Storyid: 2241604
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Chapter 1 to 22

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Chapter: 1

Chapter, the first

Pink was really not Snape's color.

Harry wondered at his inane thoughts as he watched the enraged Potions Master's face flush to match his newly tinted hair. Somehow, Harry was not entirely sure that the famous Potter luck was going to come through for him this time.

"WHAT part of *don't* put the shredded boomslang skin in with the grubblish beans *didn't* you understand?"

Harry swallowed uncomfortably, noticing for the first time how warm the dark potions classroom could get. "Sorry, Sir."

"Fifty points from Gryffindor! And I want a three foot parchment on the properties of boomslang skin and grubblish beans and the reasons why this—"he pointed to the smoldering remains of his Tranqumore potion—"happened."

Harry heard snickers from the Slytherins and an almost silent groan from Hermione as Professor Snape continued to yell. He flushed even brighter red and, when the Potion's master finished yelling, began to clean up the melted remains of his cauldron. What Harry couldn't understand was that he could have sworn that he had grabbed the anise buds rather than the electric blue grubblish beans. He cast a surreptitious look around the room and caught the silver eye of a smirking, incredibly smug, Malfoy.

Ah. Well, at least I know I am not a complete idiot.

The summer between sixth and seventh year had done Malfoy some good; he was no longer the short, pointed face little boy he had been. Malfoy had grown to a respectable height of 5'11" and,

though still built like a seeker, had put on enough muscle for the female population of Hogwarts to call him 'dreamy.' His face had matured and filled out to be an aristocratic and very handsome vision. Harry, who had long since accepted his own loose sexuality, could acknowledge that his third most hated enemy was a very beautiful person. That didn't mean he like the snarky little ferret.

Harry flipped Malfoy a rather obscene hand gesture, which the Slytherin graciously returned, and finished disposing of his cauldron. Hermione gave him a sympathetic look as she finished her own, dark green, perfectly brewed Tranqumore Potion. Harry wondered why on earth he had chosen to go into Advanced Potions even if he did need it for Auror training. Why did he want to be an Auror again? Oh, yes. He remembered. There was a psychopath out to destroy him and every one of the people he cared about. So silly of him to have forgotten.

Harry chuckled humorlessly to himself before forcing his mind off of the unpleasant realities of life. He pasted on a calm, happy-Harry mask and began his extra essay in the last few minutes of class. Hermione gave him a shocked look at his initiative, but seemed not to want to question such a miracle.

The essay was going to be very difficult. Grubblish beans were native to a tiny all-magical island country off of the coast of Greece that was rather anti-social and xenophobic, which essentially meant that very little information existed in English on the magical beans. Nonetheless, the essay was a distraction, and if there was ever something Harry Potter needed, it was a distraction from his life and the headache tingling in the back of his mind.

Draco Malfoy was bored. Very, very bored. And slightly horny, until he glanced to his right and caught sight of the simpering flower batting her eyelashes in his direction.

Pansy again. My god, when is that idiot going to get the message that I don't want to contract a venereal disease?

Harry Potter was not reacting in a satisfactory manner. To think, he had gone through all that trouble to switch his potions ingredients, and the boy hadn't even gotten angry at him! This was not acceptable. Draco Malfoy was *not* losing his touch. He was just… a little off today. Nothing to worry about, just a normal off day.

But why is he ignoring me today? He never lets something that obvious go… he looks cute when he's thinking. WHAT?

Draco Malfoy suddenly had the feeling that even though it was only Monday, this was not going to be his week.

He had no idea just how right he was.

At dinner that night, Harry's headache decided to descend on him with a vengeance. Ron and Hermione snipped loudly over him, but Harry couldn't understand a word they were saying. His

goblet of pumpkin juice seemed to be thrown in high relief, and the chicken on his plate seemed to give off a nauseatingly strong scent.

"That is *not* true, Ronald Weasley!"

"Yes, it is! You write to Krum every day!"

"I do *not*! I didn't write him yesterday!"

"Okay, so every other day."

"I don't see why you should even care! It's not like he ever did anything to you!"

"Its annoying, it is. And disloyal."

"Disloyal? What—how on earth did you come up with that?"

"He goes to Durmstrang!"

"So? Dumbledore told us that we need to stay together in all this and—"

"Oh, so this is about the good of the wizarding world, is it?"

"Actually, Ron, it—"

"If you two don't shut up about this I am going to scream!"

Ron and Hermione looked at Harry, startled. "Alright, mate?" Ron looked worried. "Is it your scar"

"No, it's not my bloody scar! You two, can you just get on with it already?"

"What?" Hermione looked confused. "Get on with what?"

"Just go shag already!" With that, the savior of the wizarding world stomped from the Great Hall, leaving two *very* shocked Gryffindors staring at his retreating form and any where other than at each other.

Severus Snape had never liked the soap operas that characterized teenage emotions. The silliness that came with the sexual frenzy of the upper years had always annoyed him, but he hadn't realized how aggravating teenage love was until Draco Malfoy hit his sixth year. Now, he constantly had to deal with the heartbroken remains of the wretches that were foolish enough to think that the Slytherin Prince would actually fall in love with them. The blond Adonis had been destined for a different fate than such human ties, but that didn't stop the boy from practicing his reproductive skills.

"But, Professor, he loves me! I know he does, he's just afraid!" Cora Monroe of Ravenclaw was crying rather messily. Snape curled his lip in distaste.

"Miss Monroe, it is rather unlikely that you have any significant insight into the convoluted mind of Mr. Malfoy. Kindly cease your pointless tears and get yourself back to your common room before I deduct house points."

"Please Professor! Please tell me the password!" she gestured wildly to the stone wall entrance to the Slytherin common room. "I know he loves me deep down, I just need to show him that it's okay!"

"Twenty points from Ravenclaw for this disgusting display of disregard for the wishes of Mr. Malfoy. If he wanted you in the common room, he would have invited you in. Now, get out of my dungeons before you force me to reduce your house's points into the negatives."

Snape watched with satisfaction as the blonde girl paled at his harsh tone and fled from the dungeons. His pleased feelings disappeared abruptly as he recalled what the girl had been doing there in the first place.

"Essence of belladonna." Snape entered through the previously solid stone wall and stalked into the lush green common room and up to the elegantly sprawled form of the resident heartbreaker. "Mr. Malfoy, if I have to send another sobbing girl—or boy, as the case has sometimes been—away from the dungeons, there will be consequences. It is not my job to handle such issues, and you are never to bring them to the common room again."

Malfoy smirked slightly. "Sorry, Professor."

"No, you aren't." Malfoy allowed his smirk to widen. "Take them somewhere else to shag them, just keep them away from here!" Snape stalked out of the common room, his robe billowing dramatically around him as he went.

Malfoy kept his smirk on for a few minutes later before gracefully rising from the couch and striding upstairs to his private room. Only when he got there did he allow his face to relax. He had no regrets for dumping Cora, none at all. That wasn't the point. He had known that he could never have a real relationship with her, even if he wanted to, and had gone into the liaison with a keen eye on the pretty girl's well formed body. His time with the girl had not changed his mind about her permanence, but she was an enjoyable diversion. Or was, until she decided that their relationship needed to be taken to the next level, that is, that they should go public.

Malfoy snorted. The idea that he, Draconis Lucius Maximilien Malfoy, would have public displays of affection with a Ravenclaw who lacked the necessary bloodlines was ridiculous. None of his friends would believe that he wasn't doing it for some hidden reason, and the rest of Hogwarts would worry whether or not the poor Ravenclaw's life was safe—perhaps they should warn her not to visit any unpopulated areas with men in black masks…

No, Malfoy decided. The diversion that had been Cora Monroe was over. He needed a new fuck buddy, if his horniness in Potions class today was any indication. All he had to do was look for someone he hadn't already been with that passed muster.

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Chapter: 2

Chapter, the Second

Malfoy was annoyed again. He had never thought of Hogwarts as a particularly small school, but as he looked around for someone who met his rather extensive standards, he was forced to acknowledge that his school did not include such a large number of people.

In Slytherin house, those that weren't baboon-like in appearance or weren't, like Pansy, sluts that could cling to someone like a permanent sticking charm, were either closely related to him or were past conquests of his. He had learned by the end of the first quarter in his sixth year not to go for girls that had easy access to his room, but by that time, he had gone through all the worthwhile partners in his own house. Unfortunately, Slytherin house tended to have students at the extremes of looks; there were the few, like him, who were incredibly beautiful, or there were those who looked the evil and twisted part.

The Ravenclaws were sure to be pissed as hell at him after the last three seventh years he had 'dated' had been Ravenclaws—and best friends, too. And Terry Boot had been giving him lascivious looks, so Malfoy decided to steer clear of there until that stalker found someone new to have wet dreams over.

The Hufflepuffs had promise. There was that girl, Hannah Abbot, who was looking better this year, as well as her brunette friend. Draco couldn't remember the friend's name, only that she had a very nice rack.

Gryffindor house, of course, was not really an option. Draco had too many enemies in that house to play with any of its members unless he had a really strong pull towards one of them. However, since Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil were old news to him and Seamus Finnigan was probably way too exuberant a boyfriend for him, there weren't really many who caught his interest in that house. A few of the sixth years looked good this year, but all of the hot ones were muggleborns, and Draco had no wish to mingle with them.

Potter's grown up a bit

Malfoy stiffened when he realized what he had just thought. *Okay, fine. He has grown a bit. Still*

is scruffy and aneroxic. Only now Malfoy knew he was lying to himself. Harry still had the same messy hair, but at this point it looked like it had been styled that way. And since he had gotten rid of those horrible glasses, grown a few inches, and put on a healthy amount of muscle, he had become someone fancyable.

Draco shook himself abruptly out of his contemplations. He must have been going crazy.

The next morning, Harry's blinding headache had subsided almost completely. He woke a bit earlier than usual and gathered his things to get a shower before his roommates awoke and hogged the showers. The morning light shone rather obnoxiously cheerful rays directly into his sleepy eyes, and he grumbled as he made his way into the tiled bathroom.

The hot water ran down his leanly muscled back, soothing his aggravation and bringing him smoothly into full awareness. By the time he had finished washing his hair, Harry was in a good mood and whistling cheerfully. He turned off the water and toweled himself down before examining himself in the mirror. His emerald eyes stood out just as much as they had the day before, and even wet, his hair rebelled against the laws of gravity and stuck out every which way. His famous scar was, as it had been the last few days, slightly irritated looking, but not so much as to be noticeable to the casual observer.

"You really should comb your hair, dear." The mirror said dotingly. Harry smiled at the glass and did as the voice asked him before pulling on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.

About that time, Ron stumbled in groggily and glared at Harry. "What has you so cheerful at this ungodly hour?"

"Nothing, just in a good mood."

"Humph… well, I can't believe you said that about me and 'Mione last night."

"It's true, though. The sexual tension between you two is driving me nuts." Harry grinned at Ron's reddening face. "Just ask her out, already."

"We're not like that."

"Denial is not just a river in Egypt, Ron."

"Huh?"

"Oh, never mind. Hurry up and get ready, I'm hungry."

Draco couldn't get his mind off of Harry Potter. There the boy sat with his two grimy friends at the Gryffindor table, sublimely unaware that he was the object of affection of a good number of the upper years. When Blaise had told him that Potter was the number one most common crush at Hogwarts, Draco had been slightly offended until Blaise had also pointed out that Draco also

had a reputation as a heartbreaker. Now, it was all that Draco could do to keep his silver eyes away from the black haired boy, and this aggravated the Slytherin to no end.

Perhaps he had a fever. That would explain his strange thoughts about the Boy Who Lived to Annoy. Maybe he should go see Madam Pomfrey for a checkup.

Just as Draco was contemplating whether he had enough time to go to the infirmary before Transfiguration started, the post came in. He looked up for his own owl but instead spotted his father's rather psychotic eagle owl coming towards him. Mordrid snapped at the other birds before landing in front of Draco with a flourish. Draco removed the letter tied to the bird's leg and the animal launched itself off of the table, raking at other owls as it flew away.

Dear Son,

Your mother and I are well and will be visiting you tonight at eight o'clock. Professor Snape has arranged for us to meet in his office for our discussion.

Lucius Malfoy

"A letter from your father?"

"Yes." Malfoy answered absently, puzzling over the reason behind his parent's visit. His birthday was in a few days, but that did not explain why they would come for a visit now.

That night, Draco arrived at the door to Snape's office at five minutes to eight. He entered at the Potion master's invitation and seated himself in a straight backed chair to wait.

"Professor, do you know what the purpose of this visit is?"

Snape looked up from the papers he was grading. "Yes, but this is a matter to be explained by your father."

Draco fell silent and waited for the arrival of his parents. At precisely eight, the fireplace in the corner whooshed with green flames and Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy exited the floo as though it were the smoothest of flying carpets.

"Hello, Father, Mother. How are you?" Draco was the very essence of courtesy.

"Very well, indeed. We have much to discuss." Narcissa looked a bit pale, but Lucius was very composed. "Draco, there is something that we haven't told you about your bloodline."

Albus Dumbledore was a very old man. Though wizards often lived twice as long as Muggles, two hundred and eleven was still a very advanced age. Usually Dumbledore looked and felt like a spring chicken about thirty years younger than his actual age, but lately that vitality had been in short supply.

The headmaster looked gravely at the tired man in front of him. "You are sure?"

"Yes." Lupin answered. "There is no denying this. If it hasn't already started, it will begin soon."

"And they said for sure that there were seven. Did they give anything else that could narrow down our search?"

"No. Only that they would be powerful and temperamental. And we know that the Council was activated around the end of the first war, so we know the stage of development they should be in."

"What will we need to control them that we don't already have at the school?"

"I would have to check the strength of almost everything. And we need to get in touch with a Guardian as soon as possible."

"Were you able to get the spell for that?"

"Yes. It requires an incredible amount of power and participation. At least thirty people."

"Do what you must to get ready for this."

Lupin sighed and left the golden room through a secret door behind Fawkes's roost. Dumbledore stared into space and considered his options. This situation could make or break the Order's fight against the Dark Lord.

"I beg your pardon?" Draco could not believe what his father had just told him.

"You have non human blood in you. From both sides of the family."

"Father, this is not funny."

"Do I look amused?" Lucius hissed at his son. "You have immortal blood in you."

"I'm sorry?"

"Immortal blood. They are not of this realm of existence, but the next. A very long time ago they lived in both our realm and theirs, but a boundary blocks them now. Some fool opened a portal in the seventh century and pulled several into our world. They married into the Malfoy line and the Black line as well."

"But… I thought we were pureblooded." Draco was incredibly confused. Why would his father have told him all his life that his blood was bluer than everyone else's if he wasn't even completely human?

"We are better than pureblooded. We are usually referred to as Chimeras and have the best of all blood."

"But I thought we were pureblooded."

Lucius darkened slightly. "Do not repeat yourself again. It's common."

Narcissa sent him a pacifying glance before speaking to her shocked son. "Chimeras are very rare and extremely powerful, if, of course, they survive childhood. Most never survive to birth and those that do are often so sickly that they die before the first six months is over. At that point, they become extremely resilient."

"But… I don't understand." Draco was still trying to piece the puzzle together. He was not human, but rather a Chimera, which, by definition, was a made up creature. He had just been able to tell that this week was not going to be pleasant.

"Chimera blood often runs through six or seven generations before it is expressed in an individual. We knew of your heritage by the enchanted blood chart that we have never allowed you to see. We felt you should grow up without the pressures of society retarding your growth."

"Oh. I don't know much about Chimera other than that they are feared more than werewolves and vampires." Draco said slowly.

"Some time after your seventeenth birthday, the bulk of your powers will be coming to you. You must be prepared for this. After your powers arrive, you will also begin to search for a life mate."

"I beg your pardon? A life mate?" Suddenly, Draco began to feel a bit nervous. "Not like Veela life mates, though, right?"

"Well, actually, Chimera mates are a bit more extreme in their dependence. There is not a dominant or submissive mate, but rather are equal in the relationship." Narcissa looked uncomfortable. "But like Veelas, you will not have a choice in your mate. Neither sex nor personal feelings affect the choice of bond mate, as Chimera are said to reproduce differently than humans. Little is known about this process."

"So I could end up with some freak and have no choice about it."

Lucius nodded and took control of the explanation. "During the time in which you are gaining your powers, your mind will be expanding and readjusting to allow your powers room. During this time, Draco, you will need to be practicing Occulumency, as your mind will be very vulnerable."

"But about this mate. What does this bond entail?" The idea of being bonded to one person, especially if it were a possessive bond like that of a Veela, was very disconcerting.

"Again, little is known about the process. We know from history that mates tend to be intensely protective and possessive. They also tend to be rather voracious sexually." Lucius wished that this distasteful conversation could be carried on by another, but this was a secret that would be kept securely in the family, excepting Severus, who would be helping Draco through the process. "And the mate is found in one of three groups of people: other Chimeras, wizards with Chimera blood in their families, and Muggles."

"Muggles!"

"Yes. It unfortunately is entirely possible, and because of the rarity of Chimeras and Chimera blood, it is rather likely."

Draco Malfoy went sheet white before crashing to the floor in a dead faint.

That bloody headache was back. Harry was having trouble concentrating on Professor Sprout's lecture on the care of a rather poisonous looking flower that kept trying to bite the witch's fingers as she showed the students the proper way to prune it. There was a tingling in the back of his mind that was irritating and felt like someone was ringing a very small bell a long distance away. Harry wasn't sure, but he thought he kept seeing metallic flashes in the corners of his eyes, which probably wasn't a good sign.

Hermione noticed his wandering gaze and nudged him sharply with her elbow to gain his attention. "This is important, Harry, so pay attention because I am not going to let you copy my essay about the Tentamula flower." She hissed at him.

Harry tried to pull his mind back to the lesson, but it quickly slipped his hold and drifted off towards the castle. He wondered what his good friend Voldemort was doing just then. Did Voldemort sleep during the day, like a bat? He remembered science classes from his elementary school and wondered whether wizards needed to go into the sun for vitamin D, or whether they had some sort of spell to produce the essential vitamin. Somehow, Harry couldn't picture Voldemort strolling through the sunlight, which then brought the image of the Dark Lord in swimming trunks at the beach. Swiftly following that image was one of Voldemort and Company in matching black speedos. Harry snorted, but then regretted it as a flash of bronze to his right appeared, startling him into whipping his face around. The light had vanished from around his Herbology professor, but the violent movement had made his head pound alarmingly for a moment.

Suddenly he realized that the entire class was staring at him.

"What?"

"Mr. Potter, are you alright?" Professor Sprout looked a bit worried.

"Um… yes, Professor, just a headache. Sorry."

"Well, then. Moving on. The pollen of the Tentamula flower is rather explosive, so when you need to collect it, you need to insure that you have the right tools."

Harry zoned out of the lecture again and returned to his world of inane thoughts and flashes of color.

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Chapter: 3

Chapter the Third

Malfoy felt ill. He wasn't sure what was going on, but at two thirty-seven on the morning after his seventeenth birthday, he woke up knowing that something was wrong. His head was pounding in a disconcerting way, and for some reason, he could feel Blaise's thoughts even though Blaise was in a different room. The other boy was having a wet dream about someone—wait… *I recognize that hair.*

"AHHHHHHH!" Draco fell out of his gigantic bed and wished for death. *Blaise is not… he would never… he couldn't possibly be dreaming about Weasel* that *way. It's not possible. This isn't happening… oh, Merlin! Wake up from this nightmare already!*

Suddenly, Draco realized that he wasn't watching Blaise's dream anymore. It was, in fact, more disturbing than that. He watched, horrified, as Crabbe dreamed longingly of making out with Argus Filch. Draco whimpered and crawled in a ball under the bed in an attempt to protect himself from the dreams before shoving the images out of his head with a push of his hard-learned Occulumency skills. Panting with the effort, he crawled out from under the bed before making his staggering way to Snape's private quarters.

"Stripped Vituperative Viper." The tapestry hiding the door to Snape's quarters dissolved into an oak door through which Draco entered the plush apartment. "Professor? I think the Chimera process has begun."

Snape strode out of his bedroom wrapped in a black dressing gown. The man looked as alert and sour as usual even at this time in the morning. "How do you feel?"

"Headache. And I found myself in the disturbing dreams of my house mates."

"Yes, your mind will be very open to the thoughts and probes of others. Any problems with your Occulumency skills?"

"It took a great deal more effort to push the dreams out than it normally would. Is that going to continue, or is it just because my mind is readjusting?"

"It is impossible to tell at this point. You may have powers that tend towards mind magic, but we will not be able to tell until the end of the process."

"How long do you think that will be?"

Snape looked uncomfortable. "Until you find and bond to a mate, your powers will not settle down, though they will probably stop growing within a month or so. Chances are that finding your mate will take quite a while."

"How will I know if I actually spot my mate?" Draco was picturing the Veela way, in which the mate began to glow ethereally whenever the Veela was nearby.

"Lust."

"Pardon?" Draco was slightly disturbed at the word coming from his godfather. It brought unwelcome images to Draco's already abused mind.

"Chimeras and their mates tend to constantly act like teenage boys in their fantasies." Draco's feeling of wrongness increased. This was not a conversation he particularly wanted to have with his professor.

Hmmm… fantasies. I wonder what Potter fantasizes about. Draco was again horrified by his own thoughts. *I DO NOT want to know what Potter fantasizes about. He probably dreams about a threesome with Weasel and the Mudblood.* Malfoy shuddered as the thought prompted the image of Blaise's dream. It was definitely time to get to sleep.

The good news was that the metallic flashes that had so annoyed him were gone. The bad news was that now everyone was surrounded by metallic auras. Harry had never seen anything as distracting in his life as he watched Hermione's bright green aura fight with Ron's light orange one. The two colors pushed at each other and kept trying to mix, which distracted Harry from what the two were saying. He realized suddenly that they were looking questioningly at him.

"What? Sorry, wasn't listening."

"I said, are you ok, mate? You look kind of peaky."

"Um. Yes, I'm fine. Just, well, just tired." *And going mad* he added silently.

"Oh, ok. Well, we have to go to Potions now or we'll be late. Are you finished with your breakfast?" Hermione eyed the waffles Harry had drowned in syrup and then systematically destroyed with his fork.

"Yeah. Let's go." Harry was nauseous again. He dreaded working with the smelly potions ingredients, but knew that skipping class was not an option. Ever since he and Snape had grudgingly finished Occulumency lessons, Snape had expected him to act like he had gotten something out of their 'remedial potions' sessions. That meant that Harry was to show up and do his potions *right*, which he did, most of the time at least.

As he and Hermione walked out of the Great Hall, they passed the Slytherin table. Harry's head lifted as he caught hold of the first scent that didn't make him nauseous that day. He stopped and looked to the source of the smell. Malfoy sat in his usual place among his adoring friends, but slightly drawn away from both Zambini and Crabbe. His perfect blonde locks framed his pale face, and the well cut robes outlined a very fit body. And for an inexplicable reason, Harry was suddenly hit by a surprising wave of lust. He turned away quickly to hid his teenage body's reaction and hurried after Hermione, not noticing the startled silver eyes that followed his progress from the room.

In the potions classroom, Harry tried to convince his excited body that it needed to reject whatever drugs it was on and get over its obsession with Malfoy's rather well formed biceps—no, he had to stop this train of thought. Harry was beginning to really worry about himself. Should he go to Dumbledore about this? As soon as the thought crossed his mind, he felt an immediate aversion to the idea. *No,* he decided, *I am tired of having to go to Dumbledore for everything. It's not like he would tell me anything worthwhile anyway.*

The Slytherins swaggered into the class just as the bell rang, and Harry's groin tightened as Malfoy smirked at him in passing.

Bubbotuber pus. Blast ended skrewts. Percy Weasley. Voldemort in a Speedo. Harry tried to think of the most distasteful things possible to get his mind out of the gutter. *Snape in a Speedo. Oh, ick!*

Snape himself swooped into the classroom just then and waved the day's instructions onto the blackboard. "You may begin." He said with a sneer at the lone pair of Gryffindors in his advanced class. The rest were Slytherins and Ravenclaws.

Harry gathered his ingredients and discovered a foolproof way to get his body off of the topic of Malfoy's arse. The smells radiating from the potions ingredients were turning him slightly green. The metallic auras were getting brighter as well. He noticed dimly that his own aura was gold, as was Malfoy's, that Zambini's was navy blue, and that Snape's was a dark forest green with an ugly dried blood-colored smear on it. *I suppose that's from the Dark Mark.*

Thinking about the Dark Mark made him think of the Death Eaters. He suddenly wondered whether he could tell who kissed Voldemort's robes through their aura. He glanced around surreptitiously, but did not see any other smears like the one on Snape's aura. *That's a relief. At least I don't have any other true Death Eaters here to worry about.*

Suddenly, Harry regretted his thoughts about the Dark Lord. Pain that was unimaginable in its

intensity slammed into his head through his scar. Harry barely pushed out a chocked scream as the pain blasted his mind apart and pulled him into an abyss filled with screaming and blood and pain and death before going completely black.

Draco was startled beyond thought when he had been caught in the emerald green scopes of his rival. Lust slammed into his body, hardening him rather abruptly and shocking him into stupefied silence just long enough for Blaise to look at him questioningly. Potter had then fled, and Draco worked to pull his attention back to his friends. He dropped his normal Malfoy-mask into place but was shaken behind it.

"Draco, are you alright? You looked strange there for a moment."

"Yes, of course I'm fine. What were you saying?"

Blaise looked uncertain, but continued. "Well, the Gryffindors are really strong this year in the offence and the seeker positions, of course, but I think that the Weasel's still our best shot. The beaters aren't great, so that leaves him pretty unprotected. If we go for—"

Draco tuned his friend out to worry over this response to Potter. He had been having strange thoughts about the boy, but surely the fates wouldn't pair him with someone like that. The Bloody Boy Who Wouldn't Kick The Bucket would be worse to deal with as a mate then a Muggle, and that was saying something!

Suddenly, he realized what time it was. "Come on, we'll be late to Potions, not that it matters." He strode rather dramatically out of the Hall, his friends and bodyguards following behind him.

As he mixed his powdered scarab beetles and the diluted hinkpunk spittle, Draco concentrated on the lean back of the green-eyed Gryffindor that seemed to be the cause of his unfortunate hard-on. He wondered suddenly whether Potter had gotten Chimera blood through his mother or his father, if of course, he was actually Draco's mate. The idea was distasteful in theory, but Draco's body was very interested in the actual practice.

When Draco got the mental image of Harry—Potter—groaning under him, he decided he really needed a distraction. Before he could come up with something, however, the Golden Boy's head came up and his emerald eyes began surveying the room under the cover of thick, black eyelashes.

Draco had the urge to trace the line of Harry's jaw to the pulse point that would be pounding for him and him alone. He wondered whether Harry wore boxers or briefs. Perhaps he went commando? Draco's groin tightened even more at the thought.

Then the object of Draco's lust stiffened. Harry shot out of his seat with a strangled scream, knocking over his chair and table, before slamming to the floor, blood pouring out of the famous scar on his forehead. Harry screamed and writhed, yelling random words and phrases frantically.

"No! Help her god don't just stand there what is wrong with you people what the hell is your problem how could you do this why this is not my fault I didn't mean to it wasn't me please don't god help her no please no don't" he finished with another loud scream, his body convulsing and blood pouring over his face.

Snape pushed through his shocked students as he dug a vial from his pocket and Granger grabbed Harry's head to keep it from slamming against the ground as he convulsed. The two worked together in a way that surprised all the students to force a potion down the boy's throat. They forced Harry to swallow the blue potion and he went abruptly still.

There was moment of shocked silence in the room that Granger broke with a sob as she wiped at the blood that covered Harry's face and spread in a pool over the floor. The door to the potions lab crashed open and Weasley sprinted in, followed by Dumbledore and Madam Pomfrey. Weasley dropped to his knees next to Granger but made room for the medi-witch to get the prone boy. Dumbledore, Snape, and the conscious members of the Gryffindor dream team waited pale faced for Pomfrey's prognosis. Draco suddenly found himself on the edge of panic and hyperventilation. He gripped his desk with white-knuckled hands.

"We may have a problem."

Draco heard the words and promptly fainted dead away.

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Chapter: 4

Chapter the fourth

Harry woke very slowly. There was decidedly too much light shining in his eyes. Perhaps he had forgotten to close his bed curtains? He turned away from the window, only to realize that the light was coming from the wrong side of his bed. He cracked one eye open, regretted it immediately, but discovered that he was in the hospital wing, in the bed that Madam Pomfrey had threatened to set aside especially for him. According to her, Harry visited the hospital wing more than everyone else in his year put together.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, you're awake. Come now, you need to drink this potion." As if his thoughts had conjured the woman, Madam Pomfrey bustled out of her office carrying a vial of what appeared to be a rejuvenating potion.

Harry suddenly remembered the pain and blood that had landed him in the infirmary. "What happened? I haven't had a vision since I finished Occulumency, and I had my mind shields up. Nothing should have gotten through."

"Well, Mr. Potter, I am afraid you'd best ask the headmaster about that. It really is more his place to tell you than I." The nurse looked at him worriedly. "I am so sorry, my boy, but it does seem that everything happens to you. I suppose that's where the luck comes in."

"What?"

Madam Pomfrey ignored his confused question and took the opportunity to force the potion down her young patient's throat. "How do you feel? Any pains?"

"No, I feel normal, but how long have I been here?"

"Three days. It's now the twelfth of November. Your mind took quite a beating and I am afraid you lost a great deal more blood through that scar of yours than would seem likely."

Harry looked at the nurse in astonishment. *Three days? From just a vision?* Madam Pomfrey continued checking his health, but Harry hardly paid attention as he wondered about his recent indisposition. What on earth did Voldemort do this time to knock him out for so long? And what had happened to his Occulumency shields? He and Snape had worked hard to make sure his mind was protected at all times, especially when he was asleep, to block the sort of thing that had resulted in the episode at the Department of Mysteries.

When the nurse pronounced him fit to go see the headmaster, Harry pulled on the clothing she held out to him and wandered towards Dumbledore's tower. He noticed that it was about mid day, and he passed many gawking students on his way through the castle. He supposed the news of his collapse had been all over the castle within the hour of the event, and began to prepare himself for another round of Rita Skeeter's emasculating insinuations.

He was only a few halls from the entrance to the headmaster's office when he passed a group of Slytherin seventh years.

"Hey, Potter! Is your head all better?" Pansy Parkinson's voice rang out mockingly. "Do you need a hug, or are you going to be able to handle those scary, scary visions?"

Harry took a deep, calming breath and willed himself to ignore the pug-faced Slytherin.

"What? Is the Golden boy too good to talk to us lowly Slytherins?"

Harry's headache was suddenly coming back full force and the students who had stopped to watch the confrontation appeared to be glowing slightly.

"Aw, look at the poor little orphan boy. He's trying to ignore us. Maybe he's scared of us. What do you think, Adrian?"

"I think knows how pathetic he is. I bet he cries at night for his mommy and daddy." Adrian

Wright, a tall, dark boy said, his handsome face twisted in a derisive sneer.

Harry told himself repeatedly that it didn't matter what they said. Neither of them were particularly inventive in their insults, not like Dra—Malfoy—was, but for some reason, their inept insults were more infuriating than anything Malfoy had thrown at him. Perhaps it was the timing of their assault, but this time, Harry was not having as easy a time controlling his temper as he had since the beginning of sixth year after Snape had pronounced him a decent Occulumens. He was beginning to see red, and it was not all from the Wright's candy apple colored aura that he could suddenly see.

Draco Malfoy had never realized how stupid his housemates were until he realized that they really didn't see the signs of Harry's rather incredible temper. Even he, distracted as he was by the relief he felt for Harry's reappearance and by the glorious sight that was Harry's arse, could tell that the Golden Boy was royally pissed. Potter's fists clenched tightly, and his steps seemed deliberate and carefully measured, as though he was forcing himself to keep walking.

Wright nudged him with his elbow. "Come on, Draco, aren't you going to add anything?" He said in an undertone as Pansy continued to taunt the Gryffindor.

"No. I don't feel like it right now." Draco answered with a bored tone. "Who cares about him anyway?" Just then, Pansy finally found something to set Harry off. Draco didn't actually hear her comment, but he felt the explosion of power that knocked everyone besides himself and Harry off his or her feet.

The Golden boy had turned to face them and stood with his feet slightly apart, as though bracing himself. He glowed with power and his emerald eyes had turned a bright gold color with green threads lacing through them. Wind whipped through the corridor, blowing papers and clothing all around in a mini cyclone. Draco had never seen anything so beautiful as Harry Potter in his anger. Dimly, he wondered where the Gryffindor was getting the power to do something like this, but he allowed himself to be distracted by the magnificent sight in front of him. Potter looked like an avenging angel, only a hell of a lot sexier.

"*If you* ever *speak to me again about my godfather, there won't be enough pieces of you left to send home to your parents in a matchbox.*" Harry's voice had deepened and was filled with an uncharacteristic rancor that shook those that heard it down to their very bones. Draco knew in that moment, when all he could feel was a shiver of lust, that his worried suspicions from the last few days were entirely correct; if Harry wasn't his mate then he was a walking tea kettle.

"Harry! What on earth are you doing?" Hermione Granger hurried up to her friend, Weasley jogging behind her. They ignored the wind whipping their robes about and approached their glowing friend without fear. "Are you alright?"

"What's going on?" Professor Dumbledore swept into the hallway, followed closely by Professor Snape. Noticing the situation, Dumbledore said soothingly, "Harry, I think you need to take a deep breath and calm down. Your powers are a bit out of control, so if you will just think of

pleasant things, we can discuss this in the privacy of my office."

Harry ignored them completely and focused his eyes on the only being still that had remained standing in the hallway when his magic had blown. Draco Malfoy stared at him in wonderment and without the animosity and coldness that Harry was used to. Harry watched Malfoy's gold aura pulse lightly, as though with his heartbeat, and wondered why the Slytherin wasn't cowering away from him like the rest of the students.

"Mate? Snap out of it." Ron's voice suddenly intruded into Harry's concentration, and as he turned to look at his best friend, the glowing in his vision subsided, and the world returned to normal. "C'mon. Lets go find out what's going on."

Harry allowed his friend to lead out of the corridor, past the stone griffin (*Swedish Fish*), and into the headmaster's office. Harry, Hermione, Ron, Snape, and Dumbledore filed into the office where Professor McGonagall already waited for them. They all sat down, and Harry looked expectantly at Dumbledore. After offering everyone a lemon drop, which all refused except for Ron, Dumbledore began to speak.

"Harry, there's something we need to tell you about your bloodline."

Draco felt the loss of eye contact with his mate like a blow to the gut. It was strange, that he hadn't actually felt any sort of connection until Harry had turned his back, but now Draco was sure that something was missing. It now felt as though the hallway was much colder and draftier than it used to be. He hoped that this wasn't a symptom of the bond between Chimeras and their mates; he was already prone to being cold, and he dreaded having to wear yet more layers of clothing.

Hmm… I wonder what Harry would look like in his boxers. Or maybe he wears briefs. I can't decide. He seems too conservative to go for commando, what a shame that is. I bet he looks good in boxers though. Red boxers, probably. Draco shuddered. *Green ones would be better. Yes, green boxers to match his eyes. Or black! That would complement him too…* Draco wandered down the corridor to his next class, Ancient Runes, without waiting for his bewildered friends to catch up.

He was halfway there when the most obvious of truths finally occurred to him: everyone from his father to the Dark Lord to Dumbledore to Harry Potter himself was going to make sure this bond was never consummated. The Dark Lord, and by extension, his father, would not let The Infant Who Humiliated Voldemort live for much longer; that Harry had survived this long had to be a combination of luck and Dumbledore's aid. Dumbledore would never allow Draco, the tainted son of a Death Eater, near the luscious body of the Golden Boy, and Harry had hated Draco for the last seven years. A one-sided change like Malfoy's would never make up for the years of animosity.

Draco's mood turned from ecstatic at having discovered his mate, to despair at ever being able to have him. Draco didn't even consider the chances that such an attachment could have two sides.

"My bloodlines? What about them?"

"Apparently, your mother had a bit more magical blood in her than we had previously thought. Tell me, Harry, do you know what Chimera are?" The damned twinkle in Dumbledore's eye was glittering at him.

"Erm. No, Professor."

"Chimera? As in made-up creature? They originated from Suruga, didn't they professor?" Hermione piped up, in true Hermione form. "The Immortals interbred with humans they considered worthy before they disappeared. But Chimera throwbacks are very rare. It takes Chimera blood on both sides and the right birth conditions. These circumstances are so rare that Chimeras from human sides are said to have Chimera Luck, which means that they have a lot of either very bad luck, or very good luck. The more powerful go through phases of luck." Hermione spoke in her fastest rate.

"Um, Hermione? Care to slow down? I think we are still back with the "immortal" part." Ron said, his confusion echoed on Harry's face.

"Very good, Miss Granger. Yes, Chimera originated from Suruga and interbred with humans. They had no concept of wizard versus muggle, so they had children with both." Dumbledore beamed at her. Snape and McGonagall looked grimly on without comment. They had obviously already heard all of this.

"Suruga. That's where the grubblish beans originate, right?" Harry was trying to piece together all of Hermione's facts. Snape rolled his eyes at his student of seven years. The boy had absorbed a useless, little known fact but couldn't remember the basic properties of common ingredients. "Alright, so what are these Chimera things?"

"Chimera are magical creatures similar to Veela, in that they take mates for life, and similar also to unicorns, in that they can purify substances and almost every part of them has magical properties, and phoenixes in that they are very strong, have healing powers, and actually have limited resurrection skills." Dumbledore continued. Fawkes, situated comfortably on his perch in the corner, preened as the headmaster mentioned phoenixes.

"Resurrection skills?" Ron said. "Wicked!"

"Yes, they are useful but leave the Chimera extremely weak for a while, so they are very vulnerable for a time afterwards."

"Wait, what does this have to do with me?" Harry said, but was drowned out by Hermione's enthusiastic lecture.

"Chimera are incredibly powerful, but they have very little control at first. They tend to get angry very easily, and they can do an incredible amount of damage without trying or even realizing.

