two hours...give or take. Knowing how precise and perfectionist Harry has become in potion making lately however...I'll say probably three hours,' Severus said in a husky voice.

'You are proud of him, I can tell,' Remus said chuckling.

'Shouldn't a father be proud of his son hmm? Now let's do forget about him at the moment...and concentrate on reacquainting ourselves shall we?' Severus said with a twinkle in his black eyes.

Remus laughed and nodded his head in agreement. 'Sounds like a *very* good idea, Mr. Snape. Running with Meyer's pack last night was nice...but I prefer to run with my *own* pack whenever possible,' he said with a slight growl and a wolfish grin.

That was more than enough for Severus and without even replying he dragged Remus to the dungeons where he knew Sirius was waiting for them both. As Harry diligently worked on the potion that would bring his Draco back from the stasis spell that Remus had put him under, Severus, Remus and Sirius were working on things of their own. Since the moon had just been full, it was a very heated, passion-filled and incredibly satisfying session of lovemaking that was brewing down in the dungeons like a well made potion. And all of them hoped that soon everything would work out as planned, and everyone would have what they desired most of all...freedom to have each other and have love.

Translation time :)

'Ah, Remus, arein biteh. Nu? Vos iz? Shtuk?' - Ah Remus, come in please. Well? What's the

matter? Trouble?

'Nein, alzding is gut. Ich gerecht hobn kumn in zogn zeit gezunt.' - No, everything is fine. I just have come to say good-bye.

'Ich farshetein. Ich wil feln du. Du bist unser meshpucha, Remus. Du bish tomid bagrisn alter.' - I see. I will miss you. You are our extended family, Remus. You are always welcome here.

'Danken ir, mein freind.' - Thank you, my friend.

'Nito farvos. Tu mir a toiveh, Remus?' - You're welcome. Do me a favour, Remus?

'Jo?' - Yes?

'Machn nit sein a fremder wider. Kumn zurik bekorew,' - Don't be a stranger again. Come back soon.

Vos vet zein, vet zein - What will be, will be.

Zeit gezunt - Be well (or also Good-bye)

Remember this is of course Yiddish, and I haven't really 'spoken' it except in bits and pieces since I was round 8 years old. At least not fluently, so if me transliterations are off I apologize. Only me mum still speaks to me in Yiddish, lapsing into it over English when she's upset or angry with me or when she doesn't want me goyim (that's someone who's not Jewish) husband or me kids to know what she's telling me. Too bad she doesn't know I'm teaching the kids Yiddish a bit! :giggles: Though in school they're learning Hebrew, they go to a local JCC (Hebrew School)...sad though I speak very little Hebrew even though I was bas mitzvahed in Eretz Yisrael (Isreal) and me cousin was born there. He's been trying for years to teach me but ah well...I was never good with languages :P

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Chapter: 13

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
This chapter is dedicated to ***Camilla H***. from ProfMcGonagall's Workshop ML (whom I hope is still reading this fic and I do apologize I have not updated in forever and a day :sigh:). I was very honoured luv you listed me as you did, and I give you a tons of :hugs and glomps: for it. I am desperately going to try and finish this fic very soon. I have only an Epilogue or so to go on You Are Always On My Mind, and I know I still have to finish Altered Reality yet too, and It's Called A Heart. Once I get done with OMM however I can dedicate a lot more time to finish out the other fics, and return to an older fic I had started months ago that people have asked me on. One that was originally the 'challenge' fic I had began, but decided to do this one instead.
Forgive me if I don't answer back for the reviews last chap, FFN was down at the time I am starting to write this chap, and therefore I'm unable to see who did review last. :mutters: However I do as always give my cheers to everyone who did! And :hugs: as well! (Yes I think I am finally breaking my habit of using 'me' instead of my...am trying at least :groans: not easy when the brain is all addled, but I am trying! :P)

~~Chapter Thirteen: A Long Overdue Welcome Home?~~

As Severus had predicted it had taken Harry close to three hours to finally finish the potion to help Draco recover. Not really because he was being so 'precise' on his work, even though he was, but because he kept leaving the cauldron to check on Draco. It pained him to know that Draco was trapped in a world of darkness at the moment, and he wondered if Draco was dreaming at all.
Draco hadn't moved a single muscle since he'd arrived, it was almost unnerving to Harry and he constantly needed to check just convince himself that Draco really *was* alive and breathing. He'd known about Viridian being mostly a vampire, so he wasn't all that surprised when he didn't see the other lad breathing except from time to time. With Draco however he was concerned, his breathing was so light at times that Harry's heart skipped more than a few beats thinking he'd died whilst Harry wasn't looking.
Harry did wonder though if Draco was dreaming, and that made him remember some of his own dreams too, dreams that now seemed so long ago, back when he was first ill. These weren't the common 'bad dreams' of his mum's death and all, these were different ones, dreams that he liked and replayed even in his waking hours. He still heard that soft, gentle voice that had filled him with safety and comfort, and still felt those arms round him that had held him close and filled him with warmth.
That voice lulled him to sleep in the boredom of the life he was now living, and at night he desperately needed to feel those arms circling round his waist, pulling him into an almost lover-like embrace. It felt so good to him, so right, and now looking down at the silvery haired veela in front of him he wished it had been this boy's arms and voice, rather then a strangers.
He still had no clue who had really saved his life when he was so ill, though he had a slight suspicion that his father, Sirius, Remus and perhaps even Dumbledore knew. He pegged it down to pure 'instinct', but it was like a warning bell was going off inside him when they would hedge the issue with him. It could very well be that they really didn't know, but Harry wasn't going to ignore his instincts these days, for they had begun to prove themselves valuable in nearly

everything else.
Harry walked away from Draco now and went back to lie on his bed as the potion was cooling down. He had a pretty good suspicion his father, Sirius and Remus were 'catching up' for Remus's absence the last few days and would be along soon as they did. It didn't bother Harry in the least though, right now he really wanted these last few minutes alone before Draco and his cousin were woken up to reflect on things...mainly his life as of late.
It hadn't really hit him until a few days ago how much he had changed over all. He now stood at 6'3" in height over the 5'10" he had been just a month and some before (which had still made him taller then Draco's 5'6" frame). He now sported black hair which thankfully was not greasy or oily and reached to the middle of his back, and these days he kept it firmly tied up in a pony tail. It had turned out that the particular aspect of Severus hair was *not* a 'family' trait at all. Severus had shown Harry pictures of his grandparents, that being Severus's mum and dad, when they were younger, and their hair had been very beautiful. Harry had seen and spoken to his grandmum several times now since he'd gotten better, and he had to admit she was a wonderful person, and was glad to be her grandson.
As far as Severus went though, Harry found out he merely used a type of all-purpose resistance potion on his hair to protect it, unfortunately the side effects of the potion cause his dad's hair to look the way it did. Harry, however, didn't need it - not yet anyway, though if he knew if he were to decide to continue in potions work he had a bad feeling he also would end up using it sadly. Harry truly had begun to enjoy potions as of late, reading as many books as his father could get for him. He found that he, like his father, had an 'internal clock' so to speak, and it was all too easy for him now to remember ingredients and smells that distinguished what potions were what without fail, provided there weren't a ton of distractions as his dad had so nicely pointed out earlier.
There were other changes that were noticeable as well, though not as prominent, and he did now have some of his mum's look which he hadn't before. Thankfully he still had the same green eyes as her, though ringed with black like they had been starting to do earlier. He also had found out he did have his father's nose after all though it wasn't really a bad thing it turned out. Truth was that Severus's nose had not been hooked until he was round nine years of age when he had broken it in some sort of accident causing it to hook like it did now, but Severus had kept the broken nose to match his 'dour' demeanour back then. When it wasn't broken, and Harry had seen pictures of Severus growing up, his nose had been very nice looking, Grecian and aquiline in appearance, though thankfully Harry's wasn't quite as err...well...large. Not that it was an issue for Severus, Sirius or Remus about his father's nose any longer, but Harry was grateful that his own nose was just right in size to fit his face perfectly.
He knew by now he definitely had inherited Severus's sense of temperament, quick to anger at times, his ability to remain aloof in and tight lipped when need be, his dry wit and finally, his father's humour. Though Harry knew most people would probably be shocked to find out that Severus Snape did have a sense of humour under his cold exterior. When his father smiled and joked it was a whole different person Harry saw, a kind, loving, considerate person and Harry was really enjoying seeing this side of his dad.
The last change Harry noticed was that his skin, though not sallow and pasty looking, had turned a bit paler these days. He knew it was most likely from being indoors so much at the moment since he was only allowed outdoors during the nighttime. He realised now that he hadn't actually seen direct sunlight at all for over a month at this point, which of course would make anyone's

skin naturally paler. Harry was beginning to think he had turned into a vampire even from how pale he did look these days, it was really noticeable against his black hair, but he vowed to tan up again soon as possible when he was 'freed' again. He found out that his dad's sallow, pasty looking skin was also the work of a potion to make it less resistant to acids and burns, another thing Harry hoped he wouldn't have to use if he went into potion work.
Thinking of the outdoors led his mind to the pitch and Quidditch now, and it brought Harry's mind back to the fact he never had found his Firebolt since he'd lost in over a month ago. He swore he must have left it at the pitch in the stands that night he talked to Draco, but no one had stepped forwards with it. He knew from Ron and Hermione that the broom wasn't in the 'museum' they had finally opened to the public, only a replica of it was on display. He really hoped he would find his broom one day though, it meant a lot to him. It was the first thing Sirius had ever sent him, even though at the time he didn't know that, and there was a newer broom on the market these days, it still held a lot of sentimental value if nothing else. It wasn't as if anyone wouldn't know it was his either, two years ago he had burned a lightning bolt onto the handle along with his first name.
Thinking on that in turn brought his mind round to what he was going to do now about a name. He couldn't just keep calling himself 'Harry' forever, he did need some sort of middle and surname. Much as he had come to accept his dad and his 'new' life, he still wasn't sure he could use the name 'Snape' though, at least not yet. It would be Yule soon however, and he really did need to make a decision, mainly because he wanted the New Year to really be a 'New Year', and start his life fresh from scratch.
What bothered him was that if he did use the last name 'Snape', chances are he would have to be re-sorted, providing he was ever allowed back into the normal, daily life of a Hogwarts student. He'd been getting tutored during this month by his dad, Sirius and Remus, but he really missed classes over all, and being with people in general. However, that also reminded him that it would be too much of a shock for the school, whilst Voldemort lived anyway, to have a 'Snape' in Gryffindor. He could maybe pose as a relative of Severus's, but even he realised just how much in looks he did resemble his dad and doubt anyone wouldn't see that as well. Not to mention anyone would notice the green eyes of Lily Potter, or rather 'Harry Potter'. Eyes that were still so vividly emerald coloured weren't going to be easy to ignore or pass off, even if they did have the ring of black round them now .
Harry sighed in frustration at all of this, he really didn't know these days what he wanted it seemed. No, there was one thing he still was 100% proof positive he did want - Draco Malfoy. He was the one person that Harry constantly thought about, dreamed of, wished for...ached for even. In his dreams it wasn't a stranger's voice he heard, or a stranger's arms he felt round him, it was simply Draco's voice and arms. Draco's whispered words of comfort, and perhaps even love. The more Harry watched Draco sleep the last few hours, the more he had fallen in love with him, even though he knew it was a one-sided feeling. People like Draco Malfoy didn't fall in love with boys, let alone their 'enemy', even if that enemy wasn't really one anymore.
Much as Harry hated to admit it, he didn't want to be there when Draco woke up after all. It would hurt him to hear the familiar sneer in that cold, emotionless voice. He didn't want to be the first person Draco saw when he opened his eyes, only to watch those stormy grey eyes turn immediately to hate, he didn't think he could bear that. Somehow he was going to have to convince his dad, Sirius and Remus to let him leave, to wait till it was just a bit darker so he could go out and fly for a while instead. To let them give the explains of the situation without his

presence, though he knew it was really cowardly to do that, he didn't care at the moment. Flying would release those cares though, he knew that, it was still his salvation and his escape. He was using his dad's broom, an old Comet Line, to fly right now, and though it didn't touch the Firebolt series at least he could fly. In the air he didn't have any troubles, it was only him and the wind on his face, rubbing away everything for the moment. In the air he was free to be simply 'Harry' and no one else. In the air there were no pressures on him, no demands, no one to pretend to or anything else. Ironically as it had turned out it wasn't James's skills for flying he'd inherited, Severus and Lily had been awesome on brooms themselves, though very few knew that fact. Lily had always avoided flying at school, but secretly she was a terror in the air according to Remus and Sirius. Severus had been the same way, at home he loved to fly, but at school he wouldn't allow himself to join the 'camaraderie' of being on a team. Sirius had once told him he 'flew like his father had' and he was right, though Sirius had also admitted Harry could outbest James anyday. Now that Sirius knew for sure that Harry was Severus's son, he said he knew now why Harry was so good in the air, apparently one night Sirius had seen Severus out on the pitch when they were still at school, and he had to agree that Severus truly was much better then James could be at flying, or had been back then.

Yes, flying right now seemed like a very good option rather then face the music so quickly. It tore him up how much he wanted Draco to like him...to love him even...and knowing it would never come to pass. Much as he had gotten Sirius and his dad to admit their feelings for each other, those were feelings just amplified by the fact they already were lovers. In this case Harry and Draco were far, far from being lovers, even friends, and saying 'I don't want to be your enemy anymore because I love you' just didn't seem to feel right. It was with a heavy heart that Harry finally gave up the hope that it could be more one day, and accepted that fate was simply fate, and he wasn't going to tempt it no matter what his dad had said.

Three hours ended up turning into five however before his dad, Sirius and Remus returned. Ron and Hermione had been told not to come to the infirmary this night, though no one had told them really 'why' they couldn't, so Harry knew they were probably wondering what was going on. They did know Draco was being looked for, Harry had told them that much, but he knew they wouldn't be told yet that he and his cousin had been found and brought back to the school. There was still way too much at stake Harry knew, and much as he trusted and adored his friends, some things were best left in secret, especially the fact that neither of them still knew of Harry's love for Draco. That was a secret he definitely was still not willing to share with them at any cost, or at least for the moment.

'Ah, Harry, perfect job of course on the potion. Worthy of at least ten points for Gryffindor,' Severus smirked a bit now, though there was definitely a touch of pride in his voice.

'Of course, you expected less, dad? Told you I could do it, though I would have earned at least twenty points if I do say so myself,' he said with a little smirk of his own, though he too conveyed he was glad his father was proud of him.

Remus grinned. 'A battle of wills I doubt will ever end. I can see you two will be very good at trying to outdo each other in the future, not that *I* am surprised of course.'

'Oi, bad enough having to put up with *one* person being sarcastically witty, now I have three of you going to be going over my head eh?' Sirius said rolling his eyes and getting smacked by Harry playfully for it. 'All right, all right, honestly, someone can't take a joke here,' he chuckled.

'Maybe if you had paid more attention in school then fluffing off, Sirius, you'd actually *get* half of our witty banter,' Remus said shaking his head wryly, though a huge grin was on his face.

'Bah, I'm not *that* old yet that I *don't* pick up at least half, love,' Sirius said with a pout. 'So, we ready to do this then? I just hope these Malfoys appreciates all we're doing for them.'
'Honestly, Padfoot, how dense are you sometimes I wonder?' Remus said in a huff. 'The fact that we've saved their lives, will be hiding them from Lucius for now, and making plans to keep Draco from ever going back to that bastard...I'm sure they *will* appreciate. The lad may be a lot of things at times, but Draco *is* a gentleman when the situation calls for it.'
'I wouldn't always go that far, Remus, he still can be a right prat at times. Not his fault though, I blame Lucius for that. The man is more of a git then Draco will ever be,' Severus said with a sigh and began to ladle some of the potion into a phial.
'Err...dad?' Harry said now jumping into the conversation and glancing nervously at the phial.
'Yes, son?' Severus said turning towards Harry now with a slight frown. 'Is there a problem with the potion you're not telling me?'
Harry shook his head. 'No, no the potion's fine. It's just that...umm...well...could I kind of...umm...go the pitch for a while...err...just till he's awake and all?' he asked hesitantly.
'Now why would you want to do that, Harry?' Remus queried.
'Yeah, what's up, kiddo? I thought you'd want to be here when he woke up and all,' Sirius said concerned.
Harry sighed deeply and shook his head. 'I...I would rather not be if it's all right. I'm just...just not ready for it...to see him I mean...awake yet. Please don't take it the wrong way, I *do* love him and everything...but...I'm just not sure if I'm ready to go past it being in here...' Harry said pointing to his heart, 'over it coming out here,' he said now pointing to his mouth.
Severus looked at his son speculatively for a moment, then nodded his head slowly and gave Harry a quick smile. 'I understand, I too know how hard it can be to have what you want in front of you, and never be able to say what they mean to you. Go on out to the pitch, son, I'll have Ron and Hermione sent out there too so they can keep an eye on you all right?'
Harry brightened at that possibility and smiled at his father, nodding his head quickly. 'Yeah, that'd be great...thanks, dad!' he said and swiftly gave his dad a quick hug and grabbed up his broom nearly fleeing the room.
Severus shook his head and sighed whilst Harry left. 'Did I do the right thing?' he asked quietly now of his lovers.
'I think that's something all parents say more then a few times when raising a child, Sev. In this case though, yeah, I think you did,' Remus said softly and put a comforting hand on Severus's shoulder.
Sirius put his hand on Severus's other should also saying softly, 'When he's ready to deal with it...he will, Severus. No one can force him into saying what he can't yet, not you, not Remus, not me. He needs his time.'
Severus nodded and walked over to a fireplace on the opposite side of the room. He took some powder out of a jar on the mantelpiece and threw it into the lit fire, waiting until it turned to a sparkling green. 'Albus Dumbledore!' he called out now and waited.
'Ah, Severus, everything all right? Is Draco and Viridian awake yet?' Albus said finally answering his Floo call.
Severus shook his head. 'Not yet, I'm going to give Draco the potion now. I need you to send Ms. Granger and Mr. Weasley down to the pitch for me to meet up with Harry though. He err...he wasn't ready to face seeing Draco awake yet,' Severus said sadly.
Albus nodded. 'Yes, I can understand that, since he doesn't know the feelings are indeed mutual

at the moment. I'll let Ron and Hermione know to go there straight away, so you two can have time to talk to the boys. How long do you think this should take?'
Severus conferred with his lovers quickly and then turned back to Albus. 'Give us half an hour, that way it won't look too suspicious for Ms. Granger and Mr. Weasley to be gone. Hopefully by then, we'll have worked things out,' he said with a nod.
'I wish you all the best, let me know how things go of course,' Albus said with a twinkle in his eyes, the with a soft 'pop' his head was gone and the fireplace was back to it's normal reddish-orange flames.
'Well that takes care of that. Now let's see what we get when these two wake up shall we?' Remus said briskly and took the phial from Severus's hand, then walked over to where Draco was.
'We'll wake up Draco first then?' Sirius said standing over by Viridian's bed now.
'Yes, that way Draco can hopefully keep Viridian from losing control. I dare say we do not need a rampant, mostly vampiric, veela running round the hall screaming bloody murder now do we?' Remus said with a chuckle.
'Personally I'll take a werewolf anyday, at least you know where you stand with them,' Severus said dryly, though it wasn't in any way maliciously said and Remus and Sirius knew that and grinned at him.
'Right then, we're in agreement, Draco it is first,' Remus said now. He uncorked the phial then gently lifted Draco's head and poured the contents of the pinkish liquid down his throat a little at a time so as not to choke the unconscious lad, then laid Draco's head back down. He recorked the phial and handed it to Severus who put it in his pocket, then the three of them waited.
The potion worked within a minute and now they could see Draco's breathing becoming more normal and shallower, the type of breathing one has as they are waking up. Draco's eyelids began to flutter then, and soon enough they opened, though his eyes remained unfocused for the moment.
'Draco? Draco can you hear me?' Severus said in a hushed voice so not to startle him. Remus had quickly hid behind Severus for the moment, knowing that if Draco saw him right off the bat he would probably go into shock more then anything else, and they didn't want that to happen.
Draco then blinked rapidly as if trying to clear his mind, then rubbed his eyes as if he'd been sleeping for a very long time, though it had only been a few hours. Blinking again he focused his gaze now on his potions professor, surprise registering quickly. 'P-professor S-Snape? I-is that y-you, s-sir? he stammered. He felt like he hadn't used his voice in a very long time either, and his throat and tongue were like cotton.
Severus nodded and reached over to grab a goblet full of water, holding Draco's head up gently and lifted the goblet to the boy's lips. 'Here, drink this, it will help clear the fuzziness,' he said quietly.
Draco drank in the water, magically kept cold in the warm, firelit room. It tasted better than anything he'd ever drank he thought at the moment, even better than a glass of butterbeer. He downed the whole goblet and indicated for a second glass before he finally found some strength, and his voice finally. Looking round at where he was he definitely was confused now, then looking back up at Severus he said in a small voice, 'I'm...we're not dead?'
Severus looked at Draco and chuckled, shaking his head, then put the water goblet down on the bedside table. 'No, Draco, far from it. You're very much alive, trust me. As is your cousin.'
'But...but Lupin...he...he said he was going to kill me...he said it,' Draco murmured now, then as

