Consillium Callidus
Author: Lady K. d'Azrael

Pairing: Harry/Draco

Rating: R

A/N: This is one of the first slash stories I ever wrote… way back in 2001! Dear Lord, how old I feel… Personally I think this story is a bit lame, but Parlophone was good enough to seek me out and request that I upload it. Who am I to argue with those who give me nice reviews?

“There is no ‘good’ and ‘evil’ there is only power . . . and those too weak to seize it.” Lord Voldemort, Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone

Part 1: The Boy Who Lived at Malfoy Estate

Lucius Malfoy perused at his copy of The Daily Prophet; the infant of the late Potters was mentioned again. No-one could see how he had deflected the Avada Kedavra curse and the paper continued to speculate groundless theories in lieu of facts. Such power in an infant was unthinkable, certainly unprecedented.

“Narcissa?” he looked over the top of his paper at his wife, who was gazing disinterestedly at the baby that had just been placed in her arms by a house elf.

“Yes?”

“Wouldn’t it be tragic if those muggles that the Potter boy has been placed with should die?”

“Yes, it would,” she gave him a shrewd look.

“What do you think they would do with him then?”

“Give him up for adoption I imagine.”

“It would only be charitable for a family like ours to take him in, wouldn’t it?”

“I don’t know Lucius,” Narcissa narrowed her eyes. “Another child would be a great responsibility.”

“For whom - you? You hardly bother with our own son. What trouble would it be to you?”

“It’s not just that. People will talk, Lucius. They’ll know what you’re up to. Albus Dumbledore won’t stand for it.”

“Albus Dumbledore is not a god. He will have to stand for it if the law decides to place the boy in our care.”

“What do you want with him, Lucius?”

Lucius looked thoughtful for a moment. “Did you ever hear it said, ‘keep your friends close, but your enemies closer?’”

Narcissa smiled and graciously inclined her elegant head. Six months later, Harry Potter came to live at Malfoy Manor.

Harry had all the material benefits that a wealthy wizarding family could provide while he was growing up: a junior racing broom, a library full of magic books and expensive clothes. Lucius and Narcissa were not loving or encouraging parents, but he didn't really care, because they weren't his real parents anyway. They treated he and Draco equally; although Harry was well aware that Draco was the true son of the family and heir to the estate, Harry was The Boy Who Lived, and that brought it's own prestige.

Harry had never thought of Lucius or Narcissa as his family, but Draco was his brother: they were rivals and playmates. They had been constant companions since their infancy, and they were bound together by the virtue of being the only children in an environment which seemed to them to be entirely populated by austere, patrician wizards.

"Wake up!" cried Harry jumping on top of Draco's bed one morning when it was nearly September.

"Ugh. Get off me, you mudblood. I can't breathe!" said Draco.

"Oof!" said Harry, rolling off Draco and sitting next to him on the edge of the bed and swinging his legs. "Today's the day, Draco."

"Yes, yes. I know."

"Hogwarts! I can't believe it. Are you packed?"

"Nearly," Draco sat up and rubbed the sleep from his eyes, his white-blond hair all askew. "Do you think we'll need dress-robes?"

"I shouldn't think so. There aren't any balls in first year."

Draco glanced over at the clock on the wall. "Oh, ye gods, Harry. It's six in the morning! Why did you wake me up now?"

"I dunno. I was bored. I haven't slept a wink."

"Well that's no reason to wake up everyone else." Draco settled back down and pulled the blankets up to his ears. Harry didn't take the hint. He wasn't going anywhere.

"Oh, and by this time tonight we'll be Sorted. What house do you think you'll be in, Draco?"

Draco opened his eyes and glared at Harry. "Slytherin of course. All the Malfoys have been."

"Oh . . . I don't know," Harry had a mischievous grin. "I think you'd make a great Hufflepuff."

"Oh shut up. You're just annoyed because you're going to get put in Gryffindor for being a mudblood."

"At least I'm not faintly inbred. Cousins marrying, not a good idea -" Harry was going to continue, but he got smacked in the face with a pillow.

"You do realise this means war." Said Harry, taking his wand out of his pocket.

"Ah!" warned Draco, "Remember what father said: 'no cursing each other before midday'."

"Killjoy," muttered Harry, forced to retaliate in kind with a pillow.

Part 2: Platform 9 and ¾

Harry and Draco had spent the weekend at the Malfoys' house in town, shopping in Diagon Alley. Lucius had accompanied them, neglecting his business duties to spoil his sons for one last time before they went off to boarding school.

Currently, Draco and Harry stood outside a shop looking longingly at racing brooms.

"Oooh," they said in unison at the new Firebolt model.

"We're not allowed to have our own brooms in first year, what's that about?" whined Harry. Lucius had given them each a pocketful of galleons to buy a gift of their own choice.

"Gay." Affirmed Draco. 'Gay' was his new word. It was an adjective with many meanings. In this case, it meant stupid and annoying.

"Well then," said Harry, reluctantly pulling himself away from the window and turning down into the shady confines of Knockturn Alley, where they'd been taken many times by their father in the past. "I suppose if I can't have a broom, I'll get an animal."

"Suit yourself. I'm going to look at the bookshop."

"Give it up, Draco! you couldn't work those hexes in a million years."

"Could so. Shut up." With not very much more bickering, they went into their respective shops. When Draco emerged with his book-shaped parcel bound in twine he found Harry standing outside with a raven perched on his shoulder. It ruffled its jade-black feathers and squawked indignantly at Draco's approach.

"Harry, the letter from Hogwarts said we were allowed an owl, a toad or a rat, it didn't say anything about ravens."

Harry shrugged. "What are they gonna do? Besides, I had to buy him - he likes me. His name is Mortimer."

"Nevermore!" it squawked, somewhat predictably.

Draco sighed heavily. "Does it do anything except recite gothic poetry?

"Yeah, it can hex in several languages, apparently."

"Okay, it is quite cool then."

"What did you get?" Harry glanced sideways at the book under Draco's arm.

"It's a spell-locked diary that only I can open." Draco said, with a hint of bitterness.

"Well, it's not my fault you keep one. You know I can't help myself when it's sitting there on the desk, full of your guilty secrets."

They made their way through the cobbled streets back to the house. Lucius was in the living room, reading an old and battered book in an armchair close to the fire. He raised his head as the boys entered with their eager cries of "hello father!" and gestured with a slight movement of one of his elegant hands for them to sit down. Draco and Harry sat side by side on the sofa. They each was almost the antithesis of the other: one dark and one almost eerily fair; one insuppressibly untidy, the other neat and always well dressed; one with soft, ordinary features and the other sharp-featured and angular. One set of green eyes and one set of steely blue-grey locked on Lucius. The raven broke the silence by reciting something very

rude in Latin.

“Harry, I’m not sure that was a wise investment.” Said Lucius, raising a tapered eyebrow, but a slight smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

“It was an impulse buy.” Shrugged Harry, the raven bobbing up and down with the rise and fall of his shoulders.

Lucius shook his head, as if in silent exasperation. The boy was talented, probably more so than Draco, but he was headstrong and indiscrete.

“Are you both ready?” Lucius closed his book.

“Yes, father.” The boys said, in unison as they often were.

“Well run upstairs and check you haven’t forgotten anything. We’ll have to go to the station in a few minutes. Oh - and Harry, you’ll need a cage for that thing. There’s one in the attic. Go and harass one of those blasted house elves for it if you can find one.”

Draco and Harry soon stood on platform 9 ¾ of Kings Cross station, as the Hogwarts Express came puffing into sight from around a corner.

“Alright, I think you can both make it on your own from here, boys.” Said Lucius, almost fondly. “Now what did I tell you?”

“We don’t know any curses,” answered Harry, as if by rote.

“And?”

“We don’t know what Death Eaters are,” offered Draco.

