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Chapter: 1

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Sequel to: Corruption
Author's Notes: Thanks to Soph for the beta. The pieces that were floating around in my head after the end of Corruption finally made some sense, so here's the sequel.

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Harry's first thought as he woke was surprise that he had actually slept, which for a moment stopped his mind informing him what had caused him to wake. Lying perfectly still, he was frozen trying to work out what had so suddenly pulled him from what had been a dreamless rest.

"I wouldn't do that," Malfoy's familiar voice said in a warning tone, "he'll..."

Something touched Harry's arm and he knew what was troubling him as his senses became suddenly very clear and he reacted without even thinking. He twisted where he was lying, his hand coming up to snatch what he knew was a wand pointing at his shoulder and then he dragged his legs up towards himself, coming onto his feet on the bed. It did not occur to him to use the wand and he faced the very startled looking wizard, snarling his displeasure at the unfortunate individual.

"...see it as a threat," Malfoy finished with a definite 'I told you so' implied on the end.

Harry's instincts screamed at him to attack and he only just held on to himself as his conscious thoughts tried to make sense of what was happening.

"Harry, you are perfectly safe," the sound of one voice confirmed what his magical senses were

telling him, and grabbing on to the headboard with his free arm Harry looked across the room at Albus Dumbledore.

So many emotions hit him at the same time that he began to shake and he slowly slid down the wooden support, still clutching the wand he had taken by the wrong end. Part of him was insisting very loudly that he was in danger and he needed to rectify that, but he focused on Dumbledore's calm words and gasping at the effort, put the genie back in the bottle. His eyes flicked between the three people in the room: Dumbledore, Malfoy and the unknown wizard.

"Who are you?" he demanded of the stranger, needing something more to bring back the very sensitive balance in his impulse-saturated psyche.

"Auror Caveo," the man said slowly as Dumbledore nodded at him.

That didn't do a lot to settle Harry's nerves since he did not exactly trust the Ministry or any Aurors he did not know, but it gave his more logical aspect something to use. Before he could talk himself out of it, he threw the wand back at its owner and then hunched down further against the head of the bed, instinctively making himself a smaller target.

"Leave," he said shortly.

It was too soon for his control to be tested so blatantly. What a fully trained Auror had thought he was doing waking any dark creature at wand point, Harry had no idea; if Caveo made a habit of it the Ministry was likely to be down one employee in the near future.

"I don't think you are in any position to ..." the Auror tried to protest as he retrieved his wand.

Harry snarled and growled, showing the wizard a mouth full of very sharp teeth. He wasn't really aware if any other changes occurred in his physical form, but the man took a step back.

"Perhaps is would be best for you to wait outside for a moment, Auror Caveo," Dumbledore interposed smoothly before the disagreement could go any further; "Harry has been through a terrible ordeal and we would not want anything untoward to occur because of the duress of the situation."

The Auror appeared very uncertain about that idea, and the way Caveo gripped his wand in a tighter fashion, Harry was not sure the headmaster was going to win this discussion. Then he felt it; a calm, serene feeling emanating from Dumbledore and he saw the Auror begin to relax. The revelation, rather than the actual influence caused him to sit down in shock.

"Harry and I will have a little chat," Dumbledore said pleasantly, "and then I am sure we will be able to clear up what happened here."

"Mr Malfoy is in custody," Auror Caveo said with a nod, "I will have to take him with me."

For the first time this really focused Harry's attention on Malfoy and he did not like it one little bit when the Ministry employee reached out and took hold of the Slytherin's arm. Malfoy appeared tired and resigned and Harry could not prevent the low growl in the back of his throat as a rather startling, possessive and protective feeling rose in his chest.

"Mr Malfoy is also perfectly safe," Dumbledore said smoothly as the Auror looked perturbed and ready to do something stupid, "he is in custody for his own protection."

Harry did not believe that for a second, but he felt the calming influence coming his way and, fighting the instinct to swat it away, he let it through his defences. It was a remarkably good feeling and he was grateful for it even though he knew he was being manipulated.

"I will notify you when Harry is calmer," Dumbledore said pleasantly and the Auror nodded and led Malfoy out of the room.

As the two wizards disappeared behind the closing door, one source of danger disappeared off his radar, but that rather focused all of Harry's attention on the headmaster instead. This caused some very conflicting emotions to try and take precedence in his brain all at the same time: shame; hope; fear; anger and more. He wanted to scream and shout, to demand of his mentor why he had let this happen to him; and he wanted to throw himself into the wizard's arms and beg him to make it go away; all at the same time.

"Oh, My Poor Child," Dumbledore said as soon as they were alone, sitting himself down on the side of the bed no more than a foot from Harry, "what did that monster do to you?"

Then he opened his arms and Harry went to him instantly. There was no fear in Dumbledore at all as he wrapped Harry in a paternal embrace and it meant more to Harry than any words could possibly express. He sobbed as he was held tightly and for a moment he was nothing but human.

The calm did not last long, however, as reality made itself known. Something in him informed him quite how much magic was flowing through Dumbledore and what a feast it would make, and the slow thudding of the wizard's heartbeat called to him in a most alluring way. He pushed himself away as soon as these ideas entered his head; he was not hungry and they were easy to cast aside, but that they were there at all frightened him.

"Don't trust me," he said shortly, wiping the tears from his face with one sleeve and moving away from his source of comfort.

Dumbledore folded his hands into his lap and just looked at Harry for a few moments.

"I would trust you with my life, Young Man," the headmaster said calmly, "no matter what magic resides within you."

"It might not be your life I decide to take," Harry shot back, suddenly annoyed.

Dumbledore's unwavering faith in him was suddenly irritating and he had to take a deep breath to stop himself acting on the emotion. He was dangerous; he'd shown that to Voldemort very distinctly and he needed Dumbledore to understand quite how lethal he was.

"How often do you influence people like you did to Caveo?" he asked bluntly, it was the least offensive way he could think of to illustrate how different he was.

Surprisingly the headmaster did not react with shock or anger, Dumbledore simply nodded.

"Ah, yes," the old wizard said calmly, "I was led to believe you may had sensed that by your reaction. It is a talent I inherited from Grindelwald after our encounter, and one which I use sparingly. It can be unproductive when used inappropriately, but I have found that it can be most useful in diffusing volatile situations until alternatives may be found."

For a moment Harry's curiosity overcame his annoyance.

"You inherited power from Grindelwald?" he asked, shocked by the revelation.

"When two powerful wizards meet in combat to the death it is inevitable," Dumbledore explained patiently, "although it is not a fact many like to accept. Magic is energy, Harry, and it cannot be destroyed, only changed and redistributed; when a magical person dies their power has to go somewhere and with someone as powerful as Grindelwald or Voldemort a particular talent can often remain intact to be passed to another. As Voldemort passed some of his magical ability to you as a baby due to the effects of the Killing curse, so Grindelwald passed certain powers to me when we fought and he died."

It was quite a radical piece of information to take in and something nasty occurred to Harry.

"I killed Voldemort," he said slowly and could not contain the glare he send Dumbledore, "does that mean on top of everything else I'm dealing with him as well?"

"You, My Dear Boy," the headmaster replied, "are a unique case, since Voldemort had already passed a significant part of his abilities to you. However, it may be that you have picked up some other talents along the way. But, please try to remember that it is not Voldemort himself who may have been passed along, but his magical abilities; nothing to be afraid of."

Harry laughed at that; a humourless, cold laugh.

"The Ministry must be terrified," he said blackly; "an unclassifiable Dark creature with the power of the Dark Lord. If I was them I'd have tried to kill me while I was asleep."

That produced the first frown from his companion and Dumbledore actually appeared mildly upset by Harry's pronouncement. Distressingly, Harry found that part of him enjoyed the headmaster's discomfort.

"Harry," Dumbledore said firmly, "I do not pretend to understand what you must be going through, but I promise you this: you will not be going through it alone and you will not be abandoned to the Ministry. Several members of the Order are already here and, shall we say, arrangements had been made to make sure that your involvement with Voldemort's demise cannot be down played."

"I stuck my fingers into his chest and pulled out his heart," Harry responded snidely. "How's that for dying at the hand of the other; fulfil the prophecy okay? Don't know what the unknown power was; Voldemort knew exactly what he put into me."

Dumbledore looked him directly in the eye then.

"I think perhaps it may have been referring to your strength of character," the headmaster said evenly.