he saw who was coming round Severus his eyes lit up in fear and he cowered underneath the duvet that was on the hospital bed.
'I won't hurt you, Draco, I promise. Please don't panic,' Remus said quietly before Draco could say anything else. 'We have a lot to talk about, all of us, and we need you to hear us out before you judge.'
Draco swallowed hard not sure if he could believe what he was being told. Not more than a few hours...days?...ago he was at the mercy of this man, he could almost still feel that strong wolf-like hand wrapped round his throat, hear the coldness and hatred in his professor's voice, feel the anger that the man had been emanating towards him. Not to mention he could still hear the words that should have ended his life.
'I know what you're thinking, Draco, but I promise you, *no one* in this room is going to hurt you. We only ask you listen to us that's all,' Severus said softly, keeping his gaze trained on Draco.
Draco turned back to see that Severus meant what he was saying, and slowly nodded to the relief of the adults. 'Why I should believe you though when *he* tried to kill me?' Draco asked curiously whilst pointing at Remus with a still shaking hand.
'Because at the moment you don't have much choice now do you, Malfoy,' Sirius drawled. He knew that Draco had gone through a lot, but one thing he wasn't in the mood for at the moment was games, not when Harry was suffering so badly. It really pained him to see how much Harry loved Draco, and he was still coming to terms with that fact being that a Malfoy was still a Malfoy by any means, even if Draco claimed to want nothing to do with his father.
Draco managed to find enough strength to actually give Sirius a glare for that remark, though his heart wasn't really in it. 'Fine, I'll listen to you, but if I don't like what I hear - ' he began but Sirius cut him off with an intense gaze.
'You *won't* always hear what you want to hear in life, Malfoy, that's the way it works so get off your high horse. *Life sucks*, get used to it. You can't always get what *you* want kid, Mick Jagger said that by the by, a truly great Muggle musician,' Sirius said with a wistful sigh at a long forgotten memory causing Remus and Severus to just shake their heads and gaze up at nothing in particular. 'What?' he said now at seeing his friends shoot him an odd look.
'You're impossible, Siri, you know that,' Remus said matter-of-factly, 'trust you to bring up something like that now. No more Muggle rock concerts for you my dear Padfoot,' he muttered.
'Oh for the love of Salazar, let's just get this over with. We're making him think we've all gone daft or something,' Severus sighed in exasperation now.
Draco actually grinned at that remark. 'Actually I've always thought you were all a bit batty, though I do enjoy Muggle concerts myself, though never heard of this err...Jagger person. And umm...no offense here...but...anyone who can do what the three of *you* do and actually get away with it without anyone noticing...*has* to be batty.'
'I'm not sure I want to even touch that remark with a hundred foot pole, Malfoy,' Sirius said and glanced at Draco with this I-have-no-idea-what-you're-talking-about look.
'I'm sure you don't, Sirius,' Remus said with a grin, understanding perfectly what Draco meant. He had actually known that Draco had found out about the three of them months ago, and had decided not to tell Sirius or Severus about that information, though it hardly mattered now. How Remus had known was easy, he'd caught Draco in the corridor by Severus's room just a day before a full moon, sneaking out of the Slytherin dorms on a late night wander apparently. Remus's wolf sense of smell picked up the fact that as he let himself into Severus's room, someone was indeed there, even though not 'there'. Sirius was in tow of course under Severus's

cloak, and clueless as always even when Remus had stopped for a moment sniffing the air slightly. Remus had smelled a crisp lavender soap scent, as well as the fact that his wolf's hearing had heard a tiny gasp of surprise when there wasn't anyone 'in' the corridor. Other then Harry and Severus, only one other person could have had an invisibility cloak - Draco Malfoy.
'Well, let's get this over with then shall we?' Severus said now turning all business-like.
'All right, where to begin though?' Remus said thoughtfully.
'Did you really mean to kill me?' Draco suddenly asked now turning to Remus.
Remus sighed and gave Draco a speculative look, then shook his head slowly. 'Never. I could no more voluntarily hurt a child then I could hurt myself. I really am sorry that I had to do that to you and Viridian, Draco, believe me I am,' he said sadly.
'Why? Why did you do it then?' Draco asked.
'We *had* to do it, Draco. You see, we did get your letter, not just the note you sent me at supper that night, which yes we know was you now, but also the one in Harry's cloak,' Severus said quietly.
'Wait, you *did*? But...but you said you *didn't* know about any letters I'd left!' Draco said staring at Remus accusingly now.
Remus fidgeted a moment. 'I *had* to make you think that, for your own good. Draco, I wasn't alone at Meyer's this morning, there were *other* people there with me, Ministry officials that were there...er...'unofficially' so to speak.'
'I don't understand...why? Who? Why put us through all this?' Draco asked confused.
'We had to get you to verbally confess before people who were considered trustworthy 'officials'. Much as your letter told us the truth, the fact is the Ministry could claim it was altered, or enchanted, considering the fact it actually was, it would have not held much water in court. Who was there I can't tell you right now, for reasons, however, they are persons of notable standing who used Ministry enchanted dictoquills to take your er...'confession' against Lucius. This way we could effectively use it against him, and of course we plan to,' Remus said.
'So...all this was an elaborate scheme to get me to confess that Lucius killed Harry and not me? Why couldn't you have just asked me? Why go through all of the charades and then pretend to kill me?' Draco asked in a hard voice.
'You were not exactly being very amicable at the time, Draco, not to mention there were other factors involved. You're running away made you look all too guilty, Lucius really does have an alibi for that day, and not to mention...Lucius could have said you were coerced or bribed to write the letter, or to confess to us unwillingly. He could have said we even used Veritaserum or anything else rather then his own son willingly giving him over to us with evidence that could do him harm. Now do you understand?' Severus asked.
Draco thought on that a moment and nodded. 'Yeah, I think I do. Lucius *would* do and say anything to get himself out of hot water, or buy his way out, unless the evidence was something grave enough where even *that* would work. I guess I can forgive you for put me and Viri through all this if it will hurt Lucius in the end,' he said sighing. 'What was with the werewolves though? How did you find us?'
'Ah, now that was easy actually. Meyer along with a few other 'friends' of mine have been on the look out for you for a few weeks now. We just got very lucky that he sensed your cousin soon as you both entered the forest in which he happens to live. Vampires you see have a particular scent of blood on them at all times, and when Meyer did some scouting and saw two young boys, he figured it had to be the ones he'd been asked to find, and that you would head for the cabin,

which you did. He owled me immediately and since it was a full moon I decided to run with Meyer's pack for the night since we knew you would be safe in the cabin, then he would go get you the next day. His pack and I go way, way back, he's a very old and well loved friend,' Remus said smiling softly.
'Oh...' Draco said quietly. 'I didn't know werewolves could tell about vampires and stuff.'
Remus chuckled and nodded. 'Well, had it been any other time of the month but the week of the full moon, perhaps you very well might have gone undetected. Which is how you've actually managed to escape my other lookouts over the past few weeks. Our sense of scent, though always stronger then full humans, increases treblefold in the week of the full moon. We can sniff out blood up to a mile away on the night of the moon, and close to that on the other days of that week. It wasn't hard to pick out Viridian, considering he must have fed recently. For a werewolf the scent of blood...well...let's just say it's a scent we never forget,' he said almost sadly.
'I never really thought how hard it is to be a werewolf, Professor. I can say I have a lot more respect for err...werewolves now then I did before, tell you that much,' he said smiling at Remus now for a moment. 'So what's going to happen next?'
'We don't exactly know yet, but trust me, when the time comes we'll let you know. Lucius shan't go unpunished for what he's done, I can assure you,' Severus said darkly.
'Umm...and me? If you did read my note, then you know why...why I ran like I did,' Draco said hesitantly.
'Yes, Draco, we know, and you will *not* be blamed for your actions. If all goes well, that will not even be an issue,' Remus said.
Draco thought on all this for a moment, he couldn't believe all this was really happening. He was alive, his father probably would go away for a long time to Azkaban, or better yet probably get kissed by the Dementors which would end Draco's torments at home. It would make things harder though in school, but at the moment he didn't care in the least. What he did care about was something else, something much more important.
Lowering his gaze to his lap where his hands had unconsciously clasped themselves he couldn't shake the thought that was now in his mind. 'You know what though...it doesn't matter what happens next really, not to me anyway. Not anymore,' he said with a slight hitch in his voice.
'And why is that, Malfoy?' Sirius asked curiously.
'Getting Lucius put away, saving me from Azkaban...it's not worth it anymore. I deserve to go there...I deserve to suffer,' he said now, allowing the tears to fall yet again from his eyes. Tears he had shed weeks ago, tears that were now showing certain people in the room that Draco wasn't a 'Malfoy' any longer really. That he did have feelings, and did care...that he wasn't his father and could and would defy the image of what a 'Malfoy' was.
'Why, Draco? Tell us why you think that?' Remus asked quietly, concern in his voice for the boy.
'Because *he* is not coming back don't you get it? It *won't* being back the dead, Professor, it *won't* bring me peace or happiness now. It won't bring back my dreams and hopes...I'll still be empty, lonely and afraid. Revenge *isn't* sweet, it's only a ruse, a game to tease you into thinking you will feel better when justice is served. It still won't bring him back to me though, don't you see that? It won't stop the pain of knowing he's dead and *never* coming back!' Draco sobbed in torment, and then curled himself into a ball, hugging his arms tightly to his chest, and closing his eyes to shut out the world. *'It won't bring back the only person I'll ever love...it won't bring you back to me Harry...my Harry...'* he whispered into the air, as if it could grant his one and only wish to return the dead back to the living.

'Or maybe it will...if you believe hard enough in that love...Draco...my Dragon...' a voice whispered in Draco's ear. Then a warm pair of arms suddenly enveloped Draco and held him tightly, holding him in a lovers embrace, and Draco had to wonder if he hadn't died after all somehow. Because the voice, and the arms, could have only belong to the dead...and the one who had died he knew could never have loved him back...

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Chapter: 14

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

Temptress - I will get back with you on that past lives thing, trust me. Avoid email at the moment due to the fact I've got 300 emails I have yet to sort out between the four email services I use :groans: I will get to it though, promise luv! (hugs her fluffy bunnies madly :giggle:)

Cosmic - :beams: hugs: glad to see you are! I think I was the one more shocked when I saw you list this fic in the Exercise 1 over at the workshop...talk about being blown over by a feather! :faints: For that I thank you and give many hugs and glomps luv. :hugs and glomps you again:

Moi - honestly, I don't know why that is. I suppose I never really thought of it, when I write it's just 'there', I don't really concentrate on how others say the same thing in different ways. Is leaving them in a err...bad thing? :shuffles:

Draco/Harry - :chuckles: No, not the end, though it is going to end soon that much I can say. I don't know how many more chaps yet, but I'm at the point where I want closure to the older fics I've written (this one, Innocence, and Reality) so I can go back and work on some other stuff, and start a new fic. Well, I could do that anyway I suppose, but I don't want to keep spreading out so thin :sigh: And I did promise I would finish this one and I will! :chuckle:

Cindy - your wish is me command luv :)

Mimi - :hugs: now no crying :wags a finger at you: then you'll start me crying! :sniffs:

Anni - :laughs: it's not easy that's for sure! I think it's because err...I have no life other than writing :giggles: honestly, other then going to too many darn doctors, I don't do anything all day long. I only work late nights between 3 and 6 AM, sleep for round 4 hours a day, and the rest...is all doing writing mainly. As for Harry...heh he is a curious one isn't he? :whistles:

Caetlyn - 100% right on that one, and the change was made from Floyd to Mick Jagger. Thanks for pointing that out. Happened that I was listening to Another Brick In the Wall when I was writing that and that's why Floyd stuck in me brain lol. And yes, I am stuck in the mid 60's to late 80's in music, you can safely say I am musically challenged because I don't know a single singer out there today. If it's not old rock, I don't know it :giggles: Give me the Beatles, Floyd, Zepplin, Frankie's Faire, Three Dog Nite, Yaz, Alphaville, Culture Club, George Michaels...all of