“Very good.” Lucius placed a hand on the heads of each of his sons. Harry felt fingers moving through his hair and wondered if Lucius was being affectionate, or merely trying to make him look a bit tidier. “Now remember, it doesn’t matter which house you’re put in, so long as it’s not Gryffindor, Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw.”

Mortimer squawked indignantly at the last part, but Lucius ignored him. “And do try to get on the right side of that old fool Dumbledore.”

“Old fool, father?” Harry looked up in mock innocence, “I’m sure you meant ‘that wonderful headmaster and veteran of the war against the dark side’.”

“Of course I did Harry, what did I say?” Lucius smirked and patted both boys on the shoulder before bidding them goodbye.

Draco and Harry looked around them as the other children started to arrive.

“Look,” Draco pointed at a family over at the other end of the platform. “Red hair, too many children . . .”

“Must be the Weasleys,” replied Harry.

“As if it’s not bad enough being surrounded by mudbloods, the pure blood families have to disgrace themselves as well,” said Draco venomously.

“Hey, enough of the ‘mudblood’ comments. My mother was muggle-born. Now come on, we can’t just stand here looking aloof all day. Let’s get on the train and see if there’s anyone worth meeting.”

Draco gave a pained expression as a group of girls walked past in jeans and trainers, with eyes the size of dinner plates as they beheld their wizard schoolmates for the first time.

“Ignore it Draco. Come on . . .” Harry pulled him by the hand and they struggled to get their trunks on board.

Part 3: The Sorting Hat

The first years stood in nervous clusters outside the Great Hall. Draco was talking to two boys called Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle. They possessed the kind of ignorance that is rarely found in creatures that can stand erect. Harry vaguely knew them from social events he and Draco had been dragged to - their parents were acquaintances of Lucius from the Old Days. Crabbe and Goyle watched Draco as he spoke with a dim reverence like peasants watching a priest speak the mass in Latin. Harry had spoken to no one and no one had been brave enough to approach him. Many stared at his scar in fleeting glances. He envied Draco, who moved and spoke with the ease and urbanity of his father. Not for the first time, Harry was glad Draco was here with him. He felt sometimes like they were twins, so hopeless and vulnerable was he when Draco was not there. Draco was his other half, black robes contrasted starkly with his pale face and neck and shock of white hair; like a yang to Harry’s yin. He must have been daydreaming again, time had passed, Draco was clenching the arm of Harry’s robe with a nervous excitement in his eyes. The sorting ceremony was about to begin.

Soon Malfoy, Draco was walking up the steps to sit on that rickety three-legged stool. Harry crossed his fingers and hoped the hat would call Slytherin. Lucius would not take a Hufflepuff in the family lightly. It was barely lowered on Draco’s head before it bellowed “Slytherin!” and Draco, relieved, stepped lightly down to the table of his house who welcomed him with proud smirks. Only a few people and alphabetical letters separated them, but the space seemed immeasurable.

“Potter, Harry.”

People whispered, but Harry stepped up resolutely. He gave one fleeting glance to Draco, who looked as nervous as he was. The hat was placed on Harry’s head and everything went dark. ‘Hmm’ said a small voice in his ear. ‘Difficult, very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There’s talent – oh my goodness yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself. So . . . where shall I put you?”

“Slytherin, please.” whispered Harry to himself. “It has to be Slytherin.” He hadn’t given the houses much thought, feeling no filial duty to Lucius Malfoy, but the thought of being cut off from Draco was suddenly terrible and stifling, rising like hysteria from somewhere in the pit of his stomach.

“Slytherin, eh? You choose to be great then?” asked the hat.

“I don’t care about power, or the house. I just have to be in Slytherin.”

“Well . . .” the hat seemed unsure. “I don’t usually let people into a house just because they ask me, but you’d do well in any of them and I can’t chat all day, so off you trot – SLYTHERIN!”

Harry walked down to the table of his house, beaming. He heard whispers and saw disapproving glances from the other houses, but he didn’t pay attention. He didn’t pay attention to the proud smiles of his new housemates. He slid on the bench next to Draco and touched his hand under the table.

“The hat didn’t seem to know where to put you, mudblood.” Draco whispered conspiratorially with a slight mocking smile, as the ceremony continued.

“It put me where I was meant to be, I’m sure.” Harry Potter fixed a winning Slytherin smile on his face and clapped as his house was given another member.

Part 4: Upper Sixth

“O, most wicked speed, to post

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.”

Hamlet, I. II.156

Harry Potter was the hero of Hogwarts. His eyes were as green as the Slytherin house banner and all the girls were in love with him. He was head boy, as well as captain and seeker of his house Quidditch team. His youthful skinniness had filled out into a lean ranginess and his black hair had passed untidy and become the adjective ‘rakish’. On a sunny Saturday afternoon he hung in the air, one leg crooked over his broomstick and arms folded.

“Come on, Draco! That was miles wide!”

“Fuck off, Harry!” Draco bellowed from his position low over the ground from which he had just retrieved the quaffle. “You don’t understand the skilful art of scoring goals. You’re a seeker. All you do is ponce about up there squinting at that bloody snitch. Which I might add, you have not yet caught. Less critique, more action.”

“I don’t ponce!” retorted Harry, huffily as he moved up higher to look for the elusive golden and winged orb.

Draco did an impression of Harry, lifting up one hand and opening and closing it to make it ‘talk’ in a mincing treble. “Blah blah, I’m Harry Potter and I chase balls all day long.”

But before he could elaborate his crude double entendre, a bludger whizzed by, striking his broom handle and almost putting him off balance.

Harry chortled at Draco’s near-undoing and then put on a face of mock-gravity. “You know what Draco? I’m so much of a professional, that I’m not even listening to your idle banter.”

He and Draco had had it in for each other all day. The Incident, later on when their bickering reached breaking point, was a seamless progression. Draco was jealous of Harry because he always eclipsed him, in everything. Draco was talented himself; he was a good wizard academically, with a flair for potions, but Harry was always that few marks better at almost everything. He was a good Quidditch player, but Harry was the star who got all the glory and decided the outcome of very match. Draco was popular, but he didn’t inspire that breathy adoration of Potter’s little fan club. What he didn’t realise was that Harry, in turn, was jealous of him. Harry longed for the self-made success of Draco, who didn’t have a legend to wrap around himself and excelled none the less. And Draco was handsome, really handsome. He wasn’t the passable kind of pleasant-looking that Harry was, exaggerated ad infinatum in the minds of his hormone-driven female admirers. Draco was a statuesque kind of stunning; it was that breath-taking, that classical. Harry wondered why no one else seemed to be aware of it, why they chose the inferior caste of his own form. He hated Draco for it, Draco who stood at the sidelines with his sharp, hewn cheekbones, perfectly straight nose and soft frame of blond hair, seeming to mock Harry’s fickle following with his truer nobility. Why did that face haunt Harry when he tried to take advantage of his groupies? Why did it’s graven features make the soft, sweaty flesh and broad smiles of the girls seem suddenly grotesque and repugnant?

Harry was in a particularly foul mood with Draco. Last night he had broken off a clinch behind the Quidditch stands with a pretty girl from Ravenclaw and Draco's comments on the field had exacerbated Harry's suspicion that his honour was in question. When they retired to the showers, the other boys made their usual bawdy jokes and smacked each other with the ends of twisted towels. Harry noticed that Draco stood away with his back to them all and a scowl on his face.

Is their behaviour really that idiotic, or is it something else? Does Draco like boys? Harry shuddered, but couldn't help wondering. Here at Hogwarts, Draco and he had shared a dormitory until they were in fifth year. Despite their physical closeness, puberty had pushed them apart. They no longer spoke of things that mattered, or things that worried them. Emotion was a weapon which they often used against each other in their popularity stakes. At home things were different, easier. Last summer Harry had walked into Draco's room to find him red-eyed, as from crying. Harry acted instinctively and embraced his brother for the first time since they had gone to school. It had seemed as if Draco was about to tell him something, but Lucius called them from downstairs and they jumped apart, as if their indomitable father's presence had caught them in some obscene act. Draco stood up and straightened his clothes and in the depths of his opalescent eyes, a door quietly shut.