Harry really didn't know what to say to that and silence descended as he looked away, unable to deal with his own reaction.

"What about Malfoy?" he asked eventually, changing the subject in an effort to continue the conversation.

"His situation is somewhat complicated," Dumbledore admitted honestly, "due to his Dark Mark. He has also been less than forthcoming about what exactly occurred last night. If you do not mind me observing the fact; I was somewhat surprised to find Mr Malfoy on our side."

That caused Harry to smile rather coldly.

"He wasn't exactly," he observed, "he is on his own side and that hasn't been Voldemort's for some time. I saw his mother after ... when I went down to find Voldemort and I almost killed her, but she wanted to know if he was still alive. I told her to take him and leave and not come back. I don't know why they didn't."

It was difficult to admit what he had done even though the darkness in him revelled in the memory and wanted to do it again. That a part of him felt as if Malfoy somehow belonged to him was unsettling to say the least.

"What happened, Harry?" Dumbledore asked gently.

Harry looked at his hands; the memory brought with it excitement and shame in such equal parts that he had to take long seconds to gather himself.

"Did he tell you he was a prisoner?" The headmaster nodded. "Did he explain why?"

"Mr Malfoy seemed reticent to explain that particular happenstance," Dumbledore replied.

"He took the Dark Mark willingly," Harry said quietly, "but I don't think he understood what it meant. Once Voldemort had him he wanted all of him, body and soul; Malfoy refused to be made a play thing. Voldemort imprisoned him until he complied. He never did and so Voldemort decided to feed him to his new creation; me."

He paused, taking a deep breath and fighting down the desire to destroy something that accompanied the confusion he was feeling.

"When I woke up, Malfoy explained what had happened," Harry began again, "and he looked after me when the magic started to change me. He was just lying there when I woke up, like he knew there was nothing he could do."

He had to stop again.

"The hunger," he tried to explain, "it changes everything. He was mine, the prey, and I didn't even think about stopping. I could have killed him."

"But you did not," Dumbledore said firmly.

Harry laughed derisively.

"No," he agreed, "but that didn't stop me doing other things. I did what he wouldn't let Voldemort do and then I drank his blood as well. I left him unconscious on the bed and yet he came back for me. Why did he come back?"

"Perhaps because you did not do exactly what Voldemort would have done," the headmaster said calmly. "You were under the influence of very strong magic, Harry, that you did not kill ...."

"You don't understand," Harry almost shouted, "I still am under that influence; it's never going away."

He heard his voice change as dark power flowed around him body and resonated through his chest.

"He's mine," he said before he could pull himself back under control.

Breathing hard he wrapped his arms around his chest. He could not look at Dumbledore, afraid to see the effect his loss of control would have had on his mentor.

"I can't stop it," he whispered dejectedly.

A hand on his shoulder caused him to jump, and he looked up at the now standing headmaster accusingly.

"There are ways we can help you, My Boy," Dumbledore told him in a tone which begged no

argument. "Trust me, Harry; we will bring you through this."

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Harry was sitting on the edge of the bed staring straight ahead when he felt the wards on the room change. The Occlumency training he had been through over the entirety of the previous year was helping somewhat, but he could not find the calm centre that he needed to make it completely effective. Without the hunger driving him, the instincts running through his body were easier to keep in check, but they were disturbing and he was uncomfortably aware that sooner or later the hunger would return.

Dumbledore had remained with him for over an hour and they had talked, but Harry had found many of the reassurances hollow and had had to curb his tongue several times. There had been a few instances where he hadn't managed it and sitting on the desire to make Dumbledore more and more uncomfortable had been difficult. The fact that the headmaster always appeared calm was a great feat in self control as far as Harry could tell, because he had not been able to ignore some of the stronger emotions coming from his mentor. Since Dumbledore had left, Harry had been trying to simply not think anymore.

He turned to look at the door just as it opened; Professor Snape walked in.

"Good afternoon, Mr Potter," the dour man greeted shortly, "I have been sent to fetch a blood sample."

That was another thing Dumbledore had mentioned; he had told Harry that finding out which of Voldemort's additions had taken and which had not was an unavoidable top priority; the Ministry was insisting on it. That he was going to be a lab rat was something that annoyed him, but was also inevitable. He was a thing never seen before; the Ministry was never going to just let him walk away. Dumbledore had insisted that the information was required so they could help him; Harry was pretty sure it was more likely the Ministry wanted to find out his weaknesses.

He could not help the bitter amusement this caused in him and Snape's turn of phrase made him smile menacingly.

"Going to trade?" he asked, baring his teeth for good measure.

That earned him an unimpressed, raised eyebrow from the Potions' Master. Over the previous year it could not be said that they had become friends, but they had made peace. Harry had returned for his sixth year a much more serious student, completely dedicated to preparing for his confrontation with Voldemort. This new attitude had not initially made much impact on Snape; but after they had had a very loud, very long argument after one of his Occlumency lessons they had reached an understanding. A truce had been called.

"I taste of dank dungeons and unpleasant potions' ingredients, Mr Potter," Snape replied coolly,

"I doubt you would find me palatable."

Harry gave a rather self depreciating laugh at that.

"That wouldn't stop me if I was hungry, Professor," he said plainly.

"Ah yes, but, Mr Potter," Snape returned, putting down the equipment he had brought will him; "I am a Slytherin and as such would not be stupid enough to come in here if you were hungry."

The retort that came to mind involved pointing out to Snape how one Slytherin had already had the misfortune of finding out about his new nature personally, but that brought enough conflict with it into his mind that he managed to keep his mouth shut.

"So what is the latest consensus of opinion, Professor," Harry asked, distracting himself from his thoughts; "do the Ministry want to dispose of me as quickly as possible, or preserve me for future study?"

"I think the factions are equally matched," Snape replied in complete seriousness as he picked up a container and checked it carefully. "If you would roll up your sleeve, Mr Potter."

There was definitely a big part of Harry that felt like refusing and telling the man to go and do interesting things to himself, but he bit his tongue and took hold of the sleeve of the silk pyjamas he was wearing. If there was one thing he knew, it was that with Snape on the job it would be done properly; the Potions' Master was nothing if not methodical.

Snape walked over and calmly tied an inch wide rubbery type material covered in some interesting patterns, around the crook of Harry's arm; then the Potions' Master touched the material with his wand and muttered something. Harry felt a slight shift in the magic of the device, it tightened so that it was flush with his skin and then there was a prickling sensation. The vessel in Snape's other hand began to fill.

Harry could not help staring as the small bottle began to fill; his blood was as red as normal, but in it swirled black and silver stripes of colour.

"Professor," he asked quietly as the sight took away most of his ability to speak, "can you help me?"

"I will try, Mr Potter," Snape said evenly, "I will try."

Dragging his eyes away from the bottle Harry waited in silence for it to fill; it didn't hurt, but the sensation was unpleasant and quite a percentage of him was not comfortable with the procedure. The knowledge that his blood might be used against him did not help either and he stared at the wall trying to ignore what was going on.

"How are you coping?" the question from Snape sounded awkward and caught Harry off guard.

He looked back at the head of Slytherin without trying to hide his surprise.

"Any information may be useful in assisting my efforts," Snape clarified, but his tone of voice had been anything but clinically professional.

"I have no control," Harry replied bitterly and glared back at the jar, "even the Occlumency isn't working properly. I can't shut it all down."

Snape did not reply for some time and eventually Harry looked up at his companion.

"There are many different aspects to your person now," the Potions' Master said thoughtfully, "it may be productive to attempt to calm each one individually."

That was an idea that had not occurred to Harry and it made a kind of twisted sense. Rather than dwelling on what he could not do he let his mind churn over that possibility and for a while he forgot that Snape was there at all.

"We are done, Mr Potter," the warning brought Harry back to the present and he looked up to find Snape waiting to be acknowledged.

Only when he nodded at the wizard did Snape move forward and tap the band on his arm once more. Typically cautious, typically Slytherin and for once Harry appreciated the trait: he already knew he was not good when startled.

"I will give half the sample to the Ministry," Snape told him calmly as the Potions' Master packed away his equipment, "and I shall return to Hogwarts with the other. Should I make any progress I will deliver the information personally."

Yet again Harry was surprised; they were no longer antagonists, but that did not mean that they spoke if they did not have to and Snape's reassurances were uncharacteristic. Not being good at keeping his mouth shut at the best of times, Harry could not help himself now.