them...anyday! :nod nod nod:
Myr - cheers! :hugs: Hoped it wouldn't be too disappointing...always worry I will be when I write :sigh:
Nagani - :groans: yes, I think that should have read more resistant, and I keep forgetting to make that change :mutters: will do that cheers for spotting it. I am trying to improve me grammar and such, that I think is me worst downfall yet despite the FAWA groups and workshops :sighs: Though after going back to fics I wrote a year ago, I can say I have vastly improved...I think :chuckle:
Shini - :grins: could be! :nod nod nod: Harry just has to be inquisitive...as Hermione would say 'It's in your blood!' :giggles: As to what type of fic It's Called A Heart is - it's a Sev/OCF angst/romance fic. In basis, Sev goes over the edge one day and threatens Harry at wand point, Albus forces him to take a sabbatical. He leaves Hogwarts for the Muggle world after confronting his mum, and accepting a place to stay from Remus since Remus and Sirius are still 'running'. (in this fic it's Remus/Sirius, though only in mention). He ends up in Muggle London and gets lost...and meets Shana, a woman that is cold, crude, short tempered, and not what she seems. She's not an MS in any way, just an OC, because I checked her against the MS 'standards'...she isn't a blue eyed, blonde haired menace trust me. Anyway, if you want to read it it's up at . I had it posted here on FFN, but seems few enjoy Sev/OCF fics sadly :sigh:, so I pulled it and put it over there now. Let me know what you think if you do read it though alright luv? Cheers!
Shades - yup, uncertainty is annoying that's for sure! Don't worry, all those questions will get answered, though maybe not all in one chap :chuckle: I think I've got at least 2 or 3 more chaps of this...give or take, depends on Scabbers muse at the moment :P (who's angry with me for not writing another Sirius/Peter fic yet so his glares are quite daunting I swear! :mutters:)

~~~~*Chapter Fourteen: From The Darkness Comes Light*~~~~

Draco was dreaming, he had to be dreaming because what he was feeling was too good to be real. The words had heard, or thought he had heard, could only be in his dreams, yet somehow he wasn't sure either. His eyes were closed, so it was highly possible he really was dreaming after all, for the voice sounded so familiar, and the arms round him at the moment were too heavenly to be real. The body that was pressed up against him, the warmth he felt, the arms wrapped round him, how could they be there except within his own mind?
A faint hint of warm breath on the back of his neck tickled him and he smiled sweetly, giving a small sigh of pure contentment. He was amazed at how real his imagination could get lately, especially in the past few weeks since he'd heard about Harry's death. At night, in that time when he was still slightly awake but almost about to sleep, where things were grey and fuzzy yet, he could still believe Harry was alive. He could still hear Harry's voice, his teases and taunts, his angers and his hatreds. In his mind's eye he could still see those expressive emerald eyes filled with coldness and mistrust. Then as sleep would finally overtake him, those words and looks would turn to whispered emotions of love. That's when Draco knew he had fallen asleep, for only in the dreamworld would Harry ever say such tender words to his enemy.
He relished those few moments of grey fuzziness though, for it kept him grounded, it kept him from falling apart and having nightmares instead. It helped him make the dreams of love better, it gave him those few precious moments of being able to think Harry was still alive, even if all Draco would ever hear were those words of hate. At least Harry would be there, and with that

knowledge there would still be hope. Now though, now all of that, his hopes and dreams, even that special world of fuzziness that grounded him, was being shattered. Now those feelings of hope were invading his waking world, moving beyond the fuzziness and dreams, and he wondered how he had allowed himself to let that happen.
'Draco...' someone whispered causing Draco to shiver. He knew that voice, yet it was also different then when he had last heard it. It was a deeper, silkier voice, sounding like velvet and lace rather than the higher pitched tone that had screamed in fear or had taunted him in contempt. Draco curled himself tighter into a ball, wishing the voice would stop tormenting him, praying it would stop giving him false hopes. *'Why? Why must you tease me like this? Even in my sleep I hear you...feel you against me...why? Why did you leave me, Harry?'* he whispered sadly, not even realising he had said those words out loud.
Draco heard a sweet, low chuckle, and the arms round him tightened, drawing him closer into the warmth of the body attached to it. He felt another tickle of warmed breath against his skin, this time at his ear. *'You're not dreaming, Draco...I'm here...I'll always be here...I promise you I will...'* the velvety voice whispered.
Draco breathed in sharply, afraid of those words. Squeezing his eyes tightly a tear formed and he choked back a sob. Shaking his head he tried to clear his mind of those whispered words, they were too painful. *'No...no more...I can't believe in promises from the dead. You left me, Harry...you left me alone...don't make me believe in what I can never have...the real Harry hated me...so this has to be a dream. It was all my fault...you're dead and it's all my fault...I couldn't save you...I failed you...Harry...'*
Draco sobbed again, trying to push away the arms round him now, he couldn't take how good they made him feel. He didn't deserve the warmth, he didn't deserve to even have even one more moment of happiness and hope. Harry was gone and not coming back, he had failed the one person in his life he loved more than anything else. The warmth was gone then, only coldness entombed him now and he sobbed again at the sudden loss of heat against him. He felt another warm breath then, this time on his face, and he could feel someone putting a hand on his cheek. Then in a pleading whisper a voice said, *'I'm here, Draco, you didn't fail. Open you eyes and look at me...please, Draco...'*
Draco wasn't sure what to do now, this couldn't be happening. The voice was so insistent, so full of pain and tenderness all at once, he found himself responding even though he didn't want to. Slowly he opened his eyes, blinking against the light and trying to focus them, and then he gave a tiny gasp of surprise. Looking back at him was a pair of eyes he knew all too well. Green eyes as vibrant and sparkling as an emerald ocean, eyes that were now filled with worry and another emotion Draco dared not think could be real. Those eyes that had always been cold and distant to him...were now filled with love...and that expression of love was for him and him alone.
Putting a shaking hand out he touched the other boys cheek as well, wondering what was going on. The cheek felt so real, and though it was pale in colour, it was warm to the touch, clearly showing the person before him was really there...was really alive. He was too stunned to move, all he could do is touch that cheek like it was a lifeline, as if he would wake up any moment and once again be thrust back into the real world where this boy was dead and never coming back. Finally he found his voice though he didn't know how, and whispered faintly, 'H-Harry?'
Harry smiled then and nodded, the worry and fears gone from his eyes now, leaving behind only the love and understanding. 'I'm here, Draco. I'm here...I'm real...' he said again reassuringly.
Draco didn't care how it was possible at the moment, or why the Fates had decided to tease him

like this, but whatever the case was Harry *was* there, in front of him, alive. He knew he wasn't dreaming anymore, and before he could stop himself the weeks of pent up emotions finally hit him square in the chest. With a choked sob he flung himself out into Harry's arms, crying and shaking until he couldn't anymore. 'Oh Harry...Harry...how? How?' he sobbed over and over into Harry's chest.
Harry held him for a while, letting Draco release those emotions and all the questions first before answering back. He knew this was going to be difficult on Draco, he didn't realize just how much though honestly. He didn't care how long it would take to get Draco to calm down, they had all the time in the world at the moment. He knew his father and the others wouldn't bother them right now, they'd left the moment Harry revealed himself from under his invisibility cloak and slipped into the bed with Draco. He had seen the look in his dad's eyes when he'd done that, it wasn't anger or even amusement, just understanding, and the nod he'd received from his father gave him the courage he needed to help Draco come to terms now.
How long they sat there Harry didn't know, he just rocked Draco back and forth in his arms, holding him tightly until the tears finally melted away. Finally Harry lifted Draco's chin so he could look at him, and he could see the myriad of questions now in those slate grey watery eyes and he smiled in understanding. Then before Draco could say anything he leaned in and gently kissed Draco on the lips, a tender, chaste kiss that told Draco just how much Harry loved and needed him, and that he would never leave him again. Raising his head after a few moments, heat flowing through his body he could see Draco's eyes shining now, not from tears, but from happiness. Very softly he said, 'How...is a *very* long story, Draco, and it begins...with you...'
Harry then began to tell Draco everything that had happened up to that moment, only pausing to answer or collaborate things with Draco as needed. He told Draco about how he had been wandering the school and had first come across Severus, Remus and Sirius in the hidden corridor, about the feelings he had felt towards Draco and how he had shied from them, about meeting his mum and grandmum, and about finding out who he really was. He told Draco how he had ran that night in fear of the map and what he was hearing from the others, how at that moment he had been so angry at the world, and how he had felt so ill by the time he'd reached the pitch.
He told Draco he remembered collapsing there, and then only darkness, but in that darkness he remembered arms round him, and a voice coaxing him back into safety. Then he told Draco everything else, from the time he 'died', right up until this moment. How he had snuck back upstairs under his cloak after telling Hermione and Ron he wasn't in the mood to fly anymore. How he had heard Draco's whispers, and how he had to let Draco know how much he loved him in return, how he really needed to remember if those arms from his dreams were still warm and loving.
Harry grinned when Draco blushed at that, which confirmed the suspicion that Harry had had the last few nights during his dreams of those missing few days of his life. Draco admitted it was he who had said those words and had held him. He didn't know Harry was hearing him nor that he would remember, and Draco told him how he knew that he would never have had the courage to say such things to Harry otherwise. Draco also admitted he had Harry's Firebolt still, or at least he'd had it back in his dorm room if no one had taken it by now, for which Harry was really glad to hear. Then Draco told Harry everything as well, from how he had fallen with him so long ago, all the way up to what had happened with Professor Lupin at the treehouse.
Harry was a bit upset about hearing how Remus had treated him, but Draco silenced him with a

kiss and then told Harry he wasn't angry for what happened. He understood it had to be done, and in no uncertain terms he hoped it would work out and his father would be punished severely. Harry begged Draco's forgiveness for having to have tormented him for 'dying' like that, but again Draco wasn't upset, now he understood it all and he agreed it had been the right thing to do. In the end they just kissed for a while, everything coming together and no more regrets or fears were in their way.

A little while later a tiny cough alerted them they weren't alone, and they looked up guiltily until Draco saw who it was who had coughed, and he broke into a grin. 'Viri! You're up finally eh? Welcome back to the world of the living, cousin,' he laughed at seeing the grimace on his cousin's face.

Viridian shot Draco a half glare and shook his head to clear out the cobwebs. 'Try more like the world of the 'half dead', I'm never 'living', cousin,' he muttered now. He then noticed Harry and nodded at him, obviously not even surprised to see the dead come back to life. 'So umm...mind filling me in?'

Harry and Draco laughed then began retelling the stories, though only what was relevant for Viridian to know. 'That's basically about it, Viridian. Dad said it was the best thing to do, safer, but I swear it's getting on my nerves to be 'dead' all the time...err...no offence,' Harry said blushing at the half vampire.

Viridian chuckled and waved his hand in dismissal. 'None taken. I'm used to that, trust me. I know you're probably wondering why I wasn't surprised as hell to see you 'alive', Harry, but I didn't smell death when I woke up, only two people very much alive, and so I figured something odd had happened. Not to mention I remembered how you smelled when I saw you last, and though it's changed slightly, it's still a scent I remembered, so I knew it was you in the room. I wonder what will happen to us all now though? Draco and I will *not* go back to Lucius, and I'm worried for my aunt too, I hope she's all right,' he said with a worried sigh.

'You're Aunt Narcissa is perfectly fine thank you, Viridian,' a soft voice said from the doorway, causing all three boys to turn round quickly with shocked looks on their faces.

At seeing who the newcomer to the hidden ward was Draco yelled in delight got up quickly, running over to the person and hugging them tightly. 'Mum! Oh mum! You're all right!' he said happily.

Narcissa hugged her son back tightly and nodded, smiling over his head at Viridian and Harry. 'I'm fine son. I'm more resilient then people think I am. As for Lucius, he won't hurt me again...or any of us for that matter, I can promise you that,' she said quietly and everyone in the room now looked at her questioningly.

'What do you mean, Aunt Narcissa? What happened?' Viridian asked puzzled.

'Perhaps in that I can also be of assistance,' a new voice said now, and a second person came through the doorway, a smile on his face.

'Dad!' Harry said happily, and for some reason he had a sudden urge to run up and hug him as well, just as Draco had done to his mum. 'What's going on?' he asked now.

Severus hugged his son back and for the first time since all this had began he really felt that hug deep inside. It was amazing to him just how much had happened to him, to all of them really, in such a short amount of time. He gazed at his son for a moment, really taking in all that had changed with the boy, and he felt better...happier...then he ever had in his entire life. Apart from Harry's eyes, no one would think this boy had ever been 'Harry James Potter', it was strange though seeing his features combined with Lily's. Thanks to that combination though Harry

actually was a very handsome boy now, and with a little pang of regret Severus wished he himself had looked like that as a child. Not that Severus hadn't changed himself as of late, he had, thanks to Remus and Sirius's insistence.
He'd removed the charm he used on his hair over a week ago, now it fell round his face looking silky and clean. He finally, after much arguing at that, had allowed Poppy fix his nose back to what it had been before he'd broken it all those years ago. Though it was still on the larger side, which made him grateful Harry had obviously inherited Lily's nose, at least it was straight again. He still refused to give up his black 'bat style' dress whilst teaching, but in private he had found a few new colours in blue, grey, red and green in his now shared wardrobe. They were gifts from Remus and Sirius and he wore them gladly during the evenings when they were alone, and sometimes even with Harry when they would have their own evening chats.
At this moment however he felt more like a 'father' then he had in the whole time since everything had been revealed. Harry in his arms hugging him, the happiness on his son's face, the love he could see not just for Draco, but for himself, melted him in all ways. He knew now the news he and Narcissa had to impart to the boys would only make things better, and he was glad he would be here to see their reactions. Nodding to Narcissa now he smiled at her and said, 'Narcy, good to see you again.'
Narcissa, who still had her arm round her son's shoulder, smiled back at Severus and nodded to him as well. 'Severus, glad to finally meet again under far better circumstances than usual. Remus and Sirius are well?' she asked.
Severus nodded. 'They'll be returning shortly, Remus got called to London a little over an hour ago for some last minute details to work out on all of this, and Sirius wanted to do some shopping whilst they were in London. Merlin only can imagine what he will pick up *this* time in the Muggle world,' he said with a slight groan and shook his head.
Harry laughed. 'Last time Sirius brought back a Muggle CD player and some music, drove dad batty for days trying to find a way to enchant it to play in the castle. Took Sirius forever to figure out that all he had to do was get batteries since those aren't effected by magic. Poor dad though, he had to be subjected to...err...what was that music again?' Harry asked turning to his father.
'I believe it was The Beatles amongst other things,' Severus said with a sigh.
'Oh come now, Severus, I recall back at school you enjoyed music like that. Getting old are we?' Narcissa teased.
'Wiser, not older, Narcissa. Though, I guess I did enjoy those Muggle groups back then, didn't I,' Severus said now with a sigh of remembrance of long forgotten days.
'Don't pay attention to his mumblings, Harry. As a matter of fact, I happen to know for fact that your father was secretly in love with Muggle things back in his youth. Lucius used to hate it whenever he would arrive at the Manor on that motorbike of his,' Narcissa said with a twinkle in her eye.
'Motorbike? *You* had a motorbike?' Harry said, then turned to his father stunned.
'Err...well...let's not go *there* shall we?' Severus said uncomfortably, though the look in his son's eyes told him he wasn't going to get away with that so easily. Mumbling something under his breath he groaned a moment then nodded his head. 'Oh all right, yes, I did have a motorbike. It was your godfather actually got me hooked on them believe it or not, even though he didn't know it at the time. I happened to find a picture of a motorbike he was looking at to buy and fix up, an old Ironhead Harley Sportster I believe, and that got me interested. Though personally I ended up with a Triumph 120 myself,' he grinned now.

'Whoa, I can't believe *you* actually like motorbikes! Do you still have yours?' Harry asked curiously.
'Yes, as a matter of fact I do still have that very same Triumph back at Snape Manor. As it happens, I've also managed to collect a few others over the years as well,' Severus said sounding as if it was no big deal to just 'collect' Muggle items like that.
'Oh stop teasing him, Severus. He loves that old Triumph, I believe it's nickname is 'The Grey Wolf' if I remember right, named after a very special wolf at that,' Narcissa said with a grin, noticing that Severus blush slightly at that release of information. 'He has no less than a hundred assorted motorbikes at the Manor these days though, ranging from the 1900's all the way through today's models. I'm surprised you haven't told Sirius about them yet, Severus. You know he would enjoy to see what you've tinkered on in your spare time.'
Severus groaned at that and shook his head. 'I'm waiting for just the right moment, Narcy. If I told him about those bikes now Remus and I would *never* see him again,' he said rolling his eyes.
Harry laughed and nodded in agreement. 'That's for sure! However, I don't think Sirius would ever forgive you if you *don't* show him them at *some* point, dad,' he teased.
'I will, don't you worry,' Severus nodded with a smile. 'Now, I believe we have some more important news to tell you all, so please sit down,' Severus said, and went over to sit down on a chair near Harry's bed.
Everyone found seats, Harry of course sitting next to Draco on Draco's bed, Narcissa in a chair next to Severus, and Viridian on Harry's bed. 'So what's the news, dad? Not bad I hope?' Harry asked worriedly.
Severus shook his head and carefully chose the words he was going to use next, though he knew the news he had would be taken gladly no matter how he really said it. 'It seems, that for once in their pathetic lives, the Ministry has decided to...err...act quickly on certain...situations.'
'What situations, Professor?' Draco asked curiously.
'Please, call me Severus, Draco, it's not like we're in class at the moment, and under the circumstances...' Severus said grinning now as his gaze slid over Harry and Draco who were holding hands, 'it would only be the right thing to do. I very well can't have my future son-in-law calling me Professor day long now can I?'
Draco blushed (which Harry privately thought was very sexy on him), and nodded at Severus. 'Er...sure...ummm...Severus,' he said hesitantly, not even wanting to touch the comment about the son-in-law idea yet. That was just moving faster than he wanted to go at the moment.
'So spill it already, what's the deal with the Ministry?' Viridian said now looking from Severus to his aunt and then back to Severus.
'Quite a bit has actually happened in the past four hours since you got back to the school, especially in the past almost two hours since you woke up, Draco,' Severus said.
'It's been that long already? Seems like a minute ago when I woke back up,' Draco said quietly, and looked at Harry lovingly.
'I know, time sure does fly doesn't it,' Harry said softly and pulled Draco into his arms. Looking back at his father he said, 'What can possible happen in just a few hours though?'
'A lot, if you want it to, son,' Severus chuckled. 'After Arthur, Arabella and Alastor brought Draco and Viridian back over five hours ago, much has taken place within the Ministry. Fudge is no longer Minister of Magic, he was ousted and pronounced unfit to serve his office further by refusing to acknowledge the return of Voldemort these past near three years.'
'Whaaat? How? Is it true? Fudge is out? Who's the new Minister?' Viridian said quickly.

'Someone whom I know will make you very happy,' Severus said with a smile, 'Arthur Weasley has been unanimously sworn in as of three hours ago as the new Minister of Magic. About time I say too.'
Harry let out a whoop of joy and beamed brightly. 'All right! Way to go Mr. Weasley! Does Ron know yet? Oh wait...no he couldn't know or he'd have told me when I saw him a bit ago...is someone going to tell him?' Harry asked in a rush.
Severus laughed and nodded his head. 'All ready been done, his mother personally came to the school to tell him and young Ms. Weasley over an hour ago. He wanted to come see you right away, Harry, but I told him he could stop in later tonight if you'd like him too. I told him you were resting at the moment and wasn't to be disturbed.'
Harry blushed slightly, remembering exactly why he didn't want to be disturbed, and then nodded at his father. 'That would be great, I'd love to see him and Hermione. I felt kind of bad I shoved them off earlier, so that'll make up for it. Besides, I have a hell of lot of explaining to do myself to them,' he sighed.
Severus nodded in understanding. 'I'm sure everything will work out, even if it takes time, son, I know how much your friends mean to you. You're important to them as well, and I doubt such a thing as your choices and who fell in love with will end that friendship,' he said quietly.
Harry nodded and gave him a nervous smile. 'You're right, they can both be a pain sometimes, but we've all been through a lot together and always have stayed strong friends. I really don't think much more can shock them actually, not after finding out I was your son!' he giggled now.
Severus laughed and nodded. 'Truer words never spoken. However, that's not *all* the news we have for you now,' he said, and glanced at Narcissa to pick up the conversation.
'Mum? What does he mean by that?' Draco asked curiously.
Narcissa smiled at her son, and was so very grateful that Draco had found his dreams and they had come true. 'It's...it's about your father, Draco, that I'm here now,' she said hesitantly.
'Lucius? What about him?' Draco said with a slight frown.
Narcissa knew the news she would now tell her son and nephew probably would be taken well, so she continued without fear. 'Not more than half an hour after Arthur was instated as Minister of Magic, he issued a warrant to search Malfoy Manor, and arrest Lucius for several things, including the murder of one Harry James Potter. Currently he is sitting in the Ministry's high security gaol in London, awaiting a trial.'
'The trial is mainly formality, Draco, he's going to be found guilty, of that I can assure you,' Severus said quietly. 'Thanks to the information from Remus, your letter, and other testimonies, including Narcissa's and my own...Lucius will be going away for a very long time, if not get the Dementors Kiss for his actions.'
Harry, Draco and Viridian all stared at Severus and Narcissa in shock. Harry knew something was going on concerning Lucius Malfoy, but he hadn't a clue that any of this was going to happen. What they were hearing was just too good to be true, Lucius really was going to pay for everything he had done, and this time he wouldn't be able to buy his way out of it. 'Oh Merlin...I can't believe it, tell me I'm not still dreaming...' Draco half whispered in awe.
Narcissa chuckled. 'You're not dreaming, my son, it's all real. There will be a lot of new changes now, and this is only the first step. Of course, the best changes won't happen until we can finally defeat Voldemort once and for all, which is yet another step in the plans now, and one we have much to discuss on.'
'Oh...why does that prat have to always make things so difficult,' Viridian grumbled. 'Do we have

to discuss him *now*, Aunt Narcissa?'
'No, we can hold off on those plans for a little longer. Meanwhile, Dumbledore has so kindly extended his permission so that I may come and see you whenever you'd like me to, Draco. Though I dare say at the moment you will have your own plans,' she said knowingly, causing both Harry and Draco to blush. 'Now, now don't look like that boys, I was once young and in love myself, I know what needing special time alone is like,' she chuckled.
'Why do I find that so hard to believe,' Viridian said dryly, then sheepishly added on, 'err...not that you weren't young, Aunt Narcissa, but umm...I mean in love and all...'
Narcissa smiled softly. 'There was once a time , long ago before I married Lucius that I was deeply in love with someone. He was everything to me as I was to him, we loved each other so much, but he wasn't good enough for my family you see. He didn't have a lot of money or power, and his blood-line was only about a hundred years old compared to my own. He was a very simple man with simple tastes, but I loved him anyway, but when my parents found out about us they forbade me to see him again. I was packed off to Lucius before I could even say another word,' she sighed.
'What happened to him, do you know? Do you still love him?' Draco asked curiously.
'Yes, I do still love him, though I don't know if he still loves me, I have not seen nor spoken to him in over twenty years now. From what I'm told though, a lot has happened to him over the years, and I don't know if...if he even still remembers who I am now, or that he was ever in love with me. The last letter I wrote to him explaining why I could never see him again...it probably tore him apart, I'm sure it did. He was never a very strong or courageous person, and though I told him I would always love him, I knew it would break his heart that he wasn't worthy enough for my family. I often wonder if I had only defied my parents...perhaps I could have saved him somehow' she said sadly.
'Can I ask who it was at least?' Draco said.
Narcissa gazed at her son thoughtfully for a moment, then her gaze turned to Harry, and it was at him that her eyes became the saddest of all. 'I'm so very sorry, Harry. If I had known what was to happen, if I had not been so weak and all...' she said with a slight trace of tears, unable to continue.
'Mum?' Draco said now worriedly.
Narcissa sniffed back a few tears and shook her head sadly, her gaze still on Harry. 'I guess you should know the truth. It was really *my* fault that Lily and James died that night, that they were betrayed like they were.'
'I don't understand, why would you say that?' Harry asked confused.
Narcissa sighed as new tears formed in her pain-filled eyes, and she swallowed slightly before continuing. 'Because, Harry...the man I was...and Merlin forgive me...still am...in love with, the man who loved me with all his heart, who promised me that he would always love me and be there for me and take care of me...the man who I thought was the most kind, considerate, patient, loving and understand man on earth...the man I had no choice but to hurt in the end...was none other then...Peter Michael Pettigrew...'
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The names of the motorbikes are real by the by, and they are really classic bikes. I have owned a few in my day, and though I've had to trade up to a normal four door car because of being a 'mum', I still remember those days of me own teenage years fondly. :)
September 17, 2002 6:05 PM ©Piriotessa/Piri Lupin-Snape/Piri Malfoy
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Chapter: 15