Harry was filled with a perverse desire to force a confidence from Draco. But how? 'Draco, what the fuck are you so moody about all the time? Is it because you're a poofter?' No, that wouldn't work. That evening, Draco complained he felt unwell and wandered off to the infirmary. Harry lay on his bed with his arms folded behind his head, trying to concoct a plan. Mortimer the raven was restless, squawking snatches of Latin songs in his cage.
'Bibat ille

Bibat illa

Bibat servus et ancilla…'

"Look Mortimer, much as I appreciate your attempts to cheer me up, I am trying to think."

The bird ruffled his feathers and sat in sulky silence.

"Oh, look. Don't get shirty with me." Harry addressed the raven. "I'm working on a cunning plan which will result in the humiliation of Draco."

The raven's eyes glowed with an unsettling fire. It hated Draco, for some reason. Draco was not an animal person. "Occultus! Archanus! Furtivius!" he cried.

Harry laughed. He had a fairly functional knowledge of Latin by now, since many important magical texts were written in it. "'Secret'? Yes, I suppose he does have rather a lot of those. How to discover them, that's the question. If only he had a confidante. Hold on- " The penny dropped. Harry grinned broadly. That fucking diary! "Thanks Mort, you're a genius."

Harry opened the door to Draco's room, which was next to his own and rifled through Draco's bedside cabinet until he found the familiar leather-bound tome. He returned to his own room, leaving the door ajar in his zealous excitement. Now, what would Draco have as his password? Harry drew out his wand and tapped the book.

"Pure blood." He tried. The magical clasp held fast. He tried a number of likely words, but after five minutes he was cursing and trying combinations like "sweaty gay sex." Not even these worked. The raven squawked again from the corner.

"Oh I suppose you have some bright ideas, do you?" Harry demanded. Mortimer looked at him the way Severus Snape looked at him when he couldn't remember the properties of Wormwood, Asphodel and

Wolfsbane.

“Occultus! Archanus! Furtivus!” Mortimer repeated and the clasp opened with a dull click.

“If you weren’t infested with parasites, I’d kiss you,” said Harry, opening the book.

Written in the inside pages in red ink was ‘The Book of Shadows of Draco Malfoy’. Gaylord. Thought Harry bitterly.

The book had an infinite number of pages. Harry skipped first year and second year to the interesting stuff. Most of it was ‘I hate Harry’ and ‘stupid mudblood who’s not really my brother’, but it began to get more and more personal, angsty, dark and more poetic by the time he reached fifteen. The at one point in fifth year it said ‘There’s no use in pretending anymore, not even to myself. The longing in my dreams won’t go away when I open my eyes. I desire men.’

Harry laughed, unable to believe it, with a wicked glee sparkling in his eyes. He wanted to bring the book straight downstairs to show the boys. Blaise Zabini would make Draco’s life a living hell. But, he scanned down the page and face fell when he read:

‘Father would disown me. He’s made it clear that if Harry or I ever display evidence of being abnormal, we’ll be disinherited. I know I must marry for appearances, but I can’t bear it. I don’t want a life of shame and secrets.’

Harry felt hot tears pricking at his eyes, he didn’t know what was wrong with him. He wasn’t the twisted queer of the family, why did he even care about all this? He skipped forward, trying to remember the date he had almost made Draco confess. There was a section in scrawled handwriting:

‘Harry embraced me and I felt again like we were brothers. I almost told him everything. But I was a wreck then, and now I see that it was best that I did not, I know he would use it to mock me later. I can’t tell anyone, not even him. Only the dead paper must ever know.’

Part of Harry fed on a dark, malicious amusement at Draco’s pretentious purple prose and adolescent pain, but he was also cut to the bone at the thought that Draco thought him untrustworthy. They were brothers and their love was an ever fixed mark, but they wounded each other with pettiness and barbed words, behaving like enemies. His mind was still reeling from this information and yet the words he read next had fresh force to shock him:

“I wish I could rid myself of these desires. I’m no better than the rest of his flunkies. I too long for Harry Potter with all the raging hormones of a teenage girl. He’s artlessly beautiful and he doesn’t even know it. Gods, he would never let me touch him again if he knew what I thought about when he’s near, especially in the showers. I have to turn away so that I don’t stare at him. Legally he’s my brother, is it incestuous?”

“I hate you,” said a shaking voice from the doorway. “How did you open it? Why? Harry, couldn’t you just have left it alone?”

“Nevermore,” cried the raven, in a smug tone.

Draco moved like a flash across the floor and swept the book into his arms, closing its clasp.

“Don’t cry Draco.” Harry had stood and was close to him, Draco’s waxen skin looked beautiful, given artificial warmth by the light of the fire.

“I’m not crying,” Draco replied in a hollow voice.

“Oh sorry,” muttered Harry distractedly and he sniffed, then fell against Draco and gave him a painfully tight hug, the sharp corners of the book pressing into their chests.

“Stop that,” Draco hissed, pushing him back. He ran a hand through his hair and sighed, not sure whether to be angry with Harry or not.

Harry looked up at his earnestly. “I won’t tell anyone. I promise.”

“You say that now, but then we’ll have an argument in front of everyone and you’ll blurt it out. You can’t keep secrets.”

“I know we haven’t always got on in the past, but I don’t want that anymore. You can talk to me, you know. About anything.” Harry looked at Draco, who stood before him with those cold, impassive eyes; it was an expression inherited from Lucius. Harry blurted out: “My scar hurts.”

“What?”

“Sometimes, I wake up and it’s burning. I think the Dark Lord is gathering forces. You know what that means, don’t you?”

Draco blanched. “Father, he’ll want me to be initiated.”

“Both of us, Draco. He thinks we’ll both serve Voldemort.”

“That’s insane. He doesn’t think that. Voldemort killed your parents.”

“He wants me to chose – between them and him. It’s one of those little mind games he delights in playing. Didn’t you ever wonder why he bothered to adopt me in the first place?”

“Ye gods, that’s insane. Even for him.” Draco sat down heavily on Harry’s bed, his head in his hands. Strands of hair snaked out from between his fingers and his knuckles were white. “What will we do, Harry?”

“Join him.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“We, you and I, are going to join Voldemort, like the obedient sons we are.”

Draco looked up. Harry had an unsettling glint in his eyes.

“Father will never fall for it.”

“Father is vain. Father will believe what he wants to.”

“No . . .Harry, we can’t! It’s too dangerous. Even if we survive, we’ll end up in Azkaban.”

“Listen to me, Draco.” Harry kneeled down before him and lifted Draco’s head with his two hands. “I won’t let anything happen to you. Trust me.” His confidence growing, Harry leaned in and kissed Draco. Draco fought momentarily, but he realised that Harry had read his diary. He had bloody well asked for it. He submitted his life into the hot, wet mouth of his almost-brother. Harry broke the kiss and grinned like a satyr, before moving downwards, pulling up Draco’s robe.

“This, this is wrong.” Said Draco weakly, feeling the cold air of the room on his loins. He felt someone

aught to say it.

“Remember what father taught us. There is no ‘wrong’ - there is only the public and the secret.”

Draco nodded and Harry leaned in for another kiss, pushing his brother, his beloved, down onto the bed.

Part 5: Conferring in the Corridor

It was a few months after Harry had opened Draco’s diary. Harry the head boy and Draco, a senior prefect, stood in one of the main corridors on the first floor. They were on lunchtime supervision duty, but the corridor was empty and they had resorted to slouching against the wall and doodling on their clipboards. Draco yawned vociferously.

“You’re so tired all the time. You look like a zombie,” said Harry.