"Are you trying to be nice to me?" he really wasn't quite sure, and he almost felt like the condemned man being given anything he wanted as a last meal.

Snape looked at him coolly for a moment and then inclined his head slightly.

"It is not a role I fit well, Mr Potter," the man admitted, "I shall desist if it bothers you."

Harry laughed at that; Snape was such a peculiar man.

"Why?" he asked pointedly.

"I feel I have underestimated you, I wished to rectify the situation," his companion said evenly.

"I have always known you are stubborn, Mr Potter, but I mistook obstinacy for strength of character. The whole Wizarding world owes you more than they will ever be able to repay for ridding us of Voldemort," Harry was quite surprised when the ex-Death Eater spoke his one time master's name without hesitation, "some of us more than others. I do not believe the Ministry will treat you fairly; they are fools. I simply wished you to know that I will not be one of those who wish to sweep your position or your contribution under the carpet."

For a moment Harry looked Snape directly in the eye and then he finally blinked.

"Thank you," he said genuinely.

Then the Potions' Master picked up his equipment, turned in a flurry of robes, and was gone. Harry watched him leave and found himself strangely comforted by Snape's plain and simple words.

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Lunch arrived shortly after Snape left and a house elf walked in carrying a large tray. Harry really was not very hungry even in the human sense, but he accepted the offering from the eager to please elf and placed it on the bed beside him. Uncovering it, he found a veritable feast of delights, although nothing really appealed to him.

Eventually he picked up a fork and tentatively poked at a moist-looking portion of steak and kidney pie. Putting a small piece of the suet pastry into his mouth he chewed hesitantly, remembering his last encounter with food. He almost managed to swallow it, but in the end he spat it out, unable to stop the nausea that threatened as he tried to eat it.

It took him a few more seconds to pluck up the courage to try again; his stomach was not happy about the idea of real food for some reason, even though he knew for a fact that some of the dark creatures forced upon him had no problem with playing at being human. This time he tried the meat rather than the casing and this worked a little better; the flavour was definitely inviting and he found that after chewing it into a complete pulp he could actually swallow it. When it hit his stomach there was a moment he thought it might come back again, but it stayed down.

It was a ridiculously small victory, but he found himself smiling anyway and set about eating what he could. In the end it was quite a bizarre divide of things he could manage to swallow and those that he couldn't. He had thought at first that he might now be an exclusive carnivore, but some of the vegetables had been fine, as had part of the dessert. By the time he pushed the tray away he was pretty sure that he was going to have to learn all over again what he liked and disliked.

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The reprieve from having to talk to the Ministry representatives could not last forever and his time ran out an hour or so after lunch. He had no idea what time it was exactly, since no one

had seen fit to tell him what time he had actually woken up, but the sun was still in the sky if the light coming through the curtains was anything to go by. He had been afraid that light would bother him since he clearly had vampire tendencies, but although it was more comfortable without bright sunlight streaming into the room it was not too much of a problem.

He was once again attempting to practise his Occlumency, this time sitting in the centre of the bed with his legs crossed, when the door opened once again. Caveo walked in with his wand in hand, followed by Tonks; Harry gave both Aurors a quick glance and then focused on the one he did not know. He was not inclined to like Caveo after their previous meeting and since his instincts were telling him the man had removed what was his as well, he was not in the best of moods.

"You could have knocked," he said icily.

The Auror was somewhat taken aback by that; it had obviously never occurred to him.

"They don't teach politeness in Auror training," Tonks said brightly and sat down in a chair as she fell over her own feet next to it.

Somehow she almost made it look like she meant to do it. Having had his attention caught, Harry could not help looking at Tonks, who had become a good friend since Sirius' death; it was not the way she appeared, it was the way she felt. His magical sense did not seem to know how to classify her and it was trying really hard.

"We need to take a statement," Caveo interrupted his musing, which earned the man a black look from Harry.

He growled low in his throat for good measure and looked back at Tonks again.

"What happened after you were captured?" the Auror continued anyway.

The dark part of Harry suggested some interesting ways to eviscerate the annoying official and he dug his fingers into his leg to prevent himself doing anything he might regret.

"They used a portkey to bring me here," Harry said without trying to hide his annoyance, "and then they drugged me and put me through two days of hell, followed by a very interesting evening with Draco Malfoy, after which I killed Voldemort. There is nothing more, that's it."

"The ceremony used requires subject participation," Caveo said hotly at his dismissal and that was almost more than Harry could take.

He stood up in one swift movement and was very close to throttling the Auror and ripping out his windpipe just to make sure. He saw Tonks move out of the corner of his eye and he knew that there were two wands trained on him as he pulled himself up short. Standing on the bed he towered over the Auror and the wizard appeared somewhat uncomfortable.

"Are you trying to suggest that I wanted this?" he all but hissed at the man. "I was drugged up to the eyeballs, I don't remember most of it; for all I know I put on a tutu and danced the dying swan. If you think I agreed to any of this then you're a bigger fool than I already think you are."

Turning he jumped off the side of the bed and walked away from Caveo, just to make sure he couldn't do anything to the man without having to at least cover some distance. He had to maintain control; losing it in front of the Ministry's finest would not help him at all.

"So you admit that you could have been an active participant in the ceremony?" Caveo really seemed to have a bee in his bonnet about that point.

"I did not want to have Merlin knows how much magic forced into me," Harry said pointedly, picking up a pillow and clutching it to himself in an attempt to give his hands something to do. "I did not willingly do anything, but it's very difficult to fight off the Imperius curse when you can't remember your own name."

"Yet you have had relations with a known Death Eater," Caveo countered.

That rather drew up Harry short as he failed to comprehend what the Auror was implying.

"Draco Malfoy," Caveo clarified.

Now Harry laughed rather hysterically; the man was more of a moron than he had given him credit for. This was almost as ridiculous as Fudge refusing to believe that Voldemort had returned. Disbelief morphed into anger very quickly.

"Relations," Harry spat at the Auror, unable to keep his anger from the surface, "is that what you call it? You want to know what relations really means? I raped him. Voldemort put me in a room with him so that when I changed I would attack him and then kill him; and I woke up and decided he was mine. He didn't even have a wand and I just took him; he never stood a chance. If I hadn't wanted Voldemort dead so badly that I could taste it, Merlin knows what I would have done to him."

He was shouting by the time he had finished and he was almost angry enough to lose it completely. He was shaking, trying to maintain control and his fingers were shredding the pillow.

"Get out," he growled; knowing that if Caveo tried to accuse him of one more thing he would be pushed too far.

"But..." the Auror tried to protest.

"Now!" Harry yelled, backing himself into a corner to keep as far from the man as possible.

Tonks was moving, but Caveo seemed undecided.

"Do you want to die?" Harry demanded, barely in control.

Tonks took charge and even if Caveo did not believe Harry was serious, she did, and she pushed her fellow Auror towards the door. How dare they suggest that he had been complicit in the abomination that he had been put through; it was almost more than Harry could believe. He was so angry he could barely contain himself.

"Never let him back in here," he snarled as Tonks pushed Caveo out of the door, and he meant it; Harry did not know what he would do if he ever saw the man again.

The moment the door closed he let fly with the pillow and feathers went everywhere; then he set about destroying anything within reach. He did not know what powers he was using as things began to explode and the bed did not stand a chance as he went at it with supernatural strength.

After Harry destroyed half the room he sat down in the middle of it and didn't move for a good long time. The anger would not fade, but the chaos he was causing was not enough to appease it and he gave up trying, taking the battle into his mind instead. He let bloody scenario after bloody scenario play over and over in him thoughts, unheeding of what effect these gruesome and out of control ideas had on his body. He felt himself shift and change: teeth grew and shrank; scales appeared under his clothes and faded again; spines ripped little holes in the silk before disappearing once more; shapes jumped at him from all over the room as his eyesight became more acute; the wards on the room began clear to his senses; he could hear the conversation between the two Aurors outside his door. He ignored it all and just let it happen as he fumed in outrage at the accusation against him.

The effect was rather unexpected as the whole process became a macabre meditation and eventually he found himself calming down. He was surprisingly tired as his perceptions faded back to normal and he glanced around the room stupidly for a few moments, taking in the devastation he had caused. It occurred to him that maybe he should do something about the mess, but he felt lethargic and un-inclined to move any more than he had to. In the end he pulled the still intact sheet off the partially shredded mattress, dragged over a cushion from the smashed armchair and curled up where he was. It did not take him long to fall asleep.