~~~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
For sake of time today which is short sadly I want to thank: Fanny Chan, Coriander, Prophetess, Shini, Temptress (me fluffy bunny! Yes I promise to get back to you on the past lives thing, just finally cleaning out the email box ;groan:), Toyo (grins I'll try for the bike scene! :grins:), Cosmic, Shades (heh you'll see what happens on that confrontation!), Moonfire, Katzztar, Nagani, Nagini, and Draco n Harry. Cheers mates, you guys are the best! :hugs and hugs:
Cheers for pointing out the messed up chappie, I didn't catch it on the upload. Now I'll make sure to do a preview of what I'm ULing so I catch those. Don't know why FFN doubled up the chap that way :mutter: but it's fixed now.

~~~~Chapter Fifteen: What Would You Do If...?~~~~

Harry wasn't sure what to do, say or even think at the moment. Narcissa Malfoy's dropping of the proverbial bomb on him about her love for Peter Pettigrew and his for her seemed like more fantasy than reality. All he could do was sit there and stare at her, not even aware that Draco was trying to get his attention. He felt cold and numb, wanting to hate Narcissa Malfoy for what she had done, yet knowing it would be pointless at this point to do so. All he knew right now was that he had to think, to get away from everything...to run, and that's exactly what he did.
Before anyone could stop him he dashed out of the secret passage, he wasn't even sure where he was going yet, just as long as it was away from everyone else. In those three little words, one single name, everything that had happened to him suddenly started to press in on him. Not just Narcissa's confession, but all of it, from the day he'd come across Sirius, Remus and Severus in the hidden corridor, to right this moment.
Oddly enough he found himself ending up in a certain place out of habit more than anything else, the place in the Gryffindor stands that now felt like now so long ago in which he used to find solace. Right now he wasn't sure if it would bring him any comfort, but it was something familiar, something of a reminder of a life he no longer had. A life that had once though had been cruel, painful, constricting, and hopeless, but now he had to wonder what the difference was

between his 'old' life, and this 'new' one he was leading.
Pulling up his knees to his chest he wrapped his winter cloak round him tightly and sighed, letting the tears he'd been holding back for a while fall. He let them fall for his mum that he would never know, for James Potter who had sacrificed his life for a child that wasn't even his, for his godfather who had been denied freedom for so long. He let them fall for Remus, persecuted and thrown to the wayside for long because of something he couldn't help. For his father for having to endure the roles he played, and for putting himself in danger all the time. He cried for Draco for a lot of reasons; for what Draco had also had endured in his life with Lucius, for believing in Harry even when he hadn't believed in himself, for loving him, and mainly just because he was Draco. He remembered the day, almost two months ago now, in which he had confronted Draco right here in this place, how Draco had told him things that had made him think. His mind heard the ghostly whispers of that fated phrase Draco had asked him *'...Tell me something...what is it the great Harry Potter doesn't have by now that he couldn't just snap his fingers and get?...'*
Harry knew that back then he really didn't have the full answers to that question, but he did now. Drying his tears he thought long on hard on that phrase whilst watching the sun slowly dip down past the horizon heralding the evening. As he watched the sun go down he realised now how foolish he had been to run, it's just that he was very good at running it seemed when the chips fell haphazardly. He was always running from something it seemed, whether it was running away from the Dursleys (though he refused to justify that running away as anything but a good idea), or from knowing the 'truth' because he simply didn't want to deal with it, or sometimes just running for the sport of 'running away'. Not having to deal with life had become almost a mantra for him and he regretted that highly now.
He knew now what it really was that the great 'Harry Potter' could never have that he as 'Harry' could...true happiness. The happiness that he had always envied with Ron and Hermione, the happiness that would make him complete, loved, needed, without the stigmas and the bowing and scraping for his attentions. That was one thing he had liked about his two best friends, they didn't do that with him, even when he had been 'Harry Potter'. They simply took him as 'Harry', just 'Harry' and nothing else, face value. They had their good days and bad days, just like all friends, but in the end they stuck together no matter what.
Harry knew that his relationship with Draco would take some doing, but he somewhat realised that his fears were probably groundless most likely. Just as long ago, there were some things you just couldn't share without ending up liking each other, and though this time it was his loving Draco Malfoy and not wrestling a twelve foot mountain troll, he had a pretty good idea it wouldn't be much different. They had seen each other through thick and thin over the past six years, and Harry doubted his friends would stand in the way of his happiness, because that's simply what true blue friends do for each other.
He was so caught up in his thoughts that he didn't even realize someone had sat down next to him on the bleacher, though he was reluctant yet to turn away from watching the last of the sun's rays climb back down the horizon. He knew who it was next to him though, and really he didn't mind. If anyone was going to come after him, Harry supposed this was probably person for the job of doing that. The person next to him now seemed to understand that, and just sat there waiting and watching as well, and Harry knew the person was waiting for him to make the first move.
'I'm sorry,' he said after a few more minutes, still not turning to face the person.

'For what, Harry?' the person asked curiously.
'For running away like I did, just like I always do. It's no wonder the hat wanted to put me into Slytherin, I make a lousy Gryffindor half the time,' Harry sighed.
The person chuckled and shook his head. 'It's not who we are that is more important in life, Harry, it's what we choose to do with that life that's important. Running away sometimes is better than staying to face the music. It gives us time to think and plan. Call it perhaps not running away even, but a strategic withdrawal, regrouping to face the next day and the next set of encounters stronger then before.'
Harry thought on that a moment. 'I suppose I never thought of it that way, I'm just so used to just running and not looking back. Funny though...I was so tired of having to make 'choices', to be what everyone wanted me to be as 'Harry Potter'...yet...as 'Harry' I have even more choices, and not a clue what to do about making them.'
'Do you remember what I told you back in your second year when we were discussing Tom Riddle?'
Harry thought a moment then nodded. 'You said something about 'It is out choices that show us what we truly are, far more than our abilities', was that it?' he asked and turned to face the person next to him questioningly.
Dumbledore looked at Harry a moment, then nodded slowly. 'Harry, life is comprised of nothing *but* choices, no matter *who* you are or *what* your name is. Whether it's picking out your favourite pair of trousers for the day, or in deciding what last name you want to bear, that is just a part of life's choices. Tears and running is only but a temporary solution, though needed at times I admit, but never-the-less, only temporary.'
'Why *me* though? Why am I the one that had to be so 'special'? Why couldn't it have been someone else so the only choices I would have in life were what type of trousers to wear or what I wanted to eat for supper?' Harry asked bitterly.
'That is a question I cannot answer, Harry. Some people are just meant to be more 'special' than others, for whatever reasons the Fates decree. Again though, it's what they choose to do with being 'special' that makes the difference. A king does not asked to be born a king, but he makes the best of what job he's been given. Just as a pauper does not asked to be born poor, but he makes the best of what he has.'
'So you're saying that's what I need to do as well then. I certainly didn't ask to do what I did all those years ago, and it's certainly made my life hell since then hasn't it,' Harry sighed. 'Why did you send me away to the Dursleys and from the wizarding world, Professor?'
Dumbledore looked at Harry sadly for a moment, then sighed. 'A lot of reasons, Harry, you can say that was part of one of my choices back then. You had done our world a great service at the time, but I didn't want you to grow up being conceited and egotistical because of something you had no memory of doing. Personally though you may not want to hear it, I think you have come away from your experiences far better off than had you stayed in this world.'
Harry wasn't sure what to think on that, and for a few minutes he reflected on his life up till this point. True the Dursleys had been horrible to him, but in the same token he wondered if had he stayed in the wizarding world...gods forbid maybe he would have ended up like Gilderoy Lockhart or something. 'When you put it that way, I guess I'm glad I didn't know who I was...or rather...what I'd done until Hagrid came and got me.'
'You are an exceptional young man, Harry, always remember that. It's not the name you have that makes you who are you, but rather who you are that makes the name. Whether you are 'Harry

Potter', 'Harry Snape', or just 'Harry', it really doesn't matter. What is in your heart and soul, what you believe in makes up who you are . You are loved no matter what name you bear, by your father, your 'family', your friends...and Draco, and I guarantee you that not one of them truly cares what name you use.' Dumbledore said with a smile.
Harry smiled back and nodded. 'You're right, I'm stupid to think a name is going to really matter. Just like Draco, I mean everyone always expects a Malfoy to be the way they are, but Draco isn't that way. He can be a right pain sometimes, but I reckon so can we all at times. We hated each other for so long because he's a Slytherin and I'm a Gryffindor...names of houses dived us, made us hate each other,' Harry said quietly.
'Harry, you are an heir of Slytherin that chose to reside in the House of Gryffindor. Tell me, do you think the name really matters in the end? You have the qualities of both houses, no question there. The cunning ambitions of a Slytherin, and the courageous nobility of a Gryffindor, a rare mix, but you manage to use them all well. You made the choice to go to Gryffindor. Without even knowing why that was back then, you chose the side of light over dark, one of the hardest choices a person can make.' Dumbledore said quietly.
'Does a person always have to be judged as being 'light' or 'dark' though? Is there ever a balance inbetween? I mean, I want to do what's right, whenever I can, but sometimes...even before I knew about all of this, who I was and all...I know I have that darker side. Sometimes I have to fight it so hard not to let it get the better of me, sometimes it does, and I get so afraid,' Harry said quietly.
'We all have a dark side, some more than others. That has nothing to do with blood-lines or anything else, but just because that's human nature. Humans are a funny breed, Harry, prone to angers, jealousies, hatreds and fears, and there is nothing we can really do to stop that. Some take that to the extreme, like in Voldemort's case, where he has allowed all that was good in him to be destroyed for the evil. But not all of his servants have done so.'
'You mean like my father,' Harry said.
Dumbledore nodded. 'He had a very dark side to him long ago, and like you he also had to make his choices. He chose the side of light, redemption for his actions, even though he knew the blood of those he killed would be on his hands forever. Even though he has turned away from the dark, he still struggles with it daily, but something keeps him from giving in.'
'What?'
'Love, Harry. The love that Remus and Sirius have for him, and that he has for them, and now your love as well. Love can cause us to do strange things, Harry, in can heal or wound, start wars or end them. Love is a giddy thing, and we have no control over what it can do to us,' Dumbledore said quietly.
'You mean like make a person turn to the side of darkness,' Harry said bitterly.
'Yes indeed it can, it can make us blind, angry and want revenge without knowing even why. It can make a person easier to be seduced by the dark because all hope has been denied, because it's easier to be in pain and torment then to wish for what can never be. When one is weaker to begin with, it becomes all too easy to get submerged into bitter hatreds,' Dumbledore said.
'What was Pettigrew like as a kid, Professor?' Harry asked suddenly. He didn't know why, but somehow at the moment it seemed very relevant.
'Most unlike he is now, yet in away, very much so like he is now. He was never a popular child, too quiet and more studious than anything. When the 'Marauders' took him under their wing it helped a little, but they didn't always treat him all that good even then. Oh they were great

friends don't get me wrong, but Peter was always the one who got the short end of the stick I suppose.'
'How so?' Harry asked curiously.
'Sirius has never told you about *his* family life, has he,' Dumbledore said thoughtfully. Not a question, more like a passing comment.
Harry shook his head. 'No, he's never told me anything. I tried to ask him once, he avoided it like the plague. The only thing he did tell me was they were ahh...well they didn't get along. Why, is it important?'
'In a way yes, it is to understand what happened back then. I suppose it isn't my place to dredge up the past, but I'm sure that in this case he would forgive me. Sirius wasn't exactly what everyone thought he was, which is where it all began,' Dumbledore said.
'Where what all began?' Harry asked puzzled.
'I believe it was sixth-year when things for Sirius started to take a downward note. James and Lily had started seeing each other, Remus was with Severus for a while as you know, and Sirius I'm afraid started to feel quite out of the loop. Peter was also seeing someone, though he didn't know at the time, and Sirius was suddenly left to his own devices, which was not a good thing. Sirius you see is descended of family of all Slytherin House members, something that bothers him greatly to this day,' Dumbledore said sadly.
'S-Slytherins? Sirius? No way...not Sirius! He's a Marauder!' Harry exclaimed in shock.
'Marauder he may have been, but he was a Slytherin by birth and nature, Harry. In fact he could have given Severus a run for his money in what dark arts Sirius Black knew when he arrived at Hogwarts. What made him different however, was that like you he chose to go to Gryffindor, and act of courage in fighting his family over the ambition of being like them. However, despite the fact he did go to Gryffindor, he still had all the traits of a Slytherin, and by sixth-year those colours showed all too well I'm afraid.'
'You mean when he tried to kill my dad right?' Harry asked.
Dumbledore nodded sadly. 'Amongst other things, yes. That was not the only sign that Sirius was allowing himself to grow darker in his outlook. The fact that he lied to me about several other things, such as his animagus abilities, showed his Slytherin traits to deceive, and his ability to pull pranks was more slyness than bravery. I suppose he thought things would be easy once he got one Slytherin out of the way of his friends grasp, but that wasn't the case. You see, just as Sirius had found out about Remus and Severus in sixth-year, in seventh-year he found out that Peter had been sneaking off for the past year to meet up with Narcissa Pembroke, a seventh-year Slytherin girl. Sirius was beyond angry for some reason, I'm not sure if anyone even know why that was.'
'Why would get so angry though if he didn't even like Pettigrew?' Harry asked puzzled.
'It wasn't Peter he was truly angry with more than it was Narcissa I think. I found out later on that Sirius confronted her one day, told her to break it off with Peter if she knew what was good for her, telling her to keep her oh what was those words...ah yes...'her slimy, Slytherin paws' off him. Also something to the effect that Slytherin's would never been good enough for the likes of a Gryffindor, and I do believe I heard wind of him saying they were nothing more than a group of 'obnoxious, evil, prats', or something to that effect,' Dumbledore said with a slight sniff.
Harry chuckled. 'Yup, sounds like Sirius all right. I guess Sirius had good reason though to hate Slytherins, seeing as how I do know how much he hated his family. Though he never said why that was, now that I know, it's no wonder. Talk 'bout being a hypocrite now though eh? He's in

love with my dad, that must have really stuck him for a long time I bet,' he grinned.
'Yes, Sirius had a deep hatred for Slytherins, as well as a deep protectiveness for his friends and those he thought needed looking after, which is why he took Peter under is wing. Peter was always the odd boy out so to speak, always desperately wanting to belong somewhere, and I'm sorry to say because of that it make him very 'usable' by people like Sirius and James. Peter back then was a very good natured soul, and very eager to please his new friends,' Dumbledore said.
'Isn't that what friends do though?' Harry asked.
'Yes, but Sirius abused that to an extent. Whilst he and James would go off to Quidditch practice or wherever they wanted to go, Peter was the one whom they got to do their homework, to stand guard for them during their 'escapades', and unfortunately to take the blame for them quite a bit I'm afraid. Because of that we were all rather sharp with Peter back then, we hoped it would help him to stand up for himself, but sadly it drew him into needing 'acceptance' from his friends more and more. Or from anyone that was, and he found true acceptance in Narcissa.'
'Wow, I guess...well...I mean I didn't think they would do something like that. Hate to say it but...in way it reminds me of Ron and me, we were always running off on Hermione and letting her pick up our homework slack. Remind me not to do that again,' he said with a weak smile.
Dumbledore chuckled and shook his head. 'On the topic of Ms. Granger falling into the same traps young Peter did, I dare say that will never happen. She's far too headstrong and clever to allow it to happen.'
Harry did laugh then and nodded. 'That she is. I don't get it though, why was Sirius so angry with Pettigrew for liking Mrs. Malfoy? If he was happy, why did Sirius want to stop it, even if she was a Slytherin?'
'Part of it was pure selfishness amongst the other things, because when Peter became truly enamoured of Narcissa by seventh-year, he was no longer there as much for the others. They were forced to start doing their own work, and Sirius resented that quite a bit. Unfortunately the little chat Sirius had with Narcissa that day only made things worse,' Dumbledore said.
'How?'
'She told Peter what his 'friend' had said, and Peter confronted Sirius about it. For once he did stand up for himself, and tore into Sirius with a vengeance. Oh not with fists or wands, Peter was never a very good dueller, but with words and intent. Peter was a very clever himself, not quite a match for Ms. Granger, but he could certainly hold his own against her. He may have been a Marauder and mischief maker at times, but he preferred to read and play chess more than not, a very well read young man. I think he could probably tie with Hermione for who has read *Hogwarts: A History* the most if you want the truth,' Dumbledore chuckled.
'Egads, and here I thought Hermione was a lone breed in that,' Harry grinned. 'I just don't see how a person like that though could end up on the wrong side. It makes no sense, even if he was rejected by Mrs. Malfoy.'
'That was only the final straw in the mixture, Harry. The constant teasing and torments from Sirius and James at school, the way Sirius treated him after their confrontation about the fact Peter would not give up seeing Narcissa, the teases he had to endure as well by being a pure-blood with little money, all added up. Peter's parents also were not easy on him, they were disappointed in him for becoming a Gryffindor, and not a Ravenclaw as they, as well as most of the Pettigrews, had been. He was constantly hounded on all ends, and when Narcissa had no choice but to reject him, he finally broke, and turned to the one person who he thought would not reject or torment him,' Dumbledore said sadly.

'Voldemort,' Harry said quietly.
Dumbledore nodded. 'Yes, sadly that was indeed what happened. Up until then he managed to deal with the rest in fashion, ignoring what he could, or just accepting the ribbing and moving on. The loss of his love though, his hopes and dreams shattered at his feet, can make any man do things they don't even realize they *are* doing.'
Harry started at that and gave it a few moments thought. 'You think he really went over to Voldemort's side unawares?' he asked skeptically.
'Not exactly, he was completely aware of who Voldemort was, I'm not saying that he didn't know. What I am saying however, is that he didn't go over perhaps quite as knowing as you think he did. When a person loses all their hope in themselves, there is a deep void left, one that is easier to be filled by corruption more than anything else. Voldemort is very good at making promises, Harry, of making people think things they normally wouldn't. Even you have been the victim of his empty promises if I remember correctly,' Dumbledore said giving Harry a knowing look.
Harry sighed and nodded his head, knowing what Dumbledore was saying was true. There had been times that he himself had almost been taken in by Voldemort's promises, like the time back in his first-year. Though it was only a brief moment, he had wondered what it would it would have been like to have just given in and let the dark win, after all he was only eleven and facing the most feared man in the entire world. Though of course he didn't know that he would keep having to face Voldemort year in and year out since then nearly, but the fact was he knew his own dark side had more than a few times slipped through the cracks when face to face with his archenemy. He had survived against Voldemort but he also knew he could just as easily have been manipulated. He knew then that if he himself with all that he had faced could still be corruptible like that, then what chance did a person like Peter Pettigrew ever have against him? Harry didn't have to think of the answer to that, it was plain as day - none.
'Do...do you think that if Pettigrew were to find out that Mrs. Malfoy still loved him that...that he would turn back from the dark?' Harry asked hesitantly.
Dumbledore turned and looked at Harry intently, a deep blue eyed gaze that Harry felt swept up in. '*At Gorchefygu Anhoffter Ond Yr Cyfoeth Cariad Brydiau Bod Chwithau Achubiaeth,'* Do you remember?' he asked softly.
Harry nodded, remembering that phrase all too well. *To Overcome Hatred Only The Power Of Love Will Be Your Salvation*, which meant that if his father and Sirius could overcome their hatreds, fears and angers, then perhaps love could also still save Peter Pettigrew. 'He killed mum though, he betrayed them...can I really forgive him?' he said thinking out loud.