“Thanks,” Draco shot him an evil glance. “I’d be less tired if you didn’t keep me up all night.”

“Draco, don’t exaggerate. You never last longer than ten minutes.”

“Not that, you filthy profligate. I mean with your snoring and quilt-stealing antics.”

“Oh, I’m sorry my love. I just think it’s rude to go back to my own room after I’ve had my wicked way with you.”

“Oh don’t stand on politeness for my sake, Harry.”

“I know you don’t mean that. You like to be cuddled.” Harry smiled in a sickly, affectionate way and brushed Draco’s cheek with the back of his hand.

Draco brought his hand up to stifle another yawn. “Oh, for a double bed!”

“Well, soon we’ll be home for the summer.” The boys had finished their final exams and were awaiting their results to see if they could proceed to Archanebridge, the most prestigious Wizarding university in Britain. Draco was going to study Potions there and Harry had got a scholarship on his Quidditch abilities, but would also be studying Defence against the Dark Arts.

“That’s going to be a problem, though. Father does have an annoying habit of knowing exactly what we’re up to.”

“He’d never say anything though, not about this.” Harry stood up straight, clasped his hands behind his back and half-closed his eyes in a languid fashion in preparation for his impression of Lucius, then spoke in a stately drawl: “Boys, I can’t help but notice that you are diddling one another. Would you kindly desist?”

Draco laughed and tried to shake the image of his father saying that out of his mind.

“Do you think the others know?” he asked after a moment.

“Who do you mean?” Harry was trying to turn a doodle of a phallus into a flower so that McGonagall wouldn’t kill him when the report sheet was handed in.

“The other Slytherins. Like, you know, Zabini and Crabbe and Goyle.”

“Blaise Zabini is the gayest creature that ever nanced upon this earth. He would do well not to mention it,

unless of course, he wants a threesome."

"Harry!" Draco gave him a shocked look.

Harry ignored Draco's feigned horror and continued: "Crabbe and Goyle wouldn't guess what we were up to if they walked in on you taking me over a desk. They are incapable of original thought and reason, as are the dumb beasts . . . except possibly Mortimer, who always seems to know what's going on."

"I hate that raven." muttered Draco, shuddering. The bell rang.

"I think that the feeling is mutual. Come on, let's go and hand in our non-reports." As they turned to go a gaggle of first years ran down the corridor.

"Hey, stop running!" snapped Draco.

"Put your top button in." commanded Harry, pointing at the offending young wizard.

"Bloody children." Draco muttered. "Were we ever that small and irritating?"

"You were," Harry retorted, sticking his tongue out.

Part 6: Harry the Death Eater

Breakfast as usual in the Malfoy household - at least, so it appeared. Above the table, Lucius read his newspaper and Narcissa delicately sipped Earl Grey tea, Harry Potter peeled a banana and looked over his History of Magic notes in preparation for an essay assignment.

Under the table, Harry Potter was rubbing Draco's groin with a flexible bare foot. Draco gripped the edge of the table with white-knuckled hands and tried to catch Harry's eyes. His murderous glare was robbed of its potency by the fact that Harry was, for once in his life, feigning an interest in the goblin rebellion of 1123. Draco, in an effort to be more like a traditional pure-blood wizard, did not wear anything under his robe. Now he bitterly regretted it. Damn him thought Draco, watching helplessly as Harry began to slowly imitate fellatio on the phallic fruit.

Without looking up from his paper, Lucius said "Harry, do stop that." Draco's stomach filled with dread and Harry guiltily retracted his foot, blushing furiously. "You know it isn't polite to play with your food. Just eat the thing, for heaven's sake," the patriarch elaborated, and Draco had to clasp his hand over his mouth so as not to laugh uproariously. Harry's expression was priceless.

Later that evening Lucius was in the living room, writing a business letter at a desk when Draco slid in and sat discreetly in the armchair by the fire, picking up his book on apparition. He was followed a moment later, by Harry who was walking stiffly as if his back hurt him and sat down gingerly on the sofa.

"What have you done to yourself now?" Lucius demanded.

"Oh, it's nothing. An accident, in the shower," mumbled Harry, blushing as it had not been an accident, nor had he been alone in the shower at the time. His eyes flicked over to Draco, who returned the sheepish gaze, then studied his book as if his life depended on it.

What was the purpose of that furtive glance between the two of them? Lucius wondered. They're up to something. His dangerous questioning was stopped by a burning pain in his arm. He hissed, drawing in breath slowly and trying to resist the urge to clamp his hand down over the Dark Mark. He never spoke openly about being a Death Eater with his sons, but he knew they were far from dim and had guessed long ago. He announced that he had urgent business and left the room.

“‘I hurt myself in the shower’” muttered Draco.

“Well what did you want me to say? ‘Oh sorry, father, I did my back in because Draco’s quite heavy and he had his legs wrapped around my waist while I was trying to shag him against the cold tile wall.’”

Draco stuck his tongue out.

“But hey, never mind that,” said Harry. “What’s all this about urgent business? Did you see his face? He’s gone to see Voldemort. I’d stake my reputation upon it.”

“Your reputation? What’s that worth these days, Mr. Potter?” Draco laid down his book crossed the room to sit cross-legged on the sofa next to Harry.

Harry sneered and nipped Draco. “Quite a lot. So fuck you with a big stick and the horse you rode in on, Malfoy. Plus, my scar hurts.”

“Poor baby, shall I make you a poultice?” Draco crooned sarcastically, brushing back the dark hair that covered Harry’s forehead. “It looks alright to me.” He said and kissed the lightning bolt-shaped scar.

“Ow!” said Harry. “Watch it, that’s tender!”

Lucius returned an hour later. The boys heard his footsteps on the wooden floor of the hallway and moved apart to opposite ends of the sofa, trying to look casual. Lucius entered the room quietly and closed the door behind him.

“Father?” asked Draco. Lucius looked drawn and tired. “Is something the matter?”

“There’s something I must speak to you of, boys.” Lucius’ words were hesitant. The boys instinctively moved closer together. Harry put his hand on Draco’s shoulder and squeezed it reassuringly. Harry began: “It’s about the Dark Lord, isn’t it, father?”

“There’s no fooling you two. Yes, it is.”

“We know,” Draco said firmly, although all the blood had drained from his face. “We know that you’re a Death Eater.”

Lucius sat in the chair before the fire and lowered his translucent eyelids. He was silent for a moment, as if he had not the energy to speak, but words eventually came:

“Of course you do. Those fools at the ministry might not have a clue what’s going on, but I like to think I’ve raised you both to be a little sharper than that.”

“Show us the mark, father,” whispered Harry.

Lucius looked angry, but he sighed and pulled up the sleeve of his robe to show the black inky stain of a skull on the white flesh of his inner arm. The boys were silent, Draco could feel Harry’s fingernails digging into the skin of his shoulder through the fabric of his clothes.

“Lord Voldemort,” said Lucius regaining the cold unemotional quality of his natural voice, “has noted that many of the old Death Eaters are dead and that his circle now has many gaps. He feels that the organisation needs new blood. He also wants to test my allegiance to see if I am willing . . .” he trailed off again. Gods, thought Harry, The old bastard actually has a moral dilemma.

“See if you are willing to give us to him,” finished Draco.

“Willing to enlist you,” corrected Lucius. Draco and Harry were trading glances: they had some kind of extra-sensory link between them that unsettled him. Each seemed to know exactly what the other was thinking, but to an outsider their expressions were unreadable.

“We will serve him,” Harry answered, acting as spokesperson. Draco nodded his compliance.

Of all the reactions Lucius had expected, a simple agreement had not been among them. He had expected to frighten and bully Draco into joining, but Harry? No, he had never really expected The Boy Who Lived to serve Voldemort.

“Harry, do tell me what goes through that dark mind of yours,” Lucius said, a smile forming at the corner of his firm-set mouth. “Why are you going to serve the man who killed your parents?”