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The dream was so clear it almost felt as if he was there, but Harry knew this was not real. He was not at the Ministry and he was not walking behind two Aurors escorting Draco Malfoy to an interrogation room. The feeling of being detached and not a part of action told him that he was dreaming, but it did not mean he felt any more secure. Something was going to happen; he knew that as surely as he knew his own name, and it was almost as if he was holding his breath waiting to find out what was going on. This was important and it had all of his attention.

"Harry," a voice interrupted his watching.

It was not as important as his dream, so he tried to ignore it.

"Harry," the voice came again, and he felt the dreamscape shift as his conscious mind started to become aware.

He needed to see what was going to happen and he tried to hang on to the dream, but other things were making themselves known to his mind now and he was pulled from sleep. He opened his eyes as his other senses informed him that there was someone standing a few feet to his left and that person was not human. Instincts kicked in before he had any chance to control them and he came to his feet as a large black wolf in the tatters of the pyjamas he was wearing.

Remus stood very still as Harry approached him and Harry sniffed around the werewolf taking in the fresh, earthy scent that his instincts told him belonged to kin. It was peculiar to find that part of his personality had taken such complete control of him, but the human, logical part of his mind could do nothing except sit back and watch as the werewolf part of him satisfied its curiosity.

Remus held out his hand for Harry to snuffle and the sudden fear he had smelt on his companion receded as Remus began to relax. There was no attempt at any contact which Harry did not initiate, but it was clear that his friend was adjusting to the situation.

"I am sorry to wake you," Remus apologised even as Harry continued to investigate the different scents coming from him, "but it took a lot of persuading on Albus' part to get me in here at all. I do not know how long we will have."

Circling the werewolf, Harry came back to Remus' front and looked up at his friend's face. The wolf in him seemed satisfied and, with control once again his, he flowed back to human form. Rather embarrassed that he had just wrecked his only clothes he grabbed the sheet he had been sleeping in and wrapped it around himself.

"Sorry," he apologised as what he had been doing caught up with him, "I..."

He wasn't sure how to explain and he trailed off.

"Were at the mercy of instincts that took you by surprise?" Remus offered kindly.

Harry nodded, grateful for his friend's understanding.

"I know the feeling," Remus admitted with a slight smile; "even with the Wolfsbane potion I still feel the pull. I do believe I peed all over Sirius once while we were staying at Grimauld Place, and he never let me forget it."

The deadpan delivery was Harry's undoing and he found himself genuinely laughing for the first time in what felt like forever. It then dawned on him what Remus had just admitted.

"You peed on him," Harry asked in surprise, "but doesn't that mean..."

"That I was marking him as mine and telling everyone else to back off?" Remus added in smoothly. "Yes, that would be true. Sirius and I were more than friends for some time, but there was never the opportunity to explain it to you."

Harry found it a nice surprise to discover that there were revelations in the world that did not centre around him; he actually managed a real smile.

"That explains so many things," he said honestly and then looked around the room; "I'd offer you a seat, but I think I smashed them all."

"Tonks told me about her colleague's idea of taking a statement," Remus said, becoming serious again; "I believe that so far six people have had words with him. Most impressive was Minerva."

"Professor McGonagall is here?" Harry asked, surprised.

Remus nodded.

"Albus had to return to the school," the werewolf explained calmly, "and Minerva came to take his place here. The Order is watching everything the Ministry is doing very carefully; there will be no sweeping facts under the carpet for public relations reasons."

Harry had not quite believed that what Dumbledore had promised was true, but he was beginning to think that maybe he was being more pessimistic than necessary.

"Would you mind if I rectify some of this damage?" Remus asked politely, not moving for his wand as he tested the waters.

Taking a step back because he did not quite trust himself that much, Harry nodded. He was not sure how much Remus could repair, but he regretted making such a mess and destroying his living environment and he hoped his friend could help. Remus pulled out his wand in a very deliberate and controlled manner, but Harry still felt himself react to the possible threat. He pulled the sheet around his body a little tighter and looked way, holding on to the instinct to defend himself.

Remus went about his business quickly and efficiently and when he had finished one chair was back together, the bed had been repaired in that the mattress was back on the frame which was no longer in four pieces, and all the rest of the damage had been banished to one corner.

"Perhaps we should give you transfigured furniture until you can control you temper," Remus pondered reasonably; "it is much easier to just transfigure something back than to repair real objects."

"Might be an idea," Harry agreed, climbing onto the bare mattress and sitting down.

Perversely he felt more at ease in Remus' presence than he had in anyone else's; a section of his brain recognised his companion as similar to himself and it helped somehow. He was not comfortable with himself and he did not trust his instincts enough to sit any closer to Remus than the few feet away he was now, but it was better than with all the others he had met so far.

It occurred to Harry that Remus was probably the nearest person he had to someone who could understand what he was going through, and he had questions, but he really didn't know how to start.

"With Sirius," he began eventually, trying to decide how to phrase what he was thinking, "were you ... umm ... possessive as well, or was it just when you were a wolf?"

"You mean did I ever want to pee on him when I was a man as well as at full moon?" Remus clarified with a smile.

Harry appreciated his friend's attempt to lighten the mood and managed a small smile before he nodded.

"Sometimes," Remus admitted calmly, "usually around the time of my transformation. I was lucky, I was bitten when I was very young and by the time I had to interact with people other than my family, I had learned to control the wolf even when it was close to the surface. Adjusting to the instincts and the fact that it is not just at full moon that you are affected can be the most difficult part of becoming a werewolf for some. Since you seem to be able to change at will I can only assume you are assailed by this problem all of the time."

"And other things," Harry replied quietly with a nod.

Remus gave him an understanding smile.

"I may only be a werewolf," his companion said seriously, "but you can talk to me about anything, Harry. Whatever you need to get off your chest, just tell me, I won't judge you."

And Remus was probably the only person from whom that phrase could have rung true. Harry gave his friend a long, appraising look and then he began to talk. Everything seemed to want to come tumbling out of his mouth at the same time and he just started speaking as if his life depended on it.

Remus sat and listened patiently, offering phrases of comfort and understanding whenever Harry ran out of words, and Harry felt as if it was the greatest gift anyone had given him. He spoke of what he remembered of the ceremony; how afraid he had been when he realised what was happening; how out of control he felt now; and how good it had been to kill Voldemort. He confessed the he had enjoyed the slaughter and how the memory of it brought part of him

pleasure, and he explained how he feared the return of the hunger which seemed able to bury his humanity. Remus never interrupted him and he never tried to tell him that these things were terrible; the werewolf just listened and accepted.

When they were finally interrupted, Harry felt as if he had been speaking forever. A light tap on the door stopped him in mid sentence and then Tonks put her head into the room.

"Caveo is being a prat again," the Auror apologised quickly; "Remus, time to leave before Mr I'm-in-charge-of-this-operation-so-I-am-God finds you in here."

The werewolf stood up with an apologetic smile.

"I'll come back when I can," Remus promised faithfully.

"Thank you," Harry responded genuinely, but he didn't know what else to say.

He stood up and stepped off the bed quickly, wrapping Remus in a one-armed hug, since the other was still occupied holding up his sheet. The werewolf hugged him back and patted him on the shoulder as they pulled back from each other.

"Stay strong, Harry," Remus said warmly, "we're here for you."

It was only as his companion turned and walked towards the door that Harry remembered the dream Remus had interrupted. For some reason it felt important and there were things he needed to know.

"Have they taken Malfoy to the Ministry?" he asked quickly, before he was left alone again.

Tonks and Remus shared a look and then Tonks shrugged.

"No," she replied openly, "we aren't moving anything including people until tomorrow. Why, did you want to see him?"

Harry shook his head rapidly; he didn't think he could cope with that right then.

"No," he said quickly, beginning to think that his dream had just been a rather vivid fantasy, "um, thanks."

He turned away from the door, not sure what to make of the insistence on the part of his subconscious that the dream meant something.

"I'll have some supper and some clothes sent up," Remus said as he left the room, but Harry was too wrapped up in his own thoughts to really pay much attention.

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Malfoy was a few feet in front of him between the two Aurors and they were walking down the corridor: it was the same scene he had dreamed before. There were two people coming from the other direction and the Aurors each had hold of one of Malfoy's arms to prevent any attempt at escape. It was a perfectly calm scene and yet Harry felt as if his life would be in danger at any moment.