'Why didn't you let Remus and Sirius kill him that day in the Shack, Harry?' Dumbledore queried.
'I don't really know honestly, I guess...I didn't want anyone else to die anymore. It wasn't going to bring her back, it wasn't going to solve anything by killing him, just pointless revenge. I didn't want Sirius and Remus to go to Azkaban for something so stupid as that,' Harry sighed.
'Which again makes you very different than Voldemort, he would have shown no mercy, neither to friend nor enemy. You share a bond with Peter Pettigrew for saving his life that way, Harry, perhaps you can use that to your advantage in more ways than one now.'
'How? He, like everyone else, thinks I'm dead. I don't see how that would be of much use now,' Harry said.
'If you had the chance to save someone's soul, even an enemy's soul...would you take it?' Dumbledore asked curiously.

Harry snorted. 'Not Voldemort.'
'Ah, but Tom Riddle was once a person too, Harry. You only got to see one small part of his past, but there was much more to young Tom Riddle than you know.'
'Whatever it was, I'm sure I could care less,' Harry said bitterly.
'If you had the chance to save him though, would you take it?' Dumbledore asked.
Harry thought on that a moment, not sure how to respond since the biting words he was going to say suddenly weren't there. 'I don't know, Professor, I really don't. I do know I'm tired of the bloodshed, of the death and the fear that's going on round me. Tired of losing people I care about like Cedric, Dean, Seamus, and my mum. I think I know what you're saying though, Professor. If I had the chance to save Pettigrew...would I do it, right?' he asked.
'If he were here before you now, Harry, would you still wish for his death...or would you want to restore the hope he once had for life, restore the belief that love could very well be his salvation yet. Which would you choose to offer him?' Dumbledore said.
Harry looked back over at where they sun had now finally set, thinking on that for a few minutes. This really just wasn't about Peter Pettigrew, he knew that, though it wasn't being said exactly. This was about making choices in general, decisions that would affect everything he knew, believed in, new territory that had never been crossed before. He knew that this decision would not rest on him as 'Harry Potter the Boy Who Lived or rather Had Died', but as just simply 'Harry'. A 'Harry' that was free to make a decision without the whole world knowing it, without being judged by anyone except himself.
Turning back to Dumbledore he looked him in the eyes and said, 'I would choose...love...Professor, because without love, there *is* no hope. My father found love after years of hatred and torment, and for everything he had done as a Death Eater, Sirius and Remus still offered him their love as well. They saved him and gave him back his hopes and dreams. I don't want anymore suffering, Professor Dumbledore, it's not worth it now, there's enough to worry about with Voldemort still out there yet.'
'Then you would save him,' Dumbledore said softly.
Harry nodded. 'I would..though I don't know how I can possible do it. You know dad, Remus and Sirius aren't going be happy about this, Professor. And I don't even know what Draco's going to think about it all, I mean, this is *his* mum, not mine. I really shouldn't be the one to make this decision, at least not without asking Draco,' Harry said with a sigh.
'Well it's about time you decided to ask what *I* would think, Harry. Honestly, you really do take forever to make up your mind on things, don't you!' a voice said from behind Harry causing him to nearly jump out of the bleachers.
Turning round quickly he didn't see anything for a moment, then he heard the rustle of cloth and he knew what was going on. Shaking his head he muttered, 'Aren't you supposed to be resting or something instead of scaring me half to death?'
'What, and be deprived of seeing you die a second time? Nope, sorry, but the next time you do die, Harry, I intend to be there. Just try and get rid of me,' Draco said now coming out from underneath the cloak with a grin.
'You're impossible you know that?' he said rolling his eyes, though they clearly showed just how much he loved the silver haired boy before him.
'Nope, I'm in love, there's a huge difference, Harry,' Draco laughed and slid down next to Harry on the lower bleacher, putting his arm round Harry's waist. 'Nice cloak by the by, so this how you only had half a body back in third-year eh?'

Harry laughed and nodded, scooting over so he was as close to Draco as he could get and wrapped his own arm round Draco's shoulders. 'Yeah, it was James's cloak,' Harry said, then thought of something and turned to Dumbledore. 'Why did you give it to *me* though if it was his?'
'Because James wanted *you* to have it, Harry. Though you were not his son he did care for you very much. I suppose in a way he was hoping you would 'put it to good use', just as he had done in his day,' Dumbledore said with a twinkle in his eyes.
Harry grinned. 'So I have, haven't I. I did...do...still care about him, I mean he was pretty accepting of the whole thing with what happened between mum and dad. I think that explains though why my Patronus is a stag because I respect him so much, even if I did end up turning into a - ' Harry began to say but cut himself off quickly.
Dumbledore chuckled and nodded at Harry. 'I've been aware of your ahh, extracurricular activities, for a while now, Harry. Don't worry though, that aspect of yourself will not get recorded, at least not by *me*,' he said with a twinkle.
'Harry? What does he mean by that?' Draco asked now curious.
'You *knew*?' Harry asked in shock, ignoring Draco for the moment. 'You didn't know about them...but you knew about *us*? How?'
Dumbledore shrugged. 'I suppose you can say once bitten, twice shy, Harry. I may have missed it then when *they* became what they did, but then they were a bit more...oh...discreet about it lets just say. I was expecting the three of you to try such a thing anyway once you met Remus and Sirius, and of course, you did,' he said simply.
'Haaarry! What is he talking about?' Draco cut in again, a bit miffed that he was being ignored.
'Err...sorry, Draco, just that...I guess I can tell you since, well in view of things. Ron, Hermione and I...err...well...that is...we've been working on something since fourth year, and finally managed to do it at the end of last term,' Harry said hesitantly.
'Do what?' Draco asked confused.
Harry looked over at Dumbledore who nodded slightly to him, then he stood up and walked down a few planks in the bleachers, so he was looking up at them both. 'Do...this...' he said, then moments later Harry was gone, and something else took his place.
What was facing Draco now made him cringe, even though he knew it was Harry he was really looking at. 'H-Harry?' he said hesitantly, keeping his distance for the meantime. What he was seeing now was a snake, but nothing like he'd ever seen, and no matter which way he looked at it, the snake looked pretty mean.
The snake heard Draco speak and it came up to him, and Draco saw just how big the thing really was. At least fifteen feet in length, and at least a foot in width as well. At first glance he had thought the snake was black, but as the dying rays of light hit the scales Draco could see many colours swirling round. There were blues, reds, purples, even some gold and silver mixed in. As the snake came up and extended itself before Draco he could see the snakes eyes were as black as night, so unlike the emerald green and Draco thought that surprising actually. He thought when people became an animagus certain traits found their way into the animals, but in Harry's case, neither his eyes, nor even his scar were visible.
The snake just sat there looking into Draco's eyes, and suddenly Draco began to feel calm, relaxed, content even, as if he hadn't a care in the world. His defenses were dropping, and he became almost lackadaisical, even a bit warm and sleepy. The next thing he knew Harry was back to his normal self, and he was grinning at Draco though Draco didn't understand why.
'What...what happened?' he said rubbing his eyes and feeling like he'd been under some sort of

sleeping spell again.
Harry turned to Dumbledore then, the same silly grin still on his face. 'Draco's the first person I tested that on, wasn't sure it would work. Hermione wouldn't let me test it on her or Ron for some reason, she was pretty adamant on that,' he said chuckling.
'Test what? Harry, what'd you do?' Draco demanded, and turned to Dumbledore who was smiling himself for some reason and nodding at Harry.
Before Harry could respond however someone flew up to them at breakneck speed on a broom, stopping right in front of them with, a very agitated rider on the handle. 'Albus, thank Merlin I've found you!
'Dad? Dad what's wrong?' Harry said worriedly at seeing how upset his father was, not to mention the fact he looked like death had just warmed over.
'The school's under attack, *that's* what's wrong! Somehow they found a weak spot and dug below the wards, dammit I never thought they'd go *underneath* them!' Severus said bitterly.
'Severus calm down, you *couldn't* have known that this was going to happen. It's not *your* fault,' Albus said.
'I *knew* something was up though, I could *feel* it, but I've been so distracted by everything lately that I - ' he began but Dumbledore cut him off.
'Enough, Severus. I will *not* say it again, this is not *your* fault. Now, are the students and Narcissa safe?' Albus said in a firm voice.
'The students are fine, they haven't hurt them...yet anyway. Narcy is still in the hidden ward, along with Granger and Weasley. They managed to get away from the Death Eaters that have taken Gryffindor Tower hostage and alert us of what was happening. The things is Remus and Sirius had just returned as well, and Granger and Weasley said they saw him being manhandled into the Gryffindor Tower. As for Sirius...'
'What about Sirius?' Harry asked sharply.
Severus's lips closed into a thin line, pain clearly on his face. 'Sirius is...is...look, you just have to come back now Albus, we've got do something anyway. I can't stay though, I can't let them find out - damn too late!' he said as a hex flew over his head and shouts from below were heard.
Severus muttered a few words and the broom took off at a dizzying speed, sailing over the Forbidden Forest faster than Harry had ever seen a broom fly.
'Draco, Harry, under the cloak, *now*!' Dumbledore said sharply as he watched Severus leave, and Harry and Draco didn't need to be told twice. Moments later they watched as a group of Death Eaters swarmed onto the pitch, their voices raised in confusion.
'I *know* I just saw them, where'd they go?' someone said angrily.
'That was Snape on that broom, that double-crossing, two timing traitor! Our Master will hear of this!' someone else spat out. For a few more minutes the four people canvassed out the area, thankfully not bothering to check the stands and Harry and Draco from under the cloak watched them becoming frustrated. Harry assumed Dumbledore had his own way of going invisible, and was really sure of that after he remembered something from back in his first year Dumbledore had told him.
'Hey, what do you think you're doing out here you lot?' a new voice said coming onto the pitch, one that was easily recognisable. It was getting darker now but Harry had no problem seeing who it was that was attached to that voice, he'd know him anywhere.
'Got a problem with us being out here, *munchkin*?' one of the men sneered and looked down nastily at the newcomer.

The man just looked at his opponent and shook his head, a small smirk on his face. 'You wouldn't want His Lordship to know you've been threatening *me*, now would you, Crabbe? Perhaps I should tell him how *you* left your post in the Great Hall to go on wild goose chases, instead of doing as ordered,' the man said in a steeled voice.
Crabbe didn't say anything but he did back down, and with a glare at the newcomer he turned on his heel and headed back towards the school in a huff. 'We saw Snape if you must know, and he wasn't on *our* side...if you know what I mean,' Crabbe then called back over his shoulder.
'Crabbe's right, it was Snape all right, we saw those black robes of his clear as day flying in the wind. We also thought we saw Dumbledore and two kids out here, one of 'em looked like Lucius's son,' another man said now.
The newcomer looked round a moment with a scowl on his face, then oddly enough his gaze stopped for a moment on the spot where Harry, Draco and Dumbledore were sitting, though he gave no indication of it. Turning back to the man he said with a sneer, 'Well maybe you were all seeing things, Nott, 'cause I don't see *anyone* round here. As for Snape, you just leave that to me, I'll take care of *him*...myself. Meanwhile, you lot get back up to the Great Hall, and *don't* let me catch you moving again. You will wait for further orders from *me*, understood?'
'Fine, but it *was* Snape and Lucius's kid, I'm *sure* of it,' Nott said shaking his head, and then he and the two other men who'd been with him headed back up the castle, not even bothering to look back.
The man who had stayed behind just watched until he was sure the people he'd sent back to the school were long gone, and no one else was coming back. With a visible sigh he shook his head, then turned back towards the bleachers, a determined look on his face. Walking towards where Harry, Draco and Dumbledore were sitting silently he stopped roughly ten feet away, sniffing the air a moment. Crossing one of his arms across his chest as if he was hugging himself he then looked directly at where everyone was sitting. In a quiet voice laced with surprising sadness the man said, 'I think it's time we had a little talk...Harry...'

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Chapter: 16

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

~~Chapter Sixteen: A Chance To Change The Future~~

Harry wasn't sure how the man below him had known he was there, but the fact was he did. He felt Draco grab onto his arm worriedly, and reached up to squeeze Draco's hand gently letting him know it was all right, and then turned to look at Dumbledore. With a little nod from him Harry made his decision, and came out from underneath the cloak, making sure that Draco was still hidden. He eyed the man before him wearily a moment, then nodded at him. 'Pettigrew. How did you know?' he asked quietly.
Peter looked at Harry oddly a moment, then actually gave him a slight grin. 'Wizard's bond, Harry, I've known all along you weren't dead. If you had truly been dead I wouldn't still feel the bond we share.'
'Oh, the bond, I'd forgotten about that actually,' Harry said sheepishly.
'You had every right to considering things,' Peter said.
'What do you want, Pettigrew? What's going on?' Harry demanded now.
Peter sighed then walked a bit further over and sat down a few bleachers below Harry, looking up at him speculatively. 'Aren't you in the least bit curious why I haven't revealed to anyone the fact that Harry Potter is alive?' he asked.
Harry shrugged. 'Ask me if I care. Besides, 'Harry Potter' isn't alive.'
'Oh? You look pretty solid for a ghost, Harry,' Peter said with a smirk.
Harry scowled. 'I'm not a ghost you idiot.'
'Hmm, I guess Severus told you the truth then?' Peter asked simply.
Harry stared at Peter. 'I don't know what you're talking about, Pettigrew. My-Severus has told me nothing,' he said coldly.
Peter chuckled. 'That's why you call him 'Severus'? Or was that the start of saying 'my father'? And I'm not an idiot, I knew all along that James wasn't your real father.'
Harry blinked, unsure if this was some sort of trap or not. 'What makes you think that?'
Peter didn't answer right away, instead he sat there and looked out over the pitch for a few moments. 'When we were kids I used to sit right here too and watch them all during practise. You should have seen James, he was incredible up there, and Sirius, you couldn't touch the 'Black Beater' as he was fond of calling himself. I was never one much for Quidditch persay, a bit too heavy for a broom, like Longbottom. Brooms and myself didn't mix, but I loved to watch it. Didn't get to often because they always dropped their homework on me right before practise, but I caught what I could. James sometimes would say flying was better than sex, it was a freedom up there that you couldn't find out earth. A simplicity...just you, the broom and the wind.'
'Flying is pretty good, I agree. Why'd you let them do that to you though? Why not stand up for yourself?' Harry asked curiously.
Peter shrugged. 'My parents were Ravenclaws you know, well maybe you don't, but they were. Generations of them really, I should have been one, but I didn't want to be. I'd already met James and Sirius on the train coming here, and they were so nice, they didn't treat me like the others. Everyone teased me because all I was to them was a 'fat kid who had little potential.' James and Sirius didn't though, they stuck up for me right on the train, some Slytherins were teasing me and they shooed them off. When I saw Sirius was going into Gryffindor, I figured James would too,

so I asked to go there instead of Ravenclaw. But I was coward, Harry. I wasn't noble or brave or courageous, I was just an afraid little boy pretending to be something he wasn't,' Peter said quietly.
'But in the end they hurt you...didn't they,' Harry said.
Peter sighed and nodded. 'Betrayed me more than any Slytherin did. Sirius found out something about me in my seventh-year, and he and I went rounds on it. James didn't care honestly, he was too busy kissing your mum all day long amongst other things to even notice, but Sirius did. He's got a pretty dark side himself you know,' Peter said.
Harry nodded. 'Yeah, so I'm finding out lately. In fact, I'm finding out a lot of things lately I wish I hadn't,' he muttered. 'How'd you know about James not being my father though?' he asked then, figuring this wasn't a trap, Peter seemed to be actually sincere in his words, and Dumbledore and Draco were still sitting there so if there was trouble he'd be safe at least.
Peter looked at Harry oddly a moment, then turned back to look at the pitch. 'Narcissa's here now, isn't she, Harry,' he asked quietly.
'Why do you want to know? Are you going to hurt her?' Harry asked.
Peter shook his head sadly. 'No, Harry, I could never hurt her. She hurt me more than Sirius, more than even Voldemort ever could, but I would never hurt her. I just wanted to know, that's all.'
'She may be here, I don't know, I ran out here a while ago,' Harry lied. 'Are you avoiding my question, Pettigrew?'
Peter shook his head and looked back at the castle, a strange look in his eyes. 'No, I'm not, Harry, just reflecting that's all. Yes, I knew about James not being your real father, that Severus was, though none of them knew I knew at the time. I was...well...collecting information you could say - '
'For Voldemort you mean,' Harry said bitterly.
Peter sighed and nodded. 'Yes, for Voldemort. Sirius was right, for over a year before they died I'd been passing information to the Death Eaters in secret. I didn't use my real name, and I used a cover, a glamourine charm so I wouldn't get seen for myself. Lily was very good at those, and in her innocence I asked her to teach it to me, and she did of course. Of everyone, she was always the kindest to me back then, at that point anyway.'
'Yet you turned her in! You killed her! She's dead because of you, they both are!' Harry said angrily, his eyes blazing black with green rings.
'I did what I had to do, Harry! It was different back then, I was different, you don't the whole story, the whole truth. I loved Lily like a sister, I adored her, it sickened me when I had to 'spy' on them for Voldemort. Once again I was being used but I had my reasons behind it. However, that's how I found out about you, that you were Severus's son, not James. I overheard James and Sirius talking soon after you were born, I snuck into the house in my animagus form and listened to them. They were fighting, screaming at each other, Sirius...he...' Peter trailed off, a stricken look on his face.
'He what?' Harry asked, his anger still focused, but lessening slightly.
'Sirius he...he told James to get rid of you. That you were bad luck, a son of a Death Eater, a good for nothing kid. He said...he told James you would bring down the house of Gryffindor, that James would be ruined by giving you his name and appearance. That it would only bring trouble,' Peter said in a harsh, edged voice.
Harry blinked a moment and stared at Peter. 'He...Sirius...he said that?' he asked skeptically.

Peter nodded slowly. 'Yes, Harry, he did. At first Sirius wanted nothing to do with you, he hated you because you were Severus's son, his enemy's son. It didn't matter that Severus had saved Lily's life, or that you were half Lily's, the fact remained you were a child of evil as far as he saw it. He wanted you dead,' Peter said sorrowfully.
'I don't believe it...I...I don't want to believe it...' Harry said faltering, tears coming to his eyes.
'It's true, all of it. Peter's right on that much,' a new voice cut in now from behind them, one laced with bitterness and pain.
Harry jumped and turned round quickly, a stricken look in his eyes. 'Sirius?' he asked hesitantly as he watched the other man sit down hard on the bleachers. 'You're hurt?'
Sirius waved him off. 'Don't worry 'bout me kid, I'll be fine. Feel like I've wrestled a ruddy troll, but I'll live,' he said thickly then turned to Peter. 'Hullo, Pete, not dead yet I see, pity,' he scowled.
'Stop playing Mr. High-And-Mighty, Sirius, you're not dead yet yourself I see,' Peter shot back.
'Nice comeback, Voldemort's not one much for intellectual conversation I take it?' Sirius muttered.
'Any more than you ever were, Sirius,' Peter said smugly.
'Will you two both shut up already?' Harry said cutting into the conversation, then turned to look at Sirius accusingly. 'You wanted me dead? Is that right?'
Sirius looked back at Harry with a pained look in his eyes and he sighed and slowly nodded. 'Sorry to say it, Harry, but yeah, I did want you dead for a bit there. Oh don't worry, I wouldn't have dared try anything funny mind you, but when I found out you weren't James's kid, I blew up pretty badly. I couldn't believe James would even let you stay in the family home of Godric Gryffindor knowing you were a Slytherin heir.'
'My mum was a Slytherin heir incase you've forgotten,' Harry said bitterly. 'You didn't want her dead now did you.'
'You're mum was the loveliest person I knew, Harry, and for the Slytherin blood in her, she was all Gryffindor till the day she died,' Sirius said darkly. 'You however, were the son of a Death Eater, how was I to know that you'd end up more like Lils? I couldn't be sure, none of us were really. Lily heard us arguing though and well...'
'Well what? You told her to dump me in the nearest lake? That you'd take me out for a ride on your motorbike then chuck me off at the nearest ocean?' Harry spat out.
'NO! No, Harry, of course not!' Sirius said shocked that Harry would even say such a thing.
'Harry, listen to me, I didn't know what you were going to turn out as, but Lily...sweet, dearest, Lily, she did somehow. She swore to me that you'd turn out just fine, and so would Severus. Lily stunk at Divinations, but at that moment she was more sure of yours and Severus's future than ever. How could I not believe her?' Sirius said with a deep sigh. 'I loved your mum, well, not in the ah...literal sense, but she was my family in all respects, Harry. If she said you'd turn out right, then I believe her. And you did, Harry boy, you did.'