“My parents deserved it, they were weak and pathetic… I never think of them. I am grateful for all you have done for me and I regard the Malfoys as my true family. As for serving the Dark Lord… I want to learn the Dark Arts from a master.” Those green eyes were strangely inanimate. “I am going to make up for the fact that I almost destroyed the greatest wizard of our time by joining him and serving him better than any Death Eater ever has.”

“I’m proud of you both.” Lucius rose and moved to the door. “Tomorrow night you will be initiated.”

When Harry crawled into bed beside Draco that night, the blond boy was turned away from him. Harry wriggled down under the blankets and wound his limbs around Draco’s, pressing chest to back.

“Don’t worry, it’ll be alright. I won’t let anything happen to you,” Harry whispered.

“Did you mean it, what you said earlier?” whispered Draco.

“Mean what?”

“About your parents, about wanting to serve the Dark Lord.”

“What do you think? Hmm?” Harry kissed the back of Draco’s neck.

“I don’t know. You get this look in your eyes sometimes and it scares me. I don’t know what you’re thinking.”

“Look at me, Draco.” Draco turned over and Harry cupped his face with two hands. The green eyes were earnest now. “You really think I’m glad my parents are dead?”

“I . . . no, I suppose not, it’s just I don’t understand why you want to join Voldemort.”

“It’s a plan. A cunning plan. Need to know basis only, baby dragon, so go to sleep.”

“I don’t like your plans… they worry me. This isn’t some schoolboy prank you know: Voldemort uses the unforgivable curses. He used one on you once already.”

“Don’t you think I know that? I mean attractive as this scar makes me look, I don’t want another one. I know what I’m doing, but I can’t tell you, it’d put you in danger. While I still breathe I’m never going to let anyone, even Voldemort, try to harm you.”

Draco sighed, unconvinced, but he kissed Harry anyway for the sentiment. Harry smiled and stroked back

some stray locks of blond hair. “Go to sleep,” he commanded. “You need to look fresh for the Dark Lord tomorrow.”

Draco did not sleep very well. He always got too hot sleeping next to Harry and ended up kicking off most of the covers. Having a double bed didn’t make the slightest bit of difference to their sleeping arrangements, for Harry always held him in a vice-like grip. It was reassuring in a way, but it took getting used to. Draco was slightly paranoid and he didn’t like the idea of someone so close, not even (or rather, especially) Harry. He always expected to wake up with his eyebrows shaved off, or his hair dyed pink.

The next evening came sooner than seemed possible, they had passed the day in a blur. Presently they stood outside the Malfoy Manor, waiting to use the portkey that Lucius had prepared.

“Now remember boys. Only speak when you are spoken to and keep a civil tongue.”

“Yes, father.”

“Guard your emotions. The Dark Lord will use anything you show against you.”

“Yes, father.”

“He may require you to pass some kind of test to show your allegiance. Be prepared for the worst.”

Draco looked at Harry and whispered ‘this is another fine mess you’ve gotten us into, mudblood’.

Part 7: Tom Marvolo Riddle

“But first he casts to change his proper shape,

Which else might work danger or delay:

And now a stripling Cherub he appears.”

Paradise Lost, III, 634

It was the hour before midnight when they reached the house. It seemed abandoned, but for the light in one window. In the room where the fire was lit the other Death Eaters were already gathered in a circle. Lucius had put on his mask and he took his place.

Voldemort stood dressed in long sable robes which flowed over the ground behind him, like the train of some undead bride. His skin was of a scaly, reptilian quality, white-grey in colour, and where he should have had a nose there were only nostril slits. His eyes were upward-slanting and a startling, vivid shade of red.

Harry had once seen a photograph of Tom Marvolo Riddle, ex-head boy of Hogwarts, and Lucius had told them that it was Voldemort in another life. He remembered that at the time he had been disturbed because Tom Riddle looked just like himself – dark hair, green eyes. Perhaps a little more slender, more like Draco’s build.

Voldemort spoke, a cold, rasping sound: “Ah, Lucius. I see you have brought us offerings.” He had not seen their faces, because they were wearing the traditional garb of uninitiated Death Eaters: cloaks rather monastic in appearance with cowls that hid their features. “But I was unaware that you had two children.”

“One is not mine by birth, but you will be pleased with him, I am sure.”

“Throw back your hoods,” commanded Voldemort.

Draco went first, as they had arranged.

“Ah, this one is yours no doubt, Lucius.” Voldemort smiled, then addressed Draco.

“What is your name?”

“Draco Cassius Malfoy,” replied Draco, not daring to look up.

“I’m sure you will do well,” Voldemort commented. “Now you, shy one.”

Harry pushed back his hood and it fell around his shoulders. There was a sharp intake of breath from the Death Eaters. They must have known that Harry was an adopted Malfoy, but they would not have dreamed that Lucius would have the guts to bring him before the Dark Lord. Voldemort’s eyes widened, but he kept his composure.

“Pray child, what is your name?”

“Harold James Potter.”

“Is this some kind of joke? Where did you find this boy who looks just like James Potter? WHERE?” Voldemort addressed Lucius.

“But I am Harry Potter,” protested Harry, forgetting himself in his indignation. “Do you want to see the scar you gave me?” The scar was very painful, he hoped Voldemort wouldn’t touch it.

Voldemort raised his wand, but thought better of it. “Come forward.” Harry stepped in through a gap in the circle and stood before Voldemort. He pushed the hair back from his forehead.

“From the Avada Kedavra curse,” mused Voldemort to himself.

“Yes.” Replied Harry.

“And you have come to destroy me have you?” Voldemort smiled. “Lucius was plotting to overthrow me after all. Is this his trump card?”

Harry answered quickly: “No, my lord! He’s done as you asked. He has brought you two loyal recruits.”

“I realise that my curse did not manage to kill you, but I rather think it has addled your brains, Harry Potter. I killed your parents. They screamed for mercy. Your father stood before your mother, protecting her, and I cut him down. Then your mother begged for your life and sacrificed herself for you. I planned to kill you, but the cunning woman had used her death to charm you. Now would you care to explain why you’ve decided to place yourself inside a circle of people who are all very willing to carry out what I at this moment cannot?”

“My name is Potter, but I am a Malfoy at heart. Lucius is my real father and he has taught me to love the Dark Arts as my own parents would not have. They would have restricted me and held me back. I am free without them, thank-you for that. Now I wish to learn from you, the only one who can teach me better than Lucius. In return, I will be loyal and obey your every command, my lord.” Harry kneeled before Voldemort and kissed the hem of his robe in a gesture of supplication.

“Never did I think I would see this day.” Voldemort threw his head back and laughed.

“Lucius, you are a worthy servant after all. Come and stand at my right hand. Now, stand up, Harry Malfoy, we have the formalities of initiation to perform upon you and your brother.

Draco was first to be given the Dark Mark; the black stain on his white arm looked like sacrilege. He took the mark, which was very painful, most bravely; a master of the impassive expression like his father. He was given a place in the circle, next to his father.

“Now Harry,” said Voldemort. “We must send the others away, for you and I must privately discuss your initiation, which has some conditions upon it.”

The others left the room, Draco looked back at Harry, distraught, but Harry smiled and made a dismissive gesture.

When they had gone, Voldemort stretched out his hand as if to touch Harry’s face, but stopped an inch before it. “You see Harry, for me to touch you now would probably kill me. That cheap trick of your natural mother is ingrained in your skin. We cannot have that, now can we?”

“How can it be reversed, my lord?”

“A potion, which will require your blood. I keep some magical ingredients in the cellar, go and fetch me these things: Asphodel, lacewings, beetle eyes . . .”

The list seemed endless. Harry tried his best to remember everything. The cellar was almost pitch-black. Lumos he whispered and his wand lit up. ‘“Some” magical ingredients’? thought Harry. It was almost as bad as Snape’s storeroom at Hogwarts, but considerably less organised. Harry gathered the components as fast as he could and ran back upstairs, laying everything before Voldemort on a dusty table.