It wasn't until the woman, who looked like an ordinary file clerk, walked past the small group and stopped that anything strange happened. Then everything seemed to slow down as Harry watched her drop the papers she was carrying to reveal a drawn wand. She turned on the spot and pointed it straight at Malfoy and the syllables of the killing curse dropped from her mouth.

There was nothing the two Aurors could do as the green flash lanced straight at their charge; both were thrown aside as spell collided with wizard.

"You'll not buy your way out of this one, Malfoy," the woman said resolutely as her victim crumpled to the ground.

Harry sat up, breathing hard and with an overriding need to wail his distress into the night. It was so strong that keeping it inside physically hurt and he suddenly knew what the dream was: it was a premonition of death and the banshee in him knew the truth of it. For long seconds he stared into the darkness, unable to bring himself to do anything as the image of Malfoy engulfed in green flame played over and over again in his mind's eye.

Someone he was connected to was going to die and the banshee wanted to scream his distress into the world, but he was not just a banshee and he did not have to impotently wail his grief over the countryside. Pulling himself together as well as he could he moved to the door and began banging on it.

"I need to talk to Dumbledore," he called through it, desperate to do something to change what he had seen.

He managed to control himself enough to step away from the door knowing that the wards would indicate to those outside that he was no longer close. He expected his guards to open up and find out what he needed, but he waited for a good few minutes as nothing happen. Walking back to the barrier between himself and the outside world, he banged again.

"Open this bloody door," he demanded, not liking the fact that he was being ignored one little bit.

"We can't do that, Mr Potter," a voice replied eventually, "our orders are no one in and no one out. Go back to sleep."

Harry boiled over and lunged at the door. His hand connected with the handle and he felt the wards trying to fight him off, but he was not about to let them win. There were some very

serious locking charms and powerful barrier magic between him and the outside, but he didn't remotely care. Letting the banshee's instincts and a collection of other talents rise to the surface, he twisted the handle viciously and wrenched open the door. The Aurors on either side of the door jumped back instantly, drawing their wands and rounding on him.

"Albus Dumbledore or Minerva McGonagall, now!" Harry bellowed at the startled Ministry employees and then he stepped back into the room and slammed the door very loudly.

If that had not woken up the whole manor he didn't know what would. His first impulse was to wipe the opposition out of the way and go and find Dumbledore himself, but he knew that would probably end up with people injured or killed and he did not want any more death on his conscience. Knowing that whatever happened would take a few minutes he began to pace.

He was only just holding on to himself when the door finally opened to reveal the headmaster and Remus. Remus looked as if he had just woken up, but Dumbledore appeared as fresh as a daisy.

"What is it, Harry?" the headmaster asked calmly as Remus shut the door behind them

"Malfoy," Harry replied firmly.

The other two wizards shared a look and Harry was pretty sure they thought he had gone over the edge.

"You can't let them take him to the Ministry tomorrow," he elucidated quickly, "there is..." he found he couldn't say it, "and he..." something stopped the words in his throat, "he's going to die," he finished without being able to explain at all.

"How do you know, Harry?" Remus asked in his usual calm tone.

Harry opened his mouth to tell his friend about the dream and nothing came out. He tried again to explain what he had seen and still no words.

"He's going to die," he said eventually, totally unable to express himself in any other way.

It was completely bizarre and yet he could not say anything else.

"Did you have a premonition, Harry?" Dumbledore asked kindly and Harry was never more relieved to have the perceptive old wizard around.

He nodded and gave up trying to speak when all that started in his throat was a peculiar little whine. The urge to scream what he knew from the nearest window was incredible and yet he could not even form a single word.

"The curse of the banshee," Dumbledore observed calmly; "the ability to predict death, but

being totally unable to communicate to prevent that death, being left with nothing but a deadly cry to announce their grief to the universe."

Harry opened his eyes in surprise; it all seemed to make sense when the headmaster explained it.

"Well done, My Boy," Dumbledore told him, "that must have taken great force of will. I shall go and explain the situation to the Ministry team and I am sure other arrangements can be made."

Harry sagged with relief.

"All will be well, Harry," the headmaster said kindly, "don't you worry. Do try to get some more sleep; I suspect tomorrow is going to be a long day."

It was with almost complete certainty that he would not be sleeping again that night that Harry nodded anyway. He might be sitting up until dawn, but he did not want to cause anyone else the same discomfort.

"Thank you," he said quietly; his voice having returned now that he was no longer trying to speak about Malfoy.

"Are you going to be all right, Harry?" Remus asked in a concerned tone and Harry gave his friend a quick affirmative.

It was not going to be a fun night, and he needed to put some of his demons back where they belonged, but he would be okay. Knowing that Dumbledore would not allow anything to happen to one of his students, Harry sank back on to the bed as the two wizards left. He hoped fervently that he would not have these visions often.

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Breakfast arrived some time after the sun came up, and the cheerful house elf presented him with the tray and basked in his thanks. He had the feeling that Malfoy house elves were not used to kind words from their masters. Some of the smells coming from the tray actually appealed to him, but other things, which he had been quite fond of, turned his stomach just to look at them. Eating carefully what his nose found appetising he picked his way round the breakfast tray and actually managed to enjoy it.

It wasn't until he had finished and was looking out of the window that anything odd occurred. Usually the house elf came back to pick up the tray, but this time the door opened and one of his Auror guards walked in. Harry held himself perfectly still and watched as the man looked at his half eaten breakfast.

"You didn't eat you porridge," the Auror said in an almost conversational tone, "want me to leave it?"

"Um, no thank you," Harry replied, rather surprised that he had been spoken to.

"Anything else I can get you?" the man persisted, which Harry found very odd.

The couple of times he had seen his guards when the door opened to admit someone they had acted as if he didn't exist; that this wizard appeared to be trying to be pleasant caused all sorts of alarm bells to go off. Letting just a little of the creature within free he assessed his guard. Under the polite veneer the man was nervous and somewhat annoyed.

"No thank you," Harry replied evenly, "I'm not very hungry."

For a moment he thought the Auror might push the issue, but the man eventually nodded and picked up the tray. As his guard left and the door was once again closed, Harry let one of his aspects even closer to the surface and extended his hearing further than normal.

"He didn't eat the porridge," he heard the Auror say.

"But that McGonagall woman said it was his favourite, I heard her tell the house elf," the familiar tones of Caveo said in a very annoyed fashion. "How the hell are we supposed to put him out for the trip now?"

Harry found himself growling; they had tried to drug him. It took a great deal of self control not to wrench the door off its hinges and tell the Auror exactly what he thought of that idea. The wards had been strengthened since he'd decimated them, but he was not under the illusion they would hold him if he wanted out. Thanking his rebellious stomach for saving him from whatever concoction the Ministry people had decided to feed him he sat down and tried to decide what he could do to prevent them trying again.

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By refusing any further offers of food and drink, Harry knew he was frustrating the efforts of the Aurors to subdue him, and he quite enjoyed it. He also made regular requests to see Dumbledore over the next hour and a half, but it did no good and he doubted his requests were even being passed on. He smelt a very large rat and he was beginning to seriously consider freeing himself and bypassing the Ministry. The only thing that kept him in his room was the fact that he did not trust himself.

In the end he decided to practice his Occlumency some more; at least that was productive and then he would be ready for anything that might happen. As it was, he was totally unprepared for what did occur.

One moment he was trying to close his thoughts down and eliminate any emotional reactions from his mind and the next he was so consumed with despair that he had no chance to stop the cry that started in the centre of his chest and erupted from his throat. It was worse than the wail

he had released after he had killed Voldemort and it actually caused physical destruction in its wake. Furniture shook; glass shattered and wards tumbled down as banshee power combined with everything else in Harry's mixed up body and refused to be impotent anymore.

He knew without a doubt that Malfoy was being taken to the Ministry; he had never been so sure of anything in his life and he knew that it was a death sentence. There was no hesitation in his movements as he surged to his feet and ran for the shattered window, smashing through what was left of the ornate glass to the ground below. For a split second his body almost hovered as he descended, landing lightly on the grass below the second floor window, but the moment he hit the ground he shifted.