For example, the famous disappearance of Atlantis is thought to have been caused, in part, by a really bad fight between three really powerful Chimeras who had just come into their powers. The first burst of power acted like a magnifying spell for the other two, which triggered a huge earthquake, which is believed to cause the destruction. Chimera can be controlled by their mates, however, except in the rare case in which the mates are the ones fighting. This is incredibly rare because—"

"Hermione?" Harry said. "This is interesting and everything, but why are we learning this now instead of in Care of Magical Creatures?"

"Harry, most of the oldest bloodlines, like the Potters have traces of Immortal blood, and therefore occasionally have Chimera children. However, since these Immortals had no qualms about mating with muggles, there is Immortal blood in some muggles as well. Your mother, Lily, was a muggleborn who apparently was also descendent of an Immortal." Dumbledore leaned forward. Harry suddenly knew without a doubt that he didn't want to have this conversation. "Your birth fulfilled all the circumstances necessary to bring out that blood. You are now the first known Chimera since the mid nineteenth century."

There was silence in the room. Ron's mouth hung open, and Hermione's formed a little 'o.' Harry stared at him blankly, unsure of how to respond. He tried to say something, anything, but he didn't know what he could possibly say to something like this. *I'm not human? Or am I human? Or, wait. What am I again? Chimera. Wait a second. I can resurrect myself.*

"That's *awesome*!"

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Chapter: 5

Ok, first off, reviewing is an awesome thing to do… this is my first ever fic so I really need to know if anything really sucks…

Chapter the Fifth

Harry's exclamation was met with a moment of silence in which Hermione and the teachers stared at his in surprise and Ron nodded enthusiastically. Harry didn't even notice the looks, lost as he was in thoughts for what this ability would bring him.

Ha! Maybe this prophecy won't be so hard to fulfill after all. I could actually have trial runs with Voldemort! And I could survive to see to legal drinking age! I can have a life! This is awesome!

Hermione hated to burst Harry's happy-bubble, but she knew that Harry wasn't really thinking

about the big picture. "Harry, you may be able to resurrect yourself, but you had better hope that your bank account will stretch for your entire life."

"What? Oh, this is so awesome. What else can I do?" Harry grinned rather manically.

"Harry, you don't understand. There's something you need to realize before you get all excited." Hermione broke in again, but this time she leaned over and grabbed his hand to draw his attention.

"What?" Harry looked at her expectantly. Dumbledore and the professors watched them silently, grim looks on their faces.

"Chimera are so incredibly powerful that they are feared and hated more than werewolves. There is an extraordinary amount of legislation against them when you consider the number of known Chimera. You aren't even legally allowed to have children here in Britain and it is technically illegal for you to be within one hundred meters of underage wizards."

Harry stared at her, aghast. "*What*? They can't do something like that! That's not legal!"

"Chimera aren't considered human. They have the highest M.O.M rating of all known beasts." Hermione looked at him nervously. "People who are even level headed about the werewolf-dangerous beasts issues will shiver when Chimera are mentioned."

"But… Why?" Ron broke in. "I haven't even heard of Chimera, so why would people be so scared of them?"

"I believe, Mr. Weasley, that it would be very difficult for you not to have heard of Chimera. They are the central figure in that silly nursery rhyme that purebloods tell to their children to keep them in line. "Where the whiten bones lay," I believe it is called." Snape said smoothly.

"Really? I've never—oh, yeah, I remember. In the middle it says something like, "where Chimera suck from marrow-bone and leave the pieces dry," or something like that. Used to scare me silly when Fred and George would sing it to me." Ron said. "Come to think of it, they still scare me silly when they sing it. Makes me think they've cooked something up that mum wouldn't approve of."

"Marrow-bones? Please tell me that was an artistic liberty."

"No, actually, that line was based on a Chimera Dark Lord of the second century who was known to actually eat the bodies of the children of his enemies." Dumbledore added in. "This Chimera was probably the cause of most of the stigma against Chimera."

"Oh." Harry said quietly, slightly nauseated. "What does this mean in terms of daily life, then?"

"No one outside of this room, with the exception of Madam Pomfrey knows of your heritage. At

least, this is what we hope. Your collapse during Potions class, was it a vision?"

"Yes. Voldemort was torturing a group of Muggle school girls." Harry grimaced, guilt suddenly breaking through the confusion of his mind. "He wanted me to see, even though he thinks I can block most of the pain."

"And your mind shields. They were in place?" When Harry nodded, Dumbledore sat back and thought for a moment. "Do you think he realized he had gotten so far into your mind?"

"No. He usually just throws something at me really hard rather then having a true connection. But why didn't my shields hold?"

"The process in which a Chimera gains his or her full powers is one in which the mind is readjusted to allow your new powers room. This means that your mind tends to be very susceptible to Legilimens." Snape answered. "Essentially, you will be able to hear the thoughts of others without trying, which can be painful and distracting, and you will be more vulnerable to the Dark Lord's messages then you were before you started Occulumency."

"Wonderful. What should I do about it?"

The professors exchanged looks. "There is not much to be done. There is a potion that should add some resistance, but it will not be able to do much more than keep you conscious during a vision." Snape said grimly. "You will probably hear surface thoughts only when you are tired or very upset. However, as you go through this process, you may find yourself developing powers that are both dangerous and conspicuous. We can do nothing but try to get you out of sight at that point."

"Like what kind of powers?"

"Tele-kinesis, perhaps the ability to create fire and ice, one Chimera actually had the ability to stop the movement of molecules, which effectively froze things in midair or mid-motion—the list of possibilities is endless. You should already be able to see auras and their impurities, and with your power, you will eventually be able to purify the tainted ones." Hermione was back in her teacher mode. "I read somewhere that there is a theory that Chimera can recognize each other by a certain aura color, but due to the rarity of Chimera and the attitudes about them, little is truly known about this."

"I can see auras. Yours is green." Harry said, remembering from the morning. "How do I control these powers?"

"You will have to learn control. We have already begun searching for a teacher." Dumbledore answered. "And we believe we may see several other Chimera very soon."

"Why do you say that?" Ron piped up. "There's never been more than a few at a time in the world."

"Our esteemed Divination teacher made a very short and extremely vague prophecy about it. We expect a total of seven within the next two years." Dumbledore answered. "I had hoped to keep this a secret, but I feel that this affects you too much to keep this from you. I have no wish to repeat my past mistakes."

"Seven? At Hogwarts?" Hermione looked aghast. "But that kind of power is unheard of. What would we do if they got angry at each other?"

Draco ignored his Ancient Runes teacher as he rambled on about the properties of some Egyptian symbol. Egypt was a far ways away, so it took the backseat to Draco's present issue. *How to get the girl—er, the boy, rather—without dying or getting him killed in the process?*

Lucius Malfoy had never been a tolerant father. As the epitome of the noble pureblood, Malfoy, Sr. did not believe in physical violence in his home, so when his son misbehaved, a low level dark curse generally solved the problem. Draco learned early on that even the curses that were much less powerful than the Cruciatus could be very painful, so he made sure to toe the line when his father required it. Obviously, making hot monkey-love with the Boy Who Lived was not going to be considered toeing the line.

Draco's teenage body perked up at the thought of Harry in the carnal sense, and the Slytherin had to force his mind onto a more platonic topic. *Okay, so where to start on the win-Harry front? I need something sneaky. And I need to avoid Dumbledore. Perhaps Snape? No, he'll report to the Dark Lord. Perhaps if I keep it vague and pull the introvert act if he asks for specifics? Hm…*

"Mr. Malfoy? Please pay attention!" His professor glared at him. "If you are finished daydreaming, please do tell us what the god Horus symbolizes in regard to a Akhen-tentara sequence."

"Flight. The sequence will have something to do with either flight or clear eyesight, as those are the traditional characteristics of birds of prey." Draco said calmly, the trademark Malfoy smirk solidly in place.

His teacher looked slightly sour, as though he knew that Draco had answered without having any idea what was going on. "Two points to Slytherin. Do try to face the classroom instead of the window."

Draco gave an internal sigh of relief. Spotting a flash of green in the corner of his eye, his mind immediately went to his mate. *Wonder whether his eyes turn different colors when he's in bed.* Who needed to know about Egyptian Runes anyway?

Ok, so I wanted to get the lover boys together in this chapter, but it didn't happen, so next one! I promise. I will try to be as creative as possible.

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Chapter: 6

Chapter the Sixth

Harry lay on the flat of his back and wondered what had awakened him. He lay in his familiar red-canopied bed in his dormitory listening to the quiet snores from Ron in the next bed over. He pulled the curtain back a little to check the time, only to see that it was 3:33 AM. He sighed. Why was he awake at such an ungodly hour when he had potions first thing the next morning? He searched his mind for this cause, and his mind presented him with the image of Draco Malfoy with no shirt on.

What the hell? Harry sat straight up. *I did not have a dream about a half dressed Draco Malfoy. There is no way. I must be channeling someone else's thoughts.* Harry stopped when it occurred to him where and with whom he was. Though Dean and Seamus were both gay, they were very much in love with each other and both despised the blond Slytherin. The idea that Ron would dream something like that was ludicrous, especially considering that he was presently dreaming about Hermione naked—*Ugh! I did not just get that image from Ron's head! Oh, sick!*—Harry quickly blocked such disturbing images of a girl who was essentially his sister. And Neville? Well, even Harry could tell that Neville was really into Ginny. The only people that hadn't yet caught onto this fact were Ron and Ginny's present boyfriend. Ginny seemed unsure of herself, but appeared to be psyching herself up to break it off with the poor sap of a Ravenclaw. For Neville's sake, Harry hoped she would, but that didn't help him solve the mystery of the half-naked Draco.

Mm… half-naked Draco. His abs should be made illegal, they are so tasty-looking. Yummy… No! No! Bad Harry! Bubertuber pus! Speedos! Snape butt naked!

On the other side of the castle, the object of Harry's reluctant lust found himself in the same situation. Draco Malfoy had never had a wet dream before. Though it was normal for a teenage boy, whenever Draco had an itch, he scratched, so he had never run into this problem before. He found it slightly embarrassing that anyone, even if it was his mate, could make him come without even being present. However, his newly discovered Chimera side would not let him dwell on this feeling of embarrassment; his mind presented him with his half-thought issues of the afternoon.

Perhaps Snape is my best bet? I don't know, this could get very dangerous. He is my godfather, but I don't know how far his loyalty will run if it even appears to be against the Dark Lord's sentiment. I just don't know if I can trust him with this, but there really is no one else I can go to that can help with this problem. I guess I will just have to keep him as uninformed as possible.

Having decided on his course of action, Draco turned over and ordered himself to go to sleep.

Two and a half hours later, Draco was still awake. His traitorous body refused to go to sleep, but preferred to consider the now-habitual question of what Harry wore under his robes. As a result, Draco was up very early and was extremely cranky. As soon as his magical clock hit six, he stomped into the bathroom to take care of his 'little' problem. It annoyed him to no end that he was going to have to deal with it himself, so it did not help matters that all he had to think of was Harry's eyes to make himself come. As a result, he was not in a good mood when he stalked out of the common room towards Snape's apartments.

"Professor? I need to speak with you about—" he cut off when he realized that Professor Snape was not alone. "Professor Dumbledore. Please forgive my intrusion." Draco turned to leave, but the headmaster called him back.

"No, no, not at all. You are just the person we wanted to speak to this morning. Tell me, Mr. Malfoy, have you found your mate yet?"

Draco froze. "I don't know what you mean." He said stiffly.

"Draco, we have some very important things to talk about. Please sit down." Snape said. Draco turned slowly and sat stiffly in an armchair opposite the two adults. "The headmaster and I need to ask you about your plans for the future."

"My plans?"

"More plainly, do you plan to follow in your father's footsteps?" Dumbledore said, somehow knowing that a direct approach would fluster the aristocratic boy. "And please do not speak in fear of reprisal from anyone."

Draco glanced almost imperceptively at the Death Eater in the room, but Snape was trained to pick these things up. "Do not worry that anything you say will reach your father or the Dark Lord."

Draco's eyebrows shot up in surprise. "You mean—oh. You're the spy."

"Yes." Snape's dark eyes showed no emotion.

Draco glanced at Dumbledore, then back to his godfather, and something occurred to the blond teen that was so obvious that he wondered what was wrong with him that he hadn't considered it before. Sexy-man-of-his-dreams Harry was the Boy Who Lived. He fought on the side of light and would never be swayed to the other side, even if Draco wanted to try to. Therefore, if Draco ever wanted to get him, he would have to be the one to switch sides. It wouldn't be so hard; Draco didn't have such strong feelings against the Light that he was sure Harry had against the Dark. "I have found my mate." He admitted warily, unsure about the adults' reactions.

Dumbledore smiled as though he had already known Draco's revelation. "And who is it?"

Draco hesitated. He knew that the light was very forgiving of bad connections and pasts, if Snape was anything to go by. However, trusting someone who had been an enemy mere minutes before was something very against his upbringing. He took a deep breath and hoped his Chimera luck would help him out. "Harry Potter." He said very quietly.

To his surprise, Dumbledore flashed a triumphant grin at Snape, while the Potion's professor simply looked sour. "Good, good. Have you approached Mr. Potter yet?"

"No, sir." Draco said, wondering at Dumbledore's look. "Professor, may I ask you something?" At Dumbledore's nod, he asked, "Is Harry of Chimera blood?"

"Not really. He is of Immortal blood."

"He's—what? He's Chimera?" Draco asked, flabbergasted. "But—but then he has had to have noticed me as a mate!"

"He has, but he does not yet realize that he even has a mate. Harry concentrated more on the strengths of a Chimera and did not truly hear the part about having a mate. He does not yet know how to recognize you. Miss Granger will probably rectify that ignorance soon." Dumbledore said. Draco was surprised when Snape rolled his eyes but did not insult the two Gryffindors.

"And his collapse the other day?"

"A vision from the Dark Lord." Snape answered. "Harry, too, has been having problems with his Occulumency."

Draco was silent for a moment. "Professor Dumbledore, you did not seem surprised at the identity of my mate."

"My boy, you told us the identity of your mate when you collapsed with Harry." Dumbledore smiled.

Numbed as he was to people whispering when he passed, Harry walked into the Great Hall and cringed at the wide-eyed looks. Every person from all four houses gossiped about him as they saw him enter. He passed people who were wondering whether he was going mad, or was very ill, or perhaps He Who Must Not Be Named was trying to possess him. Harry stiffened his spine as he passed the Slytherin table. Adrian Wright and Pansy hissed at him as he passed, but he forced himself to calm down.

He sat down between his two best friends, who patted him gently on the back. "Don't let them get to you, mate. Remember that everything they do seems worse than it is because of your—situation." Ron said.

"Yes, and I think you need to know as much about what to expect as possible. Library after lunch?" Hermione said. "I really think you need to find out about the mating process, as you are

supposed to find a mate within the next few months."

"A mate?" Harry looked surprised. "I can't have a mate."

Hermione and Ron looked at each other. "You have to have a mate. The mating bond is the only way to steady your powers."

Harry stared at them. "Um, guys," he started slowly, as though talking to small children, "I have a psycho out to kill me. I can't put a mate in danger like that just because they had the bad luck to be bonded to me."

"Harry, you don't have a choice. You can't fight Voldemort with faulty control on your power. And this bond will make your mate stronger as well, in case V—Voldemort finds out who they are." Hermione said. "Two Chimera together are much more than the sum of their parts."

"Plus you'll get really horny around them until you bond." Ron said helpfully, ignoring the sputtered "Ron!" on Harry's other side.

"Wait, what?" Harry asked, a very dark foreboding settling heavily into his stomach.

"The only proven way to find your mate is lust. There is a theory that Chimera are immune to angry powers of their mate, but that has never been proven. Anyway, whenever you see your mate, all you'll be able to think about is sex." Hermione said calmly, ignoring Ron's reddening face and Harry's horrified look. "Come on, I don't want to be late to Potions."

Harry followed the brunette witch to the dungeons in a slight daze, trying to deny the pull of the half-naked images of the night before. *Draco Malfoy is NOT my mate. I will not be mated with a Death Eater who will deliver me on a silver platter to Voldie. I am imaging this. Draco in a Speedo does not interest me. Though Draco* without *a Speedo… No! Bad Harry!*

Harry sat in his usual seat beside Hermione and tried to ignore the blonde Slytherin who sat on the other side of the room. Snape swept into the room with his usual flair and eyed his advanced class. After sending a nasty comment Harry's way about his 'delicate health,' he began the lesson. "Today we will be beginning the very first steps of the Polyjuice potion. As it takes a month to brew, we will have the practical lectures after the first simple steps have been taken care of. You will work in pairs which I will assign." Harry stifled a groan. He already knew who he would be paired with. Sure enough, when Snape finished assigning the rest of the class, he finished with a sadistic smile, "Zambini, Granger. Malfoy and Potter."

When Draco realized that his godfather was giving him a good excuse to get near Harry without suspicion, he could have kissed the man. However, he settled for a smirk and moved his things to Harry's table. Harry gave him a startled look when Draco moved over to him rather than making Harry move, but he decided not to mention it. While Draco set up their station, Harry went to grab the ingredients they would need for the day. He returned to the table warily, but Malfoy didn't even acknowledge him. Calmly and without expression, the Slytherin began measuring,

crushing, and mixing and handed Harry ingredients to prepare without a word. Harry wasn't sure why Draco was giving up an opportunity to torture him, but decided not to look a gift horse in the mouth. He worked as silently as Malfoy, and they spent the first ever hour without a fight together.

Two minutes before the bell as they were cleaning up, Malfoy handed Harry a vial of pomegranate juice unexpectedly, and Harry dropped it, spilling it all over the floor.

"Potter! Ten points from Gryffindor. If you cannot keep from wasting expensive ingredients then you will not get to handle them. Make sure you clean every bit of this up before you leave." Snape hissed at him before dismissing the class and sweeping out the room.

Harry looked sourly after his professor and grabbed a rag to clean up the juice. The rest of the class, including Hermione, who gave him a sympathetic look, filed out of the room, so Harry was startled when he realized Malfoy was handing him a clean rag to exchange the soaked one. "What are you doing here?" Harry said warily.

"Helping." Draco said, expressionless.

"Oh." Harry said, and willed his body to behave before it embarrassed him and gave his enemy a weakness to exploit mercilessly. *Mm… I bet he can be merciless in bed—No, bad thoughts, Harry.*

Draco was suddenly gripped with the urge to kiss the stiffness out of Harry's frame. He could tell that Harry didn't trust him at all, which was rather strange. Surely Harry could feel the draw too? Draco eyed the gorgeous Gryffindor behind his cold mask. He wasn't completely sure, but it certainly looked like Harry had something rising in his groin area.

"I need to speak with you." He said abruptly. Harry looked surprised.

The Gryffindor rose to his feet. "What about?"

Draco couldn't resist anymore. He lunged forward, grabbed a handful of Harry's soft hair, and seized his lips with his own. Harry jumped in surprise, but then his Chimera side crowed with victory and he opened his lips to Malfoy's, gripping the blonde's shoulders.

Draco was delirious with joy. Harry tasted very good. Much better than in his dreams, in fact. Harry was a little hesitant, as though kissing wasn't something he did often, but he grew more confident after a few seconds. Tongues battling sensuously and their hands sliding though silky hair and around broad backs, the two wizards pushed against each other and discovered that they were both thinking along the same lines. Harry slid his hands down Draco's sides before sliding them through the opening of his robes. He searched for bare skin and found Draco's abs under his shirt. Draco shivered at Harry's caress before latching onto the Gryffindor's neck just below his ear. Harry gasped and pulled Draco closer still.

"Ahem."

The boys jumped apart, startled, and Harry automatically whipped his wand out. They turned and saw that Ron and Hermione stood in the doorway of the classroom. Ron's face was bright red, and he seemed unsure whether to clap his hands over his eyes or to attack Draco. Hermione looked rather smug.

"What—um. Er… What are you two doing here?" Harry asked cautiously, unsure how they were going to react. Ron made a strangled noise similar to a mouse being stepped on, but Hermione only looked more amused.

"Remember that spell we did to make sure we all knew if someone was hurt or afraid? Apparently it works for really, really turned on as well. We thought you were being attacked… perhaps we should let him get on with it?" Ron squeaked in agony again at Hermione's statement. "Not that that wasn't interesting, but what exactly caused that?"

"Erm. Uh. I don't—"

"I assume your little friends know of your heritage." Draco cut in, the hot and bothered look that he had sported seconds before completely gone.

"Of course—what? How the hell would you know about it?" Draco found himself being held at wand point by his life mate. All he could think was how incredibly green Harry's eyes were. "How the fuck did you find out?"

"Language, Potter. And I was told by the headmaster." Draco decided that, like with a wild animal, he probably shouldn't show fear, so he settled himself securely behind his don't-fuck-with-Malfoys mask.

"*Dumbledore* told you?" Ron broke in incredulously. "Why the hell would he tell *you*?"

Draco drew himself up, insulted more than the comment probably deserved. "Perhaps because I had a right to know that my mate had more than a trace of Chimera blood." He snapped, glaring at the redhead. "Not that it's any of your business, Weasel." Draco didn't understand why he was so pissed off, but he was actually seeing a weird glow around the Gryffindor because of it. Strangely, he didn't see red as most people said they did, but rather saw orange. He pushed past Weasley and Granger to stalk back to his dormitory. He really needed a cold shower.

"Why the hell would you say that to him?" Harry demanded angrily.

"Harry, that was *Malfoy*, as in the evil git who made our lives hellish for the last seven years." Ron yelled back. "I can't believe you kissed the ferret!"

"Um… Ron?"

"Shut the hell up, Ron! Who are you to tell me who I should kiss?" Harry yelled back.

"It's disgusting! Ugh! How can you even touch that slimy Death Eater!"

"Ron!"

"Shut up! We don't know that he's a Death Eater!"

"You shut up! How the hell can you—"

"RON!"

"WHAT Hermione?" Ron roared, face bright red.

"It is not a good idea to attack a Chimera's mate, even if it's just verbally. Shut your mouth before you end up six feet under." Hermione hissed at him, pinching him hard. "Harry, calm down. This has just really surprised us. Perhaps we should just go to lunch and then discuss this when we can ALL be reasonable."

Harry breathed hard through his nose, his vision bright with their auras. He could feel magic pooling around him, as though he was getting ready to throw a huge amount of power into a spell. He struggled to calm down, but found that even as he calmed, the magic was still swirling around him. The power shone a lighter gold than his aura, and he could see it drawing towards him from the air around him. The magic swirled faster and in a split second, Harry's fury changed to fear. The power washed over him, overwhelming him, and he suddenly knew that something bad was about to happen. He tried to force the magic away from him, but it simply built up more. Harry began to panic as the magic tried to drown him. He realized his friends were still there, and he was terrified for them.

"GET OUT!" He yelled at his friends. "I CAN'T CONTROL IT! GET OUT NOW!"

Ron and Hermione had seen when Harry's face had changed from angry to absolutely petrified with fear. The alarm spell that told them when Harry was in danger had flared to life, ringing loudly in their ears. They heard the panic in their friend's voice, and did as he said. They all but flew out of the door, slamming it behind them when they left. Hermione turned and shielded it with every shielding charm that she had ever read about before Ron pulled her away. Together, they sprinted out of the dungeons and towards the Great Hall, using the Headmaster's secret passage ways, the ones that went directly towards your goal, to get there as quickly as possible.

Dumbledore was already rising to his feet when, thirty seconds after they had left Harry, Ron and Hermione burst into the full Hall.

"HEADMASTER!" Ron yelled. "WE HAVE A REALLY BIG FUCKING PROBLEM!" There were shocked gasps at his language, but Dumbledore didn't even seem to notice it.

"Where?" The headmaster asked.

"Potions classroom." Hermione said, panting. "I think we are going to need his other half."

Dumbledore looked at Snape, who was already out of his chair and sprinting for the Slytherin dungeons where he guessed Draco was. "Come." Dumbledore said, and led them back to the Potions classroom, the Great Hall in uproar behind them. "Let us hope we are not too late."

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Chapter: 7

Chapter the Seventh

In the Slytherin dungeons, Draco was angry about several things: the Weasel's insinuation that he didn't deserve to know about Harry, the fact that he was seeing weird glows around people as he passed them, he had a raging hard-on, and he had a tingling feeling that he really needed to be somewhere else. This last feeling confused him somewhat, as it was a very vague feeling, so he decided to ignore it in favor of a cold shower and some 'alone' time.

He reached his room and gathered his things for his shower. The house elves had already been there to make the silk covered bed, but Draco noticed a letter on his pillow that had obviously come while he was in class.

Draco,

We are most anxious to hear of your progress. Our friends visited today and inquired after your health. Do well in your classes and there may be a reward in store for you.

Lucius Malfoy

Draco recognized the letter for the message it was. The Dark Lord had been told of his heritage and wanted him in his ranks. The reward would be the dark mark, and Draco had no doubts that the question about the mate was more geared to finding out how powerful this mate would be. As Draco had realized earlier, a Chimera would choose the side of their mate rather than fight against them. Lucius would want to know how important a supporter Draco would be bringing to the Dark Lord. *Over my fucking dead body!* He thought fervently. *If it's between my father and Harry, there isn't even a real question.*

Draco was suddenly distracted when the niggling feeling that he was supposed to be somewhere flared into a feeling more akin to panic. He needed to be somewhere else and he needed to be there *now*. He stood, dropping his towel and clothes to the floor and looked around his plush

room frantically, as though the walls could tell him a direction. He blinked, startled, when his wall abruptly gave him a direction. A door had appeared in the middle of the wall. Draco walked over to it and stretched his hand out to try the brass knob. He jumped back when the door slammed open and Snape, glowing with a blemished dark green color, tumbled out.

"Come on!" Snape ordered. "He's going to tear the school apart!" Sure enough, Draco realized he could feel the stones of Hogwarts shaking slightly. He noticed that faint golden smoke seemed to be sliding through the cracks in the floor. Breaking his concentration sharply, Snape grabbed him and yanked him into the damp passage way through the door in his wall. Draco ran behind his godfather, trusting him to know their destination, and they could feel the floor beginning to shake more and more violently.

Just as suddenly as the door had appeared in Draco's wall, the passage way spat them out into the Potions classroom. Or, at least, what used to be the Potions classroom. The room seemed to be divided neatly into quadrants. Where they stood in the first, which included the ingredients cupboard, everything was frozen solid, with all the wood from the desks warped and the metal cracked from the cold. In the next quadrant, a raging windstorm seemed to be trying to break every object down into pieces no larger than a grain of sand. In the third quadrant, everything had rotted to an unrecognizable state. The wood was barely silt except for the door, which seemed to be held together with some force, and the stones had started turning to the finest of sand. The last quadrant seemed to be incredibly hot. All the flammable objects had long since been incinerated, the metal was boiling, and the stones of Hogwarts were actually red hot and molten. Draco, almost deaf from the roar of power in the room, was almost blinded at the incredible brilliance of the power in the center of the room. At the center of a huge column of gold, there crouched a figure—*HARRY?*

Draco lunged for his mate without concern for the power swirling through him. All he could think was the Harry—his Harry—was huddled on the floor, his arms wrapped around him, screaming with pain and fear and panic. Draco fell to his knees, grabbed Harry by his shoulders from behind and pulled him into the circle of his arms. Harry stiffened when Draco grabbed him, but then collapsed back into his warm arms. The room went abruptly silent; the whirlwind stopped moving and the boiling stones stopped bubbling and hardened in their rippled patterns. Snape held his breath, not able to believe that the storm of power had been stopped so very easily.

The door, warped and rotting, collapsed inward, and Dumbledore, several professors, Ron, and Hermione tumbled into the room. They all stopped short as they saw the damage Harry had wrecked on the room. Draco sat in the center of the room, crooning to a sheet-white Harry in his arms while Snape stood in the back of the room, in a section that appeared to be defrosting, looking pale and unsure. He took a tentative step towards the two Chimera huddled on the floor, but stopped when Draco's head shot up at the movement. Draco looked at him wide eyed for a long moment in which everyone held their breath before he seemed to recognize his godfather.

"But what about Hogwarts' shields? They are designed specifically to contain dangerous magic and should be able to contain even a Chimera's death strike. What happened to the shields?"

Professor McGonagall said in a disbelieving voice. "How could he possibly have this much power?"

No one, not even Dumbledore, had an answer for her. The only sound in the decimated room was the calming whispers of the blonde Chimera to his unconscious mate.

Harry woke once again with the light shining in his eyes, and once again he wished he had a bed curtain to block it out. A warm, comforting weight was settled on his stomach, giving him a feeling of being secure. He opened his eyes to see what was resting on him and realized that it had been a very stupid thing to do; a shaft of pain like a surgeon's scalpel plunged into his head through his dazed eyes, eliciting a loud moan of pain. The weight, which Harry had seen belonged to someone blonde, disappeared suddenly. Harry heard footsteps all but sprinting away from him and mourned the loss of the comforting presence. Seconds later, however, the presence was back, with another person Harry could recognize through smell alone.

"Madam Pomfrey." Harry said, voice hoarse and very sore. "How long this time?"

"A week. Well, eight days actually." The medi-witch's voice very soft, as though she knew that his head was filled with doxies armed with jackhammers. "Take this." She handed him a potion, and then another when he drank the first. The potions made him very sleepy, and he dropped back into the abyss of sleep as the weight settled back onto his side.

"Sleep, love." Harry thought he heard as he fell asleep.

When Harry woke the next time, it was dark in the hospital wing. The weight on his stomach was back again, and he cautiously opened his eyes to see Draco Malfoy asleep, looking more peaceful than Harry had ever seen him. Draco sat in the armchair beside Harry's bed with his torso leaning on the Golden Boy's mid section. The Gryffindor studied his rival's face, memorizing the lovely features with a bemused gaze. He didn't really know what Draco was doing here, but Harry was glad that he was. He stroked his fingers through the pale locks that framed his head, marveling at the silkiness of the hair. Draco sighed softly but didn't wake.

Harry thought about what had happened to him to land him in the hospital so soon after his last breakdown. All he could remember was being so angry at Ron about what he said about Draco, though Harry really didn't understand why he should be so furious. He remembered his power swelling as though getting ready to explode out of him, and he remembered the moment when he started to lose control over himself. It had been like harnessing the sea, he recalled. He had thought he was in control, but somehow the undertow had yanked him into a chaotic world of power. He remembered the panic that came in the absence of his control, and he remembered his terror when he realized that Ron and Hermione were still in the room. After they left, his power had exploded, slamming against the door and immediately working to break down the shield spells that Hermione had thrown up. The walls of Hogwarts fought the power that strove to destroy them, shoving back at the massive wave of golden light battering them. Harry, knowing that the weak point of the room was the door, had tried to manhandle the raw force away from the wood. The power had fought him, almost like a wild animal, until he had suddenly gotten the

idea to give the power an outlet. He searched his mind for something, anything, to do with the power, and his mind suddenly and inexplicably caught onto the last thing he had learned in his Muggle history class, about the ancient beliefs about the four elements of some little known civilization, and the power had surged through his mind into four separate directions.

It had hurt. It had burned through his mind and it had hurt more than all his visions put together. He had felt as though he were being pulled in a thousand different directions, and that he was slowly being ripped apart by the force. Harry couldn't remember if he had screamed then, but he knew it was likely.

Just when the pain had been getting to the point that Harry knew he was literally going to be pulled apart, someone had grabbed him, and the power had stopped swirling. Gently it faded into the walls of the school and back into him, not burning his mind like it had bursting out, but not healing them either. The last thing he remembered before waking up for the first time was a soft crooning that had eased the ravaged rawness of his mind.

Harry looked down at Draco. *Chimera powers*. His inner mind told him. *He is MY Chimera mate*. Harry suddenly wished he had gotten around to reading up about Chimera mates, because he had the feeling he already had his. It would explain the kiss after Potions class, and the embarrassing hard-on he got every time he saw the gorgeous Slytherin. Like the hard-on he had at that moment.

I must be all better, then. Harry thought ruefully to himself. *And since I don't even have a headache at this point, I think it is time to be thinking along these lines. As long as Draco is thinking along the same lines. Oh, god! What if he isn't? Hermione didn't say anything about mates wanting Chimera! Shit! Draco hates me! Fuck! I am going to have to seduce him, and I don't know how to seduce anyone! Crap!*

The next morning, Harry was still awake, eight days of sleeping having given him insomnia. As a result, he got to watch the slow, sexy process of Draco waking. The blonde stirred slightly, turning his face on Harry's abs. This awakened a certain part of the Gryffindor that he had been trying to control for most of the night, which made the fore mentioned boy suck his stomach in sharply. Draco woke at the movement, sitting up rather violently.

"You're awake!" Draco said, looking stunned.

"Hi. Sleep well?" Harry replied. Draco flushed rather adorably. He really wasn't helping Harry's erm… situation. "How was it that you said you knew what I am?"

"Um… What? Yes—no… I don't—" Draco was really flustered. "Dumbledore told me when I asked."

"Why did you ask?" Harry said, concentrating on Draco's mercury eyes.

Draco took a deep breath. He knew this was the chance he had been waiting for. Harry hadn't

yelled or hexed him when he had woken up with his enemy sprawled on him, so perhaps it wasn't hopeless after all. "I recognized you as my mate, and I wanted to know whether you just had Chimera blood."

Harry stared at him for a moment. "Meaning that you're Chimera also." He stated. Draco nodded. "And you went to *Dumbledore* for this?" He asked incredulously.

"No, how stupid do you think I am? Dumbledore would never have guided me towards you if I came out of the blue." Draco said, the Malfoy smirk crossing his face for the first time before disappearing again.

Harry watched Draco's face change with fascination. "How did you get him to tell you then?"

"Snape. He's guiding me through the whole maturation process." Draco answered absently, mesmerized by the emerald eyes staring into his soul.

"Hmm… I'm sorry." Harry murmured, drawing closer to Draco.

"Actually, I think he's relieved that I picked you, as opposed to a Slytherin. He does not want me on the wrong side of the war."

Harry pulled back suddenly. "What?"

"The wrong side of the war." Draco repeated, knowing Harry needed to hear this now. "Mated Chimera are historically incapable of being on opposite sides of a war."

Harry considered this for a moment. "I'm surprised you didn't try to convince me to your side." He said thoughtfully.

"You wouldn't survive long. The Dark Lord will never be able to let you live, even as a follower. I could never condemn you to be tortured anyway." Draco said before pulling Harry in for their second smoldering kiss.

And smoldering it certainly was. Harry forgot the war, Voldemort, and the bomb that Draco had just dropped in the heat of such a kiss. Draco was in blissful heaven; Harry tasted so *good*, so right, that he was almost shaking from the intensity. Harry wrapped his arms around his mate—and he didn't even question the fact that Draco was his mate—and pulled him down onto the bed. Draco slid his hands beneath the hospital sheet and into Harry's pajama top to stroke his slim body while Harry ran his hands through Draco's blonde locks and down his back. Draco felt Harry's hand grip his butt, and agreed wholeheartedly with the notion. He caressed Harry's hips teasingly without touching the straining flesh between them.

The two came up for air, and Harry immediately latched onto the same place on Draco's neck as he had in the Potions classroom, drawing a gasp of arousal from his mate. Draco went to slide his hands under the waist of Harry's bottoms, but they were startled from their snog at the sound of

shattering glass and a screetch of dismay. They jumped apart to see Madam Pomfrey, McGonagall, Snape, Dumbledore, Molly and Arthur Weasley, Tonks, Hermione, and Ron looking shocked and a broken vial of potion on the floor. Well, McGonagall, Snape, Pomfrey, Tonks, Arthur, and Molly looked shocked. The headmaster stood with a small smile and a twinkle in his eye, Hermione grinned at them in a sort of girlish glee, and Ron had his eyes covered with both hands and was muttering something that sounded like "Nightmare. This is just a dream. I will wake up in just a second. This is not real. Don't panic."

"Erm. Good morning." Harry said, flushing and bending his knees to cover the tent his erection created in the sheets.

"Good morning, Harry. How are you feeling?" Dumbledore said with his customary smile.

"You two should kiss in public for charities. You would make a fortune for them because that was really hot." Hermione broke in matter-of-factly.

"HERMIONE!" Ron burst out, obviously in severe mental pain.

"What?"

"You—you can't say things like that!"

"Why not? It's true. They look really hot making out."

Ron appeared to stifle a gag reflex. "Ugh, don't say things like that!"

"Oh, come on Ron. If you didn't hate Malfoy, you would admit that they are both attractive people and that seeing them kiss would be hot to most people."

"I would not!"

"Oh, so you're homophobic, are you? You seemed okay when Harry came out to us, but I guess you are against homosexuals."

"No, of course not! But that's… different. They're disgusting."

"Don't be a bigot! It makes you just as bad as the Death Eaters are."

"What? Don't even tell me it's not okay to hate Death Eaters. They torture people!"

"Don't judge people until you have proof!"

"I'm not! Malfoy's a git!"

"Not to Harry, he's not. And that's what should matter."

"You're just saying that because you think they're hot."

"You're just denying it because of a school boy grudge."

"I am a school boy!"

Draco was trying not to laugh. "You know, they have a lot of sexual tension between them." Draco said to Harry. "They should really just go shag already. Or not, as that might result in more Weasleys. That would be bad."

"What?" Two voices said in unison. Hermione and Ron looked at him, both turning red.

"Shag, as in hook up, get it on, pick your term."

"I—that's… um…" Ron turned even redder.

"Draco Malfoy!" Snape snapped at his godson. "Do not ever say such a nauseating thing in my presence!"

"Sorry, Severus." Draco said, not sounding sorry at all.

"Severus?" (Hermione)

"Shag?" (Arthur)

"But why did it have to be a Malfoy?" (McGonagall)

"What on earth is going on?" (Madam Pomfrey)

"All of you, move! I need to get to my patient!" (Also Madam Pomfrey)

"And it's disgusting to kiss Potter in front of me as well." (Snape)

"Sexual tensions?" (Ron)

"You should be above the school boy stage." (Hermione)

"Ronald Weasley, don't you even dare to touch Hermione in *that* way!" (Molly)

All the people in the room spoke together, drowning each other out.