“Good,” nodded Voldemort. “Now, you will make the potion. I will dictate.”

Oh great. why is Draco never around when I need him? Harry’s palms became sweaty. Voldemort did not criticise his potion making, but Harry got the impression he was being evaluated. When it was finished Voldemort called “Nagini!” and a huge snake slithered into the room, leaving wavy patterns in the dust.

Yes, master? It said.

“Your snake speaks!” exclaimed Harry.

“You can hear that?” Voldemort looked at him strangely.

“Yes.” I’m not deaf, thought Harry.

“Not everyone can understand Parseltongue you know, Harry.”

“Parseltongue?”

“The language of the snakes. It’s a very special gift. Only two in history come to mind:

Salzazar Slytherin and myself.”

“Cool.” Said Harry, forgetting himself. “Uh, I mean, I am honoured, my lord.”

Voldemort turned to the snake. Nagini, give Harry your poison for the potion.

“There,” he said, turning back. “milk her for poison, she will not harm you.”

Harry took and empty glass bottle and crouched down nervously. Now don't bite me, okay? I serve your master. No biting.

Wouldn't dream of it, replied Nagini, opening her mouth and bringing forth her fangs. Harry pushed one of them back, gingerly, and caught the drops of venom in the bottle. He was relieved when Voldemort said "enough." And withdrew his hand as fast as if it had been a bear trap. When he had added it to the cauldron, he turned back to Voldemort who smiled terribly and handed him a silver dagger.

"This is the part with the blood, isn't it?" Harry winced.

"Yes. Now prove your allegiance."

Harry had not been a troubled teenager. He had never been into poetry and self-harming: that was more Draco's department. He lowered the blade to his arm hesitantly; the coldness of steel against his skin was startling. At last he summoned the nerve, looked away and quickly nicked the skin to bring forth a bright line of blood, which then overflowed across his pale forearm and began to drip upon the floor. Trying not to instinctively double over in response to the pain, he moved to hold his injured limb over the cauldron and watched in amazement as the potion reacted to it like magnesium with water, fizzing and bubbling. Finally the liquid turned a brilliant crimson.

"Perfect," said Voldemort. Harry stepped back, hugging his arm and wrapping the sleeve of his robe around it. Voldemort ladled some potion into a goblet and looked up with his red eyes.

"You will be astonished by the results of this, Harry. You must remember the power of human blood: it gives the vampires eternal life and eternal youth. This will not give me eternity, but it will be a startling change. You took my life once, now see what you have given me." With that, he drank deeply.

The transformation certainly dramatic: Voldemort fell to his knees, his face contorting; he doubled over on the floor, his limbs twitching erratically until it seemed that he was one seething mass of black robes. When it finished Voldemort lay eerily still on the floor; Harry, who had moved against the wall in horror, heard a low, muffled laugh, then saw the Dark Lord getting to his feet. The first thing Harry noticed was shock of black hair —Voldemort had hair — then he saw a smooth, pale face with sculptured, sharp features; high cheekbones and pink lips with a distinct cupid's bow. Finally, eyes opened and there was a link of green on green.

"Tom Riddle," breathed Harry.

"I gave that name up long ago," said this handsome young man who was the Dark Lord.

Somehow he was more terrible than before; he walked forward and Harry wanted to run away, but he couldn't — he was up against the wall as it was. Voldemort brought both hands up and touched Harry's face. His scar no longer hurt him, some kind of effect of the potion, something to do with them being linked by blood. Voldemort's handsome features slid into a feral smile.

"You're mine now, Harry. Together you and I will rule the world. Now hold out your arm." He let go of Harry's face, Harry could feel the tingling where his hands had been. He stretched out his uninjured arm.

"The other one."

Harry pulled up his sleeve, hissing in pain as he straightened his still bleeding arm.

Voldemort took his wand, the image of Harry's own and healed it.

“You need no Dark Mark to bind you to me,” Voldemort explained. “We have an unbreakable connection.” He gave his lupine smile and touched Harry’s scar almost affectionately.

Part 8: The Right Hand of the Devil

Harry studied the Dark Arts with Voldemort continuously during the long summer. Deadly potions, illegal transformations and obscure histories were made known to him under Voldemort’s watchful eye. The tutor himself seemed to have forgotten about the Death Eaters completely, devoting all his energies to the training of his novice.

“You, Harry, are my first apprentice, did you know that? There was never another worthy of my wisdom.”

“I am honoured, my lord.” Harry was bent over a cauldron, stirring the Draught of the Living Death.

“To think I almost disposed of you. How foolish that would have been. I once hated you, I wanted to regain my power only to kill you. Now I see those years I spent in the wilderness were a triumph. You showed me that I cannot be killed – I shall always return. Ha, all those that call you The Boy Who Lived, their saviour. If only they could see you now.”

Harry had been faintly aware of Voldemort standing a pace behind him; now the Dark Lord stretched out a slender hand and touched the fine hairs on the back of Harry’s neck. The younger man stiffened and remained absolutely still, every muscle taut. No matter how many times he looked on that form, he could not reconcile himself to it. It was as if Voldemort wore a painted mask; it was that unreal, that faultless. Voldemort caught a lock of hair between finger and thumb and stroked it.

“I think,” he said “that it’s time you proved your devotion to your master. There is a kind of magic I have not taught you yet. A type that will require . . . physical . . . intimacy.” He gave one of his dry, rasping laughs, then kissed Harry’s neck.

Harry’s reaction was instantaneous and reflexive: he shrugged his shoulders, then spun around and shoved Voldemort back, crying “Don’t!”

Voldemort struck him hard across the face, for a moment letting his façade slip into an extremely ugly expression.

“How dare you command me! Don’t think I’m above using Crucio on you,” he gripped Harry’s arms.

Harry muttered “sorry,” but avoided his master’s eyes.

Voldemort laughed again. “Harry, I didn’t think you’d be this squeamish about being with another man. I thought Lucius would have taught you all about that. Or perhaps he is not as fond of young boys as I remember.”

Now there’s something I could’ve lived my whole life without ever knowing, thought Harry. “No . . .” he managed, “he never . . . he never touched us.”

“Well it’s time someone did, I think.” Voldemort released one arm and ran his long nails down Harry’s cheek. “You haven’t even been touched yet, have you? I want to be the first to take you.”

“You’re not the first,” Harry corrected him sharply, opening his eyes.

“Oh, I see. It is only my shape you find unpleasing. Well, you will learn that there is more to such acts than mere aesthetic appreciation. You will know pleasure and pain beyond endurance and you must understand that I will ruin you for any others you might wish to take. Now go upstairs, we’ve wasted

enough time already."

Harry hesitated.

"You are my apprentice and I am your master. There is no choice in this."

Harry turned and exited the room, mounting the stairs. He had often wondered if indeed Voldemort lived in this house: everything was covered in dust that looked as if it had never been disturbed. Upstairs he found the master bedroom and sat down on the iron-framed bed. The spaces in the iron work design were bridged with ancient brown cobwebs. He pulled his robe up over his head and coughed as his movement brought up a swirling dust cloud. He felt vulnerable lying down naked on the bed, but he had no desire to get under the mouldering covers. It was pitch black except for the firelight. Harry wondered if Voldemort always kept a fire burning up here, or whether he had planned all of this for tonight. The Dark Lord fantasising about him… how repulsive.

Voldemort followed him in a few moments. Harry closed his eyes as the Dark Lord undressed. He didn't want to see that waxen form.

"Open your eyes Harry. Look at me."

Harry took steadying breaths and obeyed. Voldemort was even paler than Draco . . . no, no more thoughts of Draco. Voldemort was androgynous except for that dreaded organ that Harry especially didn't want to look at; every rib could be seen and his limbs were thin, wasted-looking.