The wolf was faster than anything else and he ran as quickly as his legs would carry him towards the front of the house. Nothing would have stopped him as he focussed only on one thing: preventing Malfoy leaving. When he rounded the side of the building on to the main drive he saw two Aurors about to put Malfoy into a Ministry car and he did not even think about pausing as he leapt at the nearest of the two officials.

Wolf met man and Harry flattened the unprepared Auror with his considerable bulk, then without hesitating he took a mouthful of Malfoy's robes and dragged him away from the car. Unprepared for the attack, the Slytherin overbalanced and fell heavily, rolling off the drive and on to the grass. Once his prize stopped moving Harry jumped to stand over the fallen wizard, facing the Aurors and growling menacingly.

His opponents rounded on him with spells and he shifted form without even knowing he was doing it. His vision dimmed and the air around him grew cold as the magic bounced off of him harmlessly. The Aurors existed in his sight as bright spots of warmth and life and he was torn between trying to take that life and protecting the warmth he felt behind him.

"Expecto Patronum," one of the Aurors cast desperately and bright silver light filled Harry's awareness.

He shifted again, the world becoming flat and lifeless to his eyes as his sense of smell sharpened until it was almost overwhelming. He felt the skin of his neck change texture and stiffen and his tongue lengthen and fork. The Patronus coming towards him faded as its reason to be ceased to exist.

"By Merlin," one of the Aurors said as Harry looked at him, hissing his anger, and then the man turned to stone.

The other Auror threw his arms over his eyes and dived behind the car. The thrill of the hunt almost drew Harry away from his position, but he shifted again, holding himself in place with the enticing thrill of a human heartbeat.

"Enough of this!" Harry had never heard Dumbledore shout and he suddenly knew why; at the headmasters instruction it was almost as if the universe came to a standstill.

He crouched down automatically, sensing danger and wanting to protect the human that was his. He snarled as the Auror behind the car came up with his wand in hand, but the wizard's arm went back and his wand went flying to the side as Dumbledore showed that he was serious.

"What is going on here?" the headmaster demanded as a hoard of the man's colleagues came charging out of the door from which Dumbledore had emerged previously.

Caveo was in the lead of his team and Harry growled loudly as he saw the man; the desire to attack was like a drug in his system and only one thing held him back. A light touch on his ankle brought his focus right back to where he was and he looked down to see a composed, but shaken Malfoy looking back at him.

"Take him down," Caveo ordered, causing Harry to flick right to the battle.

"Hold," Dumbledore countered with such authority that every single Auror obeyed, even Caveo.

Harry bared his teeth, ready to defend himself and Malfoy, but the tableau held.

"Do you really wish to end you life so soon, Auror Caveo?" Dumbledore asked evenly; his voice not back to its usual calm, but the terror inducing power cut down to a minimum.

"We have a duty to protect the public," the Auror replied firmly, "he cannot be allowed to get away."

"I do not believe Harry is going anywhere," the headmaster pointed out smoothly.

It did not seem to have occurred to Caveo that Harry was not trying to escape and the wizard appeared rather floored by the notion.

"Where were you taking Mr Malfoy?" Dumbledore continued, completely in control of the situation.

"The Ministry, as per regulations," Caveo replied rigidly.

When the amused twinkle was not in the headmaster's eye he could be a most scary individual; even Harry could appreciate that and at the moment he was feeling very scary himself.

"I do not make it a habit of warning of danger for my health," Dumbledore said evenly; "you are a fool young man and I can only hope you live to understand how much of one. By the power vested in my by the Wizengamot I relieve you of your duty, Auror Caveo; remove yourself from this property immediately."

"You can't do that," the Auror said incredulously.

"Actually, he can," Tonks said from behind him, "article three hundred and five, paragraph two: Any chief official of the Wizengamot may relieve an Auror of his or her duty if they deem them negligent in the care of their prisoner and in so being, deliberately endanger the afore mentioned prisoner's life."

The currently red haired (as in scarlet) Auror was not even trying to hide how much she was enjoying this. Harry could feel the animosity for Caveo coming off her in waves. The desire to give the wizard something to remember him by was quite tempting, but the fingers on his ankle held him at bay.

Caveo glared around the group and realising that he had no support at all stormed towards the front gate; Dumbledore immediately took charge.

"Gentlemen, Ladies," the headmaster started politely, "it appears we have injured parties. There are two of your number outside Mr Potter's room suffering from exposure to a banshee's cry, and Auror Jones appears to have been petrified. I suggest arrangements be made to remove all three to St Mungo's as soon as possible for treatment."

Suddenly people began to move and Harry found the activity very unsettling, he almost backed away when Dumbledore walked towards him.

"Harry, My Dear Boy," the headmaster said, slipping off his purple outer robe to reveal a bright blue one underneath, "you appear to have lost your clothes again."

Placating words probably wouldn't have worked, but Dumbledore's off hand comment was so out of the blue that Harry did not even try to object as the robe was draped across his shoulders and his mind tried to catch up.

"It is nearly December," the seemingly batty old man said conversationally, "you will catch a terrible cold if you are not careful. Remus, if you would be so kind as to assist Mr Malfoy."

The headmaster's approach was so completely normal that Harry never even tried to resist as he was steered back towards the house. Before he really knew what was happening he was installed in a large wingback chair, in front of a nice warm fire, still wrapped in Dumbledore's robe, and with a steaming mug of hot chocolate in his hands. Malfoy had been placed in a similar chair on the other side of the hearth and treated in exactly the same manner. Since Malfoy was right where he could see him, Harry found that he could control any inappropriate urges.

He sniffed warily at the hot chocolate, unsure whether the treatment for Dementor exposure might cause a bad reaction, but it smelt appetising and he took a tentative sip. It tasted remarkably good and he found himself relaxing slightly despite the situation.

Dumbledore was conferring with Tonks, Kingsley and Remus over by the door, which left Harry and Malfoy looking at each other. Harry didn't really know what to do; how did you talk to someone you had raped and then mauled?

"That banshee wail was for me?" Malfoy eventually asked as the silence drew out.

Opening his mouth to reply Harry found that he was once again without voice and just nodded. Half of him could not meet Malfoy's eyes and the other half wanted to stride across the room and make a claim; he settled for staring at his mug in hopes that what he was thinking would not show on his face.

"You saved me again," Malfoy said wryly. "Trying to make a new career for yourself, Potter?"

Harry looked up sharply, not sure if the Slytherin was making fun of him and he caught Malfoy's grey-eyed gaze as anger gave him momentary courage. To his surprise his companion raised an eyebrow and smiled at him. Harry looked away again as Dumbledore walked over.

"It is time to make sure you are both safe," the headmaster said pleasantly. "The news of Voldemort's demise is being officially announced today and I believe you will both be much more comfortable away from here. It has been decided to return to Hogwarts."

Harry went completely cold and did not bother to try and hide his shock and his fear.

"The children," Harry whispered as his mind filled with all sorts of nasty possibilities; part of him looked at the school like a feast laid out for his delight.

"For once I find myself agreeing with Potter," Malfoy said evenly. "I am a self confessed Death Eater and he is a Dark creature; a school would seem to be an unlikely place for either of us."

Dumbledore smiled kindly at them both, back in the persona of the bumbling old headmaster.

"Actually I believe it to be the safest place for both of you," Dumbledore explained patiently; "Hogwarts has some unique properties which make it perfect for our needs. You Mr Malfoy cannot be taken to the Ministry, and until such time as you are cleared of charges, Young Man, you must remain in a secured location. There are ancient precautions at Hogwarts which will allow you to be spelled so that you cannot leave the grounds, but you will be free to roam."

It did not seem to be anywhere in Dumbledore's mindset that Malfoy might not be cleared, which Harry actually appreciated, because he wasn't sure what he would do if the Ministry tried anything with his human.

"And, Harry," the headmaster continued, "you are far too powerful for any measures the Ministry might take against you. The Department of Mysteries is probably the only place that might have somewhere remotely powerful enough to keep you secure and I think it would be better for everyone concerned that you not be put through the stress of returning there. I believe therefore that there is only one other place that will hold you for your own as well as others' safety; a place which is the sum of the founder's genius: the Room of Requirement."

For a moment Harry was not sure he understood correctly, and then he realised that Dumbledore was probably correct. The room was adaptive; if the headmaster required it of it, the room could probably keep him in. If the founders could not hold him, what could?

"When do we leave?" Harry asked quietly, shrinking down into the robe just a little bit more as he tried to take comfort in the fact that there might be one place he could be made safe, but it was an empty comfort as he also wondered if he would ever again be allowed beyond locked doors.