"Please! I think Harry is tired and needs quiet. Now, this may come as a bit of a shock, but we felt that you all should know that Draco Malfoy is the second Chimera in the school and that he and Harry are mates." Dumbledore broke in. "We need to begin preparing to keep them both

safe, for they will be vulnerable while they learn to control their powers. We need to rise above our petty differences for the greater good to be served. We need Harry and Draco as comfortable in their power as possible for the war." There was a moment of silence as people took all this in before Tonks broke in with:

"So Harry's a poof, then? Boy, is the fan club going to be pissed."

Ok! So I hope this chapter was good, but I won't know until people REVIEW the story, so just remember that every time you compliment me, I become more inclined to update…

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Chapter: 8

Chapter the Eighth

Harry found himself disturbingly weak when he crawled out of the hospital bed to get dressed. Draco, looking slightly worried, hovered over the Gryffindor without actually realizing his mother-hen actions. Madam Pomfrey could barely control her laughter as the Ice Prince moved anxiously to support Harry every time he even wavered slightly. Dumbledore watched the pair with amusement as well, but he was forced to leave when Hogwarts faithfully reported that there was someone in his office waiting to speak to him.

The headmaster entered his office through one of his special passageways to greet Remus Lupin, looking more haggard than usual. Lupin stood quickly when Dumbledore entered.

"We have to hurry the guardian spell up to as soon as possible." Remus said as greeting. "I was contacted by a member of the Council, and they gave me rather disturbing news about the second Chimera we are to find."

"Yes. Harry has been showing some rather disturbing signs. What does the Council say?" Dumbledore answered, waving his wand to conjure a tea set.

"They—what? Harry? Harry's the second Chimera?" Remus looked stunned. "That… well, I guess it sort of makes sense. Everything does seem to happen to him."

"You were saying about the Council?"

"Yes. Um… The second Chimera we find—wait, who's the first Chimera we know about? When I left, we had no idea about any of them."

"Draco Malfoy. He and Harry are apparently mated."

"*Draco Malfoy*? As in the son of Lucius Malfoy?" Remus seemed to have permanently adopted a stunned expression. "But… that's not possible! What's going to happen when the two are on opposite sides of the battlefield?"

Dumbledore smiled. "Mr. Malfoy has apparently come to the conclusion that he would never be able to so such a thing and has therefore defected from his family's side." Dumbledore selected a lemon drop from his supply. "Lemon drop?"

Remus took the candy absently. "Can we trust him?"

"He will never turn against Harry. It's beyond his comprehension to do so." Dumbledore smiled. "Draco will be a great asset to the light because of this loyalty to Harry. Now, the Council?"

"The Council. Yes. Harry will be far more powerful than the average Chimera, and that is certainly saying something. The Council envoy that spoke to me said something about the walls of Hogwarts not being able to contain his fury."

"Yes, we had an incident last week to prove that." Dumbledore said ruefully.

"Is Harry okay?" Remus said worriedly, knowing that the boy had a talent for ending up in the hospital wing. At Dumbledore's nod of assurance, Lupin continued his message. "They said that he would be so powerful that his mate would spend his own maturation period helping to control Harry. The envoy told me that if we did not do the guardian spell soon, we would be destroyed. I am not sure whether they meant Hogwarts or the side of light, but he made it clear that we needed the spell."

Dumbledore was silent for a moment. "Do you have all the components?"

"Yes. It is the most complicated spell I have ever seen or heard about, but I have everything. I suppose it's good that we know about Malfoy as well, because we need two Chimera to work the spell."

"Even with Harry's power?" Dumbledore said.

"The mechanics and reasoning are rather esoteric, but the way it has been explained to me, it's not the amount of power we need, its something that the Council referred to as 'pain sharing.' Apparently, one Chimera is enough to power the whole thing, but we'll need all thirty people to 'pain share.'"

"Pain share? I have never heard of it. Something that the Surugans use?" Dumbledore asked. "They are so reclusive that we know next to nothing about their magic."

"The envoy wouldn't explain. He just told me that we needed strong characters of certain ages and sexes. Twenty females and ten males." Lupin answered. "And almost all of these have to be

between fourteen and eighteen. We will need to use some students, obviously. We also need a small child no older than five, and a pregnant woman."

"Give me a full list and I will find all the people necessary." Dumbledore said, handing Lupin a piece of spare parchment and a rather gigantic violet quill. Lupin hastily began writing.

Dumbledore sat in silence, considering his options. On the one hand, he was not sure how wise it would be to allow this kind of dangerous information to others, no matter how trustworthy they were. Anyone could be a weak point in the light should that person be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Dumbledore knew that information like this in Voldemort's hands could mean the destruction of the world as they all knew it. On the other hand, however, forewarned was forearmed. He knew that he had made a monumental mistake that had caused the incident in the Department of Mysteries and he had no wish to make another. Dumbledore knew that Harry would never trust him again, especially now that the boy was in such an emotional state, if the headmaster kept something so important from him. Draco would know because Harry knew, as it had always been rather impossible for a Chimera to keep something from his mate, so Dumbledore might as well tell him straight out. Perhaps the boy would have insight into the actions of his father and his father's lord. Hermione and Ron were too essential to Harry to keep them in the dark either. Severus and Minerva would have to know, as would several other members of the Order. Not all of them, but only the most trusted and useful.

Lupin finished his rather long list and handed it to the headmaster. "This is it. We can do it on the noon of the next full moon, in a week. If, that is, we can get everything ready in time."

"Noon of the full moon?" Dumbledore looked up, startled. "Why not at night on the full moon?"

"I don't know. I am simply following the directions to the letter. They said that I am essential for the spell to work, so I assume that is why they designed the spell for the day instead of night." Lupin answered. "Have you any insight into why they refused to discuss any of this with anyone other than me? They have no issues with me telling you the information, so why did they insist on speaking to me alone?"

"I am not sure. I believe it has something to do with the fact that your lycanthropy makes you a closer cousin to the Chimera than a human would be." Dumbledore answered pensively.

Lupin nodded. "That makes sense. They are constantly trying to relate things to the familiar, as though they would be lost without some familiar characteristic."

"Such is human nature." Dumbledore answered. "Do we have any idea what this spell actually does?"

"No. We are going into this blind."

Ron was decidedly uncomfortable. He and Hermione were walking the two Chimera to the new dorms that Dumbledore had set up for the non-humans that would be arriving so that they could

sleep without fear of being discovered. Draco walked under Harry's invisibility cloak, so as not to draw suspicions, but it made Ron very uneasy to have him out of his sight. Intellectual, he understood that Draco was no longer the enemy, but seven years of habitual warfare was too deeply engrained to disappear in only nine days. Hermione didn't seem to have that problem, and she kept looking over at Harry and the space next to Harry with a rather sappy grin. It was disgusting, it was. Ron hadn't felt this nauseated since the incident with the slugs in second year, and he had a feeling it was going to get worse as the two Chimera become closer.

Ron had been slightly surprised with himself when he hadn't been deeply affected at the news that his best friend was not human. He remembered the way he had felt when he found out about Lupin being a werewolf, but he didn't feel any of the prejudice against his friend as he had against his professor. Instead, he felt like it was something to be celebrated, this new talent of Harry's. Chimera powers would help Harry survive the final battle, something even Ron was afraid wouldn't happen. He had always known Harry was strong and brave, but against the maelstrom of evil that was the Dark Lord, the Boy Who Lived looked small and very, very young. Ron would be loyal to the end—he could never let Harry down—but he had feared for his friend. Now that Harry had his powers, Harry no longer seemed like the tiny, lucky boy that he had been. Now that Harry had his powers, he was something more. Ron didn't care that he wasn't human, as long as he survived to see his twentieth birthday.

On the other side of the hall, Hermione found herself on a completely different train of thought. *God that's so incredibly hot. And romantic. Like a muggle romance novel. Lavender and Parvati are going to be crushed by this. Or they might actually be encouraged. They'll probably take to skulking around hoping to see them make out. Ooo! I've already seen them make out! That was so hot! Maybe I can get them to do it again! Hmm… I will have to wait until Ron's not around. Vomit would really ruin the mood.*

Draco watched his mate from underneath the invisibility cloak and used the handy object to cover him while he held Harry's pale hand. He was slightly worried about Harry's color, but he kept getting distracted with visions of what those pink lips could be doing were they in a private room. *Bad thoughts! Harry's weak, so no hot sex until he's better*. Draco chastised himself. *How would it be if Harry collapsed in the middle because of illness? No, I need to rein myself in until he's back on his feet… or on his back… or his knees…yummy—No! Different thoughts. Right. Don't think about getting laid. Damn.*

Draco would have been pleased to know that his mate was having similar issues. *If I overextend myself, Madam Pomfrey is going to know what I've been doing. She'd probably tell Snape and McGonagall, too. Ew. I need to get some different thoughts… Madam Pomfrey in a thong—EW! Ok, that turned me right off!*

Thankfully for the group, they soon arrived in front of a gigantic map of the magical world, complete with several countries that muggles wouldn't recognize. The swirling words that labeled the countries every few seconds before scrambling together again suddenly seemed to realize that they had company and swirled to the top of the map. PASSWORD?

"Gorgonzilla." Hermione supplied immediately.

"Gorgonzilla?" Ron asked as the map swung open. "What is that?"

"A type of animated cheese." She answered confidently. "From Milan."

"Animated cheese?" Harry asked, confused. "Why would anyone animate cheese?"

"Strangely enough, it was created as a surveillance and assassination tool at the bidding of a man named Metternich. He didn't want to be traced, so he went through Milanese wizards, but a combination of bad luck and bad choices exposed him to—"

"Mudblood, do spare me the history lesson." Draco broke in. "Harry needs to rest."

"Watch your mouth!" Ron snapped.

"I'd rather Harry watches it, actually." Draco replied with a slight smirk as he waited for Ron's reaction. Ron flinched and shuddered slightly.

"Don't bait Ron. And don't call Hermione a mudblood." Harry told him with a grin. "And I'm going to bed, so I'll see you two tomorrow. Hey, Draco, will you help me get into the shower?"

"YES! I mean, if you can't get your lazy ass into it by yourself."

Ron's hands flew up to cover his reddening ears and he began to hum loudly. Hermione yanked his hands down with a grin and pulled the blushing redhead out of the room, sending a smirking "Be good!" over her shoulder as she went.

As soon as the door closed, Harry turned a slightly predatory look at his mate that made Draco shiver pleasurably. "Don't worry, Hermione, we'll be very, very good."

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Chapter: 9

Okay! So, people who review are absolutely incredible! This is my first attempt at slash, so don't kill me if it didn't come out alright… if you don't like slash THIS IS NOT THE CHAPTER FOR YOU! Press the back button or, better yet, just scroll down really fast because the slash is only in the very beginning, and i marked where it ends, so you can skip it.

Oh, someone asked how long this was going to be… probably about 15 chapters or so… I already have it planned out to be about that length… Ok, enough talking, on with the story!

Chapter the Ninth

Draco was having a truly wonderful dream about Harry. Harry's hands slid over his body, caressing all the right spots, before his mouth followed the path downward. Draco moaned as Harry ghosted over his erection with his talented hands before blowing hot breath over it. He writhed fitfully as Harry continued his not-quite-there approach until Draco was so hard he thought he was going to explode. Only then, when he was getting desperate, did Harry take his into his mouth. Still asleep, Draco strained upward with a loud moan, sending his cock deeper into the hot, velvety mouth that engulfed him happily. Harry began an easy sucking rhythm and Draco was so incredibly close, when suddenly, the mouth and hands disappeared completely. Draco froze, on the very edge of orgasm, came fully awake and found himself in a very uncomfortable state. He sat up abruptly with the intention of heading towards a nice, long shower, only to meet the smirking emerald eyes of his mate.

"Sleep well?"

"Fuck you, Harry! That was mean." Draco growled at him. "Why are you torturing me, anyway? You're supposed to be sleeping."

Harry grinned rather seductively at him. "I just got too restless. Though, it seems, not as restless as you."

Draco snarled and lunged at Harry, who laughed and sprinted towards the bathroom. Draco followed him out of their plush, blue toned room into the white marble spa that was their bathroom. Harry shucked his only clothing, a pair of Draco's silk boxers (green) as he ran and stumbled slightly, allowing his mate to catch up to him. Draco grabbed the smaller boy and pulled him to the ground to catch his lips in a smoldering kiss. Harry yelped slightly when his bare back came into contact with the icy floor, but he soon forgot the discomfort as Draco used the opportunity to invade his mouth with a silken tongue. Harry wrapped his legs around Draco's hips and rocked slightly, eliciting a gasp from the blonde Slytherin.

Draco got to his feet and pulled Harry up with him. "Come on." He said to his dark haired mate as he pulled him back to the bedroom. "I think that floor's just a little too cold for this."

Harry gave a Cheshire cat grin behind his mate. The day before, Draco had insisted that Harry was not well enough to do any real bonding, so Harry had had to come up with this little trick to get what he really wanted. *Who would have thought that Draco was going to have to be tricked out of the chivalrous role?* Harry thought to himself as he admired the perfect curve of his mate's arse.

Draco turned to his mate as they reached the bed. "So, let's finish what you started, shall we?"

Across the island in a crumbling mansion, a twisted creature hissed at a huge, beautiful snake. Nagini hissed back, telling him of his follower's deeds in the last few days, as was her custom.

She was no longer completely a snake; now Nagini was something much more sinister and intelligent, and her master took advantage of her abilities to keep him informed of the doings of his more slippery underlings.

"Interesting." Voldemort said when his snake finished her report about one of his most trusted followers. "This will have to be—dealt with." Nagini hissed with pleasure. She hoped that she got to feed on the arrant man, as he always did smell so tasty. "Wormtail! Fetch Malfoy. I wish to speak with him." Voldemort said to his cringing minion.

"Yes, my lord." Wormtail squeaked as he fled the living room of the Riddle House to send Malfoy the message.

"*I really need a new lapdog.*" Voldemort said to Nagini in Parseltongue. "*Would you like a rat for dinner some night, love?*" Nagini hissed her pleasure. "*Perhaps not tonight, though. I still have need for him. But soon.*"

"My lord?" Came a cool, cultured voice. "You sent for me?"

Voldemort turned to face Lucius Malfoy. "Do tell me, Lucius, have you seen your son lately?"

"My lord?" Lucius said. "Did you wish to meet with him?"

"When did you plan to tell me of your visit to the domain of the esteemed Dumbledore?" Voldemort said with a cruel smile at Lucius' almost indiscernible start of surprise. "You cannot hide such actions for me, my little aristocrat."

"Forgive me, my lord." Lucius said immediately. "I meant no disrespect."

"So, Lucius," Voldemort said, searching through the top thoughts of the man's mind, "what did you and your lovely son talk about?"

Lucius was close to panic. He didn't know exactly how the Dark Lord had found out about his visit to Hogwarts, but he knew he was going to have trouble getting out of this one. He would have to show the Dark Lord some innocuous image of his 'visit,' or the creature would know Lucius was hiding something from him. Lucius grabbed an image, actually one from the summer, but one the Dark Lord hadn't seen before.

Voldemort found what he was looking for. A defiant Draco Malfoy glared up at his father, a black eye forming steadily. *"This behavior is unbefitting a Malfoy. If I ever hear of such again, you will regret your foolishness for a very long time. Is that clear?"* Lucius told his son in the memory. "Fighting again, was he?" Voldemort said with a knowing smile. Personally, he felt that such violence made a strong supporter, but he knew his lieutenant preferred that his son remain above such messy actions and stuck with magical retaliation.

Lucius forced himself to look slightly ashamed, even though all he felt behind his mask of

Occlumency was relief. "Yes, my lord. He resorted to physical violence." He said with a sneer of disgust. "And I thought I had taught him better. He had to be punished immediately."

"Yes." Voldemort said with a smile. "I suppose he would. He will be a powerful Death Eater. Tell me, Lucius. What do you know of Chimera?"

Lucius froze. "Chimera, my lord?"

"Yes. They are powerful, are they not?"

"Yes, my lord. They are said to be so. However, there has not been a Chimera in over a hundred years." Lucius said stomach knotted with fear he could not afford to show.

"So they say, anyway." Voldemort said with a predatory smile. "Tell me, Lucius, have you heard of the Sun prophecy?"

"The Sun prophecy? No, my lord, I have not."

"Of course not. Because it was made by a woman whom no one would heed. You do remember the story of the ancient prophetess Cassandra, yes?"

"Yes, my lord. She was cursed to have no one believe her prophecies. She told the Trojans to burn the horse, but they refused to listen." Lucius said, hoping beyond hope that Voldemort was merely mentioning Chimera because of some prophecy, and not because of Draco.

"Just before she died, she made a last prophecy, the prophecy of the Sun. It never came true in the lifetimes of the people who heard it. It had never been written down, for no one believed it in any case, and this was obviously before the time of the ministry's records. However, a historian dutifully recorded it on three scrolls just before he died. The first went to the library at Alexandria, and was destroyed with the rest of the works. The second went to Constantinople, and was destroyed when the Ottomans conquered the city. The third went to Suruga, where it was preserved." Voldemort smiled at his blonde follower. "The Surugans are a very reclusive people, but even they don't really notice when a single snake swims onto their lands."

"You have visited Suruga?" Lucius said, flabbergasted. "Truly, my lord? That is incredible! Your power truly knows no limits."

Voldemort smiled another snake-like grin and settled deeper into his throne-like chair. Lucius forced himself not to shudder. "They have a wonderful library of prophecies in the capital city. It took me quite a while to get there, but the effort was well worth it. The prophecy of the Sun is quite interesting. It tells of a Chimera that will sway the outcome of the war between light and dark depending on which side gets to him first. Now, Dumbledore's pitiful army is already moving to gain him. We cannot let them have the Chimera. However, the Council who gave them the means to reach this Chimera is less than pleased with our… policies… and was not helpful in giving us the spell. They will be punished for it, of course, but first we need to steal

that Chimera. I am trusting you to lead this one, Lucius."

"Thank you, my lord. I will not disappoint you." Lucius said and kissed the hem of the Dark Lord's robes.

"You had better not." Voldemort answered playing idly with his wand. "For you will regret such a failure to the last moments of life."

Remus Lupin was more scared than he wanted to admit to the headmaster. There was something that the Council wasn't telling them, and if there was something important enough to be kept secret, he wanted to know about it. This spell was going to take a tremendous amount of power and preparation, and they didn't even know what the spell was meant to do. However, Remus also knew that they had no real choice. The envoy from the Council had made it clear that without the spell, Harry and the other Chimera would destroy the world as they knew it, whether intentionally or not. So even though the thought of doing something like this spell made him shiver with terror, Remus continued to gather the necessary components.

The spell was the most complicated he had ever encountered. Besides the two Chimera, it called for a werewolf, an infant, several virgins, with the rest of the thirty people non-virgins, a pregnant woman, and a set of both male and female twins. They all had to be in a state of partial undress: the envoy had given him a picture and said that an approximation of the skimpy toga-like dress would do. There had to be several weapons also: a knife used for healing or eating, a blade meant for killing that had never drawn blood, and a dagger that had taken human life. These three items worried Lupin, for he wasn't sure why a guardian spirit would need such ominous objects in the spell. Besides a score of potions ingredients that he would collect from the school stores, they also would have to find blood from an incredibly rare dragon that until now, Lupin had thought a myth. They could only be found in Suruga, which obviously put a kink in his preparations. The last time the Surugans had allowed outsiders into their land had been back in the time of the Amazons, when they had taken an interest in the welfare of the small tribe of sorceress warrior women. Lupin knew he would probably have to ask the Council for this ingredient, and he wasn't sure what price they would demand for their help.

The list of items for the spell went on and on. Snape would have to brew the potion for them to drink, and Flitwick would have to find some sort of permanent floating charm that wouldn't affect the spell for the daggers, as they could not touch the ground during the spell. It all had to take place at noon on the day of the full moon, and the Council had threatened mass mayhem and catastrophe if they messed up the spell. All in all, Lupin felt like he was a chicken running around after he had been decapitated.

And while all these men worried and wandered around in their roles, Draco and Harry bonded and truly became one creature, oblivious of the currents of danger floating around them.

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Chapter: 10

I write faster after I read reviews, so if you want more of the story REVIEW IT and I will give you more… well, do try to be nice if you don't like something. I have been told that I am a little sensitive about criticism (which I think is a lie) and you wouldn't want to make me cry… Anyway, here goes the chapter:

Chapter the Tenth

Harry, deliciously entangled with Draco under their silk sheets, woke up suddenly without knowing why. He blinked several times and gazed at the blonde locks next to his face with dazed adoration.

"Good morning, Harry."

Harry sat up with a scream. Draco bolted upright at the sound, slammed his head against Harry's chin, and flung himself to his feet. Or rather, he tried to fling himself to his feet. With a strangled screech of dismay, Draco found himself tangled in his sheets and crashed, butt naked, to the floor beside the bed. Harry's head snapped back at Draco's inadvertent attack, propelling him backwards off the bed to land heavily at the feet of a very amused Dumbledore and a nauseated looking Snape.

"Professor!" Harry yelped as he realized his state of undress. He lunged for the sheet to make himself a toga, only to find that Draco had had the same idea and was trying to pull it off the other side. This resulted in a short game of tug-of-war, but Draco braced himself on the bed and hauled the sheet out of his mate's hands. Harry's hands immediately went to cover his more private exposed areas.

"Potter," Snape said in a pained voice, "was this exposé truly necessary?"

"Erm… sorry, Professor. I'll just go get some pants, shall I?" Harry said, striving to seem unembarrassed. His bright red face betrayed him somewhat, especially as the blush covered his face and upper chest.

"Yes, dear boy, that may be a good idea." Dumbledore said with his eyes twinkling. "We need to have a long discussion about our next project. When you are ready, please join us in my office."

"Yes, sir." Draco said on the other side of the bed, the sheet wrapped securely around his waist. Dumbledore swept out of the room, Snape following with an even more extreme sour look than usual.

As soon as the door closed, Draco burst into laughter. "The headmaster has seen you naked!" He cackled madly.

"Shut it, you!" Harry said, launching himself over the bed at his mate. Draco jumped back, tripped over the end of the sheet, and landed hard on his arse. Harry flew over the bed with a yell and tackled his blonde mate.

"AHHHHH! Harry, are you trying to kill me!" Draco said from under his now-giggling mate. Harry squirmed about until he could sit up, straddling Draco's stomach. He slid his hands down Draco's side slowly, enjoying the blonde's shudders.

"How long do you think we have until they miss us?" Harry breathed into Draco's ear.

Two and a half hours later, Harry and Draco burst into the headmaster's office, red faced from their sprint across the castle.

"Sorry, Professor! We, er, ran into some… delays." Harry supplied. Snape gave him a disbelieving glare. Draco rolled his eyes at his mate's attempt at a smooth explanation.

"We had a quick shag before we came. We got delayed." Draco said matter-of-factly. Harry gave him a pained look at his unembarrassed candidness, but kept his mouth shut.

"Draco, please. I just ate lunch." Snape said tartly.

"Now, Severus. Sexual intercourse is very important during the maturation period of Chimera." Dumbledore said, ignoring the green tinge of the Potions professor's face. "And we have to wait for Ms. Granger and Mr. Weasley anyway."

Just as he said this, the door burst open again. "Sorry, Professor. We had some problems in Care of Magical Creatures." Hermione said, as red faced as Harry had been moments before. Harry smiled at his two best friends, accepting their excuse without question. Draco, on the other hand, noticed that Hermione's lips seemed to be slightly swollen and Ron appeared to have a tiny bit of light pink lip gloss on his lips. He shuddered in disgust (*What if they breed?*) and resolved not to think about whatever they had been doing.

Dumbledore being Dumbledore, smiled benevolently at his students. "Please sit. We have something very important to talk about." All four students took a squashy chair. As they sat, the secret door behind Fawkes' perch opened to expel Lupin, McGonagall, Flitwick, Moody, Molly and Arthur Weasley, and Mundungus Fletcher. "Do sit down." Dumbledore invited.

"Albus? Has something gone wrong?" Molly asked anxiously. "Is Harry still alright? Have we found the other Chimera?"

"No, we have not. And Harry seems just fine to me. No, we have something different to discuss." Dumbledore settled himself deeper into his chair. "Please make yourselves comfortable, as this may take quite a while."

Hermione glanced surreptitiously at Ron, colored, and then glanced towards Harry to gage his reaction to Dumbledore's announcement. Harry was smiling at Draco, who wore the first truly happy expression that Hermione had ever seen on him. She hoped that whatever had changed to take them away from their usual glum selves continued.

"Now, as you all know, Harry and Draco are both Chimera and are mated. A prophecy has told us that there will be seven Chimera passing through these halls within the next year or two. Now, the only reason we were able to recognize Harry's heritage was that the Council of Koringa gave us this information."

"The Council of Koringa?" Flitwick exclaimed. "But they are Surugan! They never deal with foreigners even though they aren't based in Suruga!"

"Yes, there is no known precedent for this intervention. They approached Remus as our envoy and have refused to deal with any other."

"Why?" McGonagall asked. "It would make more sense to approach you or even one of the Chimera."

"We don't know, but our hypothesis is that Remus' lycanthropy is most similar to the mixed blood of Chimera. Immortals, as we know, came from Suruga and left the majority of Chimera children in Suruga. We believe that Chimera may be quite common there."

"I thought Immortals came from a different dimension." Harry piped up.

"Suruga's protective magic is designed in such a way that it sort of is in a different dimension. We don't know how that works, but it is how they have remained completely unnoticed by Muggles and most wizards. We believe animals can move freely through the boundary between Suruga and our world, but this has never been proven. In any case, the Council of Koringa has chosen to give us messages through Remus."

"Professor? What exactly is the Council?" Ron asked. Hermione looked up excitedly.

"It's a protective order much like the Order of the Phoenix that is designed to guard humanity and the world against powers that would seek to destroy it. The founders were Surugan and were the political dissidents that sought some contact with the outside world. They separated from the country, but after a few years, found that they did not want anything to do with our world. They realized that we were fundamentally flawed and were about to return to Suruga when they received some sort of prophecy or mandate from their gods that they were to protect our world from the evil we would not be able to fight. For example, their powers and spells thousands of years ago protected humans from extinction by vampires. They were the ones that created their vulnerability to sunlight." Draco gave her a look of astonishment.

"Do you ever *sleep*?" He asked. "I mean, how do you find the time to even go to class when you are cramming so much useless information into your head?"

"It's not useless." Hermione answered, miffed. "In the present situation, I would think you would be grateful for my education."

"You sound like a walking library."

"She does not!" Ron said angrily.

"You sound like a spoiled rich kid with the brains of a tree stump." Hermione said over Ron's exclamation.

"Look here, you filthy little—"

"Draco!" Harry said. "She knows everything! Get over it!"

"She does not!" Draco said back.

"Well, for right now, she does. Dumbledore had something to tell us."

Dumbledore smiled at their little spat. "Yes, we do have important things to discuss. The Council has also given us something they say will be vital in the war against Voldemort." A tiny shudder ran around the room. "They gave us a spell that they say will be required to teach the Chimera how to control their powers. According to them, Harry will begin having serious problems with his powers very soon, and Draco will spend his maturation period trying to keep Harry from accidentally killing someone. They also say that Draco will eventually fail in his efforts."

Harry blanched, as did McGonagall, Flitwick, Mundungus, and the Weasleys. Moody looked as jumpy and suspicious as usual, and Lupin watched the room with a tired acceptance of the situation. "But Harry would never—unless it was Voldemort, that I could see—but otherwise, Harry wouldn't ever do something like that!" Ron said into the silence.

"Remember the Potions classroom?" Harry said quietly. "I could do something like that without even realizing it."

"Yes." Dumbledore said grimly. "The unpredictable tidal waves of power that are characteristic to Chimera are partially the cause of the social prejudice against them. Even when they mean no harm, they have the capacity for astonishing destruction. This spell should prevent such a disaster."

"We will need the participation of all of you." Lupin said. "It is an intensely complicated spell. Severus, how is the potion coming?"

"Yes, though I will soon need the dragon's blood. We have two days at most to get it before the potion is ruined." Severus said with an even more venomous sneer than usual. Snape, though used to it by now, did not enjoy being kept in the dark about what his potion was supposed to do.

Though he could usually figure out a general purpose for his concoctions, this potion was completely foreign and didn't give him any clues.

"Dragon's blood? But that's simple to get." McGonagall said.

"We need the blood of a Surugan Gilded Dragon. That obviously presents a bit of a problem." Lupin said.

"Surugan Gilded Dragon? But they're just a myth." Hermione said. "According to the *Combined Book of—*"

"Do shut up, Granger. Obviously, the book is wrong." Draco broke in. Harry smacked his leg lightly for his rudeness, to which Draco replied with a mischievous wink.

"Yes, until the Council's envoy assured me that they do exist, we thought so, too." Lupin said. "Now the problem is finding one and convincing it to bleed for us."

"Mundungus, we need you to go through all your contacts. See if you can't find a source for the blood in some tiny nook or cranny. Money is not an issue for this." Dumbledore said. "We need it as soon as physically possible."

Mundungus saluted the headmaster with a cheeky smile. Molly broke in, "What exactly does the spell do?"

"We have no idea." Dumbledore said. His statement was greeted by complete silence.

"We're doing this *blind*?" Snape said incredulously. "But that could be suicide!"

"We have no choice."

"But Albus!" McGonagall exclaimed. "If the spell calls for something as rare and difficult to find as Surugan Gilded blood, it has to be something of incredible power! If we should make a mistake! I don't even want to think about what could happen if we made a mistake."

"Yes. And the spell will be extremely difficult to do. However, the alternative to this risk is to neglect Harry and Draco and the other five Chimera and allow them to come to disaster. We must trust that the Council would not give us a spell that we cannot successfully complete. Now, Filius, we will need a very difficult charm from you to keep items afloat without affecting the spell at all. I have a list of parameters for you to work with, as this will probably have to be invented."

"Yes, Albus. If you give them to me, I will start work immediately." Flitwick squeaked at the headmaster, worry turning his face into a grim parody of its usual self.

"Are we certain that the He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named knows nothing about Chimera?" Moody

broke in. "Wouldn't be surprised if Malfoy told him about his son."

"He may have told the Dark Lord about my heritage, but I have not told my father about Harry. Voldemort will not have any way of knowing that there may be more Chimera, and I had planned to openly switch sides anyway." Draco answered.

"He's going to be pissed when he finds that out." Ron piped up with a grin.

"Don't use crude language." Molly snapped at her son. She turned to Draco. "Tell me, dear, where do you plan to spend Christmas? You really must come to the Burrow with Harry."

"Um… thank you." Draco said, a bit unsure about Mrs. Weasley's sudden forgiveness and invitation after her suspicious attitude towards him while Harry was unconscious.

"Professor," Hermione interrupted, "if the Council gave us both the prophecy and the spell, why would they not tell us anything about what we are about to do? Do they not feel that any mistakes we may make could be disastrous?"

"Like oracles, the Council enjoys being as vague as possible. I get the impression that we should be flattered that they told us as much as they did."

"Perhaps they felt we should be able to reason out the purpose of the spell. What exactly does the spell include?" Hermione turned to Lupin.

"Well, we need a total of thirty people to do the spell. We have many specifications for these people, including age and sex. Also—"

Harry tuned them out. Draco turned to him and said something, but the ringing in Harry's ears drowned his words out. The world became slightly fuzzy, and yet clear at the same time, as though he were looking through a pane of glass covered in water. The world jerked hard, and suddenly Harry knew someone else was there with him.

"Hello, Harry." Voldemort's cruel, hissing voice curled through his mind.

Dimly, Harry realized that the world had a bloody tinge.

"Whatever are you talking about now? It must be something important for you to be this distracted. You haven't let down your shields in months, and yet it's been twice in a few weeks."

"Get out of my head!" Harry shouted at the invader, panicking as he tried and failed to push Voldemort out of his head.

"Now, Harry, is that any way to speak to your elders? Perhaps you've forgotten why I command such respect. Would you like to know how I spent last night?" Voldemort laughed cruelly and let his memories wash into Harry's mind. Blood and death and gore and screaming and pain and

tears burned and tore through his mind. Dimly Harry realized he was screaming again, but he could only feel the agony of Voldemort's victims. One of the school girls that he had seen in the last vision from Voldemort was still alive. She begged not to be.

Suddenly, the pain stopped. "Now, Harry, do tell me what is of such interest that you are trying to hide. Any plans for the near future? Just who is standing in the corner that you won't look at?" Voldemort smiled maliciously at Harry's shaky resistance to his probing. "Very well, I shall just have to search for it, then." With mental hands as hot as molten iron, Voldemort plunged through the top of Harry's mind and began searching carelessly for whatever tidbits of information he could find.

And Harry screamed without letting up, ice and fire and corrosion and winds of destruction sweeping around the office and its inhabitants. And throughout his fit, blood poured faster and faster from the slash in the middle of his forehead.

REVIEW!

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Chapter: 11

REVIEW! NEVER MIND THE MEEK; PEOPLE WHO REVIEW WILL INHERIT THE EARTH!

Chapter the Eleventh

Draco had never been this terrified in his life. Not even all his bloodcurdling experiences when he'd accidentally upset his father put together could equal the cold panic that engulfed him every moment Harry lay as though dead. His beautiful mate was a pallid bump that marred the covers of the cheery blue hospital sheets, the raven locks staining the pillow at the head of the bed. Nearly thirty hours had passed, and Draco could sense that something had happened to Harry, something beyond his usual visions. Madam Pomfrey gave him sympathetic looks when he told her this, holding back tears, but she told him only time could tell. Dumbledore was no help either; he sighed, gave Draco a few words of hope, and told him that only time could tell. Snape and McGonagall and Flitwick and Lupin and Granger gave him pep talks and said that only time could tell.

Draco had never hated a phrase so much in his life.

Weasley, surprisingly, didn't say a word. He just looked like a Dementor was nearby and, for once, kept his mouth shut.

And Draco hated that, too.

Draco figured that hate was a good way to distract himself from the terror. So Draco found things to hate as he waited beside Harry's prone form. He hated the smell of the hospital wing, and the texture of the sheets. He hated Hermione for biting her lip while she visited Harry, and for bringing Harry's books with her to record his missed assignments in the funny singing plan book that, funnily enough, Draco also hated. He hated Ron for being silent and pale, and for not thinking to bring Harry's books for him. He hated Dumbledore for being so optimistic and for twinkling and for wearing brightly colored robes. He hated Snape for being so dour, because didn't he know that positive vibes were known to help patients regain consciousness? He hated McGonagall for being so clean, and Molly Weasley for trying to comfort him, and Arthur Weasley for steering her away from him, and Lupin for giving him worried looks and all of Harry's Gryffindor friends for coming to visit Harry.

Draco hadn't rested at all since Harry had stiffened and began to scream and bleed. He knew he looked awful, and that he really should eat some of the food that the house elves had brought him, but the thought of eating when his mate might never eat again made him feel nauseated.

Dumbledore was very worried about Draco. He had asked Snape to lace the food with a mild sedative, so that the Chimera would get some badly needed rest, but Draco refused to eat. He just sat, hour after hour, in the chair next to Harry's bed, gripping and twisting Harry's sheet between pale fingers.

With no positive signs from that front, Dumbledore was glad at least that Mundungus had made some progress. Though Mundungus' shady business associate didn't actually have access to the rare dragon's blood, he did know someone who might be able to find some. Snape was becoming more and more snappish as he saw his hard work edging near towards ruin, so Dumbledore hoped that the friend of a friend of a friend could get a hold of the substance.

Flitwick had designed a flawless levitation spell that would not affect the power flow of the spell.

Lupin had gathered all the necessary items and people.

They had a time and a place to perform the spell.

And every effort would be obsolete if Harry didn't wake up.

Lucius Malfoy was coming close to panic. He had been working ceaselessly to find out how to steal this Chimera, but he had no idea of how to go about it. He didn't know where or when or how the Light was going to have this person, so he could not even begin to devise a plan. As he strode through the damp corridors of the rotting Riddle Mansion towards his master, Lucius began to fear for his life.

Wormtail opened the door to the sitting room and ushered Lucius into the room. The aristocratic man hid his disgust behind a well crafted mask and went to his knees to kiss the hem of

Voldemort's robes.

"You may rise." Voldemort said in his slimy, hissing voice. Lucius obeyed immediately.

"How is your work coming on the Chimera plan?"

Lucius forced himself not to shake in terror. He knew that the Dark Lord probably already knew how the plan was going, but was asking to see if Lucius would lie to him. "Not very well, my lord. Please forgive me, but I simply do not have any specific information from which to work."

Voldemort smiled cruelly. "Well, that certainly is disappointing." Lucius had to force himself not to shudder again. Nobody should smile at such a large disappointment unless they knew something incredibly juicy. "Tell me, Lucius, you are very familiar with your family tree, are you not?"

"Yes, my lord." Lucius had the sinking feeling that he knew what this talk was really about.

"Good. Tell me, when do you plan to bring your son to me?"

"Soon, my lord. As soon as he finishes school."

"Hmm… well, I wish to see him sooner than that. You will bring him for a visit this Saturday."

"Yes, my lord." Lucius bowed.

"You may go. I expect you to have some progress on the Chimera plan next time you report."

"Yes, my lord." Lucius knelt and kissed Voldemort's hems before backing swiftly out of the room. Walking quickly, but not so quickly as to draw suspicious looks from the few Death Eaters that were in the mansion, Lucius walked to the boundary of the anti-appariation wards and brought himself quickly back to Malfoy Manor.

He had work to do. It took a good bit of planning to betray the Dark Lord without getting killed.

The first thing Harry noticed when he awoke was that he didn't feel alone like he used to when he woke up in the hospital wing. *Ah.* He thought. *Draco's with me.*

"Draco?" His voice cracked with dryness.

Draco sat straight up from where he had been slumped. He hurriedly grabbed the glass of water on the bedside and helped Harry take a few sips.

"Where's Dumbledore?" Harry asked when he had finished drinking. "I need to talk to him. It's important."

"I'll get him." Draco said. He planted a relieved kiss on Harry's forehead and hurried to find the headmaster. He didn't have to go far, as Dumbledore was on his way already. "He's awake!" Draco said excitedly. "He says he needs to talk to you."