"Harry Potter, do you know how satisfying it is to see you stretched out before me like this?" Voldemort's voice was strangely mellifluous, hypnotic. He ran a finger down Harry's sternum, between his pectoral muscles to his stomach. Harry refused to tremble. "And you're afraid. Oh, I'm so glad that you are. You should be. I have such terrible raptures to bestow upon you."

"Can we skip the foreplay, master?" Harry hissed, dangerously.

"Such insolence. I really must cure you of that." Voldemort smiled and spittle gleamed on his teeth.

Harry had thought he was undressed before, but Voldemort's hands on him were stripping away more, he felt raw and flayed. He was sure that Voldemort now knew everything, he had Harry's memories in his hands. Like Imperius, Harry fought back against revealing what was important: Draco, he could never know of. This was what Lucius had meant when he said 'guard your thoughts', but if he had known of this, why had he even bothered to say it? It was impossible. The violation of his body was secondary to that of his mind.

Harry did not remember ever having cried, not since he was a very young child. Lucius had cured him of that habit as early as possible. Yet, that night when he got home, Harry sat up in the bath, hugging his knees to his chest and sobbed into his hands. He could still feel Voldemort's touches on him, they lingered like the vague sickly unsteadiness one encounters while lying in bed after getting off a boat. He felt like he would never be clean again. There was a soft rap on the door.

"Harry? Are you in there?"

"No. Go away."

"Alohamora." Draco entered, wearing his black silk dressing gown and closed the door behind him.

"Don't say anything. Don't ask me anything," said Harry, splashing water on his face in the hope it would hide that he had been crying; as if Draco, who knew him best of anyone, wouldn't recognise the distress

in his voice, in his eyes.

The blond youth clasped his hand over his mouth and stood back in horror. “He . . . gods! Harry, what the fuck did he do to you? I can see his marks all over your body.”

Harry looked down at himself. He could see only his own faintly tanned skin. “You can see it?”

“The prints of his hands,” breathed Draco. “It looks like . . . scar tissue.”

“I can’t see it.” Then he remembered something that made his stomach contract.

“Oh, by the way, your little blond lover won’t be so pleased to see you this evening.” Voldemort had added as Harry dressed.

“They’re for you. Only you can see them,” said Harry quietly.

Draco came closer and sat on the edge of the bath. “Did he hurt you?” Draco reached out, but his hand stopped an inch before Harry’s shoulder.

“I’m sorry, Draco.” Harry said, his voice sounded so artificial it was like Lucius’. “You were right, when you told me not to interfere with all this. We should have just fled. I thought I could take him on, but I can’t and now he’s destroyed me. You can’t even bear to touch me, can you?”

“Of course I can.” Draco embraced him tightly, stroking his hand up and down Harry’s back comfortingly. “His parlour tricks don’t make me jealous. Come on, let’s go to bed.”

Harry got out of the bath and was wrapped in a thick towel by Draco. They returned to the bedroom to find that a house elf had hung up Harry’s robe and emptied out the contents of his pockets onto the bedside table.

“What’s this?” Draco picked up a small glass phial.

“A potion that will induce a dreamless sleep. The Draught of the Living Death. Obviously Voldemort thought I’d need it.” Harry smiled weakly then took the phial from Draco and drained it.

Part 9: Initiation

Harry woke late the next day. He looked at his clock and was delighted to see that he was in time for lunch. He padded downstairs in his dressing gown and took his place opposite Draco at the table.

“Good afternoon my love.” Draco said, glancing up from his newspaper.

“Good afternoon. And where, pray tell, are our wonderful parental units?”

“Ah, father and Narcissa have gone to London for the day. I believe some of their vile friends are having a dinner party there this evening.” Draco glanced up again. “And how are you this morning, Harry? Are you feeling any better?”

“A little I suppose, but I think that’s because of you. I was frightened last night because I thought you would never forgive me.”

“Not forgive you for being raped? For being overpowered by the greatest wizard who ever lived?” Draco reached across the table and covered Harry’s hand with his own.

Harry smiled. “Somehow in the light of day, here with you, I am not afraid of him.”

“You shouldn’t be. You have magic Harry, greater than anything I’ve ever seen. You shouldn’t be afraid of him.”

It was one of those extremely rare sunny days of a British summer. Harry knew he should go as he had every other day and shut himself up in that dusty house with the Dark Lord to learn arcane secrets, but he had neither the willpower nor the inclination to go. Instead, He and Draco lay out on the lawn together underneath the copper beech tree. Draco read aloud to him from a book of poetry he had ‘liberated’ from a locked bookcase of ancient muggle writings in the Hogwarts library. It was in Latin; Harry was not as great a scholar of the dead language as Draco was, but he liked how it sounded in Draco’s voice and let himself drift into a light doze with his head in his lover’s lap. When the sun had moved far enough around that the tree was of no shelter, hot and bothered, they went skinny-dipping in the lake.

“The marks.” observed Draco as Harry stripped off. “They’ve gone.”

“Only a temporary glamour spell I imagine.” How had they seemed so like irrevocable scars last night?

The water was freezing cold, but they both overcame the initial shock of it by splashing each other and squealing childishly. Inevitably, in their state of nakedness, it all ended with Harry grabbing Draco about his waist and kissing him wantonly. Draco responded gently and clasped his arms around Harry’s neck.

“How about some impromptu shagging to frighten the house elves?” offered Harry.

Draco smiled lasciviously, but a pang of conscience made him change it for an earnest, searching expression. “You know I want to, but how about you? I mean . . .are you sure?”

“I’m not scarred for life Draco.” Harry kissed him again and pushed his lover up against the bank.

Draco laughed, a fresh sound that caught on the heavy air. “Oh, you’re in one of your dominant moods, are you? I suppose I could allow that.” He cleared his throat and fluttered his eyelids, then began his side of the role play in a breathy, feminine voice: “Oh, Mister Potter. What are you doing! Stop that, right now!” Harry grinned and nudged up against Draco more firmly.

“Don’t!” cried Draco

Harry suppressed the urge to laugh. He had to keep his side of the charade. He kissed and sucked Draco’s neck, leaving red marks where the blood rushed to the surface.

“Stop!” Draco protested.

Harry worked his kisses down to Draco’s weak spot, his collarbone. Draco moaned.

“Oh you wicked man! Don’t stop!”

Afterwards they lay on the grass and sunned themselves dry. Evening ,as coming on and so they dressed and retired inside. They sat together on the sofa in the living room and shared a bottle of wine before dinner.

“I was worried, once you know about us being . . . together.” said Draco.

“Did you write it in your diary? If so you can save me the trouble of explaining, I’ll just go and look it up. What was the date of entry?”

Draco laughed and swatted him. “Harry, you know, much as I love you, you are an utter git.”

“Alright, I’m sorry. Do continue. Why were you worried?”

“I suppose I used to turn it over in my head. I thought ‘what if I made a move on him and he said ‘no’?’ That would have killed me. But then, the equally confusing question was ‘what if I made a move on him and he said ‘yes’?’ I thought, that would be a whole new chapter of angsty torment in the Diary of Draco Malfoy.”

“And what of when I made a move on you?”

“Everything was suddenly simpler.” Draco took a deep draught of the pale wine, but kept eye contact over the rim of the glass.

“I know what you mean. You and I haven’t had a proper argument since then, have we?”

“No, we haven’t. It’s like . . . we were trying to compete with each other all our lives. We were jealous of each other. What we really needed to do was to join forces… it’s obvious really. I don’t know why we didn’t work it out sooner.”

Harry smiled and kissed Draco’s forehead, lingering close to him for a moment. Then he drew back with a grave expression and whispered. “I have a confession to make.”

“What?”

“You must understand that this is told in absolute secrecy. No one else must ever know.”

“You can tell me, my love.”