'Just like Severus did, Sirius?' Peter said quietly. 'At least some of us got to be happy in the end now, didn't they. Even if they did end up with a...Slytherin.'
Sirius looked at Peter in surprise, then his face took on a look of sadness. 'You really loved her didn't you, Peter,' he asked quietly.
'What does it matter now, Sirius? She's Mrs. Malfoy now, you're sleeping with Severus and Remus, two for one, and poor, pathetic, little Peter gets nothing. Just like always,' Peter said in a dull, flat tone of voice.
'Even you didn't deserve that, Pettigrew...Peter...' Harry said quietly. 'What they did to you in

school was wrong. What Sirius did to you was wrong, he didn't have the right to tell you to stop seeing Mrs. Malfoy.'
'You...you know about that?' Peter asked in shock.
Harry nodded. 'Someone told me about it, yeah. Also how James, Sirius and Remus would leave you to do everything, how they made you always to be the fall person, taking the blame for them,' he said then turned to Sirius. 'How could you, Sirius? He was your friend! Friends are supposed to stick together, to be there for each other!'
'Will Ron and Hermione be there for you when you tell them about Draco?' Sirius shot back.
Harry bristled. 'Yes, they will be there! If they didn't leave me when they found out I was a Parselmouth, or when I found out Severus was my dad, why would they leave me because of Draco?' he asked. 'Just because he's a Slytherin? Or because he's a Malfoy? Or both? If you really think they'd leave me because of that, then you don't know what 'friendship' means, Sirius. Are you just pretending to love my dad as well because of who and what he is? Your 'enemy'?'
'No! I love Severus, you know I do, Harry! It's not that at all, please, let me speak here. When I was younger yes, I was a stupid git, a bitter, foolish kid who didn't know right from wrong. I've seen the error of my ways though, Harry. Twelve years in Azkaban gave me a hell of a long time to think things out, see where I went so wrong,' Sirius said sadly.
'What about Peter? Did you also think on how you hurt him? How you drove him to Voldemort?' Harry demanded.
'He didn't do that, Harry, Sirius wasn't the reason I did what I did,' Peter said.
'I was the start of it though, Peter, I know that now. What I did, what we all did to you back then...and what I did personally to her by my words...was wrong. Narcissa was the nicest of the lot, I knew that, but I was blinded by the fact she was still a Slytherin, and nothing would sway me off that. Pretty ironic now that I'm the one who ended up in the bed of a Slytherin, and an ex-Death Eater none-the-less,' he said with a humourless chuckle.
'So Severus really has switched sides then, I wasn't wholly sure, till you confirmed it that is,' Peter said thoughtfully.
'Err...' Harry said hesitantly. 'I don't think you should say anything anymore, Sirius. You're going to get my dad killed or something here.'
Peter snorted. 'Not by me, I can assure you of that. I don't want Severus dead, I never did. I never wanted anyone dead.'
'They why did you lead him to James and Lily? Why have them killed, Peter?' Sirius said angrily.
'Sirius, do you really think Voldemort was going to give up so easily? Do you?' Peter demanded and turned to face Sirius dead on. 'If it hadn't been me it would have been someone else. Actually, because of Remus's connections to Severus, Voldemort wanted to use him at first. I just happened to be in the way, I was angry because of what Narcy did to me, angry at you for how you treated me. Angry at the world, Sirius, for everything, I was blinded by that hatred, by fear. I wasn't even sure of what I was doing until I'd done it.'
'Peter I - ' Sirius began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.
'Peter, did you really not know what you were doing? Or did you really want to do it all? Betray everyone like that?' Harry asked.
Peter turned to look at Harry, a sad, wistful look in his eyes. 'I knew what I was doing, Harry, I knew I was going to hurt...have killed...two people that I had cared about. But like Sirius at the time, I was blinded. Blinded by emotions, too angry, too sad, too full of revenge against all of them for what had happened. Not just with Narcissa, but all of it. I went willingly, craving the

power to stop being the 'fat tagalong', but to this very day the guilt has also lived within me. I still have nightmares of the night Lily and James died...I was there you know...well you don't know that...but I was, in my animagus form. I thought I wanted to see them die...but...when it came down to it I wanted to die with them.'
'You should have, Peter,' Sirius scowled.
'You're right, I should have. I should have let him kill me instead of what I did, but tell me, Sirius, were you any less of a betrayer? Did you not try to kill Severus back then more than once?' Peter argued back.
'Wait, what do you mean more than once?' Harry asked puzzled.
'Hmph, the willow was only one time, the worst of it really. There were other times, and why was it, Sirius? Hmm? Never told him the truth did you, about your past,' Peter said coolly.
'You mean that his family was all Slytherins?' Harry asked then turned to look at Sirius. 'I know about that too.'
Sirius paled and then groaned. 'Who told you? Severus and Remy wouldn't have, that much I know,' he said.
'Doesn't matter who told me, I just know,' Harry said with a shrug.
'That's not all of it either, Harry. That's not why Sirius hated Slytherins as he does, his parents were evil, worked for Grindelwald even, but even that's not it, is it, Sirius,' Peter said heavily.
Sirius glared at Peter then looked back at Harry, a darkness in his eyes, and he sighed. 'He's right. There's another reason I didn't want him with Narcissa, a very big reason,' he said quietly.
'Why, Sirius?' Harry asked.
'You going to tell him the truth finally, Sirius? About damned time I say, you've had enough years to do it,' a new, crisp voice cut in causing all three men to turn round quickly to the pitch.
'Hello, Petey, long time no see. You're not looking very good these days...nothing like the sweet, adorable boy I once knew anyways...'
'Narcy,' Peter said in shock and for a moment he put his hand out as if to touch her, but drew it back quickly as if he was burned. 'You're...looking good...Mrs. Malfoy...' he said quietly, a mixture of emotions running through his voice and across his face.
Narcissa looked at Peter sadly for a moment, then turned and glared at Sirius. 'Have you told him yet?'
Sirius shook his head. 'It's not exactly as if the subject came up, Narcissa,' he said coldly. 'How did you get here? There's Death Eaters swarming the bloody school.'
Narcissa snorted and held up a shimmery piece of cloth. 'Thankfully I remembered where you all kept this, I thank you it came in handy,' she said and threw what could only be an invisibility cloak at Sirius.
'How did you get the password to our room?' Sirius asked astonished as he folded up the cloak.
'Severus gave it to me before he took off. He's all right?' she asked now worriedly.
'I don't know,' Sirius said with a fleeting pained grimace. 'I hope so.'
'My dad took off into the forest but I think he was hit or something by one of the Death Eaters that were here on the pitch. I hope he's all right too,' Harry said softly and looked out over to the forest seeing if maybe he could spot his father somehow.
'Severus is a survivor and a Slytherin, he'll be fine,' Peter said although his eyes were trained on Narcissa. 'Well, Mrs. Malfoy, what brings you here hmm? Come to see if I've killed off Harry or Sirius yet? Or if Voldemort's arrived yet?' he said icily.
'Drop it, Pete. I'm not 'Mrs. Malfoy' any longer, my son actually has seen to that. Speaking of

which, Draco? Are you all right my dragon?' she asked into the air worriedly.
Draco, who'd been watching this whole scene of course underneath Harry's cloak, sheepishly came out from underneath it as his mum called for him. 'All right, mum. I'm here. You all right?' he asked.
Narcissa walked up the bleachers and hugged him and nodded. 'All right, they can't scare me any longer, my little one. Only you can do that now,' she said with a chuckle. Turning back to Sirius however her eyes darkened. 'Well? Are you going to tell the boy or shall I?' she said coldly.
'You've spent too many years as a Malfoy, Narcy,' Sirius said, though oddly enough it wasn't mean sounding his words, not in tone anyway.
'I believe you're the one who saw to that now, weren't you. Now tell him, or I shall,' she said huffily.
'All right, all right, no need to scream at me woman!' Sirius mumbled, then turned to face Harry. 'You see, the real reason I didn't want Peter with Narcissa was - '
'Oi! You up ther', come quickly! I needs yer 'elp!' Hagrid called out now spotting everyone in the bleachers.
'Hagrid? What is it? What's wrong?' Albus said now coming out from his own invisibility.
'Dumbledore? You're here too?' Sirius said astounded. 'Well, guess now I know where you got information, Harry. Figures you'd tell him,' Sirius muttered and glared at Albus.
'Not now, Sirius,' Albus admonished. 'Hagrid, what is it?'
'Blimey, 'Arry, is tha' you lad?' Hagrid said as he recognised the dark haired boy standing next to Draco.
Harry blushed and nodded. 'Err...yeah, Hagrid, it's me. Somewhat anyway. What is it though? What's wrong?'
'Yer alive?' Hagrid said in shock, obviously ignoring everyone's questions.
'Yes, Hagrid, I'm alive,' Harry said with a deep sigh. Much as he loved Hagrid, right now he wanted to know what was going on. 'Now what's wrong?'
'Oh, right,' Hagrid said sheepishly, his eyes overjoyed by seeing Harry. 'I was jus' in th' forest a bit ago an', well ya best come to th' cabin an' look fer yerselves.'
Everyone looked at each other and quickly scrambled back down to the pitch. However as they got there Albus said, 'Harry, Draco, I want both of you underneath the cloak till we get to Hagrid's. Sirius, Peter, Narcissa, under Severus's cloak as well. Hagrid, you will walk with me so that I can shield you. No one is to talk or come out from underneath their cloaks until we get inside the cabin is that understood?'
'Wait a minute here, am I the only one that has a problem with the fact that a Death Eater is coming with us?' Draco said quickly and looked at Peter. 'I mean what if he turns us in or something? I mean, why aren't you trying to kill him, Black? I thought if he was dead you'd be cleared?' he asked confused.
'Draco, my darling son, I love you dearly...but do get under your cloak and shut up won't you?' Narcissa said sweetly.
'Mother? Mum what...?' Draco said surprised that his mother would talk to him that way.
'You heard her, kid, under the cloak and shut up,' Sirius muttered.
'Hey, you can't talk to me that way, Black! Show some respect!' Draco said stubbornly.
'I'm afraid he can talk to you that way, Draco,' Narcissa said getting underneath her cloak.
'What? Why?' Draco asked puzzled, though he was still glaring at Sirius.
'Because I'm your uncle, kid, now get under the damned cloak and be quiet!' Sirius muttered and

glared right back at Draco.
'You're my what?' Draco said and at the same time Harry came back out from underneath his cloak and gaped at Sirius. 'You're his what?' he said.
'Children, children, now is not the time for this. Underneath your cloaks, there you go, all of you,' Albus said sternly and waited till everyone was underneath their respected cloaks. 'Right then, to Hagrid's. No one talk remember, we don't want to be spotted, and I'll cast spells when we get inside.'
'You know, you've got some serious explaining to do to Harry and me when we get there, mum,' Draco said quietly but angrily from underneath Harry's cloak, and he thought to himself that if this wasn't a day full of surprises, Draco would eat the sorting hat. In later years he would think back on that comment and wonder just how that old hat would have tasted, because it would turn out that the day was far from over, and there were many more surprises ahead for him. For all of them actually, and ones that would one day rewrite history.

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Chapter: 17

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: Standard :sigh: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)

~~Chapter Seventeen: The Secrets Of The Family Tree~~

It was a subdued group that arrived at Hagrid's small hut on what was to be a day decidedly full of surprises. No one expected to find what they did inside the tiny hut, to say the least all of the people that crowded round the room gasped as they saw what Hagrid had found. Dumbledore quickly put up silencing and shielding spells so they would neither be seen nor heard even if one was to stand right in front of the windows, which really wasn't possible since the windows were well over a normal man's height, but should anyone peer inside they'd have seen nothing. Rather if they had gotten through the spells what they would have seen was a roomful of shocked faces at best.
Harry was the first to move, not unsurprisingly given the situation in front of them. ***'DAD***!

Dad...what have you done?' he cried out as he quickly moved over to the bed in which Severus was lying prone. Tears coursed down his face as he hesitantly approached his father and he tentatively held his hand out towards him. 'Is he...is he...' he stammered, afraid to even say more. Hagrid nodded his head sadly and turned away as Dumbledore slowly approached the bed that Severus was on. He examined Severus for a moment then he turned to face Harry, a strange look in his eyes. 'I'm truly sorry, Harry,' he said quietly. 'There's nothing more we can for him.
'NO!' Sirius screamed and made his way over to the bed. Looking down at the ashen, prone figure that was his lover he said with a sob, 'No...oh no, Severus. You bastard, don't you dare die on me. Not now, do you hear me, Severus? Not now! Not when we had plans for the future...not when we've finally figured each other out...you can't leave me...leave us...do you hear me, you bastard? Don't you dare leave Remus and me!' he said as the tears spilled down his cheeks.
'Siri- ' Narcissa began but was cut off quickly.
'Don't you dare. Don't you dare placate *me*, Narcissa. I'm not a kid anymore with a skinned knee where a kind word and one of your hugs can make it all better. This isn't like falling out of a tree in the backyard, or when I used to fall off my broom when I was younger, Narcy. This is my *lover* here, my *lifemate*. This is one-third of my soul lying here dead. A wave of a wand and a smile isn't going to fix things this time,' Sirius spat out heavily whilst glaring at Narcissa.
'He's probably in a better place, Sirius, believe me,' Peter said.
'YOU! You don't even the right to speak!' Sirius said as he turned to Peter with a dark, menacing look in his black eyes. 'What do you know of anything you bastard of a traitor? Are you happy now? You've killed Severus, you killed James and Lily, you killed my mo- '
'He did not!' Narcissa said firmly and glared right back at Sirius.
'Shut up, Narcy, I know what I saw,' Sirius snarled.
'Hey, don't talk to my mother that way!' Draco said cutting in.
'Stay out of this, kid,' Sirius said threateningly.
'Look, Sirius, maybe you should calm- ' Harry began but was cut off.
'Stay out of this, Harry. This doesn't concern you,' Sirius said bitterly.
'Draco, Harry, Sirius is right, stay out of this,' Peter said sharply.
'Don't tell me what to do Death Eater!' Draco said warningly.
'I am telling you what to do, Draco, and I say that both of you stay out of this!' Narcissa said. 'Now both of you go over there- ' she then pointed to a spot out of the way, 'and stay put. It's time we settled things once and for all here.'
'Mother...I don't think - '
'Don't think, just do as your mother says!' Sirius said irritably.
Draco was about to reply but was quickly pulled aside by Harry. 'Ah, Draco? Perhaps we should umm...do as your mum said and stay out of this. Much as I hate to say it, whatever is going on doesn't involve us and I don't know 'bout you here, but I don't want to be on the wrong end of anyone's wand...just in case,' he said quietly.
'But, Harry...' Draco began, then saw the looks of anger, resentment and even sadness in his mother's eyes and he sighed and nodded. 'All right, but if they go to blows you can be damn sure I'm stepping in,' he said firmly.
Harry grinned and nodded. 'Count me in there too, don't worry. Besides, whilst there off having their row...I've got something in mind...' he said conspiratorially.
'Oh really? Now what do you have in mind my dear Harry Potter?' Draco said with a sly grin.
Harry chuckled. 'First off let's get one thing straight. I'm *not* Harry 'Potter' anymore, just Harry, at

least for now. Second of all...' he said dragging Draco away from the screaming adults to a bucket with a pile of ashes in it. 'Do you know what's in this bucket?'
Draco peered into the bucket but all he saw were said ashes and he shook his head puzzled. 'It's nothing but ashes, Harry.'
Harry reached in and grabbed a handful of the ashes. 'Wrong, Draco, take a look at this,' he said and sifted some of the 'ashes' into Draco's hand.
Draco examined the ashes for a moment then gasped in shock. 'These are bone fragments!' he said in surprise.
Harry nodded. 'Yup, and I'll give you three guess whose bone fragments they are, the first two guess don't count,' he said keeping his voice as low as possible.
'Harry, you're not suggesting...no...is it possible?' Draco said shaking his head in wonder.
Harry nodded and tapped his forehead. 'The moment we walked into the hut I knew actually. My scar nearly made me cry from the backlash of energy still flowing through those pieces of bone. I may not have a clue who I am at the moment, but I still know what I'm feeling. Evening touching the ashes of that bastard hurts,' he said with a shudder and held up his hands.
'Oh Salazar, Harry, your hands!' Draco said in a panic. Harry's hands just from touching the 'ashes' as he had for those few moments had turned fiery red and had become blistered and bloody, just as they had long ago during his confrontation with Quirrell in the dungeons after touching Quirrell's skin whilst Voldemort was still 'attached' to him.
'It's all right, Draco, I'll live. What's important now is what happened and how did they get here?' Harry mused.
'I can answer that, Harry, but you have to go outside where we won't be overheard,' a voice whispered into Harry's ear causing him to jump.
'Who's there?' he said looking round, puzzled when he saw no one but Draco and the screaming adults, well three screaming adults along with Hagrid and Dumbledore who were remaining watchful but neutral.
'Go outside with the bucket, Harry,' the now all too familiar voice whispered again.
'Harry? What is it?' Draco asked quietly, concerned as Harry's face turned pale.
'We need to go outside, Draco, now,' Harry said in a strange voice.
'What? Why?'
'We just do, all right? Come on...' Harry then said, and grabbing up his invisibility cloak and the bucket of 'ashes' he and Draco somehow managed to slip out the door.
They weren't as unseen as they thought however, someone had seen them leave, but a slight nod from the person to another unseen person was all the indication needed. As the door slowly and silently closed behind the two boys, Albus Dumbledore once again turned his attentions back to the adults in the room.
'This bastard rat killed her, Narcy! How can you still claim to love this traitor?' Sirius spat.
'Because you of all people know full well you can't help who you fall in love with, Sirius Malfoy Black! I *never* loved Lucius, only Peter, with every fibre of my being I loved Peter!' Narcissa shot back. *'You* were the one who was so dead set against us, drove us apart...and now who's calling who the turncoat here, Sirius? Hmm? Could *you* help falling in love with Severus...you're worst enemy? *Could you*?'
'That's different! We're adults, we know what we're doing!' Sirius said angrily.
'I may have been sixteen when I fell in love with Peter, but I damn well knew what I was doing as well, Sirius. I knew enough that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with him, and I didn't

care that he didn't have any money or wasn't as influential as Lucius Malfoy or anyone else. **I LOVED HIM**!' Narcissa yelled.
'Past tense, Narcissa?' Peter said quietly and looked at her speculatively. 'Does that mean you no longer love me?'
Narcissa looked at Peter with a sadness that was unmistakable. With a heavy sigh she sat down in one of Hagrid overlarge chairs and shook her head. 'I never stopped loving you, Peter, how could I? You held my heart in your hands then, you still do. I know what you've done, I know you're a killer, a traitor, a betrayer...but I can't help it, yes I still love you with all my heart. Or what's left of it. These last eighteen years Lucius has drained every ounce of hope, trust and love from me. I've been nothing but a walking shell without you, and I let myself become that way because of you, because I couldn't be with you. My own personal way of punishing myself for what I put you through. For what I made you do back then...and now,' she said softly.
Peter closed his eyes and sighed heavily for a moment, then opened them and walked over to Narcissa. 'I wanted to kill him you know, to hurt him as I knew he was hurting you. I was so blinded by my anger, my fears, by your rejection of me that when I went to join Voldemort...I wasn't even myself anymore. I was lost, heartbroken, in pain, Narcy...all I could think about was that it was his arms round you at night, it was his bed you were in not mine, his lips on yours. I wanted to destroy him...and you for going to him. I wanted to destroy the entire Malfoy clan...especially you, Sirius,' he said turning to Sirius.
'Is that why you gave them to Voldemort, Peter?' Sirius said in a strange voice.
Peter sighed again and nodded. 'I couldn't hurt you directly like I wanted to, it would have been too obvious, so I in my half conscious state of mind I did the next best thing. I hurt you by taking away the people that mattered to you...just as you had taken Narcissa from me. Just as your family had taken her from me. Because I wasn't 'good enough'. I wasn't rich enough. I wasn't a 'Malfoy'. He was your fucking enemy, Sirius! How could you do that to her? How could you give her to that bastard, you own damn cousin, just because he was more pure-blooded than I was? **HOW COULD YOU**!' he screamed out in agony now and fell to his knees with choked sobs. 'I loved her, Sirius, I loved her and still love her more than you could ever possibly know...'
'Peter...oh, Petey...' Narcissa said falling to the ground next to him and wrapping her arms round him. 'I still love you too, Petey...I will never stop loving you. Tell me what to do...I'll do anything...just tell me what I can do for you!'
'For *you*, Narcy? What about for *me*? For my mother? For James and Lily? For Harry? What about all the people who've died because of him? **WHAT ABOUT FOR SEVERUS**?' Sirius yelled.
'I can't bring them back, Sirius! I wish to the Gods I could, but I can't!' Peter said sadly. 'Only Voldemort has that power, not me...'
'What's Voldemort up to, Peter? What did he really send you here for? Just to hold us hostage? Or to kill us all?' Sirius said thickly.
'Sirius this isn't the time for this,' Narcissa argued.