Dumbledore hurried to Harry's side. "Harry, my boy, are you alright?"

"If Chimera are supposed to be so lucky, who the hell peed on my parade?"

There was a moment of silence before Draco began to laugh rather hysterically. Harry looked at him worriedly and pulled him down to sit on his bed.

"Harry, Chimera are said to have luck. They never said that meant they had good luck. And besides, you have had several incredible runs of good luck that have gotten you out of sticky situations. Perhaps it was just time for you to have a run of bad luck. The universe prefers to be in balance, you know."

"Humph." Harry replied. "Oh, and you might want to know that Voldemort knows some of what's going on."

Draco stopped laughing. "What does he know?" Dumbledore said urgently.

"He knows about Draco. He also knows that we are doing the spell, and that Snape is making a potion for us."

"Does he know about Snape's spying?"

"No. He knows that Snape doesn't know what the potion is for, and I wouldn't let him see Snape in your office, and by the time he gained enough control over me to manipulate my body, I passed out."

Dumbledore got to his feet. "Thank you, Harry. I need to tell Professor Snape immediately so that he can prepare for this. Is there anything else urgent that Voldemort knows, or can we discuss the rest later?"

"I don't think there's anything else, but I cannot be sure." Harry said quietly, remembering the hands pulling apart the seams of his mind. It was funny that it had hurt so much then, but Harry didn't even have a headache now. The rips that Voldemort had made were still there—Harry could feel them, somehow—but he seemed to be healing nonetheless.

Dumbledore hurried from the hospital wing to warn their best spy of the recent development. Harry watched him go before turning to Draco.

"I'm sorry." Harry said before his mate could say anything. "I didn't mean to worry you."

Draco closed the mouth he had opened to yell at Harry with a surprised snap. "How did you

know what I was going to say?"

"I am having a bit of trouble keeping my legilimen powers under control. I could hear it in your thoughts. And I really am sorry."

"Why is it that you seem to have all these collapses, but all that happens to me is that things go all glowy when I get angry or upset? I have been watching your gold aura for nearly over thirty hours now, by the way. It kept fluctuating while you were out."

Harry thought for a moment. "Well, if you were created to keep me from hurting anyone, then I would say that your powers would have to be less flashy."

"I suppose. I better still be able to light things on fire with my mind."

Harry laughed. Draco watched his mate's animated face with relief. He leaned forward and caught Harry's mouth in a long, gentle kiss that didn't stay so gentle for more than a few seconds.

"Mr. Malfoy! Harry has been extremely ill! If you would kindly keep your lecherous paws to yourself until he is well again, that would be greatly appreciated."

Draco pulled back and sent a dark scowl at the medi-witch. "And how long will that be?"

"Well, I won't know until you allow me room to check my patient, now will I?" Madam Pomfrey shot back at the irritated Chimera. "Shoo, you are in my way."

"Harry!" came an exclamation from the door.

"You're finally awake! Took you long enough, mate." Ron said, following at Hermione's heels as the girl hurried up to give Harry a hug. "How do you feel?"

"If you would kindly allow me to examine my patient, you would know how he feels." Madam Pomfrey said in exasperation as the two Gryffindors sat down on the sides of Harry's bed.

Ignoring the medi-witch, Hermione said, "Harry, was it Voldemort again? It seemed a bit different from your average vision, though the alarm spell certainly tried to blow a gasket."

"Blow a what-sit?" Ron broke in.

Harry ignored the mechanically-challenged boy. "Voldemort tried to pry apart my head with a crowbar. He was looking for information about the spell."

"Did he get any?" Hermione asked intently.

"What's a crow-bar?" Ron asked.

"Yeah. I didn't give him anything about Snape, though, so we still have a spy in the inner ranks."

"If you would move!" Madam Pomfrey interrupted. The teenagers ignored her again.

"Are you alright, though?" Hermione said. "Do you have a headache?"

"No, surprisingly enough, I don't. I can feel where he was digging around, though. It's not a comfortable feeling, but it doesn't hurt, exactly. It just feels a bit sore is all." Harry said thoughtfully. "Do you think it's possible that I might do the same thing to him, only in reverse? I could find out so much from his head, especially if I was really gentle."

"You are not going into Voldemort's head." Draco said flatly.

"And, remember, Voldemort is a very skilled Oculumens. There is no guarantee that you would be able to get in anyway." Hermione said, always practical.

"Yeah, mate, I hate to agree with Malfoy on this, but I really don't think you should even try. We can still do fine without the information, but we can't if we lose you." Ron said.

"Mr. Weasley! Get yourself out of my way this instant!" Madam Pomfrey was really annoyed now. "I need to see to Mr. Potter, and it would be best if I saw to him immediately! Now move, before I move you myself."

"Oh, sorry, Madam Pomfrey. I didn't see you there." Ron said as he stepped back. The medi-witch gave him a murderous look, but immediately began checking Harry's health. She seemed reluctant to let him leave, but after lengthy diagnostics that made sense only to her, she declared Harry in excellent health, if a bit dehydrated.

With that auspicious news, Hermione and Ron went to the other side of the screen Madam Pomfrey had placed around his bed while Draco helped Harry into his clothing. In reality, Harry helped himself into his clothing while Draco tried to keep it off of him.

"C'mon, you two! What is taking you so long?" Ron said impatiently from behind the screen.

"I don't think you want to know." Hermione hissed quietly at the redhead.

"What? Oh. Eww…"

"You are so clueless sometimes."

"I am not!" Ron retorted. "Just because I don't pick up on all the subtleties in life doesn't mean I am clueless."

"Oh, really? Ron, you are a boy. Did you know that they estimate that the average male thinks about sex at least once every six seconds, and that they have a tendency to relate most things to

either sex or food? If that's a normal boy, and you cannot pick up on the fact that Draco hasn't gotten any in almost two days, what does that say about you?"

Draco and Harry stopped moving behind the screen to listen to the pair.

"We don't think about sex that much!" Ron said defensively. "And just because we are more controlled by our hormones than girls doesn't make us clueless!"

"You missed my point." Hermione said calmly.

"What? I did not—"

"Hey, Weasel, when's the bachelor party?" Draco broke in, walking around the screen with Harry smirking by his side.

"The what?" Ron said blankly. Hermione, as usual, was two steps ahead of her friend and blushed a bright red at Draco's question.

"The bachelor party." Harry supplied helpfully. "You know, your last hurrah before you get the old ball and chain."

"The old what? Why on earth would I need a ball and a chain?" Ron asked, confused. Draco turned to Harry with an equally blank expression.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Honestly, you two really need to take Muggle Studies. The ball and chain was an old prison device in which a prisoner was attached to a short chain with a heavy iron ball on the end. The purpose being, of course, to make escape rather difficult."

"What on earth does that have to do with…Oh. Those Muggles are a creative lot. Disgusting as all get-up, but creative nonetheless." Draco said. Hermione scowled at him, but let the slur on Muggles go.

"I don't get it." Ron said. What does a ball and chain have to… a bachelor party? My father has pictures from his friend's but he won't let me see them because… oh. Oh!" Ron turned red as he figured out what Draco had been talking about. He studiously avoided looking at Hermione, who was laughing at the look on his face.

Later that night, Draco and Harry lay naked on the furry rug in front of their fireplace, talking comfortably about any and all topics that crossed their minds. They had discussed Snape, their powers, their friends, how Dumbledore had explained their absence from classes (rather contagious cases of the rare and dangerous Mephisophlesimumpeles), the Sorting hat, secret passage ways, and invisibility cloaks. They sat in silence for a while, Harry comfortably sprawled over Draco's body, before the blonde broke the quiet.

"I have a question for you. Remember the first time we met, in Madam Malkins? Why were your

glasses held together with tape?"

Harry was quiet for a moment. Draco, knowing this was not something Harry wanted to talk about, extended his legilimens powers just far enough to touch his mind with the soothing warmth of love. Harry smiled slightly at the effort. "My cousin broke my glasses."

"How?" Draco asked when no more explanation was forthcoming.

"He punched me in the nose."

"He *what*?" Draco sat up straight, startling Harry into coming to his knees.

"He punched me in the nose. Broke my glasses again. My aunt and uncle weren't too keen on replacing them, so I used tape."

"They wouldn't replace your broken glasses? I knew they were poor from your clothes, but I didn't think they were that poor."

Harry smiled at the startled look on Draco's face. As a rich only child, Draco was probably not used to thinking about replacing something so basic as a pair of glasses. "No, they had plenty of money. I was just a bit of an inconvenience to them, so they didn't like to spend money on me."

"An *inconvenience*? You? Harry Potter, the savior of the wizarding world, were an inconvenience to Muggles who probably would be dead now without you?

"They don't much like magic." Harry replied lightly, trying not to get upset. "Could we talk about something else, please?"

Draco stared at him a moment longer before changing the subject to a safer topic. *I am not through with this*. Draco thought. *He may not want to talk about it and he may not think it's a big deal, but it's a big deal to me.*

Dumbledore waited in his office for Mundungus to arrive. Snape waited tensely beside him, muttering dour threats about what he would do to the scoundrel if his potion went to waste.

"Do calm yourself, Severus. He will get here."

"And if he hasn't procured the blood? This potion was not exactly easy to make, you know!" Snape snapped back at the headmaster. "And I would prefer to have this done before the Dark Lord calls me, as he probably will, thanks to Potter's little stunt."

"Now, Severus. It is hardly Harry's fault." Albus chided gently, ignoring the vitriolic look on the Potions master's face. The secret door to his office opened abruptly, expelling the rumpled figure of Mundungus Fletcher. "Ah, Mundungus. Did you acquire the blood?"

Mundungus smiled a rather grimy smile and held up a vial. "Couldn't get much, and it cost an arm an' a leg, but I got it!"

Snape snatched the vial from his fingers and swept from the room without a word.

Albus smiled after him. "Severus is a bit on edge today. Lemon drop?"

The next morning, Harry and Draco woke to the annoying sound of knocking on their door.

"Why is it that we can never just wake up slowly?" Draco grumbled as he searched for a robe so that he could answer the door without shocking whoever was pounding on it. Not that they wouldn't deserve such a shock, but Draco preferred not to flash his gorgeous body at any old person.

"We're just too special to sleep in." Harry replied sleepily, enjoying the pale view walking around the bed. "At least they knocked this time. I don't think I'll ever get over the fact that Snape has seen me naked."

"Ugh." Draco replied, jealousy conflicting with disgust in his expression. He yanked open the door. "What could possibly be so important that you had to disturb my rest?" He snapped, the Malfoy arrogance dripping from his every word.

Lucius Malfoy raised his eyebrows. "I beg your pardon?" He said to his startled son.

"Father!" Draco yelped. He cleared his throat and pulled on a calm mask. "What brings you to Hogwarts at this ungodly time on a Saturday morning?"

"Do I need a reason to visit my only son? Or a reason to enter that son's room?" Draco suddenly realized he was blocking his father from entering the room.

"Well. It's a bit of a mess in there. Shall we go for a walk?" Draco asked, panicking. *I have to give Harry a chance to get out of the room!* He thought frantically.

"In your robe?" Lucius's eyebrows hadn't yet left his hairline. "Move aside and let me enter."

"It's a lovely day outside. Why don't we go for a stroll around the lake?"

"It's snowing outside. *Move aside*, Draco." Lucius knew there was something in the room that Draco didn't want him to see. He searched his mind for whom it could be, and suddenly realized the obvious: Draco had found a mate and was feeling territorial or unsure about it. "I would so like to meet your mate, Draco."

The young blonde froze. "Would you?" he said awkwardly. "Umm… if you give me just a moment, I will go get him. I don't believe he is dressed yet."

Lucius stifled the urge to smirk at that. "Please do get him." Draco closed the door gently, turned around calmly, and went abruptly into panic mode.

"Shit. Fuck. Shit. Oh god! What the fuck do we do? I am going to die. You are going to die. I am going to be spitted over a fire and roasted like a chicken! The Dark Lord won't have to worry about killing you because you will already be dead!" Draco flung himself around the room, pacing and worrying his hands, as Harry watched with amusement. Draco tripped over a shoe, stubbed his toe on the end of the bed, and cursed some more. Harry finally couldn't hold it in any longer and burst into laughter.

Draco spun around. "What the hell is so funny?" he demanded.

"He doesn't have to know it's me, you know." Harry replied. "Haven't you been paying attention in charms lately? We can do an illusion charm. It won't hide the scar, but we can make sure my bangs hide it."

"An illusion charm? Can you do an illusion charm? I haven't been paying much attention in charms lately."

"I wonder why?" Harry said, grinning lasciviously. He pulled out his wand, waved it at himself, muttered something softly, and concentrated hard for a moment. Draco didn't see any difference for several seconds, but then Harry's features shifted, his skin and hair lightened, and when he opened his eyes, Draco could see that his eyes had changed to a soft brown. While still attractive, Harry was no longer very noticeable; he looked like a normal wizard, albeit one that had just woken up. "Good, huh?" Harry asked at the startled look on Draco's face.

"I thought you could only change one feature at a time."

"I modified the spell a bit. We might want to let your father in. Oh, wait. I need a new name. What's my name?"

"Umm… Henry. Henry is close to Harry. Henry…"

"Evans. That was my mother's maiden name."

"Right. Be really polite and formal." Draco opened the door to admit his rather imposing father. "Father, I would like you to meet my mate, Henry Evans."

An hour with a polite smile screwed on that Harry was positive Lucius could see straight through was definitely enough for Harry. Two hours later, Harry was getting a cramp in his cheek from his bland smile. Three hours later, he was starting to panic. *How in the hell do they spend so much time talking about absolutely nothing?* He asked himself. *Surely they can't go on for much longer!* He thought desperately.

Lucius wasn't entirely sure what to think about his son's mate. He seemed like a nice enough

fellow, and thank Merlin he was a wizard rather than a Muggle, but he seemed rather bland and stupid. Lucius wasn't sure the boy would be able to deal with Draco's temper tantrum and the jealous rages he was sure to have as Henry happened to be mildly attractive. *Draco is going to chew him up and spit him out before long. It is truly a shame that the boy won't be able to add to Draco's arsenal. Draco will need all the protection he can get after tomorrow.*

Finally, Lucius decided that Draco's mate was entirely useless. With that out of the way, he said goodbye to his aristocratic son and swept smoothly out of the room. He headed towards the dungeons, allowing Henry to close the door behind him.

Harry waited a few seconds, peaking out the door, to make sure that Lucius was truly leaving before he closed the door and dropped the illusion spells. He slid down the door to plop onto his behind.

"Whew. That was a lot more effort than it should have been." He said to Draco.

Draco grinned at him. "I know I told you to be polite and formal, but I didn't mean you had to play dead."

"What are you talking about? I was not playing dead. I just thought maybe I should come off as kind of uninteresting, so he doesn't really notice me." Harry said defensively.

"Oh, sure, you *meant* to come across as slightly dim witted." Draco answered teasingly.

"Hey! Mr. Amazing Bouncing Ferret, I would watch who you call dim witted if I were you."

"You can only wish to be me." Draco stuck his shapely nose into the air. "Alas, your aspirations are doomed to fail, as no other can achieve such perfection."

Harry refused to respond verbally to that. Instead, he opted for a nice shag to muss up all that pristine perfection.

Approximately one hour later, at eleven-oh-three, the two Chimera became aware that someone else was pounding rather insistently on their door.

"I got it last time. It's your turn now." Draco said sleepily from under Harry.

"What if it's your father again?"

"Tell him you finally knocked me off and you have been lying in wait to wipe him out too." Draco shoved at Harry. "Get up, you lazy sod!"

"I'm getting around to it." Harry griped as he fumbled lazily for Draco's cast off robe. He rose and stumbled towards the door, pulling on the silk garment as he went. "What is it already?"

"Mr. Potter." Harry gave a yelp and yanked the robe closed. "I sincerely hope that you do not plan to make your nudity a habit." Snape said acidly.

"Er… Professor. What are you doing here?" Harry asked, Draco laughing behind him at his red ears.

"Nothing I would be doing by choice. It seems, Mr. Potter, that you are incapable of being on time even when the occasion calls for your exulted presence."

"What?" Harry asked blankly. "It's Saturday. I don't have any classes to be late to. And why would you come—"

"You are an imbecile. How the headmaster expects you to save the wizarding world, I do not know." Snape gave Harry one of his famous glares, the kind Harry hadn't seen too often since they had come to their civil working relationship. "Today is Saturday, and it is nearing noon." Harry's face remained blank, and Snape gave an exasperated sigh. "Noon on the day of the full moon?"

"Oh! Oh, shit! The spell is today! Fuck!" Harry said as enlightenment hit.

"Language, Mr. Potter." Snape snapped at him.

"Wait, what is today?" Draco yelled from the bathroom.

"The spell!"

"Oh, fuck!"

"Just hurry up! You will be given clothing to wear when you get there, so just get decent." Snape turned to leave.

"Wait, Professor! Where are we doing the spell?" Harry yelled as the man swept away down the hall.

"In the Great Hall." He answered sourly.

"On a Saturday morning?" Draco said, yanking on a pair of trousers. "Is secrecy really that unimportant?"

"Apparently." Harry replied, admiring Draco's chest as he moved. "Right. Clothing. Need clothing to get to Great Hall."

Hermione was in a frenzy of academic curiosity. After dogging Lupin's footsteps until he, exasperated, allowed her to help him set up for the spell, she began trying to unveil the mysterious purpose of the procedure.

"The lavender I can understand, this is some sort of a protection spell after all, but I simply don't understand why we have to have so many blood elements. Protection implies avoiding blood, rather than coveting it, so I just don't understand why we need the blood-fire lilies and the dragon blood and the bloodied dagger. This is so complicated." She turned to Lupin, who was carefully anointing herbs with drops of Snape's potion. "Where exactly did you get the spell? What was the book called?"

"What book?" He asked distractedly.

"The book, or scroll I suppose, that had the spell. Do you remember what it was called?"

"There was no book. They gave me the spell directly."

"Directly? They wrote it down?" Hermione asked excitedly. "May I see it? I would really like to study it, plus there are many things you can learn by the style of writing, little things mostly, like small aspects of their culture."

"No, they didn't write it down. They put the spell directly in my mind. Rather uncomfortable, like when they gave me the Surugan language. Made my head feel rather full." Lupin straightened. "Sorry, Hermione, but I don't know how they did that either."

Hermione closed her mouth, disappointed.

"Ah, Remus! How is the spell coming?" Albus strode up, already dressed in the white robe that reminded Hermione of the ancient Roman outfits only with a huge hood. Remus turned to answer him, but Hermione caught sight of Ron timidly entering the hall.

"Ron!" she called him over. "Isn't this exciting?"

"Erm… yes, I suppose it is." Ron responded, looking awkward in the rather revealing toga-like outfit that exposed most of his chest and was much shorter than the average pair of shorts. *I don't suppose Ron has worn shorts much*. Hermione thought to herself. *Which is such a shame, as the boy has a nice behind.* Shocked by her rather uncharacteristic thought, Hermione blushed and turned away, unconsciously mimicking Ron's blush when he noticed her outfit.

Harry and Draco ran in, breathing hard, at that point. Draco took one look at their red faces and immediately came to the right conclusion—the sexual tension between the two was making itself known to the oblivious Gryffindors. *About time! Maybe when the girl gets laid regularly she won't spend every minute in the library.*

Harry, of course, took one look at the pair of red faces and came to a conclusion that was close but not entirely right. "Hey, guys. Embarrassed about the costumes?" He eyed Ron's toga and Hermione's… lingerie. Well, Harry supposed it wasn't supposed to be lingerie, but he didn't think women outside of a Victoria's Secret magazine wore clothing like that regularly. Hermione wore

a white skirt that hung incredibly low on her hips, was tight around her hips and buttocks, and was loose and flowing on her legs and ended about mid-thigh, showing far more of her legs than the boys were accustomed to seeing. Her top was even more revealing, as it was a bit like a flowing white sports bra with designs on incredible cleavage. Hermione's hair in the front had been woven into tiny braids that clung to her head while the rest of her chestnut mane flowed down over her back, and her make up had been down with an uncharacteristic amount of black kohl.

Basically, smart, nice, cute Hermione Granger had been turned into a sort of mythological babe, and Ron Weasley had no idea how to handle the change.

"Oh, good, you are here." Remus said, catching sight of Harry and Draco. "You need to change. Here are your Shenkihas."

"Our what?" Draco asked with a laugh.

"Shenkihas. The traditional formal dress of Surugan male adults."

"I have a quick question." Harry said. "If these things are traditional male outfits, is Hermione's outfit traditional for women?" Harry wondered with a slight shudder if Professor McGonagall was required to wear that outfit. If so, it would be a scarring experience. *And I really don't need anymore scars.* Harry thought ruefully.

"No, no, of course not. That is the outfit of a virgin girl that is still, well, on the marriage mart, I suppose you would say." Hermione blushed an even deeper red. "The older women and those that are…erm… no longer maidens have a different dress."

"Thank Merlin for that." Draco drawled as he and Harry went to change. "I would like to avoid nightmares."

When the boys returned, the Great Hall was full of the spell's participants and students. Dumbledore had set up a partition that blocked off half of the Great Hall for the use of the students, who were milling around with food, looking at the activities with curiosity.

"Oi! Harry! What's going on? Are you feeling better?" Dennis Creevy yelled at him as he passed.

"I'm feeling fine. Spell." Harry answered unhelpfully.

"Harry! Come, you and Draco need to stand here." Remus called, looking frantic.

Harry dragged Draco towards the center cleared out space and away from the food he had been reaching for. Ignoring Draco's grumbling ("Honestly, Harry, starving me is not the answer to your deep rooted self esteem issues") Harry stepped into his place and looked around.

All thirty people stood in a ring around the two Chimera. Lupin stood at the southern end, with

Dumbledore at the northern, and the others dispersed in a girl-girl-boy pattern. The tiny girl stood at the western pole of the circle, and the pregnant woman at the eastern. Fred and George were on opposite halves of the circle, as were Padma and Pavarti Patil. McGonagall, Snape, Molly, Arthur, and Tonks were there, as well as other members of the Order, Seamus, Dean, an aloof looking Blaise Zambini, Ernie McMillian, Justin Finch-Fletchy, and other students. Harry and Draco stood a few feet apart, with a sharp-looking knife between them, a rather wicked-looking dagger and a beautifully crafted sword next to them, forming a shape that seemed like a triangle that was missing its point. A fine grey dust lined a circle behind all the participants and smelled, to Draco's slightly enhanced nose, to be a mixture of lavender, gardenias, and blood. It was a strange scent, and somehow felt rather exotic.

"Alright, are we ready to begin?" Lupin asked. "We need to begin precisely one minute before noon, when Professor Dumbledore will vanish the ceiling to allow pure sunshine on the circle. Everyone link hands like so," He demonstrated with Tonks, who stood next to him, before picking up a long white streamer and wrapping it around each pair of wrists around the circle, linking them all together. "And stand up as straight and tall as you can. Harry, Draco, you two will be powering most of the spell, so I want you to keep one palm connected and the other one flat facing the missing point of the triangle while we are doing the spell." They nodded. "Good. Alright, as for the rest of you, this will feel very strange. As I understand it, you will get a feeling of *stretching*, as though something were just out of reach. Though this may be a bit uncomfortable, do not drop hands with your neighbors or the spell will fail. I do not have any idea whether that will lead to any bad consequences, but I don't want to take any chances." He glanced at the ceiling. "Ready?"

Dumbledore mumbled something very soft under his breath, and the ceiling disappeared, not that they could actually see the difference. The only way they could tell that the ceiling was gone was the rather chilly draft that wafted down towards the circle of wizards.

As the clock struck twelve, Lupin began to chant. Flitwick levitated the three daggers from the sidelines so that they floated just below the level of the Chimeras' arms. Hermione listened as hard as she could to the strange language Lupin spouted out in a singing sort of tone, but she couldn't find any similarities to any language she had ever heard, nor, she found, could she exactly remember the sounds. The strange words seemed to flood out in streamers, surrounding the participants and binding them together and to the Chimera in the center.

Harry and Draco didn't feel anything at first. They watched with their Chimera powers as Lupin's words really did form golden bonds between the people. When the bonds connected everyone in the circle, the light thickened at the four poles of the circle and began to shoot streamers towards the Chimera. When the first one connected, Harry felt a tiny *something* at the edge of his mind that reminded him unpleasantly on Voldemort's last attack. This time, however, the magic touched him gently, testing the waters of his mind, before seeping in and taking root somewhere that felt strangely deep to Harry. As though that had been a signal, more and more touches of magic entered his mind, filling his vision with a haze of gold. The magic began connecting him to Draco after it took root in Harry's mind. He glanced over to his mate to see that Draco was also surrounded in magic, and that he had a dazed expression on his face.

Suddenly, the bonds between the people in the circle snapped taunt. Harry and Draco gave identical yelps of surprise as the light began *pulling* from that deep space. The magic strained towards the missing point of the triangle, and Harry nearly fell to his knees at the yank of magic from within him. He heard Draco cry out again as the magic surged, and suddenly he could feel the other people in the circle. They were startled, and slightly fearful at the strain within them. Harry could tell that an infinitesimal amount of power flowed from each person towards him and Draco, but most of the power condensing at the point of the triangle was being forcibly removed from the two Chimera.

Just as Harry was starting to panic at the drain of his energy, there was a strange, almost painful snap, similar to a joint popping back into its proper place, and the light bonds vanished. All that was left was the cloud of power at the point of the triangle, which simply stayed in place for a moment. Behind him, Harry could hear Lupin continuing to chant the spell in the strangely lyrical language, and there was an incredibly bright flash that seemed to suck in the power of the sun to blind everyone in the Great Hall.

And when Harry's eyes cleared, the most beautiful creature he had ever seen was standing at the point of the triangle.

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Chapter: 12

Reviews make the world go 'round. They also give me little tingly feelings of joy… is that normal? Sorry about the long wait. If any Americans have ever taken AP exams, you know exactly why it has been so long since my last update. The only reason I am updating now is that I really don't feel like doing any more work.

Anyway! Story!

Oh, and a cookie goes to Chatwyn for mentioning my profile!

Chapter the Twelfth

Said beautiful creature stood about five foot, eight inches tall, had long golden locks styled in a rather elaborate version of Hermione's hair, and had the body of an athletic goddess. Her face was made of perfect planes that were almost intimidating in their perfection, and two bright, violet eyes shone over the assembled wizards.

Said beautiful creature was also glowing, and, Harry noticed, floating several inches off of the ground.

Said beautiful creature didn't glow or float for very long. With a startled "Oof!" the young woman fell out of the air onto her behind in the middle of the Great Hall. As she fell, so did the weapons floating around Harry and Draco. The woman, who, Draco noticed, looked only about eighteen, rose to her feet, rubbing her bottom and looking around quizzically.

"Dominaisphas cherimsinea?" She said, looking directly at Harry.

"Er…" Harry wasn't sure how to respond.

"Dominaisphas cherimsinea?" she repeated impatiently. Remus broke from the circle of staring people and stepped towards her.

"Corlilisam couriel domsintkasim Remus." He made a strange sort of bow, his arms crossing over his chest to pat his shoulders as he bowed his head.

The woman was not impressed by his show of respect. She raised an eyebrow and gave him a rather cold glare. "Dominaisphas cherimsinea!" She said forcefully, as though not accustomed to having to repeat herself. She turned to Draco and Lupin leapt forward, as though to stop her. She looked startled as he jumped between her and the blonde Chimera. "Korlaist gigamof ajosf." She snarled at the werewolf.

"Damo." Lupin said firmly, refusing to get out of her way. She smiled a rather patronizing smirk and flicked her hand at the man. With a yelp of surprise, Lupin found himself flying through the air away from the mysterious woman. She smiled with satisfaction and grabbed Draco's chin. He shied away from her hand, but found himself unable to move. Harry found himself in the same situation, as did every other person in the Great Hall. Draco found that all he could look at was the bright violet depths of the young woman's incredible eyes. He sensed her presence in his mind as similar to the first, gentle touches of magic from the spell. She delicately sifted through the layers in his mind, searching for something. It was not a comfortable feeling, but it wasn't at all painful. It felt a bit like someone pressing something firmly into his skin.

The woman stepped back after a moment, and everyone could move again.

"What the hell did she do to you?" Harry demanded as he pulled the dazed Draco behind him, protecting his mate with his body.

"He isn't hurt. And he wouldn't be dazed either if he had even a paltry amount of training."

Harry blinked at the woman, startled. "You speak English?"

"What the hell did you think I was doing with your mate? What, did you think I developed a taste for pretty boys?" she answered derisively, a touch of lyrical accent in her voice. She turned to look around the circle of people, obviously looking for the leader of the group. "What the hell is wrong with you people? Why the hell would you perform the Sun Guardian spell *indoors*?"

"We have sunlight, which was all the spell called for." Dumbledore answered, walking into the circle and waving his wand to make the ceiling reappear.

"All the spell called for? Do you know anything about the spell? Are you a complete idiot?" She spat at him after a startled look at the ceiling. "You don't summon a guardian from just some spell you managed to find. Haven't you any idea how dangerous they are? Do you know how many magical parasites and predators you just alerted to your presence? Humans probably are too weak for them to bother with, but your Chimera are completely unshielded. What the fuck were you thinking?" She demanded.

What a bitch. Draco thought to himself.

"Well, it's better than being an idiot." She spat at him. Draco looked at her startled. *I didn't say that out loud, did I?* Draco thought to himself in panic. "If you would shield your mind, you wouldn't have to worry about whether you did or not." She said.

"Holy shit, you can read my thoughts!"

The woman rolled her eyes. "Of course I can read your thoughts. You're practically throwing them at me! What did you expect to get, anyway? Some muscle-bound bimbo with a sword?"

There was a silence. "Actually, we were expecting some sort of protective object or power." Dumbledore said. There was another silence as everyone stared at the woman, who stared at Dumbledore.

"You did the spell blind." It wasn't even a question. She looked faintly ill. "I don't believe this. Who gave you permission to do a Semiona level spell?"

"I'm sorry?" Dumbledore said.

"A Semiona—where am I? I'm not in Suruga, am I?"

"No." Lupin answered, walking cautiously back to her. "You are at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, in Great Britain. We have an urgent problem that we were told you could help us with. You see, Harry and Draco are two of seven Chimera that are supposed to appear and they need training." He paused, waiting for her response. She stared at him, speechless. "The Council of Koringa gave us the spell because they said it was the only way to keep Harry from losing control of all his powers and hurting someone. See, we are in a war against the dark side, headed by a man so evil that most people refuse to speak his name." He paused again, but she didn't respond. "We brought you here to help us."

Finally, she responded. "Go fuck yourself."

"What?" Lupin asked, startled. Molly Weasley gasped from behind them.

"I refuse to throw my life away helping idiots. Send the Chimera to the meddling good-for-naught Council to deal with." She opened her hands and the long sword and the wicked-looking dagger flung themselves hilt first into her hands. She sheathed the sword as though she had a sheath behind her back so that the hilt stuck up over her right shoulder, and she sheathed the dagger at her hip in a mysteriously unsupported way.

"But… But we need your help. The Council told me you would help us!"

"I make it a point not to risk my life against some evil power for idiots." She called the sharp knife to her hand and handed it to Draco. "Don't put good weapons on the ground. Congratulations on your mating. May it be filled with children and good luck." She told him before turning on her heel and heading for the doors to the Great Hall.

"Wait!" Molly Weasley yelled. "Surely you aren't so cold hearted as to refuse our plea?" The woman kept walking.

Dumbledore stepped forward and waved his wand. The doors of the Great Hall swung shut. "Forgive me, but I cannot allow you to leave before we explain the situation."

The woman turned to look at him. "You are in the middle of a war. You just summoned something that could decide the outcome. And you do this spell in the middle of a school surrounded by people you couldn't possibly be sure about the loyalties of. Do you not even understand the advantages of your enemy *not* knowing of a powerful weapon?" She eyed them suspiciously and sent a glare towards Molly Weasley. "I would prefer not to be on the doomed side, thank you." She flicked her fingers towards the doors of the Great Hall, which fell off of their hinges with a huge boom, and continued on her path out of the school.

"Remus?" Dumbledore said quietly. "Have you any ideas?"

Remus thought frantically before yelling out at the girl's retreating back. "Wait! I call for the ancient rights of the imperiled! The, um, Domine siea corliar!"

She went rigid and turned to face them. She stared at Remus thunderously for a second before letting out an explosive sigh, saying, "I don't believe this! You don't even get told what a guardian spell is for and yet you know how to force me to your service?"

Dumbledore smiled. "Now, child, what is your name?"

The girl gave him an irritated look. "Look, you overbearing ass, I was around before your great grandparents even considered begetting children, so don't you take that condescending tone with me." Dumbledore looked a bit taken aback, as did everyone in the room barring the Slytherins, who looked like Christmas had come early.

Draco, in fact, couldn't stifle his laugh. To everyone's surprise, the girl flashed a brilliant smile at

him that made her annoyed face once again resemble the gorgeous creature she had been in the split second after her arrival. The smile actually broke up some of the tension in the room.

"My name is Phaedra." She said to Draco, ignoring the others in the room. "And yours?"

"Couldn't you just pull it from my head?"

"It is terribly rude to do so." She responded serenely, conveniently forgetting her invasion of his mind only minutes before.

"I am Draco Malfoy. This is my mate Harry Potter, who is the one for whom you were summoned." Draco was unsure whether to offer his hand so he settled for a polite incline of his head.

"Hello." Harry said. Phaedra flashed him an answering smile.

"May I ask you a question?" Hermione cut in. The guardian looked rather surprised, but warily nodded her consent. "Was your rather impressive display of telekinesis a talent that is particular to you, or can anyone learn how to do that?"

"You mean the doors? That is not particular to anyone. All of us can do it."

"Us?" Lupin broke in.

Phaedra gave him a dirty look for his interruption and the tinge of rancor in her voice returned. "Chimera, of course. How on earth could you be stupid enough to mess with this kind of spell without even knowing what you were trying to do?"

"Wait. Chimera?" McGonagall said incredulously. "You are the third Chimera?"

Phaedra blinked at her. "You really know nothing about Guardians, then? That is so sad."

McGonagall turned excitedly to Dumbledore. "Only four more to come, then! We now have a teacher for the remaining ones, also."

"Four more?" Phaedra asked. "That's not right. It doesn't work like that. You must have read the prophecy or whatever you got that from incorrectly."

"I assure you that I did not. The Council—" Remus began.

"The Council is manned by misfits and religious zealots." Phaedra interrupted scathingly. "They have very little access to true prophecies and as such, are likely to get facts wrong. Like, for example, that anytime Chimera are mentioned in a prophecy, their numbers are added to four to honor the four elements."

"Wait, the four elements? Chimera can control those elements, can't they? That makes sense; prophecies are likely to come from priests who would feel obligated to add such powers in!" Hermione said excitedly.

"Wait, so there aren't seven Chimera?" Ron asked, bewildered.

"So that's what happed with the Potions classroom!" Tonks exclaimed from the sidelines.

"Are you certain that the real number of Chimera is three?" Dumbledore broke in. "I would hate to leave our enemies the opportunity to exploit someone as powerful as a Chimera."

This gained him an insulted look. "I know what I am talking about." Phaedra said. "And as I seem to be the only expert, you would do better not to question my knowledge."

"Forgive me, I was only trying to confirm." Dumbledore said with a gentle smile, obviously trying to avoid insulting the guardian again.

"Why do you not feel that secrecy was of any importance in regard to this spell?" Phaedra said, ignoring his attempt to assuage her annoyance.

"I am afraid that Voldemort already knows about the spell." Dumbledore said, ignoring the shudder that ran around the room at his pronouncement. The children in the hall looked at each other worriedly while Harry, Draco, Hermione, Ron, and most of the Order members simply looked grim.

Phaedra lifted one perfect eyebrow. "Does this creature not get laughed at when he tells people his name? He sounds like a cheap villain in a bad story."

Harry laughed mirthlessly. "Actually, most people are afraid to say Voldemort's name. He is generally referred to as He Who Must Not Be Named." Another shudder ran around the room.

"That's idiotic." Phaedra said immediately. "If I hear anyone say such a ridiculous thing in my presence, I will smack them."

There was a stunned silence in the room until Harry began to laugh uncontrollably.

Lucius Malfoy was not looking forward to telling his wife about his decision to leave the Dark Lord. A Death Eater Narcissa was not, but a pragmatic survivor she most certainly was. Lady Malfoy would not be pleased to hear that her life was going to be in constant danger, and Lucius fully expected his wife to be very upset.

He hoped he had made the correct decision in abandoning the Dark Lord, but he had not had much of a choice. Though he had always been rather harsh on his son, Draco was his child, and he would not allow him to be exploited in such a way by the Dark Lord. Draco's mate would not be able to protect Draco at all, so it was up to Lucius to ensure that his son survived long enough

to carry on the Malfoy name.

Lucius stepped from the fireplace into his lavish study and summoned a trembling house elf with a snap of his fingers.

"Tell Narcissa that I wish a word with her immediately." He ordered. The tiny creature bowed and disappeared with a crack.

Lucius sat in his chair and poured himself a drink with a wave of his wand. He sipped the fine brandy contemplatively as he waited for his wife to come to him. Several minutes later, Narcissa Malfoy entered the room gracefully.

"Is everything alright, Lucius?" She asked softly as she sat in the chair across from her husband. "You just returned from a visit with Draco, correct?"

"Yes. I am afraid I have some rather disturbing news." Narcissa waited patiently for him to continue. "I have broken ranks with the Death Eaters. I have joined the side of the light."

There was a long silence and Narcissa went a bit pale. "Was that a wise move, Lucius? The Dark Lord will not be pleased at this action."

Lucius smiled at the drastic understatement. "No, this is not particularly wise. However, the decision is a rather moot point. The Dark Lord knows of Draco's… uniqueness. It was no longer a question of personal preference."

Narcissa went completely still for a moment. Lucius was rather surprised that she hadn't become angry yet. "Is Draco safe?"

"For the moment, he is as safe as possible. And he has found a mate. Unfortunately, the mate will not be of use to protect Draco."