"As soon as transport can be arranged," Dumbledore replied.

Harry went back to staring at his mug of hot chocolate, unable to meet anyone's eyes as he lost himself in his own dark thoughts.

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Transport it turned out was a secure portkey and he, Malfoy, Dumbledore, Remus and Tonks all arrived in the headmaster's office just under an hour later. By this time Harry had clothes that were actually his size, which made him feel a little more comfortable, but he was quite frankly terrified of himself. The moment they landed, Harry felt the power of the school like a blanket around him, and it was almost as if he could reach out and touch it.

The magic sang to him and he found himself quite fascinated, looking around the study as if he had never seen it before. The darkness within him rose at the sensation of such energy and he wanted to touch the walls to see if they would give up their secrets. It was as he was fighting to hold himself still that the sixth being in the room made himself known, as Fawkes launched himself into the air with a trilling song.

The Phoenix landed first on Malfoy's shoulder, much to the Slytherin's shock, singing his heart out the entire time and then the bird jumped to land on Harry's. When Fawkes came to rest on him the Phoenix's song changed, but was still just as sweet, and Harry felt his knees go weak. If it hadn't of been for Remus he could have fallen as all strength left him.

Fawkes continued to sing and Harry began to become light headed, but it was strangely wonderful as well and his mind soared free of the darkness curling around his body. He sagged into Remus' arms, and, for the first time since Voldemort had kidnapped him, he felt at peace. Nothing mattered, nothing but the Phoenix's song.

Harry woke up very slowly feeling rested and at ease, which was a very pleasant surprise. It took him a few minutes to remember where he was and how he had ended up there. Sitting up rapidly he looked around at a room that was totally unfamiliar, but the feeling around him was the same and he knew he was still at Hogwarts. This had to be the Room of Requirement, but it was like he had never seen it before. He was sitting on a large four poster bed that had deep red sheets, just like in Gryffindor tower. There was an open door to the right where he could see a large bathroom and to the left was a library type area with shelves full of books and a large

desk.

Unable to stop himself he reached out with the power inside his body and felt for the wards around the room; it was like hitting a brick wall and he lurched back onto the bed as the wards threw him off. He threw the pillow next to him in frustration as the part of him that wanted to be free rounded in anger, but his fit of pique did not last long. He calmed down surprisingly quickly as far as he was concerned and began to wonder what exactly was going on with him.

There was a letter sitting on the bedside table addressed to him so he picked it up and opened it quickly.

Dear Harry,
Fawkes' song appeared to affect you quite distinctly, and we brought you to the Room of Requirement while you were under his influence. I do hope you slept well. Dobby has access to the room and if you need anything just call for him. If you are open to visitors tell Jeremy Kats, the portrait next to the door and he will allow us in if we call.
Rest assured we are all working to find a solution to your unique situation.
Yours,
Albus Dumbledore

For a while Harry just sat there looking at the headmaster's neat cursive script; he was home, at Hogwarts, and yet he felt like an alien. Then again he felt like a stranger in his own skin so it wasn't as if he had expected to be comfortable with his new surroundings.

Climbing off the bed he padded into the bathroom and tried to ignore the mirror on the wall as he relieved himself. He did not want to see the changes in himself, but as he washed his hands he really couldn't avoid seeing at least a partial reflection and he snatched his gaze away at the treacherous glance. He was turning away when he became angry with himself; how could he go through life afraid of his own reflection? Thumping the basin with his fist he glared at himself in the mirror and refused to flinch away.

"What are you?" he demanded of his reflection.

He could not understand how something so ugly on the inside could look so beautiful on the outside. His thoughts were full of death and violence, and yet ethereal, alluring features stared back at him from the mirror. He was a contradiction, and it repelled him; he was the devil in disguise.

How many creatures waited behind his green eyes to devour the innocent and unwary? He had not heard from Professor Snape yet, so he really did not know what to expect until it happened. So far he had concrete proof of incubus, vampire, werewolf, banshee and Dementor. There was also his sense of the emotions around him which he assumed was something to do with the incubus and the boggart, possibly also the Dementor and he had no idea why he could move through solid objects, or why he seemed to have a vague desire to absorb magic.

Of course, of all things, there was also the basilisk: about the only aspect of this he had to be thankful about was that his skewed version of the creature appeared only to be able to petrify and not kill with a look. If that Auror had dropped down dead he suspected he would now either be surrounded by the corpses of those defending their colleague, or be dead himself; Dumbledore or no Dumbledore. What else lurked beneath the pale surface?

Reaching out, he touched the mirror as if it would answer all his questions, but cool green eyes just continued to look back at him. Could be ever hope to control what was inside of him or would it consume him? Turning from his reflection he walked quickly back into the other room; at least here he had something to distract his troubled thoughts and he walked over to his small library. If he could not fight what he was, at least he could understand it, and he set about trying to find a book that might have information about the magic that curled through his body.

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"Mr Potter," a voice said from behind him as he leafed through his third book on magical creatures.

He turned, surprised to have been addressed and found that the empty frame beside the door was no longer without an occupant. A smartly dressed seventeenth century gentleman looked out of the canvas at him.

"Hello," Harry responded, unsure of why the portrait would be talking to him.

"I'm Jeremy Kats," the man introduced himself, "and Professor Dumbledore asked me to look after your door. Normally I wouldn't interrupt you, since you have not given me notice to alert you of visitors, but there is a Slytherin outside to see you, and he is rather insistent. Should I allow him in?"

Harry was beginning to suspect there was some sort of calming charm on the room, since he felt more stable now than he had since he first woke up, and he nodded. If Snape had come to see him it was probably important, and hopefully the Potions' Master would have some news.

"Yes, thank you," he replied politely.

Jeremy disappeared and Harry went back to the page he had been reading, not looking up again until he heard the door clicking closed. When he did glance towards the entrance he froze; it wasn't Snape.

"Expecting someone else, I see," Malfoy said casually and walked further into the room.

Harry suddenly found that maybe the alleged calming spell on the room was only so useful, as every cell of his body screamed and would have lunged at Malfoy like first years onto the welcome feast, if he had not been clutching the table as if his life depended on it.

"Are you insane?" Harry asked, desperately trying to keep himself in check.

Malfoy was back in school uniform, but Harry did not think he had ever seen anyone look quite so edible, and in his case that was literal as well as figurative.

"We need to talk," the interloped said pointedly and was definitely not walking back towards the door.

"Malfoy," Harry said, his voice deepening with a slight growl, whether he liked it or not, "remember what I did last time we were alone? Get out before I do something we will both regret."

If he had been hungry he would have pounced on Malfoy without a second thought, as it was, lust and various other desires stirred in the pit of his stomach and he could barely stay seated.

"No," Malfoy said simply and sat on the bed.

Harry closed his eyes and tried to banish the mental images that move put into his mind. Occlumency abandoned him as he fought to empty his thoughts only to have his very prominent instincts provide him with yet more possibilities.

"I don't blame you, Potter," the words dragged him back from the edge of the pit he was looking into and he glanced over at Malfoy, unsure of what to reply. "I admire your strength of character."

Harry would have laughed if he had not been so afraid that the reaction would be his undoing.

"That strength is failing," he said rather desperately.

The longer he was in Malfoy's presence the harder it became to ignore what his body was telling him and the quieter the voice of control was speaking. They were alone, there was not a raging battle going on and there was nothing else for Harry to focus on: the Slytherin had his undivided attention.

"Malfoy, every fibre of my being wants to do that to you again," Harry could think of nothing that might make the Slytherin leave except the truth, "please go."

For a few moments his focus of awareness did not move, the Slytherin remained elegantly poised where he was sitting, and then he rose to his feet. Harry closed his eyes and tried to hang on for the long seconds it would take Malfoy to cross the room to the door. Only as the click of the door did not come and he realised that feelings of curiosity, trepidation and want were assailing him, did he look up in shock and realise that his prey had not walked towards the door.

"I know," the Slytherin said from no more than a few inches away, "I can see it every time you look at me. Potter, I owe you for my life twice and for my mother's once, you can have whatever

you want. They have locked you in here with no idea what to do when the hunger returns; well I am your solution."

Breathing was difficult as pure, unadulterated lust tried to strip Harry of any control he had left. The hunger was not forcing him along, burying his humanity in its intensity, but he wanted Malfoy with everything he was, and he almost reached out.