'This is *exactly* the time for this, Narcy,' Sirius said. 'What is it he wants you do to here, Peter? Tell me!' he said going over and pulling up Peter by his robe collar and shaking him.
'It's H-Harry...h-he w-wants Harry...' Peter stammered.
Sirius blinked, confused by those words, then let Peter go roughly. 'What do you mean he wants Harry? How could he know - '
'Of course he would know you idiot. Just as Peter has a bond with Harry, so does Voldemort in

case you've forgotten,' Narcissa said wearily as she helped Peter get back off the floor.
Sirius paled and stepped back a few paces, muttering a few oaths under his breath. 'His scar, of course. Why didn't I see it before? He's known all along this was nothing but a ruse. That Harry's been alive this whole time,' Sirius said weakly.
Peter nodded. 'Yeah, Sirius, he did. He's know from the start...just as he knows now that Severus was Harry's real father.'
'What?' Sirius said in shock now. 'How the hell could he know that? Unless...you! *You* told you him...didn't you!'
'NO! I can assure you I did no such thing, Sirius,' Peter said firmly, though he stepped back a few paces from Sirius. 'He saw it in a direct dream link with Harry a few days ago, which is why he attacked the school. He saw Harry here...with Draco and Viridian, he saw Harry hugging Severus, and talking to him. He heard Harry call Severus 'dad', and he knew. He was outraged that Severus kept it from him all these years. Outraged that Severus was indeed a spy after Severus swore his re-allegiance to him. He wanted them both dead, and was ready to tear apart the school to find them both.'
'Well he's gotten his wish as far as Severus goes, didn't he,' Sirius said with a pained sob and looked back at his lover. 'Severus is dead now, and Harry -' he said glancing round the room.
'Harry?' he said now in a panicked voice. 'Harry, Draco, come out this instant! Where are you?'
'What? They're gone?' Narcissa asked, worried herself now. 'Draco? Draco my love, where are you?' she called out.
'The hut's not that big you realize,' Peter muttered. 'It's obvious they're not here.'
'Thank you for your unasked for assessment, Peter,' Sirius snorted. 'I can see they're not here. So where the bloody hell are they then?'
'You don't need to worry about our young Harry and Draco. I can assure you they're perfectly safe where they have gone off to,' Dumbledore said stepping into the conversation now, a twinkle in his blue eyes.
'Albus? Where are they? What are you saying?' Narcissa demanded.
'I'm saying that they are safe. That's all you need to know at the moment,' Dumbledore said firmly.
'They better be, Dumbledore. If not, someone's going to answer to me,' Sirius said darkly.
'Oh stop playing the 'I'm-so-fucking-tough' ploy for a moment, Sirius. You know, all through school I envied you because of your 'tough' attitude. Because everything came so easy to you, because you took everything in stride and feared nothing. But you do fear things, Sirius, and you're not so tough as you think,' Peter said.
'I'm tough enough still, Peter, don't you forget it. I can still wipe the floor with you, wand or not,' Sirius grumbled.
'Try it, Sirius, and see how far you get,' Peter said pulling his good arm across his chest protectively. 'I've picked up a few things whilst you were sitting in Azkaban, in case you've forgotten,' he smirked and patted his wand pocket.
Sirius glared at him but decided against testing his luck. 'Fine, Peter, but don't think this is over yet. You're still going to pay for killing my mother, James and Lily...and especially for Severus's death.'
'For the last time, Sirius, I did not kill your mother! I didn't kill Severus either for that matter, I was here the whole time, I honestly don't know how he died,' Peter said angrily. 'However, I swear to you on whatever you want that I did not kill your mother!'

'Bullshit, Peter, I saw you come to the house that day but I decided not to say anything. By the time I got back from my errands only an hour later, she was dead, and you were gone without a trace. You were the only one that could have done it!' Sirius argued.
'He didn't do it, Sirius, on that I will swear to you,' Narcissa said quietly and stepped in front of Peter.
'How would you know that, Narcy? You weren't even at the house that day! You were off with Lucius on a date, so how could you know?' Sirius asked.
'Because I *was* there...and I know *exactly* what happened,' Narcissa said with a deep sigh. 'It was *me*, Siri...*I* killed your mum...not Peter...' she sobbed.
'W-What? What are you talking about, Narcy? Don't cover up for this bastard...' Sirius said.
'She's not covering for me, Sirius, it's the truth,' Peter said dully, then went over and put a comforting arm round Narcissa's waist.
'I don't understand...why...how...? What happened? Narcy?' Sirius said in a pained voice.
'Oh, Siri, I've wanted to tell you for years and years, but I couldn't. Besides, you were in Azkaban for so long...I didn't think it would matter any more,' Narcissa said quietly.
'What happened, Narcissa. Tell me everything,' Sirius half pleaded, half demanded.
'Some of it's a bit fuzzy, even back then it was. I remember I had just come home from my date with Lucius, and he saw Peter at the house. You know your mum always had a soft spot for Peter, she felt bad actually for what had to be done, but Father...well you know what he was like, Sirius,' Narcissa said wrinkling her nose.
Sirius snorted. 'Don't remind me, Narcy. I've spent years trying to rid myself of that bastard's memory.'
'You're not the only one,' Peter muttered, only to receive a glare from Sirius. Coughing slightly he then said, 'Go on, Narcy, tell him what happened.'
Narcissa sniffed back a few tears then continued. 'Anyway, Father was away that day if you recall, in London on business. Lucius usually didn't get out of the carriage when he would take me back home, mainly because he didn't want to risk running into you, Sirius. He thought it was demeaning that you should have gone to Gryffindor when you were a Malfoy-Black, a pure-blood of highest regard. He never did understand why I took my real mother's surname name when I went to Hogwarts, but I wanted it that way.'
'I know that part, Narcy, I was there the day you told my mum and that bastard your decision to use your real mum's name remember?' Sirius said.
'Oh right, well anyway, Lucius hated you because you were a Gryffindor as you know, so he never came to the house. That day however something changed and he walked me to the door of the manor. We went round back to the gardens and to my surprise, and Lucius disgust, Peter was sitting there talking to your mum. Well when Peter saw Lucius words were said, rather flung heavily between them, and before anyone could stop him...Lucius had his wand out,' Narcissa said, shivering slightly from the memory.
'I thought you said you had nothing to do with this, Peter?' Sirius said glaring at him.
'Will you just listen, Sirius, before jumping to conclusions?' Peter muttered. 'Go on, Narcy, continue.'
Narcissa nodded. 'Well anyway, I don't know what was said exactly between them, they'd moved away from your mum and me into the gardens. The next thing I knew a hex flew over our heads, and it was clearly from Lucius's wand since Peter was facing the other direction from us. I took my wand out preparing to intervene, but just as I was casting a stupefy spell on Lucius because I

knew Peter...well...he wasn't the best dueller...' Narcissa said glancing hesitantly at Peter.
Peter shrugged. 'I wasn't, simply put. Sirius was the one always better at duelling then I was,' he said with a nervous chuckle and a quick glance at Sirius.
'You got the better of me that day in the street though, didn't you, Wormtail,' Sirius said with a wry smirk.
'Sheer cleverness, Padfoot,' Peter said dryly. 'I had the means and the reasons to set the outcome. It doesn't matter now, let her finish the tale.'
Narcissa nodded and continued before anyone could intervene again. 'As I was saying, I was just casting a Stupefy on Lucius, but what I didn't know was...at the same time he was casting the Cruciatius Curse towards Peter. Somehow or another though your mum...she got in the way of both our spells. Lucius's hit her first and she went down to the ground, but I couldn't pull my spell back, and somehow when the Stupefy spell hit her on top of Lucius's Curse...well...'
'It was an instantaneous death,' Peter said quietly. 'There was nothing I could do either. She was dead before I could even get to her, Sirius.'
'If I hadn't casted the Stupefy...if she'd been hit by just the Cruciatius Curse...she'd have lived...oh, Sirius...my dear brother...I'm so sorry...I really did love your mum...she was really the only mother I ever knew. She cared for me despite the fact I was the bastard child. She didn't hate me even though Father cheated on her with my mother, and even when my real mother died giving birth to me your mum took me in and treated me like her own daughter. I loved her as if she was my own mother...and I killed her...' Narcissa said with a sob. 'You should hate me, Sirius...because I hate me for what I did, I have all these years. I've lived with the guilt...knowing I was the one who killed her...oh, Sirius...I'm so sorry!'
'Narcissa...oh, Narcy...' Sirius said sadly shaking his head, then he walked over and swept her up into his arms, hugging her tightly. 'You didn't know either the truth about mum...it's not your fault...you didn't kill her,' he said quietly.
'I did! Peter had nothing to do with it! I casted the second spell...she'd have lived if it wasn't for me!' Narcissa sobbed.
Sirius shook his head. 'No, oh, Narcy, if only I'd have known sooner,' he said softly, then turned to Peter. 'I'm sorry, Peter. Now I that I know the truth...I can't hate you for something you didn't do. I do hate you for killing James and Lily...for sending me to Azkaban...but none of it would have happened maybe if I'd only trusted you from the beginning. When I thought you killed my mother and no one would do anything...I think I lost it. I wanted to destroy you too, hurt you like you hurt me and my family. That's why I kept you away from Narcissa. That's why I told Father to - ' he said stopping short.
'What did you tell him, Sirius?' Narcissa said sniffing back more tears.
'Oh Merlin, what webs we weave,' Sirius said stepping back now and suddenly laughing. 'By the Gods, here we are...a room full of deceptive, distrusting, dark-sided arses, Narcy. And I'm right in the middle of it all, just as bad if not worse then all of you,' he said continuing to laugh.
'Why do I have a bad feeling about this?' Peter muttered and stepped away from Sirius. 'You laughed this way when they took you to Azkaban, Sirius...what have you got up your sleeve?'
Sirius shook his head, still laughing. 'D'you know...I told Father to make sure that you married Lucius? That the Pettigrews weren't worthy of us...that they were pitiful excuses of wizards because they were Ravenclaws?' he said slowing down to a strange chuckle. 'Father...for all his dark ways...he didn't even try to retaliate against Peter...I didn't understand...he knew though didn't he...that Peter didn't do it...'

Narcissa and Peter both paled, but slowly nodded. 'I told him the truth, Siri. Right after it happened I told him everything. And you want to know something? He was fucking proud of me, Sirius. Said I did him a favour, killing off a woman who had given birth to a...'
'A Gryffindor?' Sirius said in all serious now, laughter completely gone, a hard look on his face. 'He didn't have the damned guts to kill her himself...oh no. Killing a Malfoy would be unthinkable...but have your offspring do it...oh then it's all well and good. No fuss, no muss, and easy to cover up. He promised me though you'd never see Peter again, that he'd take care of it...I suppose I never realised how much like him I was becoming eh?'
'What I still don't get though, Sirius, is why you wanted me to be James and Lily's secret-keeper in the first place when you hated me so much?' Peter said curiously.
'Why? Easy, Peter. I was a Black...and a Malfoy on top...Voldemort surely would have come after me once Lucius gave me up to him. I knew that no matter how much that Slytherin git hated me, I was still blood relative to him, which meant that I was corruptible. I needed a ruse, a way to avoid that. I knew that for as much as Lucius hated me...he hated you more, Peter. He also knew I hated you, so why would anyone ever suspect that I'd have turned over such an important task like being James's keeper to you of all people? Someone who was weak and talentless...and hated...it's was perfect,' Sirius said.
Peter stared at Sirius, then oddly he began to chuckle and shake his head. 'And all the while Lucius had me in his back pocket, and you never knew. After that day when your mother died, Lucius and your father forced me into staying silent about the whole affair. I also became their secret lap dog, Lucius told me that if I didn't report to him what he wanted, he'd turn Narcy in to the Ministry anyway. In his eyes it was her spell that caused your mother's death, Narcy was the killer, not himself. I had no choice, Sirius, I did what I had to do to protect her. I had to learn to hate, to destroy, to become emotionless. I did it because I loved her, and I somehow I had still enough hope, a tiny spark even, that one day I would get her back.'
Sirius shook his head slowly. 'And here I came along and persuaded Father to make her go to Lucius' bed after all, though now I see it really took no efforts on my part. He already had you hogtied into doing his bidding. Unbelievable...'
'It's not your fault Siri, you couldn't have known. I don't hate you for that, for what you thought you were doing was right,' Narcissa said quietly.
'You didn't kill her though, Narcy, that I can assure you,' Sirius said quietly.
'I did, Siri, if I hadn't casted the Stupefy -' she began but was cut off by a wave of Sirius's hand.
'No, you didn't,' he said firmly, then turned to Peter. 'My mum, you saw her go down before Narcissa's spell hit her, right?' he asked.
Peter nodded. 'Yeah, I couldn't deflect Narcissa's spell in time though...what does it matter?' he asked curiously.
'Because it just confirms to me Narcy's spell didn't kill her. She was dead from the Cruciatius Curse, of that I have no doubts,' he said.
'How can you be sure though?' Peter asked.
'Because my mum had a weak heart, Peter, something no one, not even my Father knew. I only found out because one day when she thought no one was supposed to be home her private Medi-wizard came to the manor. I was curious so I hid whilst they were talking in the library. I saw him examine her and told her to take these pills, I heard him say there was something wrong with her heart that magic couldn't fix. The stress of a spell like The Cruciatius on her...I have no doubts that it stopped her heart before the Stupefy ever hit her,' he said quietly.

'Oh no, are you sure about this, Sirius?' Narcissa said weakly.
Sirius nodded. 'Positive, Narcy. I confronted mum after the Medi-wizard left. She told me everything. She was under orders not to have any stress, that it would most likely kill her. Which is why she never told Father of course, he'd have done everything in his power probably to stress her,' he said with a dark look on his face. 'As it was Father was barely home at that point in time, so mum didn't have to worry about him too much. No, Narcy, you didn't kill mum...Lucius Malfoy did, that I am sure of.'
'Siri...I'm sorry,' Narcissa said softly. 'I wish I had known all this sooner. What have we done to each other?'
'We've all lied and betrayed and hated each other for no reason?' Sirius said dryly. Turning to Peter he said, 'I will never forgive you for what you did to James and Lily, I told you that, but now I understand why you did it. Love makes the strongest of men turn into the simplest of fools...' he said glancing back at Severus's prone body with a sad grin. 'If *I* could fall for my enemy, do things that I thought that I could never do to protect him...then you hadn't a chance in hell against it, Peter. Besides, I'm not the one that the decision of what to do with you rests on. That's on Harry's shoulders. It's his mother and now his father that you've killed, even if it's indirectly. It's Harry who saved you three years ago, Peter, so it's him your beholden to now, more than even Voldemort. He is now your judge, jury and executioner, not me.'
'Except that currently my executioner has disappeared,' Peter said with a frown. 'Where is he, Dumbledore? Where did the boys go?'
'I told you he and Draco are perfectly safe. I think by now they also have heard the things they needed to know, so I have no doubts they will return shortly,' Albus said, then glanced at something over by the door.
Had anyone been looking they would have seen a slight shimmer near the door, one that bounced along the floor and headed towards the bed where the body of Severus Snape was. If they had been paying any attention at all, they would have seen that shimmer of light creep up and settle itself back into the body of Severus. If they had seen that, they also would have heard a slight intake of air as life was breathed back into Severus Snape's body. As it was however no one had noticed, no one that is but a blue eyed old man who smiled because he knew that somehow things had a way of working out after all.

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Chapter: 18

~~Deny Thy Father And Refuse Thy Name...~~

Disclaimer: JKR is a goddess and anything canon belongs to her. Anything else however heh

belongs to me! :grins:

Cheers to everyone reading and reviewing! :)
Much as it pains me to do this I think it's high time this fic came to an end :sigh:. I've been attempting to finish it for near six months now, and at 17 chaps it's already far longer than I had planned on. I most likely will come back to fill any 'gaps' I've left out at some point, but for the moment I want to give this some closure so I can get back to work on my other myriad of WIP fics that are also begging to be finished. Don't think of this as a 'final ending', in fact when I go back and do the rewrites (as I already am beginning to in places) I will do a more complete job of it. Consider this a 'rough draft' ending for now. :)

~~Chapter Eighteen: Epilogue - The Power Of Love Will Be Your Salvation~~

'And the game is over; Slytherin 250, Ravenclaw 180. Slytherin wins the Quidditch Cup! Congratulations Slytherin!'
'Yes! What a game!' a voice said happily.
'He makes the best seeker doesn't he?' a second person said with a touch of pride.
'Next to you maybe,' a third person said grinning.
The first person chuckled. 'You taught him everything he knows, so I'd say he's right on par.'
'Of course I am, expected less of me, Granger?' a new voice said with a drawl, though pale grey eyes shone with merriment.
'Draco!' the second person said happily. 'Terrific game, congratulations!'
Draco smiled at the person. 'I couldn't have done it if it wasn't for you, Harry,' he said softly and walked over to his lover. 'I owe you everything.'
Harry smiled back at Draco, and took Draco's hand into his own. 'I think it's me who owe's you everything, Draco. If it wasn't for you I couldn't have been here to even watch the game today.'
'It's been a right long year hasn't it,' Hermione said with a slight sigh.
'You can say that again, Hermione,' Ron said with a nod. 'If you'd told me ten months ago I'd be standing next to Draco Malfoy without wanting to kill him, I'd have said you were daft.'
Draco snorted. 'Any more than I'd be standing next to a Weasley and not have something truly...nice...to say,' he said dryly.
Harry shook his head and chuckled. 'You two, honestly, what am I going to do with you eh?'
'Well one thing you can do is give Draco back for a little while so he can go attend the celebrations now taking place in his honour in the Slytherin common room,' a voice from behind them drawled.
'Dad!' Harry said turning round and smiling at him. 'That was quick, they're already doing a celebration party?'
'I believe they were confident before the match even began that they would win,' Severus said with a slight grin. 'Now go on, Draco, and don't forget we're meeting with your Mother this evening, so do be prepared.'
'I won't forget...Dad. See you all later then!' Draco said with a grin and winked at Harry, but before Severus could even respond he dashed off towards the castle.
'Dad?' Severus said in surprise as he watched Draco run off. Turning back to Harry with a look of

curiosity he asked, 'What is that all about?'
'Ahh, Harry? We'll see you back at the castle. We've got some err...studying to do, right, Ron?' Hermione said hurriedly and glanced at Ron oddly.
'Err...oh...oh right...yup, studying,' Ron said with a series of nods. 'Catch you later, Harry, Professor Snape!' he said now and taking Hermione's hand they also dashed off towards the castle.
'Harry,' Severus said in a warning tone. 'Care to enlighten me what this is about?'
Harry watched Ron and Hermione heading off and then sheepishly turned back to his father. 'Err...that is...what I mean is...'
'Harry Silvius Snape, what is going on?' Severus said slowly.
Harry sighed then held his hand out to show his father. 'Umm...this?'
Severus stared down at what was clearly a golden band round the third finger of Harry's left hand. 'And what praytell is that?'
'It's a wedding band if I guess correctly, Severus,' Remus said, as he and Sirius now walked up with smiles on their faces.
'A what?' Severus said in shock.
'A wedding band, Severus, I believe you're...familiar...with them?' Sirius said with a wry grin as he made a pretense of turning a golden band that was placed on his own left hand.
'Of course I'm familiar with them, Sirius, I'm not that stupid,' Severus muttered. 'Why is one on *your* hand though, Harry?'
'Well...err...it's not quite a wedding band...yet...um...Dad. It's an engagement band for the moment,' Harry said quietly.
'I see,' Severus said slowly. 'And when were you planning on informing me of this...engagement?'
'Umm...soon?' Harry said fidgeting. 'I reckon that Draco's just err...excited because of the match and umm...forget to not say anything just yet.'
'Excitement can do that to a person, yup,' Sirius said trying to hold back a grin.
'Oh will you stop it, all of you,' Remus said rolling his eyes. 'Congratulations, Harry. I know that you and Draco will be very happy together, just as your Dad and we are. Isn't that right, Severus?' Remus asked whilst looking heatedly at his husband.
Severus cleared his throat and looked a bit sheepish. 'Err...right you are, Remus. Of course they'll be as happy as we are.'
'Heh, married only two months and already Moony's got you whipped old man,' Sirius said with a laugh.
Harry laughed. 'I wouldn't say that, Sirius. More like Dad knows when it's a full moon coming, and when *not* to peeve off Remus,' he grinned.
'On that you are absolutely right, son. Something certain people still haven't learned apparently,' Severus said dryly.
Remus grinned. 'He's got a point, Sirius, you never did know when to quit whilst you were ahead. At any rate, when do you and Draco plan to have the ceremony, Harry?'
'Well, not till after he leaves school of course. Then there's the matter of Ron and Hermione's wedding, so we don't want to damper that. Perhaps by Autumn, there's still a few things Draco needs to clear up regarding...well you know...things.'
'I thought Narcissa was handling that?' Sirius asked.
'She is doing what she can, but now that Draco is head of the family, there are some thing he

must do for himself,' Severus said.