Narcissa eyed him suspiciously. "Are you quite sure?"

"Yes. The boy showed no signs of intelligence or power."

"Then the boy is an excellent actor."

Lucius went still. "What do you mean?"

"I had a visit from Severus earlier today. He told me that Draco's mate would be uniquely able to protect him from harm, and that even Draco's considerable power is eclipsed by that of his mate." Lucius stared at her. "Are you sure you met his real mate?"

"Draco introduced him as such, and they were in a rather compromising state of dress." Lucius thought for a moment. "The mate must, for whatever reason, be hiding from me. That does not

inspire trust in his character."

Narcissa smiled humorlessly. "Perhaps the mate is a staunch supporter of the Light side. Few teenagers on the light side would wish to show themselves to you in private."

"Then our son-in-law is a coward." Lucius said dismissively. "A coward will not be of much use in any case." He paused. "However, Draco's mate is not our primary concern at the moment. Dumbledore has arranged for us to stay in an Order safe-house not far from Hogsmeade. We will need to gather the necessities and disappear before the Dark Lord realizes my betrayal."

Narcissa gave a well-bred snort. "Well, if you hadn't gambled your lot on the half-blood, we wouldn't have to, now would we?"

Lucius sighed as he readied himself for his wife's scolding and snapped his fingers for a house elf.

Draco had a favorite spot on Harry. It was a really beautiful area of skin, and it was so wonderfully sensitive. He nuzzled Harry's hip happily, enjoying his mate's squirms and pleadings immensely, as Harry tried to read a scroll that detailed the effects of several potions ingredients that had been used in the Potions classes he had missed.

"Draco! I am going to fail potions because you are a horny bastard!" Harry finally exclaimed, squeaking when his mate gave a particularly strong suck to the area of skin.

Draco grinned up at him and tickled the flesh to the side of his face. "I am not the only one."

Harry gasped as his mate touched a very happy part of his anatomy and tossed the scroll off the bed with an exasperated noise. "Now you've done it." Harry said as he yanked his mate up. "I am going to fail potions and then I will have to repeat the year." He licked Draco's lips. "How exactly do you plan to make this up to me?"

Draco pushed Harry flat and straddled his hips. Sliding his hands into Harry's shirt, he whispered huskily into his mate's ear, "Oh, I am sure I can figure *something* out."

Three floors above the lovers, Albus Dumbledore was walking on eggshells around a very testy sorceress. "Would you care for a lemon drop?"

Phaedra closed her eyes and took a deep, calming breath. "No, I don't want a… whatever you offered me. I want to know what this war is about and how to dispose of the madman so I can get back to my peaceful life."

"Well, you see—" Remus began.

"I was not talking to you." She said flatly before turning to Dumbledore. "I am forbidden to deal with agents of the Council of Koringa."

Snape, sitting with McGonagall in the corner of the room, could barely contain his smirk at the startled look on Remus's face.

"It began like this. There once was a very talented young wizard born to a witch and an intolerant Muggle. Tom Riddle lived in an orphanage before coming to Hogwarts." Dumbledore explained.

Snape watched the woman closely as Dumbledore described Voldemort's entire life story. Her sharp eyes focused intently on Dumbledore's face, almost without blinking, and she had a completely blank look on her face. When Dumbledore explained the prejudice against Muggleborns, a thoughtful look appeared briefly, but she hid it almost immediately. Phaedra was wary of the strangers, and obviously unsure about their intelligence and about whether they were entirely trustworthy. Snape couldn't help but approve immensely.

When Dumbledore finished, Phaedra was silent for several seconds. Finally, she said, "The first order of business is to train the Chimera. The two of them are a disaster waiting to strike, and Chimera tend to be quite messy when that happens. Draco is undoubtedly stronger mentally than Harry, though Harry has a much larger arsenal. Draco will be best for reconnaissance and espionage, though I have the feeling he isn't likely to be in any condition for the field in a few weeks."

"Why not?" Remus said sharply, still offended over her dismissal.

She gave him a dirty look. "Pregnancy, of course. Chimera are quite fertile in the first few months of mating."

"Pregnancy?" McGonagall exclaimed. "Is that possible?"

"Chimera are different biologically from humans. He will carry the child much like a woman would, but Chimera birth children in a much more…dignified… way. It will not be messy and sweaty, and Draco will not have any of the nasty signs of pregnancy beyond a bit of nausea in the first month."

Snape almost grinned at the thought. He restrained himself as to not give the Chimera sorceress any notion that he actually had a sense of humor. Unfortunately, Phaedra suddenly glanced at him with violet eyes and flashed him a smirk worthy of any Slytherin.

"I am tired." Phaedra said abruptly, rising gracefully from the plush chair on which she had been perched. "It has been a very long time since I have been to the physical world. I expect a place to sleep that is very far away from the Chimera pair. No one is to have access to my rooms without my permission, and if anyone enters without being invited, they will learn a rather harsh lesson about life and death."

"I have just a few more questions." Dumbledore said, once again turning on his 'harmless old man' persona.

"Well, you are just going to have to ask them tomorrow." Phaedra spat out, not in the least impressed.

Dumbledore inclined his head quickly. "Very well. Severus, I believe you can lead our guest to her rooms." Snape rose to tower over the young woman menacingly, which she completely ignored in favor of eying Fawkes, who had just appeared in a burst of golden fire, rather speculatively.

With a polite motion and a sour expression, Snape ushered Phaedra out of the office and towards the dungeons. He swept along with his usual bat-like elegance and watched her out of the corner of his eye. She had a swinging, balanced gate that brought to mind a warrior ready for an attack from any direction. Slim muscles flexed and relaxed as she strode as smoothly as he through the chilly halls of the castle. He led her down several floors into Slytherin territory before stopping before a clock that showed the lunar phases and gave the password (verisimilitude of setting). Phaedra flashed him another brilliant smile, stepping inside the clock, and snapped the door sharply closed.

Snape really couldn't decide what to make of her.

Voldemort was rather confused, but, as usual, was hiding it well. The old fool at the school seemed to know that he knew about the Chimera spell, as Dumbledore hadn't even bothered to hide it from him. Somehow, that made Voldemort rather uneasy; he couldn't help but feel that the old headmaster had something tricky up his sleeve.

Adding to that uncertainty was the issue of Lucius Malfoy. The Dark Lord had been calling him for the last four hours, and his right-hand man had yet to respond. This was not like Malfoy, who believed that those from the best classes were always punctual, and the Dark Lord had enough informants in the Ministry to know that no action had been taken against the man. Voldemort was beginning to get a bit suspicious over this. Malfoy had been slightly strange yesterday when they had spoken about his pretty son, but Voldemort had been certain that the aristocrat had simply been worried about punishment. It would not do for Malfoy to have betrayed him. *Lucius had better have an excellent reason for his absence*. Voldemort thought irritably.

"Wormtail!" He called imperiously. The rat man scurried quickly from the hall and bowed to Voldemort. "I want you to take Nott and find Malfoy. Bring him to me, and if you cannot find him, bring me his son. Make sure you knock the brat out before you take him."

Wormtail bowed and hurried from the room, considering what this new development might mean for the ex-Gryffindor.

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Chapter: 13

Hey kids! I hope you are all having wonderful days coughreviewcough ! Sorry about the extremely long wait. I am SO excited about HBP, which comes out in like 6 days, but anyway… On to the story.

Chapter the Thirteenth

Draco Malfoy was having a strangely pleasant dream. He and Harry were walking hand in hand down the streets of Hogsmeade. The stores were full of brightly colored things, but Draco couldn't really see what those things were. Harry was smiling brightly at him and playing with a violet colored butterfly and was, Draco suddenly noticed, completely naked.

"Harry, why are you naked?" Draco asked.

"Why am I naked? Why are you naked?" Harry answered with a smile. Draco glanced down and realized that he was, in fact, campaigning for a nudist colony. *"I hope your father brings marmalade when he comes to tea. I really liked the kind he brought last time."*

Draco smiled. *"It's my favorite too. He and mother are dropping by after they finish their Death Eater meeting."*

"Oh, good. I hope they aren't late. Kreacher was quite upset last week when they were so late to the Tupperware party. He so loves those parties."

"He does, doesn't he? I hope he likes the muffler we got him for Christmas."

"Oh, yes, I am sure he will." Harry's butterfly changed into a kitten with a jeweled collar. *"What time is it?"*

"Hmm?" Draco asked lazily.

"Ten…Nine…Eight…"

"Harry, what are you talking about?" Harry just smiled and continued to count.

"AHHHHH!"

"AHHHHH!" Draco floundered around in bed, got smacked in the face with someone else's limb, and slammed to the floor. The sound of rather melodic, if slightly malevolent, laughter filled the bedroom.

"What was that for?" Harry demanded, shivering and shaking the icy water from his hair.

"Do you know what time it is?" Phaedra asked with a laugh.

"No, and why should we care?" Draco snapped, reaching for a blanket to wrap around himself before realizing that all the blankets were cold and wet.

"It's time for you to start training!" Phaedra said cheerfully. "I let you two lovebirds sleep in this morning as a bonding present, but you'll have to be on time tomorrow. I'll meet you downstairs in the hall in which I was summoned."

"The Great Hall?" Harry asked sourly, sitting buck naked on the cold stone floor.

"That's the one! Get dressed, lads, or you'll scare the children. If you aren't down in twenty minutes, you come down dressed in whatever you may or may not have on!" She bounced out of the room.

"What the fuck has her so cheerful?" Draco asked irritably. "Wasn't she a bitch yesterday?"

"Yeah, and I'm not sure which I like better." Harry answered, heading towards a warm shower.

Draco grabbed his wand from the bedside table. "Tempus!"

It was half five in the morning. Draco couldn't resist letting out a pitiful whine, but the wet blankets effectively prevented him from crawling back into bed.

Twenty minutes later, two sullen and bedraggled Chimera entered the Great Hall to find that their sadistic trainer was dressed in the same outfit as the day before, except that the color had changed to black. She was barefoot, and seemed to have the hilts of two very long trident knives running the length of her outer thighs. She flashed them her cheerful, awake smile and eyed their hastily donned clothing.

"Well. First of all, please remove those… shoes." Phaedra said distastefully.

"What? It's December and we're in Scotland." Draco said, astonished. "And it isn't all that much warmer in most places in the castle than it is outside."

Phaedra rolled her eyes. "Thank you, Draco, I hadn't noticed the temperature. Quite stalling and remove your shoes."

Harry and Draco stared at her for a moment. Phaedra sighed. "Alright, then, I'll give you two options. The first is that you remove your shoes and we will start your training from the beginning. The second is that you keep your shoes and we go straight to the part where I test your skill at fending off daggers when unarmed." She drew the two knives at her thighs, and they glittered hungrily at the two boys.

Draco took one look at the drawn knives and decided to go with the traditional Slytherin low

ground. He sat down and yanked off his dragon skin boots. Harry held Phaedra's gaze for a few seconds longer before deciding that his Gryffindor tendencies were really going to get him killed; he, too, pulled off his shoes.

"Excellent! Now we can get started." Phaedra sheathed her knives and walked out of the Great Hall, the two boys trailing behind. "You need to become accustomed to being barefoot, as it is easier to learn to control your magic when you are in direct connection to the earth. Come along." She opened the doors of the entrance hall with a flick of her fingers and led the two Chimeras into a fresh snow.

The cold hit Draco hard; he had not dressed to go outside before dawn had truly begun. Harry shivered by his side as well. Phaedra, on the other hand, didn't seem to notice the temperature. Phaedra turned and flashed them another smile before waving to them to follow her and breaking into a run. Draco gave a disgusted sigh at the exercise, but followed Phaedra and Harry nonetheless. It wasn't long until Draco was reconsidering the option with the knives. Phaedra ran fast through the snow. Ice and hidden rocks didn't seem to faze her. The boys, however, couldn't feel their feet and so seemed to trip over every little stick and pebble on the path. Phaedra confidently led them towards Hagrid's hut and then into the Forbidden Forest, smiling and breathing easily, while Harry and Draco huffed and puffed and strained to keep up.

Just when Harry thought that Phaedra was going to save Voldemort the effort of killing him, she came to a complete stop in the middle of a clearing. Draco ran into him, and they both tumbled to the ground, clutching their sides and each other. Phaedra laughed at them. "Oh, come on, you can't tell me that you cannot handle a little jog! Get up, we need to stretch before you get cold."

Draco realized that he had actually forgotten about the cold. *Yes, being completely numb will make you forget about things like that*. He couldn't help letting out another very soft, pathetic little whine of misery as Phaedra began putting the two boys through endless ridiculous-looking stretches that neither of them could do half as well as she could. After Draco got stuck in a particularly painful position and had to be helped to his feet by two smirking Chimera, he decided that he was through with this ridiculous exercise.

"Could we *please* get on with the real training? This muggle activity is starting to irritate me." Draco snapped.

"Oh, thank you for reminding me. These non-magical people you call muggles, are there many of them here?" Phaedra asked, obviously not noticing the derisive way Draco referred to muggles.

"Oh, yeah, more than wizards, actually." Harry responded, finishing up the push-ups that Phaedra had assigned them.

"Really? And they don't know about the existence of magic? Why on earth would anyone wish to create such a dysfunctional society?"

"Dysfunctional?" Draco asked incredulously. "The wizarding world is a great society that has been in existence for thousands of years—"

"Yes, and is very limited in numbers, obviously, if wizards don't make up even half of the population. And it can't be that wonderful if they took so long to realize that such a monstrous creature was back to take over the world." Phaedra said, pushing Draco down into push-up position. "Any government worth their salt would at least investigate such a claim."

"How do you know all this?" Harry demanded. "You've only been in this world for a day."

"I used a sort of sophisticated mind-meld to absorb Draco's English and, in the process, absorbed several impressions and vague memories, of which the astonishment about the Ministry of Magic's incompetence is included."

"You used a what?" Draco said, looking rather blank and breathing hard as he struggled through yet another push-up.

Phaedra patted him on the head. "Don't worry about it, darling. You'll learn how to do it in a few days, as it is really quite simple, as long as you're careful, of course."

"What are we going to be learning, by the way? We haven't exactly received a syllabus." Harry asked.

"You both will be learning slightly different things." Phaedra said, sitting down on a snow-covered stump. "Draco looks to have very strong mind-magic capabilities, so that will be his topic of study. You, Harry, have the flashier powers, and will have to learn to control them before you get to the point at which you stub a toe on a chair and accidentally incinerate it. You both have the ability to learn how to infuse physical actions with magic, so we will be learning physical fighting skills as well as magic. This is the reason for the push-ups, which you may stop doing, Draco." Draco collapsed into the snow.

"So, why are we doing push-ups in the snow rather than the castle?" Harry asked.

"Yes, and I hope you realize that pneumonia will set us back in our training a bit." Draco added sourly.

Phaedra laughed at them. "You're Chimera, silly boys, your bodies can survive much more punishing conditions than humans, so quite whining." She waved her hand idly and Draco suddenly found himself sitting on bare earth. He glanced around and saw that Phaedra had cleared snow off of a large circle of earth.

"Is it just me, or is the clearing getting warmer?" Harry asked, feeling the uncomfortable tingles that heralded the return of feeling in his flesh.

"Chimera can handle punishing conditions, and you both have to become accustomed to them,

but there is no need to do it all at once." Phaedra said. "Now, we will cease the 'muggle' activities," she sent a look at Draco, "and begin training your new powers." She motioned for the two boys to sit cross-legged in front of her. "The first thing any Chimera needs to learn is how to shield him-or herself. Wizards, I have noticed, have a curious lack of protection. Instead of building permanent shields and wards around themselves, they rely on being able to cast a spell fast enough to block an incoming attack. Whether this is caused by ignorance or just plain stupidity, I don't know, but Chimera cannot afford the luxury of this folly. Therefore, you will learn how to create shields that will block unfriendly spells and that are not affected by surprise or illness or sleep."

Harry couldn't help but remember Cedric Diggory at that moment. Had Hogwarts taught such shields, Cedric wouldn't have been surprised with Avada Kedavra and would still be around today. Before he could feel the familiar guilt over Cedric's death, Phaedra snapped her fingers in his face, startling him.

"I will also teach you shields for the mind which are much more solid than this silly occlumency rot. You will, at that point, actually be able to block me from hearing your thoughts." She gave him a very penetrating look. "Anyway, there are many ways to go about teaching these skills, but we, unfortunately, do not have the luxury of time, so we will take the quick and easy way. This means, of course, that you miss all the lessons on temperance and how to decide whether a situation warrants direct versus indirect magic. We will just have to hope that you two have the moral judgment to handle this kind of power."

She paused and appeared to think for a moment. Finally, Harry ventured a question. "So, what does that mean, then? The quick and easy way, I mean."

"It means that instead of demonstrating and then allowing you to try and figure out a way to emulate me, I go directly into you and show you how it's done."

Draco suddenly felt a bit nervous. "And what exactly does that mean?"

Phaedra grinned at him. "Brace yourself and think of England."

Voldemort hated to feel confused. When he was lord of England and the world, he would ensure that he never need feel confused again.

Lucius Malfoy had disappeared off the face of the earth. No arrests had been made, and the Malfoy manor was empty of its lord and lady. The house elves, under considerable duress and after a few hours in Bella's tender care, admitted that someone had entered the house some days ago and created a horrendous raucous in Lord Malfoy's private study. The house elves, forbidden to enter the study unless called directly, had no idea what had happened behind those doors, but the Lord and Lady Malfoy had never reappeared from the rooms. When Lord Voldemort sent several Death Eaters to investigate, they found the study door unlocked and the room empty of inhabitants. Everything was in perfect order, with Lucius' brandy glass still half full on the desk. There was no sign of a struggle except for a very small singe mark on the beautiful leather chair

that could have come from any number of things.

Voldemort suppressed a sigh of impatience. There was just enough evidence that perhaps the Malfoys had not disappeared willingly to prevent him from just declaring them traitors; if they hadn't left willingly, they could possibly return, and the dark lord had no wish to alienate his most powerful follower.

Yes, Voldemort thought, *Lucius is too valuable to risk betraying his loyalty.*

Meanwhile, Voldemort was also rather confused about the recent actions of the old fool in the school. He knew, of course, that the order was trying to summon some sort of power, but Voldemort knew that this power was probably the Chimera foreseen in the prophecy of the sun. Why Dumbledore would perform the spell in front of so many witnesses, especially witnesses that included the many children of his Death Eaters, was the mystery. Voldemort still intended to acquire this creature for himself, of course, and he was sure it wouldn't be terribly hard to convince the Chimera to join him willingly, if her attitude towards Dumbledore gave any indication. But why, if Dumbledore didn't have a good control of the creature, would he allow so many untrustworthy witnesses to see her?

Intimidation, Voldemort supposed. That was what he would have done, anyway. However, Dumbledore apparently hadn't guessed what the power actually was until after they had summoned her. How would he intimidate anyone when he hadn't a clue what he was getting? What if it had been something very innocuous, like a book or a scroll? And what was Draco Malfoy doing amongst the spell casters? Had the boy made the foolhardy choice not to join the Death Eaters? Or perhaps he just fit the roll in the ritual that the Order preformed and hadn't been told what was going on. It was entirely possible, as witnesses had said that he seemed rather unsure of himself as the ritual went on. Voldemort scowled. He truly hated being confused.

By the time Phaedra allowed the exhausted boys to leave the clearing, they only had about half an hour to get to class. Now that Harry was better and Draco's mysterious 'illness' had been cured as well, Dumbledore expected them to return to their normal schedules. Phaedra waved them back into the snow and promptly disappeared from the clearing. The two Chimera stumbled as fast as they could back towards the school, praying that all the unpleasant critters in the forest were intelligent enough to stay in their warm burrows rather than to chase after them. They raced into the entrance hall and stopped short at the sight of Phaedra, holding their school robes in one hand, a plate of sandwiches in the other, and their school bags at her feet.

"Um… Phaedra, you do realize that we cannot be seen together, right?" Harry asked hesitantly. "We cannot allow anyone to realize that we are not mortal enemies even though they are probably wondering about us doing that summoning spell together."

"Don't be ridiculous." She said calmly. "I have set up a low level illusion to block you from sight. Hurry up and eat, you both have potions with that rather unhappy-looking fellow."

Draco snorted at her description of his godfather. "Unhappy-looking? Your choice of adjectives

is rather lacking." Phaedra made an impatient gesture, which got the boys to reach for a sandwich. She removed her hands from beneath the plate and the robes, allowing them to float unsupported, gave them a brilliant smile, and walked away, leaving the two Chimera to try to ignore their confusion.

She disappeared down a corridor just as a large group of third year students walked into the entrance hall on their way to Care of Magical Creatures. Harry and Draco stiffened in anticipation, but the students kept chattering without a glance in their direction, wove around the two without noticing them, and left the entrance hall, blissfully ignorant of the astonished Chimera.

"Wow." Harry said. "If that's a low level illusion, I wonder what a high level illusion does."

"No idea." Draco said. "What more would you need from an illusion spell? Makes that invisibility cloak of yours rather superfluous, doesn't it?"

Harry gave his mate a mock-glare before leaning in and stealing a quick kiss. "We are going to be late for Potions, especially since we can't walk in together." He pulled on his school robes. "I'll walk in first, since you are less likely to get a detention for being late."

"Harry?" Draco said, pulling on his own robes.

"Hmm?" Harry responded, tying his red and gold tie.

"When will we be able to walk in together?"

Harry stopped straightening his clothing. "I don't know. After the war is over, I suppose." The two boys looked at each other for a moment.

"We're going to be tardy." Draco said after a long moment. He grabbed Harry by the front of his robes and pulled him into a proper snog. Harry stumbled back when Draco released him and found that he once again had to straighten his robes.

Draco smirked at his flushed face and began strolling towards the dungeons.

Harry, of course, received a detention and ten points of Gryffindor for being late. Draco, on the other hand, received a polite inquiry on his well being after his 'illness' and was told that he should tell Snape immediately if he began feeling ill again during the class.

Harry didn't have to fake a scowl at that as he sat next to Ron and Hermione in the back of the classroom.

Ron waited until Snape had begun the lecture before speaking. "Where were you?" he whispered. "You weren't at breakfast. Please tell me that you two weren't… you know…" Ron grimaced.

Hermione rolled her eyes but continued scribbling down notes.

"No, we weren't *bonding* or *shagging* or anything." Harry whispered back, one eye on Snape. "We started our training with Phaedra."

"Really?" Ron said rather loudly.

"Mr. Weasely, what exactly is so startling that you felt the need to disturb my class?" Snape demanded, glaring darkly at the Gryffindor.

"Um… well, I just didn't know that about the… erm…" Ron looked frantically at the board. "The grubblish beans." He finished hastily.

Snape gave him a long, disbelieving look. "Five points from Gryffindor." He returned to his lecture. Hermione flashed them an aggravated look.

"I'm not letting you copy my notes, you know." She hissed. "I really mean it this time."

Ron and Harry exchanged grins before returning to their previous conversation. "She got us up at five thirty this morning for a romp through the snow. She didn't tell us about the romp through the snow, of course." Harry whispered.

"Why?" Ron responded softly, after a quick glance at Snape.

"Training. Supposedly she is training our bodies so that it is easier to use magic. She did something weird after our nice exercise session in the snow." Harry broke off as Snape turned a glare on them. As soon as the professor turned away, he continued. "She went into my head and was… showing me things inside my mind I've never seen before. It was bizarre." Harry pretended to write stuff down as Ron stared at him.

"She went *inside* your head? Like what Voldemort and Snape do?" Ron asked.

"Kind of. It was the strangest sensation. She did something that made my mind… well, click is the only word I can think of… and then I could see everything surrounded by auras of magic and power, more so than when I was angry before. Then she built these… these shield things around me that I could see as power and it was so… wicked." Harry glanced at Snape. "She showed me the actually source of magic, and it's so awesome! It's like this…this lake of power, only in my head, and I just wonder where all the room for all that stuff came from. Was it always there, do you thi—"

"Mr. Potter." Snape snapped suddenly. Harry jumped and turned to see his Potions professor less than a foot away from his desk. He and Ron had been so distracted that they hadn't even noticed his approach. Hermione was looking rather vindicated on Ron's other side.

"Sir?"

"What could be so fascinating that you and Mr. Weasley simply have to discuss it during my class?" He asked, black eyes glinted with annoyance. "I would have thought your illness would encourage you to try and catch up with the class, but that, apparently, was too much to ask. Would you, perhaps, learn better if you were seated closer to the front?"

"Oh, no, sir, I don't think that's necessary." Harry said hurriedly.

"Oh, I think it is." Snape said, voice dangerously soft. "Move."

Harry gathered his things together and walked through the snickering Slytherins towards the desk at the front.

"Professor?"

Snape turned along with the rest of the class towards Draco Malfoy. "Yes, Mr. Malfoy?"

"I do believe that Potter might benefit from a proximity to a decent potions student. Perhaps he would prefer to sit between Pansy and me?"

"No, no." Harry said very quickly. "I am sure the front of the room will be more beneficial." He sent a glare at Draco that was coupled with the question, *what are you doing?*

Snape looked at the two for a moment. "I do believe you may be correct, Mr. Malfoy. Potter, please take a seat between them."

Harry sighed audibly and moved into the seat next to Draco and Pansy. Pansy smirked malevolently at him, her smirk a somewhat pathetic immolation of the famous Malfoy smirk that Draco gave him from his other side. The real difference between them, though, came from the fact that Draco also gave him a squeeze under the cover of the desk that came rather high up on his thigh. Harry had a hard time keeping his face straight at that.

Ron and Hermione in the back of the room were both having the same trouble as they watched Draco wrangle a seat next to his lover without invoking the suspicions of the Death Eaters' children.

As the class went on, Draco preformed the obligatory antics that would be expected of him: he spilled his ink over Harry's notes (making a mental note to make a copy of his own for him later), jostled Harry with his elbows as he tried to write, made snide comments in a voice just loud enough for Pansy to hear, and was generally unpleasant. He countered his actions, of course, with a rather friendly hand in Harry's lap. If the Gryffindor was a bit more flushed and fidgety than normal, everyone wrote it off as the effects of his stifled anger towards Malfoy.

Draco knew he was walking a very fine line between a nice little joke on his fellow Slytherins and potentially lethal exposure. He found that now that he had worked his hand under Harry's

t-shirt, he didn't care all that much. Harry was struggling not to moan as Draco's fingers teased the sensitive skin of his navel and then fluttered lightly over his trouser-covered crotch. He shifted slightly and gave Draco a light kick in the shins, to which Draco responded with a quick twist that undid the button of Harry's jeans. Harry shifted slightly away, sending Draco a mental plea not to make him embarrass himself in front of Snape, but he ran into Pansy on his other side and immediately shifted back towards Draco.

Draco concealed his smug look with another smirk and pulled down Harry's zipper. Harry felt himself flush more as Draco grabbed his erection without cloth to separate them and set to work.

The class was nearly over when the door creaked open and Phaedra sauntered in. Snape cut off his lecture suddenly as she began looking around the room without acknowledging the class.

"May I help you?" Snape said in his quietly menacing voice.

"Hmm? Oh, no, I was just exploring the make up of the castle. You have much stronger wards in the dungeons than the upper levels, you know. Seems rather backwards, as the dungeons have more natural protection to start with." Phaedra answered. Draco noticed that she was still barefoot.

"If you would, explore the dungeons when I am not trying to teach a class." Snape said in an acidic tone.

"Oh, yes, I just remembered that I did have something else to do down here. Harry and Draco, if you would, I believe there is something that the two of you need to see."

"What could we possibly need to see together?" Draco snapped, playing along in his role.

Phaedra smiled and said, "*Now*" in a voice that made several people shiver. Harry rose from his chair, making sure that the wet spot on his trousers was completely concealed by his robes, reluctance in every limb of his body. Draco glared at her and Harry before rising with all the arrogance and grace of a true aristocrat.

"I don't believe I gave you permission to remove my students from the class." Snape said in his own version of Phaedra's shiver-worthy voice.

Phaedra turned to him with a brilliant smile. He held his glare for several heartbeats before it faded slowly from his face to be replaced with a strange look of… well, it could only be described as peace. Harry reflected absently that he almost didn't recognize Snape without a glare or frown on his face. Draco looked at his godfather and then exchanged confused glances with Blaise Zambini.

"Class dismissed." Snape said almost pleasantly. The class moved slowly to leave, as though afraid that Snape would snap out of his daze and attack them. Draco and Harry waited with Phaedra until everyone had left. Once Ron and Hermione at the end of the queue left the room,

Phaedra dropped her gaze from Snape and motioned for the boys to follow her. She waved a hand at the wall of the classroom, which presented her with a door, and she led them through it to a corridor near the History of Magic classroom.

"Where are we going?" Draco asked, glancing around to see that the hallway was empty.

"To see your father, of course." Phaedra answered him. "He's quite the looker as well, isn't he?"

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Chapter: 14

Reviews awesome

Computer obnoxious, irritable, sulky little toddler with way too much power over me

HBP uhhh… cannot speak in awe of such magnificent mastery of the literary arts

My dog much too active right now. She just bit my toe…

Story …um… yeah, I was getting to it eventually. Sorry about the delay, hope it is everything you hoped for.

Chapter the Fourteenth

Harry felt his life flash before his eyes as he waited for someone to respond to Draco's knock on the solid wall in front of them. *I am going to die. Trelawney is a fraud. I am about to die*. Draco sent him a glance and gave his hand a squeeze. Phaedra snorted behind him.

"Don't be so melodramatic. And that was a true prophecy, by the way. I can see it in your aura."

Draco turned in surprise. "You can see a prophecy in someone's aura?" He asked curiously.

"You can't. I can." Phaedra replied. "You might want to keep your mind on the current situation."

Draco turned back to the door. Phaedra was right; he didn't know how Lucius was going to react to finding out about Harry.

"Why are we doing this, again?" Harry asked plaintively.

Draco smirked at him. "Oh, behold the mighty Gryffindor."

"Shut it, you." Harry replied. "Being brave doesn't mean you like to volunteer yourself for disembowelment."

"Could have fooled me." Draco said, smirk growing as Harry scowled at him. The smirk fell abruptly from his face as the door finally yanked open to reveal his father in a state of more undress than Draco had ever seen him.

Lucius Malfoy, dressed in a pair of silk pajama bottoms and an inside-out dressing robe went slack jawed in horror as he saw that his son was hand-in-hand with the Boy Who Lived while he, the quintessential aristocrat, was practically in his underclothes. He felt his horror widen as he took in the sight of an incredibly beautiful woman behind them who seemed to be biting her own fist to keep from laughing at him.

"To what do I owe this… pleasure?" Lucius snarled, fixing Potter with as good an aristocratic glare as he could manage.

"Father." Draco broke in. "I would like you to meet my mate, Harry Potter."

Lucius looked at him blankly. "I beg your pardon?"

"It's rather complicated, but I am afraid I haven't been entirely honest to you." Draco began, straightening his shoulders and lifting his chin.

"Oh?" Lucius responded icily.

"Yes, I am afraid that… erm…" Draco suddenly realized that he couldn't remember what name they had created for Harry when he had met Lucius under a glamour.

"What your lovely son is trying to tell you is that he made up this… Henry Evans character in an attempt to not have the love of his life be delivered to a madman." Phaedra broke in with a grin.

"And you are?" Lucius asked, eyebrows raised as he eyed her costume.

Phaedra seemed to straighten somehow. Her posture changed subtly until Draco could have sworn that she was as aristocratic as Lucius. "My name is Phaedra. I am a Chimera and the Guardian of the Sun. I am currently teaching your son and his mate how to control the world around them." Her tone was rather icy, and she matched Lucius' haughty look with one of her own.

Someone cleared their throat politely behind them. Phaedra didn't react, but Harry and Draco whirled around to see Narcissa Malfoy standing in the hall, dressed to kill in designer robes.

"Mother!" Draco said, startled. She cast a politely pointed glance at Harry and Phaedra. "This is Harry Potter, my mate, and Phaedra, my teacher."

Narcissa smiled without missing a beat. "Wonderful to meet you. I'm afraid that I hadn't expected to have visitors, otherwise I would have met you properly." She turned a look on Lucius that clearly told him that this lack of warning was entirely his fault. "Do come in." She gestured for them to leave the hallway.

Harry entered awkwardly, trying not to show that he wasn't entirely sure he was going to be coming back out of the room. Lucius looked like he had just been asked to live with a rabid troll, but he stepped aside as his wife swept imperiously passed him.

Narcissa was like a hurricane of well bred hospitality. Within a few moments, she had all three of her guests seated comfortably in the small, richly furnished parlor, had sent her husband to dress, and had ordered tea from the house elf who appeared instantly when she snapped her fingers.

"So, tell me, Harry darling, how is your school year coming along?" Narcissa said.

"Um… fine. A bit strange, what with the Chimera heritage and all." Harry said uncomfortably. He glanced at Draco, unsure what to make of this friendly visage.

"Mother, I wanted to speak to father about the reality of my mate." Draco broke in, unwilling to allow his mother to small-talk them to the brink of death.

"Yes, but there is no need to be rude." Narcissa admonished.

"If I may…" Harry began. At Narcissa's nod, he continued. "Why are you and Mr. Malfoy living in Hogwarts castle?"

"Oh, do call him Lucius, darling. He is, after all, your father-in-law." Harry smiled nervously. He doubted he had the balls to call Lucius Malfoy by his first name to his face. "The answer to that, of course, is that the Dark Lord became a bit too interested in Draco's uniqueness. We felt it best to leave his service before we became ensnared in the nasty situation of having to choose between familial ties and personal opinions."

Harry blinked. "You betrayed Voldemort, then?"

"Why is it, Potter, that you feel the need to bandy that name about as though it had no power?" Lucius asked venomously. They turned to see him as impeccably dressed as he ever was.

"Names have power if you give them such." Phaedra said, reclining gracefully on her seat. "*Harry* is quite right to ignore the paranoia that most other wizards seem to feel." Lucius looked down his nose at her. Phaedra wasn't at all intimidated. "I believe you were the minion in charge of finding a way to acquire me for the madman's side, were you not?"

Lucius looked a bit sour. "Yes, though how you know of it—"

"I know many things of interest." Phaedra broke in. "Particularly since Dumbledore and his

minions aren't skilled at all at keeping thoughts in their heads. Your son will make an incredible mind reader, though. He is got every mind power, from mind reading to mind speech to empathy manipulation. Give me a few weeks, and he won't need this silly… Imperius curse, or whatever it's called… to control people. He'll be able to rely on the power of suggestion to do all his work for him."

"What does that mean?" Draco asked.

"Well, for example, there are many people around that don't like to do things that others tell them, just on principle. You will be able to get them to do it by suggesting it to their subconscious. They will actually believe that they thought of it themselves." Phaedra answered. "Not that you should actually do it much, but hypothetically it's possible."

"Could we please return to the more pressing issues to be discussed?" Lucius broke in acidly. He turned to Draco. "Why did you invent such a desolate waste of oxygen as your mate?"

"That was me, actually." Harry said. "I wanted to be completely beneath your notice."

"I understand your reluctance to show Lucius your true identity, darling, but I hope you didn't truly believe that we would turn our son's mate over to the Dark Lord." Narcissa said, cutting her husband off before Lucius could snap out an answer.

Harry glanced at Draco, unsure of what he should say. Draco picked up the conversation smoothly. "All the same, we weren't entirely sure that it would be safe, and so decided to err on the side of caution."

Lucius again started to say something derogatory, but Narcissa cut him off. "So, Harry, what do you plan to do after you graduate?"

Phaedra made a faint sound of dismay. "I'll be going now." She said to Narcissa. "I just needed to make sure my fledglings were going to be alright, but I see that you have the situation completely in hand."

"Yes, and thank you for bringing them by. I hadn't gotten a chance to ask for Draco to visit us." Narcissa said. Lucius glared daggers at Phaedra, but she smiled brilliantly back at him, making him forget for a moment why he disliked her so much.

That afternoon on the other side of the castle, Ron, Seamus, Dean, and Neville were having a long discussion about an important topic: girls.

"Hermione's clearly open to it, you know." Dean told Ron.

Ron turned red. "We aren't like that."

"Yet." Neville chimed in. "What did you get her for Christmas?"

"A book." Ron said, as though that were obvious.

"You should get her some lingerie." Seamus said lecherously. "I have a magazine that could help you get in the mood."

Ron went even redder as Dean and Neville snorted with laughter. "Shut it, wanker." He mumbled.

"Oi, Neville, anything happening with Ginny?" Dean added in. "She was giving you a look the other day at dinner."

"WHAT?" Ron shouted.

"Relax, mate." Seamus said with a grin. "Your little sister a big girl. And very nicely put together, if I do say so myself."

Ron lunged at him and began to beat him about the head with the first book that came to his hand. Neville, who had gone red faced, was now laughing with Dean as Ron chased Seamus around the dormitory. Ron made a flying leap and tackled his prey to the ground, a patch of floor which happened to be occupied by Seamus, who gave an ungainly squawk and knocked Neville over. The four boys tumbled into a heap of arms and legs and struggled to untangle themselves.

"Um… did you guys need to tell me something?"

The four froze. Ron shoved someone's arm out of the way to see Harry standing in the doorway with Draco Malfoy, Hermione smirking behind him, and a small crowd of staring Gryffindors who hadn't taken their eyes off of the Slytherin Prince.

"Uh. No, we just, uh, tripped and, uh…" Ron stammered as he struggled to his feet hastily.

"Uh huh." Harry said with a knowing smile.

"Right." Hermione said. "Anyway, we have an update on the Chimera Dramas that we were going to tell you, but—"

"But apparently you lot really need to get laid, so we'll just come back later, shall we?" Draco broke in.

"Shut up, Malfoy." Ron said darkly.

"Potter-Malfoy, actually." Hermione said.

There was a silence. Even the crowd behind them on the stairs stopped muttering. "What?" Neville asked.

"We, um… we just got married." Harry said.

There was another silence. "What?" Ron repeated.

"We just got married, Weasel—Ron." Draco said, changing the name when Harry sent him a narrowed glance.