Harry looked about as if the very walls might be agents of espionage. Then he stage whispered: “The sorting hat wanted to put me in Gryffindor.”

Draco clapped his hand over his mouth in mock-horror. “Why would you tell me such a thing?”

“Well, it put me in Slytherin because I asked it too. I asked because I saw you sorted and I knew I couldn’t bear to be separated from you. I felt like it might kill me to face the world alone.”

“Semper deliciae meae! Parcae nobiscum, quis separabit?” Draco enthused and kissed

Harry.

“I beg your pardon?”

“Philistine,” muttered Draco. “I said: ‘Forever my love. The Fates are with us, who can separate us?’ but you ruined it. It was much more romantic in Latin.”

Harry had deliberately affronted Voldemort by his non-appearance that day. He had guessed it would not be without consequences. Before midnight, when they were just contemplating going to bed, Draco’s Dark Mark began to burn.

“Shit,” they said, in unison.

They had learned to apparate over the first month of summer, and did so, reluctantly, to appear in the clearing habitually used for the gatherings. They had taken the time to pull on their Death Eater robes and

masks. The others were already present, and they were the last to take their places in the circle. Voldemort did not look happy. His paper-thin skin seemed stretched across his harsh features.

“Mr. Potter, I see you have deigned to join us.”

Harry was reminded of Professor Snape, who by coincidence was also in the circle. Harry did not say anything. Speak only when asked a question, that was the best way to avoid an Unforgivable Curse in one of these meetings.

“And silent too.” Voldemort stood before him. “You’ve spent all day lounging about with this pretty little boy Malfoy, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” replied Harry, trying to keep the cockiness out of his voice.

“At least you admit it. Well Lucius, did you know about that?” Voldemort snapped his head around to stare at the shrouded figure of Lucius Malfoy. “Did you know what your sons get up to when you’re not around? Hmm?”

Lucius was silent.

Voldemort took steadying breaths. He turned his attention back to Harry, his voice becoming a low hiss. “Oh, I’ve tried to teach you Harry. I’ve tried to teach you supplication. I am your master and you should be obedient to me. I’ve tried to teach you through pain, through humiliation but you just don’t learn, do you?”

“No. Apparently not, master,” replied Harry, keeping his voice toneless.

“Crucio,” said Voldemort, with a sly smile. Harry felt a rending pain ripping through him, he fell to the ground, limbs convulsing like one in a fit. The screams he was making reached his own ears distantly through the haze of over-powering agony. Then he heard Draco shouting “stop!”. The pain did stop, but Voldemort was laughing. Draco was by Harry’s side in an instant. He pulled off Harry’s mask, having already removed his own, for they needed to see each other’s eyes for reassurance.

“Are you alright? Can you stand?” Harry nodded dumbly and climbed warily to his feet, one arm around Draco’s back for support.

Voldemort’s laughter trailed off. “Now isn’t that touching,” he sneered. “I think, Harry, my apprentice, that you need to be tested. Show me once and for all that you wish to have me for your master and not for your enemy.”

Harry drew himself up straight and let go of Draco.

“This one,” continued Voldemort, pointing at Draco. “I have no need for. This toy of yours is expendable. It is time for your true initiation, Harry. Kill this one.”

Harry drew his wand from inside his robes. He pointed it at Draco, who did not flinch.

“Do it now Harry,” warned Voldemort. “Do it or I shall kill him myself and then you. You cannot save him by hesitating.”

Harry ignored Voldemort. He looked over to Lucius.

“Father, do you think I should kill him?”

“Do what you must, Harry.” The voice did not betray emotion and Harry could not guess what expression

lay behind the mask.

“It is better to be the right hand of the Devil than in his path, that is what you taught me, isn’t it?” Harry mused on this. Voldemort remained silent, but held his own wand, ready to react. “And tell me, father,” Harry continued. “Where would you cry ‘stop’? Is there no one you wouldn’t give him, is there nothing sacred, not your own son?”

Silence.

“Very well then. I will kill him. He means nothing to me, and evidently nothing to you either.” Harry laid his wand against Draco’s chest. A curse rang out, but it was Lucius who cried the words.

“Crucio!”

The Dark Lord reeled, fighting off the curse. He dropped his wand. In an instant Harry had seized it. Voldemort recovered himself, but gnashed his teeth when he saw what had happened in his moment of weakness.

“Give it back to me boy! Give it back and I will forgive all your transgressions. You will not have to kill Draco. Now don’t be a fool and give me that wand.”

Harry toyed with it. “Do you know, when I got my first wand Mr. Ollivander said to me ‘the wand chooses the wizard’. But what if . . . the wand meant for me had already been sold. What if I only got the next best fit?” Harry dropped his own wand. Voldemort flinched, itching to pick it up but aware that the movement would leave him vulnerable.

“Oh, you can have that one. I no longer want it.”

“Don’t play games with me, boy.” Voldemort warned.

“It’s not much fun is it? Being powerless?”

“Don’t be a fool. I am the most powerful wizard in the world, I am your master and I have much to teach you…”

“I don’t think I like your teaching methods.” Harry retorted.

Voldemort snarled and made a sudden lunge for the wand that lay discarded on the ground, but as he did so Harry’s words rang out across the clearing: “Avada Kedavra.”

Harry was surprised how forceful the wand was compared to his own: it reacted as if it was part of him, channelling all the hatred and loathing he had for Voldemort into a single curse. Not even the Dark Lord could have worked that curse he was so familiar with so well. The body fell with a muted thud and all was silent for a long moment, but one by one, the Death Eaters removed their masks and cautiously came to peer at the body.

Oblivious to it all, even to Draco’s arms around him, Harry looked at the wand and smiled. Why not? If that fool could do it. “Stand back,” he commanded. “There will be a new order of things now. Those who wish to be destroyed may try to leave. Those who will serve me, come and kneel before me.”

The others stood bewildered, but Lucius came forward and sank on bended knee before Harry. He kissed the hem of Harry’s robe, then stood up and clasped Harry’s arms in a Roman embrace, enquiring “And what shall your title be, young master?”

“He Who Shall Not Be Named,” Harry replied with a terrible smile, then he burst out laughing, but in a harsh, ringing tone that made the others flinch.

“Go now, you will be called in the future.” He waved his hand dismissively and the Death Eaters began to disperse. Finally only Harry and Draco were left; they embraced tightly, until Draco pulled back and searched Harry’s face.

“He never had you for a moment, did he?”

“There were times I wasn’t so sure.” Harry admitted. He looked up to the house on the hill and sighed. “Oh what a pitiful inheritance. Somehow when he was here we were all impressed by his presence, but take away his glamours and what have we now? Nothing. An empty, dusty house. He was just an insubstantial threat. Even his knowledge was not very great. Was that his power, do you think? The confidence trick?”

“I have faith that there is real dark magic to be found Harry.”

“I hope so. Or else I have nothing left to strive for in life.”

“Well . . . if the dark arts fail you, there’s also Quidditch.”

“True, my love.” They apparated back to the grounds of Malfoy Manor and began to walk up the driveway.

“Harry, do you really want to be the next Dark Lord?”

“That’s Lord Harrymort to you. Yes, I do and now you shall be my consort.”

“Be serious Harry!”

Harry glanced sideways, impishly. “What? Would you rather I make an honest man of you? You could be Lady Harrymort.”

“Harry! I mean it! You frighten me sometimes. Do you really want to take his place?”

Harry stopped walking, and clasped Draco’s arms, turning him to face him.

“Look at me Draco, what do you think.”

Draco tried to fathom the expression in them, but he could not. His Dark Mark tingled suddenly. He rolled up the sleeve of his robe to discover that the stain marring his flesh had turned the same green as Harry’s eyes.

“I’m not your servant.” Draco said.

“No, of course not... you are right.” Harry smiled and placed his hand over the mark. When he drew back again it was gone, leaving only the faintest scar.

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