"No," he growled, more at himself than Malfoy and sent his chair skittering backwards as he pushed himself away from the table and away from the Slytherin, "I don't want you indebted to me, Malfoy. I don't want to use you; you are better than that."

Momentary shock flicked across the Slytherin's pale features, but he still did not move away. For a moment Malfoy appeared indecisive and then he shrugged off his outer school robe and put it on the table. As Harry watched, caught between fascinated horror and wanton desire, the Slytherin stepped up to him once more and reached out to touch the side of his face.

"Maybe I want this too," were the quiet words that became Harry's undoing.

There was only so much self control that he could manage and with that gesture Malfoy snapped Harry's will like a twig. The incubus surged to the surface as it tasted victory and he dragged his prey to him, forcing their bodies against each other and their lips together. Malfoy met his passion with equal fervour and the kiss left them both breathless and bloody by the time they pulled back; each having bitten the other at some point during the act.

Malfoy's eyes were bright with the same delirium that Harry felt running through his body and all doubt fled his mind. This human was willing and his: there was nothing else that mattered.

"Take off you clothes," he commanded firmly, knowing that if he had anything to do with undressing Malfoy, there would not be a lot left of the Slytherin's school uniform.

There was no hesitation in Malfoy's movements as his prey moved to obey and garments were shed with graceful efficiency. Harry watched every move and drank in the sight as pale skin was revealed to him. Malfoy did not even pause at his underwear, simply shedding it as well until he stood in front of Harry as naked as the day he was born.

There was nervous excitement coming from his prey as Harry looked Malfoy up and down, but this was not the same frightened human he had taken to him last time. The Slytherin stood with confidence and desire in his stance and it drew Harry like a moth to a flame.

He moved forward, placing a hand on one pale shoulder and for a moment holding himself completely still to admire what was on offer. Malfoy was perfect and, if his skin had not been warm, Harry could almost have believed it was made of creamy stone.

The Slytherin was really much bolder this time and as Harry paused Malfoy took the initiative, lifting hands to start unbuttoning the loose shirt Harry was wearing. As fingers unfastened

buttons and pushed aside fabric, Malfoy replaced them with his mouth and Harry found himself surprisingly not in control. Not that he was complaining as he put his head back and closed his eyes, revelling in the sensation of Malfoy's teeth and tongue on his chest.

When the Slytherin worked his way onto his knees, reached Harry's waist and carried on going with the whole removing clothing and then using his mouth idea, Harry had to grab the side of the desk to stop his knees giving way. Sensual, warm hands pushed his trousers and his underwear towards the floor and Malfoy fixed his wonderful mouth on Harry's throbbing erection. They were too far from the wall and Harry did not want to bother with the brain power to remain upright. Entwining his fingers in Malfoy's hair he pulled the Slytherin back from him with a firm, smooth movement.

Grey eyes looked up at him from behind blond lashes with the most wanton expression and Harry could not help smiling.

"Bed, now," he said decisively.

He had not bothered putting on shoes and socks after he woke up, so he stepped out of his garments easily and then pulled Malfoy back to his feet using his current grip. The Slytherin did not resist and came easily, winding his arms around Harry under his shirt after he was released and kissing him leisurely before turning and doing what he was told. Following Malfoy to the bed Harry allowed himself to be kissed again and pushed back on to the bed. Then the Slytherin went back to what he had been doing and Harry arched into the touch, enjoying the opening of his senses as he became more and more aroused.

Not being in sexual control was a new sensation, not that Harry was particularly experienced, but the incubus part of him knew what he was doing; and not taking control seemed somehow wrong, yet deliciously wonderful at the same time. He arched his back, spread his legs to give Malfoy better access and let himself enjoy the skilful ministrations of his willing victim. Whatever else Malfoy might have been, he was definitely not sexually inexperienced with persons of the same gender.

The more the Slytherin caressed him, the more he wanted and Harry lifted his head, needing to see Malfoy as his bed fellow touched him. He felt the changes begin in his body as dexterous fingers played with the inside of his thighs and Malfoy sucked him in deep. The moan that began deep in his chest came out of his mouth in a long breathy sound as he watched small ridges rise out of his skin to form little blunt spines in two long lines.

Malfoy pulled back, breathing hard and watching in fascination at the alterations occurring to Harry. The Slytherin's hot gaze was almost as erotic as his sinful tongue and Harry literally swelled under those eyes. He looked directly into Malfoy's face as he felt his body responding and when he was descended on again he put his head back and called out his encouragement to the room in general. With Malfoy's hand working the quickly slicking shaft and the Slytherin's mouth working the head it was not long before Harry arched completely off the mattress and came with shuddering gasps.

His bed partner did not stop his ministrations until Harry collapsed back on to the bed. Then the Slytherin looked at him with a very smug smile, which did nothing to quench the fires of desire that rather than being satisfied with his incredible orgasm were actually burning brighter by the second.

He pounced as soon as he could gather the muscle control to move and he rolled Malfoy on to the bed. His first instinct was to turn his prey over and take the Slytherin as he had before, but Malfoy held his ground as Harry tried to flip him.

"Let me see you," the Slytherin requested breathlessly, "please."

Harry sat back, positioning himself between Malfoy's legs and looking down at his prize. He knew he would not be resisted if he chose to insist, but he liked looking into those powerfully emotive eyes. Pushing his lover's legs up and apart he ran his hands down the undersides of Malfoy's thighs. He moved his fingers to run them over his companion's sensitive balls and further down between the cheeks of his arse. The long nails on his fingers retracted automatically as he chose to put his fingers to other uses, but what he found was an entrance already slick and ready.

"You came prepared," Harry said with what he suspected was rather a manic smile.

"Of course I did," Malfoy replied, curling his hands into the bed sheets as he spoke, "I'm a Slytherin."

With a slight shift of hips and a little thrust up, his prey made himself very clear, and Harry did not hesitate to take up the invitation. Malfoy grunted when Harry breached him, but the Slytherin did not tense and Harry slid in smoothly. The gasp from those talented lips was one of unbridled pleasure.

"Make me scream again," Malfoy said breathlessly.

It was not a request Harry had any intention of denying and as he pulled out slightly he placed his hands on his lover's hips and pushed the smallest amount of power through his limbs. Malfoy moaned and pulled on the sheets, his legs falling apart further and Harry took the opportunity to push back in. The almost ecstatic panting that came from his lover as he did so, and the rush of pure sexual energy Harry felt let him know that he had struck the right spot.

Now he was feeding off Malfoy's sexual high as well as his own, and nothing could have stopped him pushing his lover to the limit. Thrust after thrust he drew moans and sighs and words of encouragement, while the whole time those grey eyes pinned Harry down. When he reached down to take hold of Malfoy's straining erection his lover almost threw his head back and closed his eyes, but pure obstinacy seemed to have hold of the Slytherin and he did not look away.

Harry stroked his lover in time with his movements and Malfoy's sounds became totally incoherent; the words didn't make sense any more. His prey was almost there, so close to the edge that Harry could taste the energy in the air around them. Thrusting in hard one more time he fisted Malfoy's cock and forced magic through his hand. Now his lover's eyes did close and his head went back as he came, screaming Harry's name. The power release hit Harry like a wave and he climaxed for a second time, collapsing onto Malfoy as the concussion force of sex magic and sexual release meeting took his mind away for a moment.

When he came back down from the high, he found himself nose to nose with his lover and grey eyes were once again looking at him. That gaze was sated and sexually replete and a little smile played at the corners of the Slytherin's mouth.

"Was that loud enough?" Malfoy asked irreverently and all Harry could do was smile.

They were still intimately joined and part of him did not want to give that up, but the incubus was satisfied and Harry felt his body shutting down accordingly. It did not feel as if the sexual predator was far below the surface, but he did not believe that Malfoy was in any state for another round and, reluctantly, he climbed off his lover. He was not really sure what their relationship was, but he liked it none-the-less.

They lay spooned against one another with Harry holding Malfoy in a loose embrace, drifting in the post coital haze. Harry found that the darkness within him had other, less pleasant plans for his lover, but the voices were very dim and easy to ignore. This was as close to appeasing both sides of his nature as he could possibly come, and he did not want it to end. Tightening his grip slightly on his relaxed companion, Harry chose to push other thoughts away and enjoy the warmth of the moment.

The End