"Congratulations!" Seamus said, using Dean's head to push to his feet. "Is there going to be a reception? If so, you really should get an open bar. I went to one where they didn't, and it was a rather boring party."

"Ow…" Dean said, rubbing his head. "Am I missing something? You got married to Draco Malfoy?"

"Yup." Harry said. "We're, um…" he hesitated before deciding on his story, "soul mates."

Dean and Seamus stared blankly at him. Neville, who had been let into the secret by accident several days before when he was innocently eavesdropping, smiled. "Congratulations, Harry. And, um… Draco as well."

"Wait, wait. I thought you were joking!" Seamus said, looking alarmed. "You married the ferret?"

"Watch who you call ferret, Finnegan." Draco snapped. "Yes, we got married. We no longer have a reason to keep our relationship secret, and Wea—Ron, I would like to speak to you and… and *Hermione*… in private."

Harry flashed him a smile for being polite to his best friends. Draco suddenly felt that the effort was entirely worth it.

"This is a joke, right?" Someone yelled from down the stairs. "You are doing this for the competition of prankster-in-chief, right?"

Draco turned and gave the Gryffindors a smirk before yanking Harry into him by his tie. After a long, incredibly explicit snog, he released his mate and gave the watchers another patented Malfoy smirk. Harry stumbled backwards and hit the doorframe, a dazed look on his face, before clearing his head with a good shake. There was another shocked silence, accompanied by a look of revulsion and shock (the boys) and pure delighted surprise (the girls). Hermione was grinning from ear-to-ear and covering Ron's eyes with her hands.

"Shoo." Draco said threateningly to the Gryffindors on the stairs. Harry rolled his eyes and pulled Draco into the dorm room by the waist of his trousers and slammed the door shut.

"But…But…" Seamus stuttered, pole axed. Dean looked equally as shocked.

"Um… I sort of overheard something Ron and Hermione were talking about the other day, so I kind of already knew." Neville said nervously. "Not that you were married, though, just that you were…erm… sleeping together." His voice became softer as he went. Dean and Seamus sent him wide-eyed looks of horror.

Draco sent an annoyed look at Ron and Hermione. "You two really aren't very good at keeping secrets, are you?" Harry flicked him hard on the shoulder.

Ron scowled. "Well, it's not like it was anyone untrustworthy. Neville's hardly going to go running around telling the world."

Hermione smacked Ron on the shoulder. "Polite, remember. We are trying to be polite."

"When… when did this happen?" Dean asked faintly.

"Well, we've been together since late November, remember when I collapsed? We realized it then, but we got married this morning because—"

"Harry." Draco broke in. "I really need to speak to Wea—Ron and Hermione."

"Oh, okay. I'll see you later then? Or are you coming back here?"

Draco was relieved that Harry didn't ask what he wanted to discuss with the other members of the Golden trio. "I'll come back here. Then we can go tell my friends about the joyous event."

Seamus snorted. "Need backup?" he asked. Draco gave him a haughty look before motioning to Ron and Hermione to follow him. To their surprise, he headed towards the hidden passageway in the wall of the dorm that eventually led to the hallway near the Prefect's bathroom.

"Anyway," Harry continued, ignoring the fact that his roommates were staring after the other three, "we got married this morning because we finally broke it to the Malfoys, and they were alright with it."

"Lucius Malfoy was alright with you marrying his son?" Dean asked incredulously. "Was he drunk?"

Meanwhile, in the passageway, Draco lit his wand with a muttered Lumos before leading the two Gryffindors towards a very narrow door that they had never noticed before. He opened it to reveal a small, circular room with a padded bench that ran around the edge of the room. Other than the bench and its Technicolor cushions, the room was completely empty, without windows or doors besides the one through which they had entered.

Hermione sat down calmly on the bench and looked expectantly at Draco. Ron, on the other hand, looked at Draco with the air of someone looking at a monkey with rabies and an ax. Draco sat down elegantly, once again adopting the aristocratic airs that had been bred into him.

"So, I wanted to discuss something rather important about Harry." Draco began. Ron and Hermione exchanged puzzled glances. "I want to know about his childhood."

The Gryffindors were completely silent for a moment. "You'll have to ask Harry that." Hermione said finally. "It isn't our place to tell about… that."

"I have already asked. He is quite reluctant to describe it. The only details I have are that his cousin broke his glasses and his aunt wouldn't buy him a new pair." Draco narrowed his eyes. "This is unacceptable. Harry is my mate, and if he has been mistreated, I need to know about it immediately."

"Why?" Ron said flatly. "If Harry doesn't want to tell you—"

"Harry is uncomfortable speaking of it. I wish to know without causing him distress, so I ask you." Draco answered, keeping a strong hand on his temper.

Ron and Hermione looked at one another, considering. After a very pregnant pause, Hermione spoke. "He wasn't so much physically abused as emotionally neglected. He was given to his aunt and uncle after his parents were murdered because his aunt had his mother's blood and therefore fulfilled the requirements for some ancient protection magic. His aunt and uncle neither wanted him nor liked him; they hate and are terrified by magic, and so tried to… smash it out of him."

Draco looked appalled. Hermione fell silent, and Ron picked up the thread. "From what my brothers and I have figured, he slept in the cupboard under the stairs until he started Hogwarts. Then they moved him to the small bedroom upstairs and fitted the room with bars on the windows and locks on the door. You know the summer of our second year, the one where we came to school in the flying car? Fred and George and I rescued him from his room in that car. They—the Dursleys—had put a cat flap on the door… I, well, I assume it was for food." Draco's face was slowly turning a brilliant red.

"Why did Dumbledore allow him to return to that cesspit?" Draco hissed, sounding a bit like the Slytherin serpent.

"The protection magic." Hermione said quietly. "Something about being able to call that house his home protected him from Voldemort."

Draco fell silent. "So he was never struck?"

"Well, not by his aunt and uncle, I don't think. He said something once about his cousin going 'Harry hunting,' but I don't know exactly what he meant. Oh, and his uncle's sister once set her bulldog on him. He told me it kept him in a tree for hours."

Draco was shaking with fury at this point. Hermione sent Ron a look of trepidation. "You realize he needs them, right?" Hermione asked cautiously. "He still needs that blood protection."

The blonde got to his feet very slowly. "Thank you for telling me." He said very stiffly before turning and striding back towards the Gryffindor common room.

"Did we just do a bad thing?" Ron asked. "We shouldn't be worried, should we?"

"I don't know." Hermione said softly. "But Draco was going to find out eventually."

They sat silently for a moment, neither of them looking at the other. "He really loves Harry, doesn't he?" Ron said. "I was still sort of waiting for them to laugh and yell 'gotcha' or something."

"Yeah, he really does." Hermione said contemplatively. "You could really see it at the wedding."

"WHAT?" Ron exclaimed, jumping to his feet. "You got to go to the wedding? Why wasn't I invited?"

"I ran into them on my way to the library. They were going to Dumbledore's office because he can legally officiate for them, so I came along. Mr. Malfoy looked ready to vomit, but Mrs. Malfoy looked positively delighted." Hermione shook her head. "The bad smell look that she had the last time we saw her was nowhere to be seen. It's shocking how freeing betraying Voldemort was for them."

"Why did—they betrayed You-Know-Who? Openly?" Ron asked, startled.

"Well, I don't know how openly it is, but they have gone into hiding in Hogwarts, so they have betrayed him."

"They are in hiding, yet they still went waltzing through the halls?"

"No, no, they had Phaedra with them. I didn't even see them until she dropped the illusion she was creating." Hermione sighed. "Oh, the questions I have for her. I just need to corner her somewhere, but she keeps disappearing before I have the chance. I want to ask her about the language, first off, and then about this Guardian of the Sun business, because no one seems to know what it is, and then—"

Hermione broke off suddenly as Ron finally stopped struggling with his adolescent insecurities and caught her lips with his.

Draco was seething with fury. As he stormed up the passageway towards the dorm, he struggled to control the shields that he had so carefully built earlier under Phaedra's careful eye, but he couldn't keep the strongest thoughts of the people in the adjacent hallways and rooms from entering his mind. He knew he was probably projecting his anger onto the students, something that Phaedra said was an unfortunate side effect of being able to manipulate emotion, but he couldn't bring himself to care. All he could think about was that he needed the find a way to

make the filthy muggles pay, and that he needed to make sure Harry was never, ever, neglected again.

He burst into the dorm to the sounds of laughter; Harry lay on his stomach on his old bed, watching Dean and Seamus playing exploding snap on the carpet beside the bed. They all looked up as Draco burst in. Dean and Seamus whipped out wands when they saw how furious the blonde was, but Harry thrust himself to his feet and grabbed his husband's arm.

"Draco?" Harry said worriedly. "Are you alright?"

"Am *I* alright?" Draco answered, sounding astonished. "Are *you* alright, that's what I need to know."

Harry looked at him blankly. "Of course I'm alright… why wouldn't I be?"

Dean and Seamus glanced uncomfortably at each other. They didn't exactly want to be in the middle of a lover's spat, if that was what this was. Draco seemed to suddenly realize that the two other Gryffindors were in the room. "Come on. We need to talk." He seized Harry's hand and began hauling the confused Gryffindor down the stairs and out of the common room.

Once he hit the hallway, Draco began to run, Harry following behind him, still completely mystified. Though the Slytherin seemed oblivious to the students that the pair passed, Harry noticed the gob smacked looks on the faces of all the Slytherin seventh years they passed. Pansy Parkinson actually dropped her books as they passed her near the charms corridor.

Finally they slid to a halt in front of the door to their rooms. "Draco…what's… going…on…" Harry panted, holding his side.

"Green Elixir." Draco spat at the wall, and then dragged Harry into the bedroom. Harry yanked his hand out of Draco's grip and slammed the door behind them.

"What happened?" Harry demanded, still out of breath. "Did someone die?"

"I don't want you to ever feel unwanted again."

Harry blinked at him. "Oh. Um… Okay."

"I love you, Harry."

"I…er… I love you, too. What's wrong?" Harry reached for his mate and drew him down to sit on the rug before the fireplace with him.

"You are wanted desperately and I never want you to think otherwise."

Harry shifted uncomfortably, enlightenment dawning. "They told you about the Dursleys, then."

He said quietly.

"Yes." Draco looked at him steadily, intensity written all over his face. Harry shifted again and looked at his hands, curled in his lap.

"They shouldn't have." Harry said finally. "I didn't want you to know. That is not a part of me that I want anyone to remember."

Draco shook his head. "It doesn't work that way, Harry. You can't give me bits and pieces; you have to give me the whole package. I *want* the whole package, shitty childhood and all." He leaned forward and kissed Harry's shoulder. "What I want to know is where they live."

Harry's head shot up. "Why?" He asked warily.

"So that I can go torture them, of course." Draco said, completely serious.

Harry stared at him for a moment before letting out an unwilling laugh. "They are horrible people, but they did take me in." He said. "You can't kill them."

"I never said anything about killing them." Draco said with a grin. "I'll just give them something to…teach them some respect."

Harry shook his head with a fond smile. "I love you." He whispered as he leaned forward and pressed his lips to Draco's. "Every bad thing that happened there was worth it if it meant being right here with you."

Draco couldn't help but smile. He grabbed Harry's chin and kissed him slowly, deeply, until the two forgot the world around them. Finally, they realized that the kiss wasn't enough, and Harry pushed Draco backwards and pulled off his tie. Draco unbuttoned Harry's robes and shirt as Harry returned the favor, and within moments, both were bare-chested and enfolded together in another long kiss.

Harry moved from Draco's lips down to the smooth, pale neck before him. He kissed and sucked a random pattern of love bites onto his mate, who was gasping and clutching at Harry's sable locks. Harry moved down to Draco's chest, marching a messy line of marks down the pale chest to one nipple, and then over to the other one. Draco wrapped his legs securely around Harry's torso and then moaned much louder than he expected as Harry sucked hard on the sensitive nubbin of flesh. Harry grinned up at him at the sound and abandoned Draco's nipples in favor of nosing around the planes and valleys of his abs and belly button.

Draco tossed his head back against the floor as Harry reached the edge of his trousers and licked a line just under them. He had two fistfuls of Harry's black hair that he couldn't help but twist in protest of the slow, teasing speed of kisses. Harry reached up and grabbed Draco's hands, carefully untangling them from his hair, and then pinned them to the ground beside Draco's hips. Giving Draco a smirk to rival any pureblood Malfoy's, Harry unbuttoned the trousers and

dragged the zipper down with his teeth before blowing a hot breath over the erection that sprang free from its outer confines. Draco shut his eyes and bit his lips against another groan as Harry began a series of very light, barely there kisses around Draco's still-covered groin.

Suddenly, it stopped. Draco's eyes flew open to see Harry barely an inch above his face. "Now, Mr. Potter-Malfoy. We need to discuss a certain incident in the classroom this morning. I hope that you come to realize that your behavior was… how should I put this?" Harry brought his mouth to Draco's ears, still not releasing his hold on Draco's hands. "I believe the word is… *distracting*. Shall I return the favor?"

Phaedra had returned to her room, satisfied that her jobs for the day had been taken care of: she had taught the fledgling Chimeras, she had cleared up the familial situation, she had given the sour puss a moment of peace, she had gotten the lovebirds properly hitched, and she had been arrogant and insolent to the meddling headmaster. *All in all*, she decided with a smile, *it has been a productive day*. She settled into an extremely comfortable plush armchair in her parlor and summoned a glass and a bottle of wine. She absentmindedly directed the wine into the glass before taking a sip and moving into a cross legged position to meditate. She needed to know more about this world, and the only efficient way to do so was to absorb information from those who lived in it—the students, teachers, and creatures of the castle.

This was how she had discovered the presence of the Malfoys in the castle. She had been searching for information on the Dark Lord, and had already gone through those students reading about the latest disasters in the newspaper and had been searching for the Death Eater spies that Dumbledore believed were in Hogwarts. Lucius Malfoy had been having a rather gruesome nightmare about a night out with Voldemort and the Death Eaters, and the confusing turbulence of emotion had caught Phaedra's attention.

Once her interest had been piqued, of course, she had dug carefully into his mind to discover more about the subject; after all, that was why she was here in this strange world. She had been rather delighted to see that Lucius was in the right moment of his life to consider accepting his sworn enemy as a member of his family. She had absently noted as she dug that all thoughts of Narcissa, his wife, had the emotional overtones of a teacup; Lucius didn't even have sexual implications towards the woman who had born him a child.

Phaedra took a deep, calming breath and allowed her strongest mind shields to drop. She grabbed a ready-made spell from her mind and spun it out to cover the school. The bluish spell searched for information on the Death Eaters, and was much more efficient than the previous spells that she had created, as this one was able to discern the difference between worries about the Dark Lord and actual information.

She had just caught hold of a juicy little mind in the dungeons when something small and magical veered into her magical vision. She broke her trance quickly and glanced around for the source of the new magic and realized that it was coming from the hallway.

Sighing, Phaedra spilled smoothly out of the chair and to the door. She drained her glass of wine

and banished it back to its place before composing a mysteriously amused look on her face and wrenching open the door.

To her momentary surprise, there was an owl sitting on the doorstep. She remembered belatedly that owls were the main method of communication and saw that the large, rather evil-looking creature had a small piece of parchment connected to its leg.

Taking the letter with aplomb, as though she had actually ever touched an owl before, Phaedra summoned a live mouse and tossed it into the corridor. The owl looked a bit surprised at this, but swooped to catch the tasty little treat quickly. Phaedra smiled at the look of delight on the owl's surprisingly expressive face, before apologizing silently to the unfortunate rodent.

She closed the door and returned to her comfortable position to open her letter.

I extend my greetings and wish to welcome you to this world.

TMR

"Hmm…" Phaedra said to herself after reading the note. "Am I supposed to know who TMR is?" She glanced at the envelope, which still had a small item in it, and upended it into her palm. On a fine silver chain hung a small pendant with the ancient symbol for the Guardians—three circles equally intertwined—with a small emerald at the center. It was a beautiful piece: simple and something Phaedra might have picked out herself.

She glanced back at the note and searched her memory for someone who had the initials TMR; she came up with almost fifteen people, but none of them of this world or, if they were, none over the age of twelve. *This is an adult.* Phaedra thought to herself. *And this is also a male. The handwriting and syntax definitely shows that.* She studied the note for a few moments longer before coming to the conclusion that there wasn't much else to find from it. The necklace, Phaedra discovered, had several charms on it. As she had never studied the type of magic used in the wizarding world, she had no idea what the charms did, but she could see the emotions related with the charms. One had a feeling of safety—*protection spell, probably*—another had the feeling of luck, and another had a feeling of happiness and another of adventure. Phaedra studied the necklace contemplatively.

"Well. I suppose I have two choices here. I could decide to put the necklace aside until I find out whether they can hide spells from empath powers, or I can go ahead and be the young, stupid girl that I am." She looked up and addressed the ginger cat that had appeared in her room yesterday. "What do you think?"

:Do it.: The cat told her. *:Might be interesting.:*

"Well, if something bad happens, like death or dismemberment, do be a dear and go get help, will you?" Phaedra told the cat conversationally.

:*Of course. I assume you would prefer I didn't go to the Twinkle Man:*

"You assume correctly. The headmaster may be a good wizard, but I still don't like him much." Phaedra shrugged. "Well, red roses for my funeral, if it comes to that, of course." She calmly slipped the chain over her head and settled the pendant between her breasts. She and the cat waited for a long moment, but nothing happened.

:*Well that was disappointing. I was hoping for something entertaining.*: Said the cat. *:Would you care to repeat that thing with the owl, since nothing exciting is happening?*:

Phaedra smiled indulgently and waved a hand, bringing another hapless rodent into her rooms. "Enjoy." She said before settling down to more meditation.

Remus Lupin was trying very hard not to sulk, but he found that the effort not to hadn't lessened since he was a teenager. He was disappointed and frankly insulted by the fact that this…this *girl* wouldn't give him the time of day. He was the entire reason she was even there, and yet she wouldn't even be polite.

He wished he could have asked her some questions about the Council. He didn't understand what they had done, putting all that information in his head. Lupin had asked the Council members, of course, but in their quest to appear as mysterious and powerful as possible, they had ignored his questions. It was disconcerting to look at things and suddenly have little thoughts and sayings about them in a language that he couldn't remember learning.

Lupin was on his way to the headmaster's office to answer a summons. He reached the gargoyle at the base of the stairs and gave the password (Coconut delights) and turned as he heard footsteps behind him. Snape strode imperiously passed him onto the stairs, once again mimicking a giant bat. Lupin suppressed the urge to roll his eyes at the childish cold shoulder and then turned again as he heard more footsteps. Minerva and Flitwick hurried up to the stairs as well.

"What's going on?" Lupin asked. "Has Albus called all the teachers in?"

"Yes." Minerva answered shortly. "He needs to inform us of something that may disrupt the students a bit."

She refused to say more, so Remus was forced to wait to find out with the rest of them. As they entered, he noticed that the prefects, excluding Draco, were also assembled, and that there was a reporter, batty enough to only be from the Quibbler, sitting on the edge of his seat. Dumbledore's office seemed to have expanded a bit to fit all the people in.

"Thank you for coming at this short notice." Dumbledore began. "Now that everyone is here, I would like to tell you all about an event that may or may not cause some trouble in the castle."

Everyone glanced at each other warily, except for the reporter, who appeared to be clutching the

chair in order to remain seated. "I am pleased to tell you all the Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy were married this morning in this very office."

There was complete silence in the room. The reporter's mouth hung open, revealing several gold and silver teeth.

"You *must* be joking!" Pansy Parkinson cried out. "Draco would *never* marry Potter! Is this a joke?"

"No, it isn't, I'm afraid." Dumbledore said with a smile.

"Albus, please tell me *you* didn't officiate this…this travesty." Severus spat out. "Please tell me you didn't marry two *children* this morning."

Dumbledore smiled mysteriously. "But…But why?" Ernie McMillan said, stunned. "They hate each other!"

"Actually, they have been engaged in a relationship for several weeks now." Hermione said calmly. "All the Gryffindors know."

"All the Gryffindors know? And they have managed to keep it a secret?" One of the Ravenclaw prefects said incredulously. "Did you curse them?"

"Well, they haven't known for long, obviously." Ron said cheerfully. "They've known for about twenty minutes now." The teachers and prefects stared at him uncomprehendingly, obviously wondering why Ron, who had hated Malfoy for ages, was completely blasé about his best friend and enemy.

"Albus? I thought there were too many complications for them to publicly declare a relationship." Remus said. "Has something happened?"

Dumbledore smiled his mysterious little smile before sending the teachers and prefects away with an order: "Do try to help the students accept this new development."

The next morning, at 5 a.m. sharp, Phaedra marched into the Chimeras' room and sighed loudly. The boys hadn't even made it to the bed last night. They were sprawled naked together in front of the hearth, looking peacefully beautiful, except that Draco seemed to have love bites from his ears to his… *Oh, my poor virgin eyes!* Phaedra thought dryly as she caught a glimpse of the end of the trail of red marks. She shook her head at the two lovebirds and went to her knees beside them.

"Time to wake up…" she sang softly above them. "You might want to wake up before I take matters into my own hands…" There was no response. "Alright, then. Don't be angry at me for waking you."

Phaedra sat up calmly and conjured a very large, white rat. She placed the squeaking creature directly on Harry's golden-skinned chest and backed away to conjure a pot of the magnificent substance they called coffee. The rat, unsure of its new environment, froze when Harry twitched slightly. However, when the rodent's platform stilled except for the rhythmic movement of breathing, the rat became more adventurous and began to explore its new surroundings.

Phaedra breathed in the fragrant aroma of her coffee and smiled when the screaming started.

After whipping her students into a frenzy of activity outside in the snow—Harry learning to control fire and Draco learning how to magically convince him not to—Phaedra settled herself onto a stump in the predawn light. After creating a bit of heat to keep herself warm, she set a small spell to tell her if her students got out of hand and folded herself into meditation position. This time, however, she searched outside of the castle, for sentient beings in the forest.

She almost immediately found a group of centaurs to the west of them. The herd was sleeping contentedly, secure in their knowledge of the future. Centaurs, Phaedra knew, didn't really dream, so there would be no information from them until they were awake. She searched further and found several grubby little beasts that would be happy to prey on humans that disturbed the forest. Moving past the barely-sentient creatures, she found a large nest of spiders that seemed to have a few thoughts. The leader of them, however, had many, many thoughts running through his elderly head. The creature was pondering the future, and considering the question of whether Hogwarts under new management would increase the supply of humans into his territory.

Ugh. Spiders are disgusting. Phaedra thought with a mental shudder as the spider remembered the way he had devoured his last human meal. *Still, he seems rather accepting of the fact that the castle will have new management. Perhaps he knows something of importance.* She dug carefully into the mind; non-human minds were very different from human minds, so it was very easy to make mistakes that could be deadly.

What she found was worth the effort of navigating the slimy corridors of the arachnid's mind.

For several weeks, through Christmas holidays and into the January, the Chimera kept at the routine. Every morning at five a.m. Draco and Harry met her in the entrance hall for their lessons. After the first three days of being rudely awakened by their beautiful teacher, the boys looked up a spell to wake them up in time. After the lesson, which generally lasted right up to the start of class, the boys went to regular school, at which they received weird stares and whispers. After a few failed attempts at physical attacks, the Slytherins, and some of the Gryffindors, settled for trying to make the Chimera couple's life miserable. To their dismay, they were unsuccessful, as Draco and Harry couldn't remember a time when they had ever been so happy even though they were dead tired all the time because of their schedule and the drain of using the magic that they had never before tapped into. After classes, they returned to Phaedra for another lesson, in the dungeons, usually, and then after dinner, they went back to Phaedra's rooms for a session in meditation, which, according to Phaedra, would "open worlds that even the most learned scholar has never imagined."

Only then, at about nine or so, were they allowed to return to their rooms. What schoolwork they hadn't managed to finish during free periods, which were usually spent frantically trying to get something done, had to be completed then. Only then could they sleep, or… not sleep. Draco and Harry spent every night curled around each other, feeling complete and safe and warm. Sometimes, on the days when they had a bit of extra energy after they made love, they talked a bit, getting to know the person whom they loved so much. The weekends had the same routine, only instead of class, the two boys met up with Hermione, Ron, Blaise Zambini, and occasionally Dean, Seamus, and Ginny to work on the school work that they hadn't finished. Though Ron was rather unhappy about the studying, he said nothing because he knew that this was the only time he was really going to have the chance to be with his best friend.

It wasn't until mid January that the routine changed. That Saturday morning, Phaedra had finished their morning lessons earlier than usual. For the first time since early December, the Chimera were able to go to breakfast in the Great Hall. When they arrived, most of the school was already inside, so when they opened the doors, most of the student body turned to stare at them. It was only then that the two realized that they hadn't changed into robes like they usually did after lessons. Harry blushed slightly as the entire school once again got an unimpeded view of his torso. After the first week of lessons, Phaedra had changed their uniforms from regular clothing without shoes to the Surugan outfits that they had worn for the spell. Phaedra continued to wear the black outfit, though it never seemed to get dirty or torn, no matter that Harry did actually manage to nick her with his dagger once while she was sparring with him.

Without thinking about it, Draco conjured two robes with a twitch of his fingers, using the same method that Phaedra had when she used to meet them in the entrance hall after the lessons. Harry took the offered garment, ignoring the shocked silence that had descended over the student body at the use of wand-less magic. Together the two strolled to the Gryffindor table and sat amongst Harry's group of friends. Blaise Zambini, smirking condescendingly at his shocked house mates, sauntered over to them and sat beside Ginny, flashing her a charming smile. Neville shifted uncomfortably, obviously holding back a protest, but was instantly reassured when Blaise gave Dean a lascivious wink.

"The slave driver getting tired?" Ron asked Harry, passing him the syrup.

"Phaedra? Tired? I don't think it's possible. The woman is an incredible sorceress, really. She can draw power from *anything*. Today she pulled power out of a rock." Harry answered, shaking his head and pouring the syrup over his pancakes.

"From a rock? There is power in a rock?" Hermione asked. "What kind of power? How do you access it? Can you use it for anything, or is it a certain type of—"

"Granger, you are giving me a headache." Draco broke in. "And we know nothing about the power in the rock. We can see it, but we can't touch it yet."

"So, why are you guys free so early? Doesn't she usually go a bit longer on the weekends?" Seamus asked conversationally.

"No idea." Harry answered after swallowing a bite of bacon. "She just gave us her little 'be gone, ignorant pests' look and we left. We learned pretty quickly that questions about non-spell or -fighting related things are never answered."

Draco noticed a bit of syrup on Harry's finger and grabbed it as Harry reached for his pumpkin juice. Sucking the digit into his mouth, he cleaned the finger diligently with his tongue, giving the finger a nip as he let it slide from his grip. Draco quickly stifled his smile at the glazed look on Harry's face. He knew that the Gryffindor was remembering the previous night, when something substantially larger had been in Draco's warm, talented mouth.

There were twin sighs from across the table. Draco looked up to see Hermione giving him the strangest look. "What?" Draco asked warily.

Hermione and Ginny glanced at each other. "You two are so *sweet*!" they said together.

The straight boys at the table groaned, Blaise grinned, Harry turned red, and Draco turned up his nose.

"We are *not* cute." Draco said, spitting out the last word. "We are mates, and this sort of behavior is essential to our health and general well being."

"Hey, so when are you two going to have a baby?" Seamus suddenly asked.

There was a stunned silence. "Ex…excuse me?" Harry asked finally, staring at the other boy along with the rest of the table, and all the other nearby students who had overheard.

"Well, you know, marriage is usually followed by a family, so I was just asking when you were planning to pop one out. Who's going to play mommy, by the way?"

Draco and Harry stared at each other silently, obviously seeing each other in a different light.

"Draco."

"Harry."

They looked at each other. "No way am I getting stretch marks." Draco said firmly.

"You are the logical choice." Harry countered. "You don't have an evil wizard out to get you specifically."

"Yeah, I do, actually. The world knows we are soul mates now, so you can bet he's out to get me." Draco countered.

"Are you saying your beauty is more precious than mine?" Harry demanded. "Because I assure

you, you'd be the loser in that one."

"And if I got stretch marks—"

"You'd still be the most beautiful person I've ever seen." Harry said flatly.

"Awww…" Hermione and Ginny couldn't hold it in any longer. Harry and Draco sent them fierce glares.

"This is a serious question." Draco told them flatly. "It is *not* cute."

"Yes, it is." Ginny said with a wistful grin.

"It is absolutely adorable. And it's not actually a serious question, because you don't have a choice which of you bears the child." Hermione added.

There was another silence. "What?" Neville asked.

"Well, whichever body happens to be the most likely bearing ground at the moment of conception carries the baby. You really don't have a choice. Oh, and did you know Chimera carry children for ten months?"

"Hermione, you really need to get out more." Dean said. "I appreciate that intelligence when you can help with homework, but your fount of knowledge is, frankly, worrying."

Seamus nodded his agreement. "Question: if it lasts ten months, then it logically takes longer to show, right?"

"Right." Hermione said. Everyone waited for Seamus to finish his thought.

"So, if it takes longer to show and guys don't have… erm… monthly joys to clue them in, it stands to reason that it takes a while for them to realize they are knocked up, right?"

Draco stood up abruptly.

"Where are you going?" Harry asked, startled.

"Would Madam Pomfrey be able to test for a Chimeric pregnancy?" Draco asked Hermione.

"I don't know." She admitted. "Chimera pregnancies aren't well explained, they just say that Chimera carry children much more gracefully, whatever that means."

"Madam Pomfrey wouldn't be able to help you."

Draco turned his head to see that Phaedra had popped up once again. The students immediately

started whispering again. Phaedra was a tantalizing mystery to the school; almost no one knew anything about her, so the rumors were spectacularly entertaining. Phaedra smiled at a group of staring Hufflepuffs before sauntering over to the Gryffindor table.

"Chimera have very few signs of pregnancy, and it can't be recognized by another person, or even the mother, until a certain amount of time has passed." Phaedra said, grinning mischievously at Draco. "But the mother of the children is easily predicted in this pairing."

Harry exchanged glances with Draco. "Well, who is it, then?" Ron broke in, as no one else seemed to want to speak.

"The one that doesn't have a direct connection to a madman, of course." Phaedra said. "Such a negative connection could be detrimental to the baby's health."

Draco sat down hard, looking terrified. "But…how…how exactly…" He couldn't finish.

Phaedra grinned and took pity on him. "Don't worry, blondie, pregnancy won't be that bad. No labor, for one. No swollen ankles, either, which I hear are very irritating. You get more powerful, too."

"No labor?" Neville repeated. "But then, how does the baby…"

"It teleports, obviously." Phaedra said calmly.

"What?" the entire table said in unison.

"Well, only if both parents are Chimera, of course. It… well, the mother guides the baby, and you'll have the labor pains to tell you when it's going to happen, but its much shorter and less agonizing than mortal labor. No exit holes."

"Ugh." Ron shuddered, along with the rest of the boys. Ginny and Hermione gave them annoyed looks.

"You never really think that *that* is exactly what happens to us." Hermione said.

"Yes," Ginny agreed, "I think wizards should have to go through the same pain as we witches. Perhaps we should invent a spell?" She and Hermione exchanged speculative looks.

Phaedra laughed at the looks of horror on the boys' faces before standing up and walking to the middle isle of the Great Hall.

Silence fell slowly as people realized that Phaedra was waiting. Dumbledore looked up at her and held his hands up for complete quiet.

Once you could hear a single pin drop on the Great Hall floor, Phaedra spoke.

"All those who want to help defeat Voldemort should listen up." There was an almost silent gasp of shock that ran throughout the hall. Phaedra waited until the hall was again deathly quiet before dropping her bomb.

"I know how to kill the monster. And I want him to know it, too."

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Chapter: 15

Okay. Those reviewers who are afraid of the mpreg thing, don't worry, I am not going to go very far into that subject, and I agree that both Draco and Harry are adorable pregnant. I chose Draco because I felt that the baby would realistically be safer with Draco than with Harry, what with Harry's propensity for getting injured. Anyway, I'll get to the story now.

And just a little shout out to reviewer HecateDeMort: your one word reviews make me v. happy. To everyone who reads and doesn't review, follow his/her example. This is the review:

"great"

This is awesome; very short and sweet. Every little one motivates me!

Chapter the Fifteenth

The Great Hall was in compete chaos. The non-Death-Eater-supporting students were yelling frantically at each other, everyone trying to be heard over the racket, while those students who had thrown their lots in with the dark side were communing with each other in furious whispers. Phaedra stood in the middle of it all, smiling with delight at the drama she had created before giving the teachers a 'come-hither' look and walking out of the Hall.

:*Get your beautiful behinds to my rooms. Bring the Order and those friends you trust. Tell the sour one that he will be safe from prying eyes.:* Harry and Draco looked up as they recognized Phaedra's mind voice.

:We're on our way.: Draco answered for the both of them. As Phaedra had predicted, his mental powers exceed those of Harry's, so Draco tended to broadcast Harry's thoughts for him.

"Come on." Harry said to the table of friends. "Let's go find out what's going on." He turned and briskly walked to the teacher's table. "Come on, she's going to her rooms. Professor Snape? She's covering you so that you can come straight with the rest of the teachers."

Snape raised an eyebrow in silent question.

"She's spinning a complicated mind illusion that works in conjunction with the subconscious of those who aren't already aware of your true allegiances to fool everyone into believing that you are exactly where they most expect you to be." Harry clarified.

Snape blinked. "What does that mean?" Remus asked.

"Everyone thinks that you are somewhere you are supposed to be, even if they don't know where that is." Harry explained patiently. "It's a very complex sort of spell. Draco's been practicing it."

Harry and Draco led the group of Anti-Voldemort activists towards the dungeons. Dumbledore trailed in the group, looking rather startled at the turn of events that had taken him out of the role of 'all knowing mentor-man.' Several members of the DA that hadn't been a part of the Gryffindor's table joined the group as well, recognizing that they would find the juicy stuff wherever Harry was.

Phaedra's door was waiting open when the group arrived there. "Find a seat and wait until I'm finished talking to ask your questions." She said imperiously as they entered. Lucius and Narcissa were already seated, both dressed impeccably as to show their breeding to the lesser beings of the world.

Phaedra stood before the hearth, the fire both illuminating and throwing her face into shadows. The group of wizards crowded into the room, which seemed to be expanding slowly to accommodate more people. Harry and Draco made their way towards their teacher and sat on either side of her in classic Surugan student position, waiting patiently for her to begin.

When finally the group was quiet, Phaedra flicked her fingers and the door slammed shut. A line of fire appeared around the base of the floor of her rooms, which Draco and Harry recognized as a spell to block anyone outside of the room from eavesdropping on the conversation.

"The simplest solution is often the most effective." Phaedra said into the silence. "But in this case, the enemy is intelligent, and realizes that. Voldemort has been protecting himself from the simplest solutions since he began to accumulate power, so that enemies would have to attack him with convoluted plans and tactics. Of course, convoluted plans have a tendency not to go well, so this protection is surprisingly strong.

"Not many people know much about Suruga." The Order members glanced at each other, unsure of what was going on. Draco and Harry already knew that Phaedra was going somewhere with this little tangent, so they kept silent. "They don't know, for example, that a Surugan with even a drop of magic in them has protections layered on them before they are even out of the womb. As a Chimera, I have had more than anyone I have ever met before. A Chimera Guardian is one of the most valuable things on the planet. A small vial of blood used in the correct manner can bring people back from the dead, or cure vampirism, or give someone the strength of a god. As a result, many of my protections have to do with being kidnapped by magic."

Phaedra stretched out a closed fist and then opened it to reveal a silver necklace with an emerald in the center.

"That's a portkey!" Dumbledore exclaimed. "Where did you get that?"

Phaedra smiled. "I received it several days ago by owl. It's from a TMR. Would that happen to be anyone you know?"

The Order and the students looked at each other blankly. "There's a Theodore Martin Rowling in the sixth year." Dean said slowly. "But somehow I don't think that's who you are talking about."

"Tom Marvolo Riddle." Harry supplied quietly.

Phaedra smiled at him. "Voldemort's original name, yes. This was sent to take me to Voldemort. It's surprisingly unoriginal, but I suppose it could have been possible if I didn't have the protective spells. It tried to remove me from my rooms last night at midnight. I imagine Voldemort was rather surprised to find that it didn't."

"How would he have known whether you had put it on or not?" Hermione asked. "Logically, you would have been too suspicious to put it on."

"Voldemort has spies in Hogwarts. They saw me wearing it when I walked into McGonagall's class the other day. I caught them gloating over it."

"How? Surely they weren't talking about it." Severus said.

"No, no, I was doing a bit of reconnaissance." Phaedra said with a wicked little smile.

"Spying on their thoughts, you mean." Draco said from the ground. "What you told me was against all ethics, right?"

"Exactly!" Phaedra said. "But I am an unethical brat, so it doesn't matter."

"How does this help us?" Ron interrupted. "We have a portkey that has already been used, so what does that do for us?"

"One of the most irritatingly secret things about Voldemort is his location. I don't think it is even located all the way in this realm of existence, so crashing the gates in a bit of problem."

"But Voldemort would have made the portkey destination untraceable. There are several dark spells that can hide destination, and none of them have a counter." Dumbledore said, once again trying to enter his role of all-knowing leader.

Phaedra immediately shot him down. "You may not be able to trace it, but I can. And what's

more, so can Harry and Draco beacuse of the Chimeric instincts. Which brings me to my next point. I have figured out the way to kill Lord Voldemort."

The room exploded in a roar of excitement. Those students that hadn't been privy to the secret of Harry and Draco's bloodlines were completely confused and were demanding explanation, while those who had been were yelling for the plans.

Phaedra nudged Harry with her foot. He glanced up at his teacher and caught her annoyed glance so, very calmly, got to his feet and froze all of the Order's voices. Draco had to quickly stifle his snort at the absolutely flabbergasted looks on the people's faces as they couldn't force a sound out.

"Thank you. Now, if you would please stop interrupting, all your questions will be answered." Draco snorted in disbelief. Phaedra grinned at him. "Well, some of your questions will be answered, anyway."

Harry released their voices. "Please go on." Hermione said eagerly, eyes shining in anticipation.