'And he's doing them quite well at that from what Narcissa says. Now, what about on Halloween, Harry? At least that's a day in which he'd never forget your anniversary,' Remus said whilst looking pointedly at Sirius.
'Hey! It's not my fault I got caught up with- ' Sirius began.
'Sirius,' Severus said warningly and shook his head. 'Not another word.'
'Err...right,' Sirius mutter.
'Caught up with what, Sirius?' Remus asked curiously and looked between Sirius and Severus.
'Oh, nothing, love, absolutely nothing,' Sirius said with an exaggerated grin. 'Now, we were discussing a date for Harry here. I think your right, Remus, Halloween is a wonderful day indeed.'
Harry grinned. 'Actually that's what Hermione said too. Said it would be prophetic or something like that. The start of a new life, one hopefully this time filled with happiness and not sadness.'
'Something we all should have,' Severus said with a nod.
'Implying you're not happy with your current life, Severus?' Remus asked with a raised eyebrow.
'You know I am,' Severus said with a slight smile. 'For my son though a new life is just beginning, and I want him to make the best of it he can.'
'I will, Dad, with Draco at my side,' Harry said softly. 'Not to mention Ron and Hermione. They have their wedding date set for August 24th by the by, so that they can have a bit of a honeymoon before they start working at the Ministry.'
'What are they going into again?' Sirius asked.
'Hermione's going into some researching department, and Ron's going into his Dad's old department working under Percy. He's not thrilled about it, but he's getting a nice pay packet so Hermione doesn't mind. She knows that even though Mr. Weasley is Minister of Magic now doesn't mean Ron should automatically get in at top ground. She wants him to do some work first actually, prove himself and all that,' Harry said with a shrug and wrinkled his nose a bit.
'Typical woman,' Sirius said with a chuckle. 'Always wanting us men to do the dirty work.'
'That goes for some men too, Sirius Black,' Remus said with a snort. 'Arthur didn't clear your name so you could just sit back on your bum and do nothing you know.'
'I know, I know,' Sirius muttered and shot a glare at Remus. 'I'm working on it all right?'
'I thought you were offered your old Auror position back, Sirius?' Severus asked.
Sirius shrugged. 'I turned it down. I think by now I've seen more than my share of things. Give me anything other than that actually.'
'I'm sure you'll find something, Sirius,' Harry said. 'Anyway I reckon we should get home and get ready for tonight. Don't want to upset Mrs. Malfoy now do we.'
'Gods forbid we do that,' Severus said mockingly.
'Heh you don't know Narcy like I do, Sev. She can be a right bear when she's angry, trust me on this one,' Sirius said with a nod. 'Right then, back home we go. We'll see you tonight at Dumbledore's office.'
'Make sure you're there at quarter to six prompt this time, Sirius,' Severus said warningly. 'Albus said he has the portkey configured for exactly six sharp.'
'Yeah, yeah we'll be there on time,' Sirius said with a wave of his hand.
'And make sure you're dressed properly as well, Sirius,' Remus said sharply.
'Honestly, I don't see why I have to get dressed properly for a *rehearsal*,' Sirius muttered.
'Just to make you miserable, Sirius, that's why,' Harry chuckled. 'Come on then, if we're getting

done up so are you. Don't worry, I'll make sure he's proper.'
'That's my boy,' Severus said with a grin and ruffled Harry's hair.
'Dad! Quit that!' Harry grumbled. 'I grew it long for a reason you know.'
Severus chuckled. 'And here I thought it was because Draco said you looked sexier that way.'
Harry paled. 'Err...that too,' he said with a blush.
Remus, Sirius and Severus laughed. 'Go on, Harry, we'll see you tonight. Oh and don't eat before you come, we'll go out to a late supper after rehearsal.'
'Really?' Harry asked excitedly. 'Can we go to the Galloping Gorgon in Knockturn Alley? I love their food!'
'Maybe, we'll see how late it gets,' Severus replied. 'Now go on, you've got three hours till you have to be back.'
'Right, Dad. Come on, Sirius, we'll need that time to get all showered and ready. I can't wait!' Harry said grabbing Sirius's hand and heading back towards their cottage on the outskirts of Hogsmeade.
Severus watched his son go and shook his head. 'Sometimes I can't believe he's mine. Is it all real I wonder?'
'As real as we are, Severus,' Remus said softly and went up to put his arms round his husband's waist.
'Are you?' Severus asked quietly and looked down at his husband with a tender expression in his coal black eyes. 'I sometimes wake up in the morning and think it's too good to be true.'
'I will spend the next hundred and some years reminding you just how good it is, Severus. I love you...Sirius loves you...Harry loves you...you're just a lovable bloke I'd say,' Remus said with a grin.
Severus snorted. 'That's because you're all daft,' he said.
Remus chuckled. 'I'd rather be daft and in love with you then sane and hating you, Severus Snape. You make a wonderful father, Severus, and I can't even put to words what kind of husband you are, because there are no words for perfection.'
Severus pulled Remus into a tight embrace, holding him for a few moments as if he were a life line. 'I can't believe how much has happened in these short months, Remus. You are a very forgiving man you know, you shouldn't have been.'
'It's wasn't my nor Sirius's decision to make though, Severus, it was Harry's, and he made it the way he felt best. Everyone deserves happiness...and even redemption at times. After all, Harry's had a very good role model to learn that from I'd say,' Remus said softly.
Severus sighed. 'I never deserved redemption. I never deserved to have you and Sirius's love, let alone Harry's for what I did,' he said sadly.
'But Harry did forgive you,' Remus said firmly. 'Just as he forgave Peter in the end. Peter will forever live with his guilts, as will all of us, Severus. Besides, Peter didn't get off scot free remember. After they come back from their honeymoon Arthur has much planned for him,' Remus said with a wry grin.
Severus chuckled. 'The nastiest, dirtiest jobs one can find at the Ministry eh?'
'Not to mention Malfoy Manor has no less than a hundred stabled horses that need daily tending. I reckon it's safe to say that the new Master of the Manor will definitely have his work cut out for him,' Remus grinned.
'I was very surprised I'll admit when Draco agreed to turn over the Manor to his Mother and Pettigrew,' Severus said.

'Draco doesn't need it nor want it, Severus. Godric's Hollow is being rebuilt even now, and that's where he and Harry will find a new home with a new life. Like you said, one filled with happiness,' Remus said.
'Actually that reminds me that...there's something I want to discuss with you, Remus,' Severus said hesitantly.
'Oh? Does this have something to do with Sirius's disappearing acts lately?' Remus asked with a raised eyebrow.
Severus chuckled and nodded. 'Very much so as it happens. Harry and Draco, Narcissa and Pettigrew...they're not the only ones that should be starting a new life together, Remus. I think it's high time so should the three of us.'
'What are saying, Severus? What do you mean?' Remus asked puzzled.
'What I'm saying, my sweet wolf, is that *our* turn to be happy now too. Voldemort is gone now, I saw to that- ' Severus began.
'At the cost of nearly your own life at that,' Remus said with a trace of anger. 'What were you thinking when you confronted him in the forest?'
'I was thinking of you...of Sirius...of Harry...of what it would mean to be rid of that bastard once and for all,' Severus said heavily. 'I did what I had to do, and I don't regret it for a moment, Remus.'
'We could have lost you forever, Sev. Did you even think of that?' Remus asked in a pained voice.
'I did, Remus, of course I did,' Severus said sadly. 'But like the Muggles say, "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few". I weighed my options, and to me if I had the chance to destroy him once and for all...I knew that even you and Sirius would understand why it had to be done. It was my life for a few, over the lives of the entire Wizarding World, something I knew you'd understand'
Remus sighed deeply and nodded, putting his head against Severus's chest. 'Of course I do, Severus. It's just I can't imagine my life without you or Sirius in it is all. I would have only been one-third of a person if you'd left us for good.'
'That is something I don't plan on doing again for a very long time, my lovely wolf,' Severus said softly and kissed the top of Remus's head. 'But you do understand don't you? As much as I love you and Sirius, destroying Voldemort to save everyone else was more important at the time. A sacrifice I was glad and more than willing to make.'
'At least the Fates were kind and gave you back to us. I still can't believe you did it though. How did you know what to do anyway?' Remus asked curiously.
Severus shrugged. 'I don't know, Remus, I really don't. One minute I was flying into the forest to get away from the curses and hexes being casted at me, the next thing I remember I was crashing into a clearing. In that clearing was Voldemort, and he was as surprised to see me as I was to see him, tell you that much. I suppose since I had the advantage of being just a touch less surprised, I got the upper hand. It was as if some hidden force was controlling me, and before I could stop to think I had my wand out and was casting the spell I did.'
'What was it you used? You never did tell us,' Remus said.
Severus chuckled. 'It wasn't the Avada Kedavra, tell you that much. I had a feeling that if that really hadn't worked once, it wouldn't again. Perhaps buy us again more time, but not get rid of him forever. If you have to know...I used the Deleo Maleficus Curse.'
Remus looked up at Severus now in shock. 'No, you didn't...did you?' he asked in a hushed voice.

Severus nodded. 'I damned well did, Remus,' he said grimly. 'I'm sure that if Arthur Weasley were to know about my use of that particular spell he'd more than likely forgive me however.'
'Perhaps so, but that spell is one of the most dangerous restricted spells you can use, Severus. However, it does explain why you died,' Remus said thoughtfully.
'Yes and I knew I would die using it. You can't cast that spell without giving everything of yourself, which is why it's restricted, because it's so immensely powerful. However I knew it would be a spell that would counteract anything Voldemort could manage to throw my way, because what that bastard never understood was simply that good always triumphs...or at least it did in this case,' Severus said with a grin.
Remus shook his head. 'He really didn't understand that did he. In order to cast the Deleo you have to use every fibre of your being that is pure and good. Which makes me realize just how wonderful a person you are, Severus.'
Severus held Remus tightly again. 'I couldn't have casted that spell before you all came back into my life, Remus. It was you, Harry and Sirius that saved me, otherwise the spell would have been worthless, I would have died and done no damage at all to Voldemort. It was knowing how much I loved you all, and how much the three of you loved me in return that made the spell truly work.'
'And it's what brought you back to the living, Severus,' a voice said cutting in now.
'Albus?' Remus said in surprise and looked at the old wizard worriedly. 'What are you doing here? Is anything wrong?'
'No, no, not at all, Remus, everything is just fine. Lemon drop?' Albus said with a twinkle in his eyes whilst holding out a small bag of sweets.
'Albus,' Severus said in a strict voice, 'don't sneak up on people like that, especially when they're discussing things that shouldn't be overheard.'
'Come now, Severus, I overheard nothing,' Albus said with a smile. 'Besides, if I *had* heard anything...I would of course be agreeing with you both. After all..."*At Gorchefygu Anhoffter, Ond Yr Cyfoeth Cariad Brydiau Bod Chwithau Achubiaeth."*Isn't that right?'
Remus and Severus both smiled then, and nodded at the Headmaster. 'Indeed you are right, Albus. "To Overcome Hatred, Only The Power Of Love Will Be Your Salvation." Truer words never spoken. The love that we all share saved us all in the end,' Remus said looking tenderly at his husband.
'And love will continue to do so until the end of time, Remus,' Albus said with a knowing smile. 'Now why don't the both of you return to the castle and get ready. The portkey will be ready at six o'clock to take all of you to Malfoy Manor. I'll see you again after that in two days time correct?'
Severus nodded. 'We've been offered to stay at the Manor after the wedding for a few days, so Draco can get some of his affairs in order. We'll be back however by Monday morning for the Leaving Feast.'
'Good, good, seeing as how Slytherin is going to be honoured the House Cup as well this year, I would assume you'd want to be there, Severus. Considering this will be your last chance for a while to see that happen,' Albus said knowingly.
Remus scowled. 'Did you have to remind me of that, Albus?'
Severus chuckled. 'Well once Harry 'died', Gryffindor never stood a chance,' he grinned.
'Well gentlemen, I'll see you this evening. I believe Minerva is looking for me,' Albus said, and with a nod he began to head back to the castle.

Remus turned his head and looked up at Severus quizzically. 'What did Albus mean by that remark, Severus?'
'Hmm?' Severus said watching Albus go. 'Which remark would that be?'
'You know full well which remark, Severus,' Remus said sharply.
'Ah, yes, trust Albus to spill the beans as it were,' Severus said off-handily.
'Severus...' Remus said warningly. 'What did he mean?'
Severus looked down at Remus hesitantly, taking in every detail of his husband's face. 'You look tired these days, Remus. Do you know that?' he asked softly.
Remus looked puzzled by that remark. 'I suppose I am a bit. I'm not getting younger you know,' he said wryly.
Severus chuckled. 'No, none of us are. You're...transformations...have been more difficult lately, that much I do know. I saw it during last month's moon when you just wanted to curl up with us in front of the fire at the cottage rather then go for our usual romps round the forest.'
Remus shrugged. 'I was a bit more tired than usual last month, but then I've had reason to be as of late. With our wedding only two months ago, the exams coming up...'
'Exactly, which is why Sirius and myself have come to an agreement,' Severus said.
'Without me? I thought I was part of this family,' Remus said in slight rebuke.
'Of course you are, and that's exactly why we've been concerned for you, my lovely wolf. I said it was our turn now, and it is. Our turn to be happy, to find contentment, Remus, something I think we all desperately need. Which is why...I told Albus that neither you nor me will be returning to teach next school term,' Severus said hesitantly.
'What?' Remus said shocked. 'You told him this without even consulting me?'
'Yes, and I will hold to it,' Severus said firmly. 'You should be doing a garden, not doing test exams, Remus Lupin. I know we're not 'old' yet, but we've enough money to last us several lifetimes. Harry doesn't need our money with both his and Draco's fortunes, we've got no more obligations with them either now that they're off to get married. Narcissa will have Pettigrew to keep her company now...and as for me...all I want is the both of you at my side, in our bed, happy, content, and enjoying what we have...together.'
'Oh, Severus...' Remus said in a half whispered voice. 'You...you would give that all up...for us?'
Severus nodded. 'Sirius agreed with me, which is why he's been disappearing as he has. You see, he's been scouting for places to live. Not just a hired out cottage in Hogsmeade mind you, but a place that we all will start fresh. Not Black Manor, not Snape Manor...but our own 'Manor' as you will. Which is in reality a quaint and cozy cottage on a river inlet just outside of Penryn in Cornwall.'
'Cornwall?' Remus asked in shock.
'Yes, my dear, Cornwall. Where you grew up, and where Sirius and I agreed was the one place you would enjoy the most. After this term is up we're moving in there right away. Sirius has already purchased the cottage through the Diagon Alley Estate Agents offices, as well as already furnished it with all your favourite things. From now on you're going to do nothing more than sit back, relax, grow a few things in your garden, and let us do the rest.'
'But...what about Sirius? What about you? What will you both do?' Remus asked, still too stunned by all of this.
Severus chuckled. 'Sirius is Sirius, he'll find things to do. He doesn't need to work, he wants to, if only to keep himself busy and out of trouble. As for me...I've already posted off to the Potion Masters Monthly Journal. They've been looking for someone to review various potions,

ingredients and whatnot, and I think I can safely qualify as an expert in the field. I may once in a while have to travel to the far flung parts of the world to investigate certain items, but I promise I will never leave on a full moon, or for very long.'
'Severus...' Remus said quietly. 'I don't know what to say.'
'Don't say anything,' Severus said softly. 'The day you said 'I shall' was all the words I ever needed or wanted from you, Remus. Twenty some years ago we found comfort in each other because of need; now we find that comfort because of love. You'll see, soon you'll be so content doing 'nothing' that you'll wonder how you ever did without it,' Severus grinned.
Remus chuckled and shook his head, then reached his hand up and tenderly put his palm on Severus's cheek. 'You both spoil me too much.'
'We don't spoil you enough,' Severus said firmly. 'Consider this payback for all those years of suffering and not knowing where your next meal was to come from, or how you were going to put a roof over your head. The cottage is in all our names, your things are yours, no one else's. That I can share in those things, as well as have a piece of your heart is enough to keep me for a very long time, Remus.'
Remus closed his eyes a moment and shivered, letting those words sink in, loving how good they sounded. 'Mine,' he whispered, then looked up at Severus.
'Yours...forever, Remus,' Severus said quietly. 'Just as Sirius is ours, and Harry is Draco's.'
'They'll truly be happy together won't they,' Remus said with a soft sigh.
'Like Father, like son,' Severus said with a smile.
'Indeed he is,' Remus replied, then smiled as Severus leaned in and captured his lips with a kiss that was made up of passion, tenderness and what could only be true love.

What had started out as a journey into the unknowing for all, had become a journey of understanding. Harry forgave Peter Pettigrew because he felt that if he could forgive his Father for what he had done, forgive Sirius and Remus for the lies and deceptions, even forgive Dumbledore for that, then Peter deserved no less. Peter and Narcissa married and after a few years of atoning himself for everyone else, they went abroad for many years so that Peter could find his own self worth, travelling to all parts of the globe in search of redemption of his soul. Peter eventually found that in a Tibetan temple, and though Narcissa wasn't happy about his leaving her, he spent a year in severe meditation. When he came back however it had been worth the wait, for he was a much changed man. Today Narcissa and Peter Pettigrew live quietly at the renamed Pettigrew Manor, rarely interacting with anyone but family and close friends.
Ron and Hermione married as well that Summer after school let out. They both did indeed go into the Ministry, where eventually both were promoted to the head of their respected departments. They currently have four children, all sons, and Hermione swears she will keep going until they have at least one girl. They live in a house adjacent to the Burrow where Molly and Arthur Weasley are in constant attendance on their adored grandchildren.
Remus, Sirius and Severus did settle happily into domestic life. Remus has a budding garden yearly that grows whatever he is currently enjoying at the moment. Sirius went on to get, of all things, a job in the Muggle world working on motorbikes, and from time to time brings home the occasional one to tinker with. As for Severus, on most days you can find him in his study, pouring over Potion journals or just reading up on the local daily news of both Muggle and Wizarding worlds. He realised years ago that the Muggles had some fascinating medicinal

qualities with their herbs and plants, and he spends a lot of time still searching to perfect the Wolfsbane Potion for his beloved husband Remus.
Harry and Draco Malfoy-Snape were married quietly by Albus Dumbledore on Halloween evening when they were eighteen. They too travelled for a while since Harry had professed interest in seeing the world before settling down. When they returned from one of their travels to America they brought back with them an infant that they had adopted; a young werewolf cub whose mother and father had been killed by werewolf hunters. With help from Remus of course they learned how to take care of a newborn wolf-pup, and they were very proud parents when their son Ian started Hogwarts. Nor did they mind in the least when he became a Ravenclaw, and they were incredibly proud when he became the second youngest seeker of the Ravenclaw House Quidditch team.
Harry and Draco lived quietly at the rebuilt Godric's Hollow. At any given time you can also find Ron and Hermione, Sirius, Remus and Severus, Narcissa and Peter, or even the occasional sighting of Albus Dumbledore crossing their front door for tea or just a chat to catch up on events. They are happy and carefree, and are more in love with each other now then they even were years ago, and they adore their son not to mention spoiling him rotten, as does Ian's many grandparents.
As for Salazar Slytherin and Rowena Ravenclaw, they still reside within the painted portraits at Hogwarts. They still gather in the third floor painting with Helga Hufflepuff and Godric Gryffindor to have tea and scones, along with a swim or a nap when mood strikes. They are happy and content as well, knowing that their heir brought peace to the world, and that in the end all had indeed worked out for the best.
Albus Dumbledore retired to go on a journey with the house-elf Dobby to find the perfect pair of knitted socks. Minerva McGonagall took over as Headmistress of Hogwarts, appointing Charlie Weasley (who'd had enough of being burned by dragons at that point) as Deputy Headmaster. Hogwarts continues to run smoothly and efficiently as it always will, although the restrictions on first-years not allowed to have brooms was lifted several years ago to many first-years delight. The Harry James Potter Museum still draws in hundreds of Wizarding tourists yearly. All proceeds go to various charities including St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies, as well as The Werewolf Protection Society for the care and shelter of cubs that are abandoned or orphaned. Harry and Draco, as well as Remus, Sirius and Severus are their most ardent supporters, and they are always willing to help both the museum and the Protection Society whenever possible.
Evil had been destroyed by love, and though new evils and tribulations would come in the future, good would always win. For you see, even if you try to deny or refuse who you are and what you believe in...you can never escape from what your heart and soul desire. Because in the end love does indeed conquer all.

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