Phaedra smiled. "Now, to return to my original statement, Voldemort has protected himself from the simpler ways to kill someone. The reason he did not die sixteen years ago is because he has fundamentally split his body and soul in such a way as to circumvent true death. Think of the soul as a layer of skin for a moment. It overlays every part of the body, it moves when the body moves, and it can be felt by the person and others. Voldemort's soul, on the other hand, is like a shadow in the evening. It is separate from the body, though still connected at certain points."

"How?" Dumbledore couldn't help but interject. "Where does he get the energy to maintain that?"

Phaedra gave him a dirty look. "Blood magic, of course. Any spilling of blood releases magic because of blood's basic nature, so all he would have had to do was to go and sit near St. Mungo's or a Muggle emergency room every day and he could have gotten a enough to last a while. However, he didn't have time to go and dawdle about hospitals, and it would look rather suspicious if he did, so the Death Eaters spilled the necessary blood. That dark mark he uses to contact them? It is also a link. He can draw the power from the blood through that link, so even if he isn't at the site, he can still get the power."

"What about the excess?" Hermione piped up, wincing as she realized she had just interrupted.

Surprisingly, Phaedra answered without a glare of any kind. "He poured the extra power into vessels that he could then use to bolster his magic. For spells that would require more power than he had, or if he exhausted himself, he could draw on these reserves. It is how he gathered such a huge following; he seemed to be inhumanly powerful." She looked down at Harry. "The only reason Harry had a chance against all that bottled up power was because his mother sacrificed herself. Blood magic collected unwillingly is negated by a willing sacrifice of blood. Lily was a very well read woman; she bet on this fact when she realized they couldn't outrun Voldemort.

She cut her own arm before she ran to the crib, just in case blood would be needed."

Harry's breath hitched slightly. Draco reached his mind out and gently caressed his mate's, trying to help him control his emotions.

"But I digress." Phaedra continued. "The rebounded curse splintered that bond between his body and soul and his defenses that he had spent so much time to perfect kicked in. As long as a part of his body survived intact, the soul could remain grounded to the early plain rather than floating into the afterlife. The defensive spells collected enough blood to trick the soul into believing itself still attached and stored the vial in between realms, a place that Muggles call Purgatory or Limbo. When Voldemort got a new body with that little spell in the graveyard, he used the stored blood as a basis, so now we are back in the same situation we were in before he came to kill the Potters, except, of course, for Harry." She smiled down at him fondly.

"I have a part of his soul." Harry stated. Phaedra smiled proudly at him for figuring that out.

"Exactly. That's why even Occulumency couldn't completely block him out. Anyway, the plan. Draco and Harry and I can find the place, but only I have the ability to just pop in there as though it were an extension of the road and I cannot kill Voldemort. That is what the rest of you are here for. I can open a portal that will make you all able to enter it, but portals can't be held open for very long, so I have designed a spell that will make you all be like… the piece of metal that braces a heavy door open. When we enter, the Order and company will be clearing a path for our brave duo to get to Voldemort."

"Duo?" Dumbledore burst out. "The prophecy says only Harry can kill Voldemort."

Phaedra turned an exasperated look on him. "Fate has a way of taking care of itself."

"The mating." Hermione, predictably, put it together immediately. "Chimera matings are said to be fate."

Phaedra flashed her another delighted smile. "I like the smart one." She proclaimed. Draco rolled his eyes, but Harry grinned up at his teacher. He wasn't surprised.

"The prophecy states that—" Dumbledore began.

"And we always listen to the insane ramblings of a half mad old woman to tell us how to fight a war." Phaedra snapped. "It may have been a true prophecy, but that doesn't mean it is infallible or complete."

Severus Snape almost swallowed his tongue at the look on Albus Dumbledore's face.

The next morning went as usual, except that Phaedra seemed to be concentrating very particularly on training Harry's physical skills and on Draco's meditation. They finally returned to the castle just moments before class started and used a bit of magic to allow themselves to run

faster than humanly possible to arrive, rosy cheeked and exhilarated, to Potions class on time. It was a normal class, except for one tiny little fact.

Draco had a little payback coming to him.

Harry started out slow: he projected an image of himself winking lasciviously into Draco's mind. Draco turned slightly in his seat, sending him a puzzled look, but apparently decided that it had been an accident and went back to taking notes.

Harry then sent an image of himself ripping open Draco's belt buckle and yanking feverishly at the zipper of his trousers. Draco started slightly and gave Harry another confused look. Harry bit back a smile and sent an image of a very nude Harry with a very happy hard-on and a vial of coconut oil in his hand.

Draco choked and dropped his quill. Harry clenched his teeth together to hold in laughter. "Mister Malfoy, are you alright?" Snape asked, hoping that his godson wasn't going to collapse like his delinquent mate.

"Y-yes sir." Draco said firmly. Snape gave him a strange look but went back to lecturing.

Harry promptly sent an image of Draco flat on his back with Harry looking up at him as he engulfed Draco's erection in his hot, wet mouth.

Draco shifted rather violently as a rather monstrous wave of lust tried to bowl him over. He sent a frantic glance at Harry, who gave him a completely innocent look and sent him an image of Draco preparing himself with the bottle of coconut oil and two long fingers.

Draco shot out of his seat. "May I be excused?" He asked Snape, panic clear in his voice.

Snape gave him a startled look before glancing at Harry. Harry, of course, looked as confused as everyone else and sent Draco the image of him thrusting slowly into Draco's body.

"Please!" Draco gasped out. Snape nodded hurriedly as Draco began turning a strange red color that was somewhat familiar.

Draco sprinted out of the classroom like the hounds of hell were at his heels and headed for the nearest boy's lavatory with the help of that speed spell that Phaedra had taught them. *:Harry, you horrible brat, you should be coated in honey and tied to an ant bed:* He sent as he yanked open his straining trousers inside the double-locked lavatory.

Harry had to pinch himself hard to keep from laughing out loud. Hermione elbowed him and sent him a knowing grin. Ron looked mystified.

"Mate, shouldn't you go check up on Malfoy?" Ron hissed at his friend. "He didn't look so good."

"Oh, he'll be fine." Harry said carelessly, building up the strongest mind shields against Draco that he could. He really didn't want this favor returned to him at the moment.

Harry didn't see his mate again until lunch. Harry had already sat down and begun eating when Draco walked in.

"Hello, lover." Draco said, giving Harry a look that promised retribution.

"Oh, hey, Draco. Are you feeling better?" Ron asked helpfully. Draco sent him a disbelieving look.

"Granger, perhaps you two shouldn't get together. The children might not inherit your brains, and where would that leave the world?" Harry smacked Draco's shoulder but soothed the 'hurt' with a kiss on his smooth, pale neck.

"Shut it, Malfoy." Ron snapped back.

Draco smirked and opened his mouth to say something but was interrupted by a melodic voice behind him. "Boys, be nice." They all turned to see Phaedra pacing gracefully up to them. "I heard someone has some questions, and I am feeling generous today."

Hermione's head shot up. "That means me, right?" She asked excitedly. Phaedra cocked her head expectantly. "Oh, um… I wish I had prepared for this… Okay. Tell me about this Council. You said it was comprised of religious zealots and outcasts, right?"

"Ugh, yes. The Council was created after a prophecy was made several thousand of your years ago. According to this "Fire and Ice" prophecy, or so it is dubbed, a child from this realm will be instrumental in saving the world, but the brat will be born only if the side of Light can make significant triumphs here. The prophet was frankly insane, but very charismatic, and so managed to build a bit of a following. This group broke many laws of magic to cross realms and establish a stronghold at the very edge of where this reality meets the Surugan reality. To make a very long story shorter, the Council has had there little paws in every major fight between good and evil since they got here. Unfortunately, they aren't the best qualified for the job, and we at home in Suruga have seen many a fight go to the side of Dark because of their interference at the wrong moment. The Holocaust, for example, occurred because they recognized a great leader in that silly Austrian man and tried to motivate him to step in and bring the country back to prosperity. The mind-mages that they sent to do this were… well, they drove the man insane, and the rest is history."

Hermione was listening eagerly, having pulled out a quill and parchment with which to take extensive notes.

"Basically, they have a great deal of information about the occult happenings in this realm because they have been tracking them for a few thousand years, so they are a pretty good source

of knowledge if you need it." Phaedra finished. She summoned a grape from the bowl of fruit on the table.

"Okay. Next question. The only readings about Chimera that I have found are very vague. Could I ask you some questions to clarify some of these issues?" Hermione had settled down to a long, involved interview. Amazingly, almost everyone above the fourth year that was in the Great Hall was silent, listening eagerly. Phaedra inclined her head as she popped another grape into her mouth.

"Mates are said to be similar to Veela mates in that they find each other through all-consuming lust, but it also says they are much more dependent on each other." Hermione said in teacher-mode.

"A Chimera is always faithful to their mate. If the mate is human, he or she isn't tied as closely, but since the lust is so strong between mates, even humans tend not to stray. If a Chimera's mate is killed, the Chimera generally dies as well. This is because the two have a sort of soul bond. When the bond is broken with the death, the power that connected the two backlashes onto the surviving person. The sheer force of the hit pretty much fries them completely. There have been two incidents where a Chimera did survive the death of their mate, but they almost immediately committed suicide because of the agony of the loss. In Suruga, it would be considered a crime to force such a heartbroken creature to live." Phaedra smiled sadly. "A Chimera with a dead mate is not a pretty picture."

Harry couldn't help but glance at Draco. Draco was looking determinedly downward. Harry slipped his hand into Draco's lap to entwine with the blonde's fingers.

"Besides death, they are also very dependent because a pair cannot be separated for long periods of time without very bad results. Sometimes they just go mad, but sometimes they go mad and get extremely violent. A Chimera in a killing rage is… probably the scariest thing you could ever see." She reached for Harry's goblet of pumpkin juice. "Pregnancy shortens the amount of time the pair can spend apart. The pregnant partner becomes rather *needy* in the sex department and generally tires the father partner out constantly, which means that both of their food consumptions go up dramatically." The students began examining both Chimera's waistlines surreptitiously.

"Hey!" Harry said as Seamus poked at him brazenly. "I am *not* the mother figure in this relationship!"

"Oh, yes, you are!" Draco answered. "I refuse to be that needy."

Ron rolled his eyes. "Malfoy, as you are the girly one in the relationship, I would say that that makes Harry the father."

"I am *not* the girly one!" Draco said, offended.

"Boys. I am trying to interview someone here." Hermione snapped irritably as she realized how long this little cat-fight could go on.

Phaedra grinned at her. "You should write a book. There isn't enough scary information here about Suruga."

Hermione perked up. "That would take a lot of interview time."

"Sweetie, if we survive this war, you can have all the interview time you want before I go home. On one condition, of course."

"What's that?" Hermione asked, excited about the possibilities.

Phaedra leaned in and whispered something in her ear that made her turn bright red. "I can't believe you told me that." Hermione said to Phaedra. "Now I will never be able to look at him without blushing."

"Embrace the gritty facts of life." Phaedra said before vanishing.

Sorry about the fact that it has taken me so long to update… I will try not to be such a slacker, but I am in the process of getting college applications together, and I am all stressed and worried and in pain because I get the same question from everyone I meet: "So, where are you going to college?" I don't know where I'm going to college! I don't even have a list of colleges I want to apply to yet! Every time I hear that question I have to resist the urge to throw something…anyway, getting reviews releases endorphins, so...

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Chapter: 16

It's only been like a week since update, right? Who da bomb! Wow, I can't believe I just wrote that. Psychiatric help might become necessary very soon...

An imaginary cookie to the several reviewers who looked at my profile. HecatedeMort, we may be soul mates. I adore you.

Anyway, the usual author's plead to review the story.

Chapter the Sixteenth

"So…" Ron began after handing Hermione a chocolate frog. The group of Gryffindors, plus an arrogant and beautiful Slytherin, was sprawled in the Gryffindor seventh year boy's dormitory.

"What is this condition of which the mysterious one spoke?"

Everyone looked up expectantly. Draco stopped finger-combing Harry's rebellious locks in favor of listening.

"I don't know what you mean." Hermione said calmly as she unwrapped the chocolate.

"Don't play coy, Granger." Draco drawled from his comfortable position with Harry reclining between his legs.

"Coy?" Hermione asked innocently. "I am quite sure I have never played coy in my life."

"Oh, come on, 'Mione." Ron said with a wheedling grin. "You can tell us."

Hermione sat up with a completely serious face. "Really? And you all won't tell anyone?"

Everyone nodded eagerly, sitting forward in anticipation. Dean stopped debating with Neville over which subject was the worst, History of Magic or Divination.

Hermione took a deep breath and spoke in a low, wary voice. "Phaedra wants me to dance naked under the full moon with her and Narcissa Malfoy so that she can cure Severus Snape of his heartbreak and emotional scars and lure him into Lucius Malfoy's bed."

There was complete silence for a moment before the boys burst out laughing. "Well, at least you came up with an interesting lie." Seamus managed to get out between sobs of laughter.

"You know we'll get it out of you eventually." Harry said, grinning widely.

Hermione smiled a secretive smile and said nothing. Draco dismissed the sudden suspicion that crept into his mind. *Uncle Severus isn't pretty enough to interest Father, even if he was gay. Which he isn't, obviously, as he had me without argument about the gender of the other parent*. He thought to himself as he accepted the absurdity of Hermione's statement.

Later that night, Draco and Harry lay in a post-coital stupor after a particularly enthusiastic romp.

"Harry?" Draco began, unsure of how to continue.

"Hmm?" Harry said sleepily.

"Did…did you ever consider…me? Before the whole Chimera thing?"

Harry turned over onto his stomach and propped himself up on his elbows. "You mean did I consider sleeping with you, or did I consider being married to you? Because I can honestly tell you, I never thought the idea of marriage would ever become an issue for us."

Draco smiled slightly. "Yeah, I would probably have beaten you up if you had ever mentioned anything like that. No, I meant this." He waved in the general direction of Harry's genitals.

"Not seriously. I had always said you were hot, just that you were an obnoxious rich kid." Harry said with a grin before leaning over and planting a soft kiss on Draco's shoulder.

"I thought about it." Draco said very quietly. "I used to have the occasional dream about you when I was younger. You would be smiling at me and telling me you loved me."

Harry was silent for a moment. "I never would have guessed that." He answered. Silence reigned again as both were lost in memories of the wasted time they'd spent fighting. Suddenly Harry remembered what Draco had said. "Wait, wait! What is this about *you* beating *me* up? Everyone knows I could take you, prissy boy!"

"You could not!" Draco retorted, shoving his mate's shoulder. "You would be much too distracted staring at my arse!"

"Like hell! It's you who can't keep your hands off my arse! I can restrain myself when it's not an appropriate time, like, say *Potions class*." He sent his mate a significant look. Draco smirked at him.

"Yeah, but your face was priceless when you came."

Harry shoved Draco flat and straddled his hips. "Oh, was it now? Could you show me just what that looked like?"

"I don't think you're up to the job." Draco said, not struggling at all as Harry pinned his arms to the bed. He shivered as Harry raked his tongue across the base of his throat.

"That sounds like a challenge. You're not being very smart if you challenge a Gryffindor." Draco sucked in his breath as Harry shifted so that their erections rubbed lightly together.

"We Slytherins are always a crafty bunch." Draco said breathlessly. Harry was getting really good at wringing response from every single inch of his skin. Draco hadn't even realized the existence of erogenous zones in several of Harry's favorite places, but he thanked the gods that Harry knew about them.

"You think too much." Harry mumbled around a mouthful of Malfoy. "Let's see if I can remedy that a bit."

Harry was true to his word. The only things Draco thought for most of the night were single words like "more" and "faster."

When they both fell into an exhausted sleep barely an hour before they had to rise for their

lessons with Phaedra, Harry muttered softly, "I love you, Draco."

And Draco smiled.

Fred and George Weasley liked to think of themselves as good, strong, productive members of society. They did their part in the grand scheme of things and they pitched in for the side of light. However, sometimes they really questioned the intelligence of the group with whom they had sided.

"We have to *what*?" Fred asked, looking perplexed.

"Make a vat of *Amortentia* and then dilute it with essence of moonbeam." George repeated, reading from the letter that had just arrived by owl.

"Won't that completely negate the power of the potion?" Fred asked, thinking back to his days as a potions student. The twins had been unusually diligent in that class because it had been extremely useful in developing many of their products.

"I think so." George replied. "She also sent some hair to pop in with the moonbeam." He inspected it closely. "I wonder whose it is."

Fred grinned evilly. "Shall we find out?" His twin gave him an identical smirk and pulled out a wand.

"*Originae penultima*." Slowly, an image formed out of smoke that wafted up from the hair in the vial.

"*Snape*?" The twins exclaimed together before exchanging disbelieving looks.

"I'm not sure I even want to know." Fred said.

"Which is, of course, most unusual for us." George added. "Not to mention a complete lie."

"Might be interesting to see the result of this one."

"I certainly agree." George reached for an advanced Potions book. "Let's get started."

Lucius Malfoy was seriously considering taking his chances with Voldemort. Anything had to be better than being locked in this minuscule apartment in the school. It wasn't that the room wasn't up to his standards—which was true, as a matter of fact, as the school house elves did a horrendous job of cleaning—it was that he was staying in a tiny apartment in the school *with Narcissa Malfoy*. Malfoys did not marry for love, Draco being an unusual exception. This meant, of course, that the gigantic size of Malfoy Manor was absolutely essential for the continuation of the Malfoy line. Lucius rarely saw Narcissa at any time other than dinner and the occasional lunch. They went to high society parties together, and event like the Quidditch world cup, but

that was the extent of their interactions.

And they both liked it that way. Neither of them wanted any more interaction. This enforced cohabitation was hell on earth for the well-bred pair.

Narcissa had the luxury of being able to floo to certain secure shopping centers that the Malfoy family owned and therefore could access safely. Lucius had nothing to do and no where to go to kill time. Draco and his…son-in-law…had classes, Severus had to teach all the time, none of the other teachers was worthy of his time and attention, and Phaedra, besides being practically an unplottable building, was rather disturbing. None of the students could hope to capture his attention.

Lucius finally gave up the pretense of reading his book and yanked on his cloak. Screw Dumbledore's orders, he was going for a long walk in the Forbidden Forest. Narcissa looked up from her letter-writing and fixed an imperious eye on her husband.

"Lucius, we are not permitted to wander. Our refuge here depends on our obedience, and I would prefer not to be thrown to torture and death because of your restlessness." Narcissa snapped, obviously expecting to be obeyed instantly.

Lucius, however, was tired of being ordered around. "I wish you a pleasant day." He said rather flatly as he kept control of his anger. He walked precisely out of the room. Narcissa rolled her eyes with exasperation.

"Honestly, the sexual tension in that man could really be a problem for his health." Narcissa started as the voice came from behind her. She turned to see Phaedra examining a painting on the wall.

"I beg your pardon?" Narcissa said with a well born sneer.

"Lucius. He is completely homosexual, and he hasn't gotten any in far too long. He needs a little push." Phaedra turned and fixed her brilliantly violet eyes of Narcissa's pale blue ones. "Are you interested in being of service?"

Narcissa considered the rather blunt proposal for a moment. "What will this affect in my life?"

Phaedra smiled. "You can really tell the difference between a Gryffindor and a Slytherin, can't you?" She shook her head ruefully. "This will not affect you more than you would like it to. You will always be Lady Malfoy, and nothing Lucius can do will alter that unless you should do something astonishingly out of character. The only thing that will change is that Lucius will be rather more…cheerful… in the mornings."

Narcissa considered the possibilities silently for a moment. Finally, "Do tell me more about this idea of yours. Who exactly did you have in mind?"

Phaedra grinned a cat-that-got-the-canary smile and leaned forward with a wicked look in her eyes.

Ok, so I spent like 6 hours working on applications today, and what do I have to show for it? Absolutely nothing of any worth. I haven't finished a single application. I AM FAILING LIFE! I am so upset. I need a cookie.

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Chapter: 17

Erm… sbakar, I appreciate that you have corrected my grammar and spelling mistakes, but did you realize you made each review six or seven times? Maybe that was just your computer screwing up… It was kind of weird because it was the same like five reviews repeated over and over again… Oh, and sorry, I don't have a beta and I never really have time to edit, so that's why there are so many mistakes… oh, and the disclaimer is in my profile.

Right, so thanks for all the cookies, kids, and sorry about the really short chapter last time.

Chapter the Seventeenth

Draco Malfoy had come to the disturbing realization that Phaedra was up to something. She was noticeably distracted, which was incredibly odd; Phaedra was rarely noticeably—or perhaps recognizably—anything. She always seemed amused, as though she knew something others didn't, except for now. Now Phaedra was staring contemplatively into space, ignoring her two sweaty students.

Harry had been working on his physical fighting for far too long, in his opinion, at least. It simply wasn't fair that Draco got to sit composedly in the clearing, meditating and practicing reading minds, while he had to hit conjured spirit-fighters with metal poles. Usually Phaedra watched him carefully, making constructive (though rather emasculating) observations, but today she hadn't spoken beyond the basic orders. He glanced over at Draco as he dodged under the swing of his opponent's ax. Draco, the spoiled brat, wasn't even meditating anymore. He was simply watching Phaedra with an interested look, obviously waiting to see if she would notice his inactivity.

Unfortunately, that glance also showed Draco fiddling with the waist of his trousers. Harry's mind immediately shifted to things other than the spirit fighter, which resulted in Harry flying across the clearing. Phaedra, on reflex, dodged the falling body of her student.

Harry lay, slightly stunned, on his back until the sound of Draco's laughter broke through to his mind. Phaedra's face appeared directly over him.

"Still alive?" She asked with smirk. "I would hate to have to bring the news of your demise to the headmaster."

"Shut it, prat." Harry said flatly to Draco, who was still laughing. He accepted Phaedra's offered hand to climb painfully to his feet. Harry rubbed his chest, where he knew he was going to have a vicious bruise come morning. "What if I'd gotten internal trauma to the chest and died? Then how would you feel?" Harry said waspishly to his unrepentant mate.

"I would die as well, so I don't think I would feel much of anything." Draco supplied cheekily. Harry cast him a half-hearted glare.

"Neither of you are paying any attention today, are you?" Phaedra asked, resuming her seat on the stump.

"Yes, I was!" Harry said defensively. "I just…er…got…um… distracted is all." He blushed slightly, remembering why exactly he got distracted at such a crucial moment in the fight. Draco gave him a sexy grin, and Harry blushed again. *Quit that!* He thought to his mate.

Phaedra shook her head. "Oh, well. It's not like I haven't already taught you what you'll need to know for the battle anyway. Go shag or something, as long as you don't wear each other out."

Draco grinned with a suspicious glint to his eyes. "No worries, there, teacher-mine." Harry shivered at the sound in his voice.

Draco barely waited until they were out of Phaedra's sight to pounce on Harry. "Did I tell you that you're wearing my favorite shirt today?" He hissed at his husband as he licked a line of fire on Harry's proffered neck. Harry answered with an unintelligible moan of agreement.

Phaedra rolled her eyes with exasperation at their antics in the snow. Honestly, couldn't they wait until she got out of earshot? She really didn't need to hear Harry moaning like that… Plus, she had some major work to do. *I wonder whether I can con Severus into making his own potion…*

Hermione Granger lay in wait for the elusive Chimera to appear. She had an entire list of questions, a Quick-Notes Quill, a stack of parchment, extra ink, and several reference books all stacked neatly in her bag; she was just waiting for the opportunity to pounce. Unfortunately, Phaedra was nowhere to be found. Hermione sat, determined not to be swayed from her purpose, in the middle of the Great Hall.

Ron and the other Gryffindors had been trying unsuccessfully to convince the girl to go back to the common room, or Hogsmeade, or *anywhere* other than where she had been sitting for the last four hours.

"Ron," Hermione snapped. "If you are really that bored, go along without me."

"I can't leave you here alone." Ron said, plopping down beside her. "Why are you even waiting anyway? She's not going to tell you interesting."

Hermione shot him and annoyed glance. "The traditions of a completely foreign country may not be of interest to *you*, but they are to those who actually read sometimes."

"I read!" Ron said defensively. Seamus snorted rather loudly. Ron cast a dark glare in his direction. "Besides, it's a beautiful day. Not too cold… Come on, 'Mione!"

"Ronald Weasley, I am not moving from this seat until I get my interview! She promised to answer my questions in exchange for the favor, and we have already agreed on that. If I am to get enough information for my book, I am going to need a great number of interview sessions, so do leave me in peace!"

"You're going to write a book? On Phaedra?" Dean asked skeptically. "Why?"

"Because there are no reliable sources of information on Suruga or Chimera. Phaedra is the expert at this point, after all."

"I am, aren't I?" A bright voice came from behind them.

Hermione turned towards the newest arrival with relief. "Finally! I thought you were never going to resurface."

Phaedra flashed a smile. "Never fear, I try not to disappoint." She handed Hermione a piece of parchment. "Here is one of the potions I need made. I have come to the conclusion that now isn't the time for me to debut in the glorious world of potions making."

"Wasn't there a second potion?" Hermione asked absentmindedly as she scanned over the directions and ingredient list. She automatically tilted it away when Ron tried to crane his head over to read it.

"Three, actually. I plan to trick Severus into making the second potion. I wouldn't want to overburden any of my helpers."

"What about the last potion?" Hermione asked, folding the parchment and placing it securely in the breast pocket of her robe where Ron wouldn't dare try to steal it.

Phaedra smiled slightly at the exasperated look on Ron's face when he realized that Hermione knew him a bit too well. "The prodigal duo is making it. Out of intense curiosity, I suspect, but I doubt they will be able to figure out the purpose."

Hermione nodded thoughtfully. "You seem to almost be covering your tracks. Is this illegal, by any chance?"

"It breaks about fifteen wizarding laws." Phaedra said nonchalantly.

"Wait, what?" Dean piped up. "What are you going?"

Hermione and Phaedra didn't seem to notice. "Will it take long?" Hermione asked.

"It shouldn't take more than an hour or so." Phaedra answered, waving her hand at the table. A plate of apple pastries glazed with sugar appeared. She took one and devoured it in very neat, quick bites, like a cat.

"'Mione, I really don't think that whatever you're doing is such a good idea." Ron put in. He, too, was ignored.

"Mm… lovely pastries. Care for one?" Phaedra offered, pushing the plate closer to Hermione.

"Stop ignoring me!" Ron all but shouted.

Hermione and Phaedra sent him affronted looks. "Well, obviously this is not the best location for our interview." Hermione said.

"Indeed. Shall we adjourn to a more conducive location?"

Hermione nodded primly. Phaedra extended a hand with the grace of a dancer, which Hermione took with equal poise. They turned to look at the four boys with calm faces and promptly disappeared.

There was a moment of complete silence.

"Wish I'd known how to do that during Potions last year." Neville said glumly.

Lord Voldemort sat in his iron throne in his heavily fortified castle and allowed himself a moment of quiet self-pity. It was bad enough that his most powerful general, Lucius Malfoy, had disappeared from the face of the earth, but now to have a plan fail at the very last stage! The Guardian that Dumbledore had flaunted had been wearing the portkey and was, in fact, still wearing the portkey, but the damn thing had been faulty!

Now the creature was training the filthy Potter boy, and something was going on with Malfoy the younger. Draco, Voldemort mused, would have been a perfect heir to his father's rein of power within the ranks of the dark side. Now, however, all the training and conditioning Lucius had drilled into him was going to waste. The boy had apparently betrayed Voldemort, but the Dark Lord couldn't get his hands on him without Lucius, and no one knew where Lucius was.

Voldemort was in stalemate at the moment, and he hated being in stalemate. Perhaps he should have Bella organize a raid.

Voldemort sat forward suddenly. He really did astonish himself with his own genius, sometimes.

"Wormtail!" He bellowed shrilly. The cringing little rat entered the room. "Bring me Bella. I have a target for her."

It was Saturday night and Harry had had to promise numerous sexual favors in order to get Draco to spend it in the Gryffindor common room. Draco didn't really mind the dorm room upstairs with only Harry's immediate friends, but he hated being amongst the hoi polloi of Gryffindor house. However, Draco had found that Harry could be very persuasive sometimes when he found something he really wanted.

Draco, Harry, and several others were sprawled on conjured cushions in the middle of the common room floor laughing, talking, eating, and playing various muggle board games. Draco looked rather pained, but he accepted Neville's invitation to join in on Monopoly and promptly began amassing a gigantic fortune in true Malfoy style.

Harry grinned at the sight of the pureblooded aristocrat running roughshod over the Gryffindors and continued to listen to Ron's rant about Hermione's actions that afternoon.

"I mean, honestly! Who introduced her to rule breaking, I ask you? We did! I can't believe she would shut me out just like that. What's so special about this Phaedra bird anyway? I mean, sure she's got some new information, but what about her friends?" Ron's rant had begun to repeat itself from the beginning, so Harry began to tune him out.

Harry pasted an interested look on his face and instead studied the pale face of his beloved. It was odd, really, that they never truly fought. Up until a few months ago they couldn't stand in the same room without attacking each other, and now they couldn't even imagine spending a night alone without the other. Harry wondered if something had changed, or if the seeds of their happiness had been there the entire time. Harry sometimes felt that he had accepted this a little faster than was normal, but Harry knew that he had never felt as happy as he did in Draco's arms.

He smiled as someone opened the shutters of the window and moonlight filtered through the room to gild Draco's face. Harry reached out and smoothed a piece of silver hair back behind Draco's ear. Draco flashed him a quick smile at the touch before concentrating his considerable attention on ruining his fellow Monopoly players.

"Harry! Are you even listening to me?" Ron demanded, catching Harry's attention again.

"I'm listening!" Harry said immediately. Ron gave him a suspicious look.

"You were thinking about Malfoy again, weren't you?" Ron said accusingly. "You are supposed to be consoling me about Hermione."

"Ron, I don't see what all the fuss is about anyway. Why don't you just ask her out?"

Ron turned red. "I…um… that wasn't what I was talking about!" He said defensively. "I was talking about her ignoring me today and—"

"You're obsessing because you're sexual frustrated." Harry said calmly.

"Harry!" Ron said, shocked.

"And she's probably ignoring you because she is too." Harry finished.

Ron stared at him without speaking for almost a full minute.

"Hey, look, you managed to make him shut up!" Draco said with amusement. "Did you bring up Hermione like I told you to?"

"Yeah." Harry said, ignoring Ron's impression of a fish. "He seems very touchy about the subject."

"I told you." Draco said triumphantly. "No one knows how to push buttons better than a Slytherin."

"Buttons, eh?" Seamus said with a sly look. "Just which *buttons* are we talking about?"

Dean threw a pillow at Seamus' head.

Ron opened his mouth to yell something insulting at the lot of them, but he was interrupted by a loud bang.

The common room door had slammed against the opposite wall and someone flew through it and headed for the stairs. Hermione sprinted through the common room, leaping over the various cushions and obstacles as though she were being chased by demons from hell.

"Hermione?" Harry called. She didn't even slow down, but rather began to take the stairs three at a time.

The boys looked at each other. "What was that about?" Dean asked. They all shrugged their ignorance. The boys went back to their various activities, knowing well that they couldn't get up to the girl's dorm to ask.

Less than a minute later, Hermione practically fell back down the stairs wearing a silk kimono-style green robe. Her hair was braided in the style she had worn for the Guardian-summoning ceremony, and she was barefoot.

"Hermione!" Ron called out questioningly. She ignored him and tore through the common room door again.

The boys looked at each other for about two seconds before they all scrambled to their feet and sprinted after her.

A/N
Ok, so this one is short too, sorry. I just wanted to update because someone emailed me and sounded rather resigned to the fact that I was never going to update. Well, never fear, I am neither dead nor tired of this story. I just got back from New York City (yay shopping!) and have been super busy with school (we missed a bunch of school because of Hurricane Katrina so the teachers are trying to pack it all in) and am trying to finish applications, so I haven't had a whole lot of time.

Anyway, I will try to update more often. Sorry.

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Chapter: 18

Wow… I didn't realize it bothered so many people that I misspelled "Zabini." Sorry… when you don't have a beta, you tend to overlook little things like that, though I do think I've done ok on grammar and stuff otherwise… for some reason I reflexively add an 'm' into the name, so I will try and work on that…

Chapter the Eighteenth!

At ten-thirty on Sunday morning, the teachers at Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry made a rather strange observation.

There were eight green boys sitting buck-naked on the floor of the Great Hall.

Snape himself was speechless for a moment. Longbottom, Finnigan, Thomas, Weasley, both Creevy boys, Potter and *Draco* were chained in a circle, seated and facing outward, and were a lovely forest green from head to toe. Weasley had his eyes closed, and appeared to be praying, and the others, besides the two Chimera, were studiously avoiding the gazes of the gawking student body. Potter and Draco, however, were apparently catching up with some beauty sleep. They had gotten as close together as the silver chains would allow and were fast asleep. It was nauseating, in Severus Snape's opinion.

The teachers milled at the entrance, obviously thrown for a loop by this, until McGonagall arrived.

"What on earth!" The stern witch strode forward, obviously preparing her fire-and-brimstone

speech. "Mr. Potter! Mr. Malfoy! Wake up this moment!"

Harry woke with a start and nudged Draco to wake him. "Good morning, Professor." Harry said with a sunny smile. Snape observed that his gums were green, though his teeth had retained their pearly white veneer.

McGonagall appeared to battle down apoplectic urges. "What in the name of Merlin do you think you are doing?" Her voice rang out loud and clear, and the Hall went abruptly silent to listen.

"I was sleeping." Harry answered innocently. Draco had decided to allow Harry to handle the Gryffindor Head of House.

"Why, exactly, did you feel the need to sleep in such an indecent state in the middle of the Great Hall? And why on earth are you green?" McGonagall demanded.

"I can't remember." Harry said.

"You can't remember." McGonagall looked at the others, who appeared to be trying to shrink below her gaze. "And what about you all? Can any of you remember?"

Slowly, one-by-one, they shook their heads. "It's rather odd, but I really don't remember." Ron said thoughtfully. "The last thing I remember is chasing after Hermione when she left the common room last night."

"So, not only are you indecently exposed, you also admit to leaving the common room after curfew?"

Seamus elbowed Ron hard. "Ow! No, of course not, Professor. We, umm…er…" He was rescued by a sudden sound of shattering pottery.

The Professors whipped around to see Hermione Granger at the doors to the Great Hall, shattered mug at her feet, turning red while trying to suppress her laughter. Phaedra walked in behind her and choked suddenly as she saw the boys in the middle of the floor. She grabbed Hermione's arm and pulled her back through the doors, silent giggles shaking her frame.

"Just one moment!" McGonagall snapped at the two girls.

"Yes, Minerva?" Phaedra asked innocently, swallowing her laugh quickly.

"Remove whatever spell you preformed on them at once." McGonagall snapped, turning her anger from the unfortunate victims.

"A spell, Professor?" Hermione asked just as innocently, hastily composing herself. "What spell? You don't really think *we* did this?"

"It's hardly our style." Phaedra agreed. "I much more of a blue person than a green."

Snape stepped forward suddenly. "You are right, it isn't your style." He and McGonagall exchanged glances.

"No, this reminds me more of something…" McGonagall began.

"…the Weasley twins would do." Snape finished. The two teachers exchanged horrified looks. Gryffindors or not, McGonagall did not miss the days of Fred and George's reign of terror, and Snape was hardly a fan of the duo, having been the target of many of their experimental charms.

Professor McGonagall turned to Phaedra and Hermione with a sigh. "Well, regardless, remove this spell immediately. Do not pretend you don't know how because I know good and well that you can."

"Of course. As a favor to you, Minerva." Phaedra said with a gracious smile. Hermione coughed to cover another laugh as Phaedra snapped her fingers imperiously and turned the boys back to their normal coloring, as well as removing the binding chains. She smiled like the cat that got the cream and vanished, taking Hermione with her.

"She could have given us back our clothes." Dean muttered mutinously as they got stiffly to their feet, each boy covering himself awkwardly. Draco and Harry exchanged smug looks and dressed themselves with a single thought as Phaedra had been teaching them.

"Show off." Seamus muttered.

Ron decided that the episode this morning could have been worse. With Draco as a fellow victim, the Slytherins were not entirely certain whether they should make fun of the Gryffindors, so they managed to get through the day with only strange looks and quiet whispers. He tried to find Hermione, but she was suspiciously absent—"Obviously trying to avoid the thought of having seen Ronnikins naked." Seamus said—and somehow Ron wasn't sure he wanted to think about the fact that she had seen him in all his glory. Unless, of course, green was flattering to his figure.

Draco and Harry finished their beauty sleep after a bout of enthusiastic physical activity in their bedroom and had claimed the rest of the day off from their lessons with Phaedra.

Seamus was busy setting up dates with everyone who had been impressed by the view that morning. So far he had a date for every Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in February and the first half of March.

Dean was busy fending off the ones who hadn't spoken with Seamus yet.

Neville was hiding, traumatized by the fact that Professor Snape saw him in a less than decent state.

The Creevey brothers were consoling each other in their grief about not having had a camera the previous night.

Hermione Granger was in the library, hidden under the purloined invisibility cloak, writing out her shorthand notes of the interview the previous day.

Severus Snape was in his private rooms, trying to figure out why he couldn't stop thinking about tall, trim blonde men. The half-empty bottle of scotch was not helping him lose the hard-on either, and that was simply embarrassing. A man his age with a random hard-on? It was unheard of, especially for someone like Severus Snape.

Narcissa Malfoy was struggling to contain her glee as she watched her husband fidget uncomfortably in his seat.

Bellatrix Lestrange was shut in a heavily warded room, plotting out the tiny details for the special raid tomorrow. Wormtail lurked outside the door, obviously hoping to be invited in to join in this plan that had so much potential for gaining favor from the Dark Lord.

The next day dawned bright and clear. Draco and Harry went through their lessons with Phaedra in record time, which meant that they actually got time to eat a full breakfast with their friends. "*Your* friends, Harry." Draco said snidely. "I am merely tolerating their presence as a token of my love for you."

Ron gagged at that comment, but Harry smiled fondly at his mate.

"So, Potions first. I hope you got your homework done, Harry." All the boys turned, startled, to see Hermione sit down calmly, as though she hadn't vanished for an entire day.

"Where have you been?" Ron exclaimed. "I was beginning to think You-Know-Who had captured you."

"Don't be silly." Hermione said as she reached for the syrup for her pancakes. "I was merely expanded and analyzing my notes on Phaedra's interview."

"Where?" Ron demanded. "I looked everywhere for you."

"I was in the library, of course. Why didn't you just check Harry's map if you were so worried?"

"I…umm… didn't think about it." Ron admitted, flushing a bit. Draco and Harry exchanged looks of disgust.

"Honestly, you two." Harry said.

"Yeah." Draco continued. "We are feared magical creatures with out-of-control powers, destined

mates, and a psychotic stalker, and even we got together with less angst and confusion than you two dunderheads."

Both of the Gryffindors flushed hotly and avoided each other's eyes. Draco shook his head.

"Watch. I'll show you how easy it is." He turned to Harry and said dramatically, "I want you, I *need* you, oh baby, oh baby!" He yanked the laughing brunette into his arms and gave him a sloppy, romantic snog.

They separated several moments later to enthusiastic applause from the six and seventh years of Gryffindor and a few Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw girls. The Slytherins were all staring, obviously thrown by the public display of affection from the usually reserved Prince of Slytherin.

"Draco Malfoy!" Snape's voice could cut through any crowd, and this one was no exception. "If I may have a word?"

Draco rose gracefully and sauntered off to have a discussion with his godfather that would, no doubt, involve a great deal of "Why do you feel the need to kiss *that boy* in public?"

He was rather surprised to find that it did not, in fact, have anything to do with Harry.

"Where is your father?" Snape asked.

"What? In his rooms, I would think." Draco answered, startled. "Why? Has he gone missing?"

"No, no. I meant during the day. Where does he go?" Snape said impatiently, eyes blazing with intensity.

"I…I have no idea." Draco said. "I am in class most of the day, and when I'm not, I'm busy with Harry or Phaedra. I only see him a few times a week. If I want to talk to him, I just go visit him and Mother in the morning when they are still in their room. Why?" He asked again.

Snape ignored his question again. "How does Potter get around the castle all the time without being caught? What kind of map does he have?"

"Map?" Draco said, startled. "You were listening in on the Gryffindors?"

"Not on purpose, I assure you." Snape said with a sneer. "I only heard it in passing, and it reminded me of an incident a few years ago."

"Well…" Draco began slowly, picking his words carefully as to minimize the amount of trouble Harry was in. "I believe it was a gift, and that it is designed to show the user paths throughout the castle."

"Such a document would have to be highly enchanted." Snape said, obviously impatient at his

godson's reticence. "And would this map have an enchantment that shows the location of people within the castle?"

Draco paused again. "I have never seen the map." He said finally, avoiding the question. Snape rolled his eyes and motioned for him to continue. Draco had other ideas, however. "Why so interested in my father's location? He cannot leave the castle or he will be without protection. He isn't up to anything nefarious."

"That is not the point." Snape snapped. "Tell me about the map."

"Severus, why are you looking for my father?" Draco asked firmly, determined not to budge until he got his answer. Harry's Gryffindor tendencies really were rubbing off on him.

"You really don't want to know." Snape said very honestly.

"I am not answering any more questions until you answer." Draco said.

Snape looked irritated. "Alright, you impudent brat. You want to know why I am searching for your father?" He leaned close and whispered the answer in his godson's ear.

Harry felt his mate's shock from three floors away.

Remus Lupin was very tired. He was getting old, and his lycanthropy was aging him beyond his years. It was an unfortunate fact that, although werewolves were more difficult to kill than regular mortals, they tended not to live past fifty or sixty. That was alright for a Muggle, perhaps, but wizards generally lived well into their hundreds.

He was walking down the main street of Hogsmeade towards the apothecary to pick up some of the ingredients Severus needed for the new dose of Wolfsbane and thinking as he wandered.

Phaedra still refused to speak to him. Remus had so many questions that she could have answered for him! He didn't understand why the Council was so inclined to relate a lycanthrope to a Chimera, but the Chimera refused to have anything to do with the lycanthrope. Remus would have thought that she would be more inclined to speak to him than any of the humans, but the level of distaste for the Council was obviously great enough to overcome that urge.

Remus hoped, at least, that she was doing a good job teaching Harry and Draco. He had never been terribly fond of the blonde Slytherin: too many sour memories of the boy's father and relatives, probably, combined with the fact that Draco had often been a little snot in Remus' class. Harry, however, was James' son, and a wonderful young man. Remus hoped with all his might that Draco could give Harry the happiness he deserved.

Lupin, like Harry, was one of the few people who had looked at the war from a brutally realistic viewpoint. The fact of the matter was that Harry was very young and very inexperienced. Voldemort did not have these weaknesses, and did not have any clear-cut weaknesses that the

Light could see. Before the Chimeric change, Remus had accepted that the boy he loved like a son probably wouldn't survive the war.

Now, however, Remus was allowing himself tentative hopes. Phaedra was powerful, and she seemed to have every confidence in the boys. Perhaps, if the rest of them did their parts, the Chimera could live and grow and flourish without the darkness of war hanging over them constantly.

A crash in the alley next to him startled Remus out of his introspective walk. He looked down the alley and warily drew his wand before taking slow, careful steps towards the source of the noise.

About ten feet into the alley, Remus caught the scent of human blood with his sensitive nose. He opened his mouth and drew in a breath to yell out a disarming spell. Something flashed in the air in front of him, and he caught it reflexively.

He was still staring dumbly at the shiny sickle when the three stunning spells and one silencing spell hit him in the side simultaneously, knocking him soundlessly to the ground.

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Chapter: 19

Really, people, relax and take a very deep breath… don't worry about the mpreg, because my knowledge about biology would never allow me to come up with a plausible male pregnancy scenario, and I am therefore not going to touch the topic much more than I already have. Now, sorry about the VERY long wait… i figured i should get this out there even though it is rather short.

Chapter the Nineteenth

Phaedra didn't seem surprised at the news that Remus Lupin had been captured. When Harry asked her about it, she gave him an odd look and said softly, "He was marked for his role by women far crueler than I." She refused to explain that comment, and instead handed him a small box. "This is very, very illegal. Do not open this here, and keep it safe and hidden. Never allow it to touch your skin."

Harry took the poison carefully, knowing that it was important.

"When?" Draco asked, ignoring the din of the Order's shouting. The three sat in a corner of the Headmaster's office, out of the way.

"Soon." Phaedra said. "Very, very soon. Expect it within a few days, at the most. I want you both to eat well and keep yourselves hydrated. Don't use any more magic than necessary." Both students nodded obediently. Harry slipped his hand down his side next to his chair and found Draco's slim one waiting to accept it.

Phaedra got to her feet and snapped her fingers imperiously. The room fell silent slowly, all eyes on the Guardian. "The time is almost right." She told them. "Call in your allies, if you have any, for we are almost ready." The apprehension was almost palpable in the room. "Please don't lose your nerve now. This is the time for everyone to bring out their Gryffindor side. Confidence is everything."

Remus awoke cold, wet, and very naked in the dark. He appeared to be lying on grass, and strangely enough, he felt rather well rested and healthy. It was rather a strange feeling since he remembered being captured, presumably by death eaters. He rolled over onto his back slowly, waiting for any twinges of pain, but they never came.

He sat up and peered into the darkness. It was strange, but even his slightly enhanced werewolf vision couldn't make out anything of his surroundings. He sniffed the air and smelled only grass and dirt and dew. There was some sort of bird roosting nearby, as he could smell the acrid droppings, but there was no scent of blood or humans. Remus rose and shuffled forward cautiously, hands out to catch himself if he ran into anything.

Ten steps later, he had stubbed his toe twice on unidentified objects and had run into what felt like a boulder. Remus carefully sat down on the boulder and stopped to reconsider his plan. He was alone, naked, and without a wand in a completely unfamiliar place. Things were not looking good.

I'll just wait for dawn. He decided. *I don't think I will get very far in the dark, and I am just as likely to get caught sitting here in the dark as I am bumbling about in circles in the dark.*

Harry Potter was having a horrid day. He had walked with Draco, Ron, and Hermione down to Hogsmeade to visit the newly opened branch of Weasley twin's shop, and they were about half-way there when they were attacked by a crowd of raving lunatics.

Reporters always could ruin Harry's day.

"I thought Dumbledore forbid them to come onto school property!" Harry yelled over the shouted questions at Hermione.

"He did!" She yelled back. "We're technically not on school property anymore!"

"Mr. Potter! How did you and Mr. Malfoy resolve your infamous rivalry to come together in matrimony?"

"Mr. Malfoy, how does your father feel about you marrying a staunch supporter of the Light?"

"Mr. Malfoy, is there a baby in the making?"

"Mr. Potter, who will be carrying the child?"

Ron shoved a reporter back when he stepped enthusiastically on his foot. "Bugger off!" he yelled as he pulled out his wand.

Hermione lunged forward and grabbed his wand hand. "What are you doing? You can't hex them!" Ron cast a glare at her, which she returned.

"QUIET!" Harry bellowed. Draco slid an arm around his waist. The reporters quieted, watching the couple avidly for clues.

"As soulmates, it is no longer in our nature to involve ourselves in any sort of rivalry against the other. My father supports and condones my new relationship with Harry, and there is no child involved at this time." Draco said, adopting his aristocratic airs and looking down on the rabid journalists. "Now, if you will excuse us, we have some shopping to do."

"Wait! A picture of the happy couple!"

"Mr. Potter, how does marriage to a purported Death Eater's son affect your involvement in the fight against He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named?"

"Come on, give us a kiss for the papers!"

"How do you plan to decorate the nursery?"

Harry sent Draco an incredulous look at the last question. "We just told you there was no baby." Harry told the pretty blonde reporter from the motherhood magazine. "Please move."

Draco rolled his eyes at Harry's polite, friendly tone. "That's never going to work, darling." He told the Gryffindor. "These people are like jackals."

Harry cast him an irritated look. "Fine, then. You get rid of them."

"No problem." Draco said smugly as he turned to face the reporters. He smiled into their faces, and they all slowly quieted, all their eyes fixed wide on Draco's face. Suddenly, they all started walking away cheerfully, talking happily amongst themselves.

"Uh…What just happened here?" Ron asked, staring after the crowd of departing reporters.

"They decided that there were other places they would rather be." Draco said with a triumphant smile. "Just a little trick I learned from our esteemed teacher."

"You know, that was actually a very good question." Hermione said thoughtfully.

"Hmm? What was, 'Mione?" Ron asked as they resumed their walk towards the town.

"How *did* you two manage to get past your rivalry? A few months ago, I would have thought you hated each other."

Draco and Harry looked blankly at each other. "I don't know." Harry said finally. "It just… he doesn't… well, he doesn't *feel* like the same Draco Malfoy I used to know. It feels like he's a completely different person…I guess I don't really connect that Malfoy with my Draco."

Draco nodded slowly. "Yes, I know *intellectually* that he's still Saint Potter, but he doesn't… I don't know…it's not a rational thing, I suppose."

"So you don't get angry anymore about things you did to each other? You don't ever get annoyed about how Harry never gets in trouble for breaking rules or how Draco gets preferential treatment from Snape?" Hermione asked.

"Well…No." Harry said. "I just… I don't feel any sort of anger towards him at all. No negative emotion towards him, as a matter of fact. I don't even get annoyed when he snores."

"I don't snore!" Draco said, offended.

"Yes, you do."

"I do not!"

Hermione cut Harry off before he could speak. "What about right now? Are you irritated at Harry right now?"

"I…no." Draco said. "I'm just…arguing automatically. Not really in irritation, though."

"Hmm…" Hermione appeared lost in thought.

"Well, it's obvious, isn't it?" Ron said matter-of-factly.

"What is?" Hermione said.

"They're in love. Love can conquer all, right? Maybe this lack of negativity just has to do with love and Chimera's luck."

They were all silent for a long moment. "Wow." Draco finally said, looking amazed. "Weasley said something truly insightful! Will wonders never cease?"

Ron scowled and blushed at the same time, not entirely sure whether to be offended or not. "Shut it, you." He finally managed to say, cuffing Draco's shoulder lightly. Harry exchanged a smile with Hermione as Draco laughed and allowed the touch without a qualm.

"I think he's ready for the next step, don't you?" Harry asked her quietly.

Hermione's smile grew very fond. "Finally. Be a dear and take your beau off for a romantic dinner, will you?"

"Come on, Draco." Harry said, slipping an arm around his leanly muscled waist.

Ron watched them walk off with a smile. "They are kind of beautiful together, aren't they?" He asked rhetorically.

"Let's go to the Three Broomsticks." Hermione said. "I'm a little chilled." Ron turned immediately and offered her his scarf.

Lupin didn't know how long he had been waiting for dawn, but he knew it was more than a few hours. Something wasn't right. From the time he had been captured, he probably hadn't had more than four or five hours until dawn. He figured he'd been out for at least half an hour, though probably longer, and he had passed about three hours sitting and waiting. He should at least be able to see some predawn light.

I'll wait another hour or so. Lupin decided. *If the dawn doesn't come, then I will try to blunder myself out of here again.*

Ron didn't know what it was about her, but Hermione looked different tonight. She was dressed in her usually casual Muggle clothes, with her thick, worn old wool jacket under her school cloak, but something was new. He found himself studying her closely, trying to pinpoint the source of her…*glow*. That was the only word he could think of to describe it.

Hermione's cheeks were golden and just the slightest bit rosy, her hair fell in perfectly messy waves of chestnut, and she had twinkle in her eyes.

"Ron." Hermione said calmly. Ron jerked his attention away from her eyes and focused on what she was saying. "It's been weeks now and we still haven't discussed that kiss."

Ron turned a little pink. "Yes…I didn't, well, I didn't want to…you know…push you into anything." He said awkwardly. "But if you want, maybe we could, you know…"

"Go on a date?" Hermione finished for him, turning rather pink herself.

"Yeah." Ron said, relieved that she'd said it first.

"What are you doing right now?" Hermione asked.

Ron considered for less than a second. "Want to have dinner?"

Hermione smiled at him. "Exactly what I was thinking." She grabbed his hand and he smiled back at her with the feeling that this moment was to change their entire lives.

Remus Lupin was angry at the world and any deity that happened to be listening. What the hell was this, a new torture technique? The Death Eaters would take a prisoner out into the middle of nowhere and leave them alone to consider the source of life? Dawn *still* hadn't broken, and he had definitely been here long enough for him to see some sign of dawn.

Remus stood and sniffed the air delicately, trying to pinpoint the direction of something to move towards. Where was that bird's nest he'd smelled earlier? Remus paused in his thinking as something finally registered. The scent of pines and forest that he had noticed when he awoke was gone. It now smelled rather like a small town, with dust and the various stenches of people, but he still couldn't see anything.

This is truly bizarre. He thought, trying to control his panic. *I seem to be moving when I myself am not moving. I seem to be blind. I think my mind is slipping. Perhaps I'm still asleep? This* must *be a dream.*

"I'm afraid it isn't a dream."

Remus whirled around. There, looking like she just walked out of a legend, stood Phaedra, wreathed in shadowed mist. "What…Did *you* put me here?"

"Not really." She answered. "I placed you here specifically, but I didn't move you from where you were. You moved yourself."

Remus looked at her blankly. "Meaning?"

"You were attacked by Death Eaters in the alley."

"Yes, I figured as much." Remus said impatiently.

"They took you deep into the Forbidden Forest. You have just left it. You are now in the outskirts of Hogsmeade." Phaedra explained.

"How is that possible? I haven't walked far enough to reach Hogsmeade."

Phaedra shrugged. "You don't have to be moving yourself to actually be moving. Muggles explain it with the theory of relativity, I believe. Gives me a bit of a headache to think about it, to be honest."

"Why can't I see anything?" Remus asked.

"You can see me, can't you?"

"Well, yes. But I can't find anything even though I sense trees and rocks and such."

"That's because you're in between realms of existence right now and they don't exist in tangible forms here." Phaedra said. "They are there, but you cannot touch them and light as you know it does not exist here, so you cannot see them either."

"In between realms?" Remus repeated. "You mean—like Voldemort's citadel?"

Phaedra smiled slyly. "Precisely."

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Chapter: 20

Chapter the Twentieth

When Phaedra decided it was time to move on the Death Eaters, Harry and Draco received the job of delivering the news to the most important players. Hermione and Ron were waiting outside Phaedra's door for them, and the pair found Neville and Seamus on the way out of the dungeons. The two Gryffindors carried the word to the other DA members. Narcissa was easily found in her rooms, reading a treatise on something to do with the gems of South America, but Lucius proved to be illusive, as did Severus. After nearly half an hour of fruitless searching, Harry sighed in irritation and fetched the Marauder's map. Draco looked on with fascination as Harry located Severus and Lucius at the Quidditch field.

"Come on, then." Harry said after clearing the map. "Let's go fetch them before Phaedra gets antsy." Harry started walking in the direction of the field but realized Draco wasn't following him. "What is it?"

"Um…" Draco hesitated. "Harry, I'm not sure I want to walk into that."

Harry gave him a blank look. "Into the Quidditch pitch? Why not?"

"No, I mean the scene that is taking place at the Quidditch pitch." Draco said with a shudder. "I don't think my delicate psyche could take that blow."

Harry stifled a smile at the look on Draco's beautiful face. "Scared, Malfoy?" He taunted.

"Ha! A Malfoy is never scared." Draco said, nose in the air. "Malfoy-Potters, though, are a different story. There is no way I am risking interrupting… that."

"I'll have you know that we Malfoy-Potters are incredibly brave." Harry responded.

"Oh, is that what they call sheer dumb luck nowadays?" Draco teased back.

Harry threw a conjured snowball at the blonde. "Fine, then, prat." He said with a smile at Draco's inelegant squawk of dismay. "I'll be right back. If you hear any screaming, it's just me regretting my choice of virtues."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Virtues? What, besides a fine arse and a quick tongue?"

Harry flashed him one of his rare, absolutely brilliant grins and started towards the Quidditch field.

Harry found Lucius and Snape lying entwined together on a cloak under the teacher's section of the stands surrounded by a strong warming charm. They had pulled a second cloak across them, but it appeared the Severus was a covers hog, as Lucius' entire backside lay bare. Harry watched them snoring for a few moments before breaking into a laugh. *They're so cute!* He couldn't help thinking to himself as the two erupted out of the makeshift bed wildly, searching for wands and an enemy. When the naked lovers realized who it was, Severus flushed a dark red of embarrassment, while Lucius turned a light pink from head to toe. It was amazing to Harry how much like his son Lucius looked in that moment of indignity.

"Can we help you, Potter?" Snape asked acerbically. "Or are you just here for a gawk?"

"No, actually, I do have a purpose." Harry said, voice laden with amusement. "Phaedra says we're ready. We move at dusk."

"Oh." Snape said, obviously startled at having his rant cut off at the knees. "Well."

"It is midday, yes?" Lucius said, trying to recover his dignity. At Harry's nod, Lucius continued. "What time do we need to report to our lovely general?"

"Four." Harry replied. "She will assign everyone a place and a duty then, so you will have time afterwards to ready yourself before we leave."

"Then we have a few hours to ourselves, do we not?" Snape broke in waspishly. "You may go, Potter."

"Malfoy-Potter, actually." Harry corrected, unable to keep a smirk off his face. It grew at the sight of Severus' eyes narrowing in fury. "Have a nice afternoon." Harry made a quick escape before the Potions master could hex him and laughed all the way back to the castle.

"Well?" Draco asked as Harry rejoined him, and they started back to their rooms.

"Well, what?"

"What were they doing?" Draco demanded.

"Sleeping." Harry said.

"That's it?" Draco sounded disappointed.

"Mm." Harry affirmed. "Your father's arse is even paler than yours, you know."

"What?" Draco yelped. He smacked Harry's shoulder. "You saw my father's arse? I thought you said they were just sleeping!"

"They were!" Harry laughed at Draco's scandalized face. "Snape hogs the covers. Come to think of it, Snape has a better arse than I would have suspected." Harry said thoughtfully.

Draco lunged at him, and Harry dodged away, laughing. "Take that back, you bloody ponce!" Draco yelled at his husband as he gave chase.

"Make me!" Harry called back as he skidded around a corner and narrowly missed flattening a group of Hufflepuffs.

"I will!" Draco panted as he took the stairs three at a time. "You're not going to be able to sit down for a week."

"Ha!" Harry said mockingly. "We both know how *that* usually works out!" Harry reached their room and crashed inside. He spun around when he got to the center of the bedroom and watched Draco skid into the room and fling the door shut. Harry lunged forward at the same time as Draco, and their mouths met in a vigorous battle of lips and tongues and teeth.

Draco, who had a slight advantage of weight, pinned Harry on the ground as their mouths fought, but Harry was strong for his size and managed to turn the tables on his blonde lover. Harry pinned Draco's arms securely above his head, and Draco stopped struggling to accept a kiss. The kiss was slow and sweet, and by the time it ended, both boys had abandoned the competition, content to enjoy the peaceful intimacy of the moment.

The complacency didn't last long, however, and the Chimera were soon caught in an urgent flood of lust and love.

At four that afternoon, all the important players in the attack were assembled in Phaedra's room. Lucius and Severus made certain to arrive at different times and pointedly ignored Harry's existence, as though the boy was beneath their notice. Harry snickered at his professor, and Draco joined in when he spotted the faint flush that began to spread across Snape's pale cheeks.

Phaedra gave her students an indulgent smile and gave Hermione satisfied look. Hermione nodded in agreement and turned a small smile onto her professor and Mr. Malfoy. Snape caught the tail end of that look and gave the Gryffindor a suspicious look,.

When the last straggler had crowded into the room, Phaedra began to explain the logistics of the attack on Voldemort's fortress. "From what I know of Voldemort and the fortress, it is well guarded, which is why all of you are going to be going into battle. With a massive frontal attack, all the guards will be very busy dealing with you all rather than making things difficult for Harry and Draco." She waved a hand, and her coffee table turned into a sand table with a rough sketch of the plans of a fortress drawn on it. "I will lead the attack here—" she pointed to the main gate. "Which is where most of you will be fighting. I don't know how smart the Death Eaters will be, so I am preparing for the worst and adding a decoy here." She pointed to a smaller gate on the side of the castle. "There is a hidden entrance here that a small group of you will attempt to reach. In a best case scenario, all the Death Eaters will go to the front entrance to fight the mass attack, allowing this small group to get into the castle itself. If you get in, head to the dungeons of the fortress, for my information indicates that there are many prisoners in the lower levels. However, if all the Death Eaters do not go to the front, then a secondary attack on a hidden door will most likely be taken as the true mission, with the frontal attack as a distraction. The combination of these two attacks should draw off the majority of Death Eaters."

"Who will be in that small group?" McGonagall asked, looking supremely worried.

"I will assign places when I have decided who will be best where." Phaedra answered. "Anyhow, Draco and Harry will be taking advantage of the two distractions to slip through a secret passageway that begins about half a mile from the castle here." She pointed to the opposite side of the sand-map. "They will be met by a guide and shown the way. Once they have entered, they are to follow the instructions I have given them previously." The two nodded in understanding. "Any questions?"

Hermione raised her hand. "How many Death Eaters can we expect to be there?"

"About three dozen." Phaedra answered. "Some of them will be inside during the commotion, however, so you won't be fighting them all."

"What about He-Who—um, I mean V-Voldemort." Neville asked. "How do you know he will be in the castle and not out attacking people?"

Phaedra shrugged. "I don't."

"The fortress is always guarded with the same number of Death Eaters." Snape commented, brow furrowed with worry. "So we won't be able to tell when we arrive either. If he is not there, we will be wasting our time."

"No worries, Severus." Draco spoke up. "We've got that part under control."

"But how—" Dumbledore began.

"Professor." Harry interrupted before Phaedra could snap at the headmaster. "We know what to do if that should happen."

Phaedra sighed. "The only way this will work is if everyone stops worrying about what others are doing and concentrate on their own purpose. You must do your own part and trust that the rest of your army will do so as well."

There was a silence. Finally Ginny spoke up. "What if… if they figure out we're coming or there are more troops stationed there than we can handle? Can we get ourselves out?"

Phaedra nodded. "I can open and close portals to the realm. The only problem is that it takes about three minutes to construct a portal, so in the case of disaster, you must be able to hold for that long. Hermione has invented a shielding spell similar to that that Chimera can create, and she will be teaching you all to master it before we leave. You won't be able to cast spells through it, but no spells can reach you inside it either."

The room was quiet as the students, teachers, and Order members absorbed the plans of the attack. Harry was proud to note that although they were pale and looked nervous, all the DA members had firm expressions of determination on their faces. Draco reached over and squeezed Harry's hand comfortingly, sensing Harry's worry over the safety of his classmates and students.

"Severus, you will lead the smaller attack force." Phaedra finally broke the silence. "With Hermione, Neville, and the Weaseley twins. Choose four of the aurors, besides Tonks and Alistair, as well. Perhaps you should choose a teacher or two as well, but that is you perogative."

Snape inclined his head without expression, so Harry couldn't tell whether or not he was upset about the assignment.

"May the gods be with you, whichever gods you subscribe to." Phaedra said. "I will see you all at nine tonight at the Quidditch pitch."

The group began to clear out, some pale and nervous looking, others determined. Harry, Draco, Ron, and Hermione hung behind. "What about the vial?" Harry finally asked when the room was nearly empty. "How do I use the poison?"

Phaedra handed a small, thin knife in a thick leather sheath to Draco. "Help him coat the blade like you would with a Sahair potion. Make certain that it doesn't touch your skin."

Draco nodded and slipped the knife into his robes. Phaedra smiled encouraginglyat them all and vanished from the room.

"So." Ron said. "Anyone fancy a trip to the kitchens?"

Hermione and Harry grinned knowingly at each other. "Sure, Ron." Harry said fondly. "We should say goodbye to Dobby anyway."

"Dobby? The house elf?" Draco said incredulously. "You talk to my old servant?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, we do." Hermione said, face darkening.

Ron sighed. "You just had to say it, didn't you?"

"What are you talking about?" Draco said, looking rather confused. "It was a perfectly valid question. I see no reason that you all would want to talk to the elf anyhow. It was a rather bad house elf."

Harry pinched him. "Shut up!" He whispered to his blonde husband. "Do you *want* to be hexed?"

"I'll have you know that Dobby is the most enlightened house elf I have ever encountered!" Hermione said shrilly. "Furthermore, your blatant disregard for the feelings of creatures in lower echelons of society is an example of the major failing of wizard society!"

"Now we're in for it." Ron muttered as he led the way towards the kitchens.

Alright. I am going to Argentina for two weeks, so there will be a major delay in the writing process, but i really am going to finish this story if it's the last thing i do...

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Chapter: 21

Chapter the Twenty-first

By the time everyone gathered to leave, Ron was sweating with nerves. He wiped his palms on his short, blue battle robes and tried to relax the muscles in his shoulders.

"Ron?" Hermione said worriedly, her own hands twisting a bit in her lap. "Are you alright?"

He gave her a small smile. "Yeah." He answered, throat raspy from dryness. He cleared his throat and gave his girlfriend a small smile. "It's just… It just doesn't feel right, you know? We always go into these things with Harry, but now it's Malfoy with Harry. Usually we're worrying about Draco as one of the bad guys." He ran his hand through his red hair. "I'm just…you know."

Hermione nodded, fiddling with a loose curl. "I know. So much has changed in the last few months that we're bound to feel a little off going into this. We've never gone into this sort of thing without one or the other. We've always been three, or at least two."

"Yeah." Ron said, relieved that he wasn't the only one to feel this way. He pulled Hermione into his arms and planted a kiss on her head.

"Hey, guys." Harry came up behind them. He looked centered and determined, just as he did right before a Quidditch match. Hermione smiled at the familiar sight.

"Hey, mate." Ron said, releasing Hermione and clapping Harry on the shoulder. "You ready for this?"

Harry shrugged. "If Phaedra says that I am, I am smart enough to believe her. She hasn't been wrong yet, and she should know about things like this. As far as I can tell, this is what she's been doing most of her life."

The three turned to look at the Chimera. Phaedra lounged in a conjured armchair, reading a Muggle fashion magazine and looking supremely unconcerned with the nervous bustle around her as Order members and upper level students organized themselves into their directed positions.

"Where's Draco?" Hermione asked after a moment, looking around for the blonde.

"Patching things up with some old friends in Slytherin. I guess he doesn't want to leave any loose ends if…" Harry hesitated. "If something goes wrong tonight." He finished, turning a little pale.

"Harry, Draco will be fine." Ron said soothingly. "The ferret's too slippery to get himself into something he can't get out of."

Harry scowled at the reference, but couldn't help smiling as well. "Yeah." He agreed. "He'll be fine." Hermione thought he was probably saying so to try and convince himself.

There was a sudden hush in the chatter on the Quidditch pitch. "Bye." Harry said, hugging his friends hard. "Be careful, and I'll see you on the other side."

"We love you, Harry." Hermione said tearfully. "So do be careful as well, alright?"

"Yeah, mate." Ron seconded. "I want you to be my best man at the wedding."

"Wedding?" Draco asked as he walked up to his husband and Gryffindor friends. "Who's getting married?"

"Well, we are, of course." Hermione said. "Eventually. I want to finish school properly first."

Draco and Harry exchanged grins. "That was quick." Harry told his friends. "You've only been official for what, three weeks?"

"Four." Hermione said defensively. "And two days."

"Anyway, you should talk!" Ron retorted. "You two hated each other until about six weeks before you got hand-fasted. At least we've been friends for seven years."

"Congratulations." Phaedra suddenly said, and they all started. "But I'm afraid the engagement party will have to wait until tomorrow, so make sure you're all alive and kicking for it."

"Is it time?" Draco asked, silver eyes sharply focused on Phaedra's. Harry knew that something more was being said than the rest of them could hear.

They all looked around at the orderly lines of soldiers for the Light. Fear and anxiety showed on most of the faces of their comrades-in-arms, but there was also a thread of determination that painted a heroic picture of courage. Harry found it surprisingly comforting that these people would be behind him during the fight.

"Yes." Phaedra said, her violet eyes gleaming. "It's time."

Later, when the wizarding world was demanding stories about the annihilation of the most powerful dark wizard in history, Harry would be forced to admit that the fight was almost anti-climactic. Phaedra was an excellent general; the Death Eaters massed at the front gate, fighting the initial attack on the dark fortress, and the remainder hurried to Snape's small group on the flank of the castle.

The few who came up against Snape's group were no match for them, especially when Hermione pulled out several new tricks adapted from spells that Phaedra had explained to her. That group rescued nearly forty Muggles, mostly children and adolescents who had disappeared in the last week, as well as a dozen wizards and witches. Hermione would have nightmares for years about the bodies of the thirty or so people that were already dead when they arrived.

Draco and Harry arrived at the designated meeting point and waited for their promised guide. They could hear in the distance shouts and screams as the dark battled the light, and they sat in the darkness clutching each other's hands, hoping that no one they loved would be badly injured. When Lupin finally arrived, the two jumped about a meter in the air. There was no light and therefore no way to actually see anything, but once they calmed down a bit, both Chimera knew it was Remus by the color of his aura. Harry hadn't realized how much his perception of auras had improved until he realized that he could almost see Lupin by the light of his silvery blue life force.

"Come." Lupin said, recognizing the two Chimera by smell. "It's not far."

They met no one, and ran into no problems entering the fortress. As they came inside, the two

Chimera blinked watery eyes as magic lights struck their eyes painfully. Remus took them through damp, narrow corridors until they reached a wider, more brightly lit hall. Checking carefully before stepping into the open, Remus said, "This is where I leave you. I must go find the other group in the dungeons and lead them out." He showed them a handful of reddish pebbles. "I will leave you a path with these. Follow them out, as Phaedra wants us to all leave together."

"Like Hansel and Gretel." Harry remarked. Draco gave him a blank glance. "Muggle fairy tale." Harry explained. "They leave a trail of breadcrumbs to find their way home."

Remus reached out and grasped Harry's arm. The werewolf studied the familiar face of his best friend's son before smiling. "Good luck, Harry. Prongs would have been so proud of you."

Harry was memorizing the lined, worried face of the last true marauder as Remus gazed at him with love. "I'll see you on the other side." Remus nodded, eyes soft, and hurried down the corridor, dropping red stones as he went.

"Come on." Draco saw Harry's worried look, caressed the small of Harry's back with his fingertips, and said, "Let's get this over with."

"Right." Said Harry. "This should be easy, yes?"

"Yes." Draco said. "Easy as a Knockturn whore."

"That was so inappropriate." Harry whispered with a strangled laugh. "We're in a rather important moment of our lives here."

"Precisely." The blonde grinned. "Dirty jokes have a place in all situations."

Harry stopped walking down the corridor. He pushed Draco firmly against the wall and proceeded to give him a very short but very intense snog. "Now." Harry said, a bit out of breath. "Can we get this over with so that we can go home and finish this?"

"If you say so, my dear Scarhead." Draco flashed his husband a brilliant smile. "Voldemort won't know what hit him."

"Quiet! Order in the courtroom! QUIET!"

The hubbub in the courtroom died down abruptly at Amelia Bone's magically magnified voice. "Please continue, Mr. Malfoy-Potter."

"Right." Draco said, aristocratic eyebrow arched. "As I was saying, Harry killed Voldemort's body with a dagger poisoned with Delladiumus—" again the courtroom exploded with whispers. Draco rolled his silver eyes and shook back his platinum mane. "When his body died, his spirit tried to escape as it had done once before, but when it entered the consecrated vessel, I used

Harry's association with Voldemort through the curse scar to trap the spirit in a time loop, so that it would forever be in the moment of weakness between when the vessel was vacant but prepared and when it was locked and impervious. Harry could then destroy the occupied vessel by dissimilating and degrading the basic atomic structure, ensuring that the spirit could not escape to a secondary defensive construct."

The courtroom was quiet as they tried to figure out exactly what Draco was talking about. Harry rolled his eyes from his front row seat. Draco's rippling aura reflected his amusement at watching the perplexed looks on everyone's faces.

"Translation, please, Mr. Malfoy." Madam Bones said with irritation.

"Malfoy-Potter." Draco said insolently.

"Translation, please, Mr. Malfoy-Potter." Madam Bones grated out, her patience obviously wearing thin.

Draco sighed theatrically. "Harry coated a dagger with a poison called Delladiumus and used it to kill Voldemort's newly acquired body. Voldemort's first demise at the hands of Wonder-boy was only partially successful—"

"You are referring to Mr. Potter, I assume?" One of the Wizengamot broke in.

"Malfoy-Potter." Harry spoke up flatly. The whispers came again. It was one thing to have the son of a known Death Eater claiming to be married to The-Boy-Who-Lived, but it was quite another to have him confirm it publicly.

"As I was saying," Draco bit out, obviously a bit put out at the whispers. "Harry Malfoy-Potter was unsuccessful due to a precaution Voldemort took years before his first fall. By saving a bit of his body and keeping it 'alive' in a magical sense, his spirit would always have a foothold in this plane of existence. Killing Voldemort with the poison violently wrenched his spirit from the body and forcing it into the vial immediately rather than taking a few days while the spirit slowly disengaged from the body. In order for the spirit to enter the vessel with the blood, the vessel had to be vulnerable, so there was a delayed spell that would make the vessel impervious to all magic once the spirit entered the vessel."

Draco took a leisurely sip of water and smoothed down his robes. Madam Bones shifted in irritation and Draco smirked. "Where was I? Ah, yes. There was a split second when the spirit entered the vessel before the protections kicked in, which was when I placed the spirit and the vessel in a short time loop, so that the protections would never recognize the cue to snap into place. Then my husband separated every atom of the vessel and the spirit inside and degraded it into a less ordered and less energetic substance that would require an inordinate amount of energy to return to its previous form. We used the rest of that energy to destroy the body of Lord Voldemort and open a portal back into our own plane of existence."

The members of the Wizengamot whispered and shook their heads at each other. "How exactly is that possible, Mr. Malfoy? Malfoy-Potter." The man quickly corrected himself. "Where did you find the knowledge to open this portal in the first place? Or even to degrade these atom-things?"

Draco smiled. "I am afraid I am not able to tell you that, Mr. Gilberto. I am under oath to keep some secrets secret."

"You are under court order—" Madam Bones began.

"This is a secret that is not meant to be told." Harry broke in, voice deep and strong. "The wizarding world is not ready to hear all the secrets that this universe contains." Draco shivered at the dominating tone in the brunette's tone. That was the tone Harry had used that one time with the Gryffindor ties when he'd—right. He was in a courtroom, and erections were not the best fashion statement.

"But—" Mr. Gilberto began.

"No." Harry said flatly. "No. You are not worthy of all knowledge just because you want to know. My husband and I are leaving now. You have the testimony that you need. Voldemort is gone. Those Death Eaters who helped us in the battle have been granted pardon for their services to the side of the light, and it is not your place to ask what we do not wish to tell you." Harry stood tall, his power shimmering and spreading out around him like heat waves. The Wizengamot looked a bit startled at the previously mild-mannered young man as Draco stepped off the witness stand and strolled over to his husband.

"Shall we get dinner before we return to Hogwarts?" Draco asked, planting a kiss on Harry's lips. Harry smirked at him and draped an arm possessively about his blond lover.

"What a marvelous idea." Harry said as they strolled out, looking as fabulous as only a young, wealthy, in-love couple could.

"Smile for the camera, Scarhead." Draco said charmingly as Rita Skeeter and her constant companion, the photographer, pushed towards them through the crowd. The photographer was swinging his camera into position and Rita Skeeter had just opened her heavily painted mouth to demand an interview when the pair disappeared completely without a pop, a puff of smoke, or any sign at all that they had ever been there.

Hermione and Ron, holding hands high in the seats above the courtroom, smiled at each other over the commotion caused by the disappearance of the highest profile couple in the wizarding world. "I think Phaedra was a bad influence on Harry." Hermione said.

"Yeah." Ron agreed. "She certainly gave him a flair for the dramatic. He gets more poncey every day."

"More like Draco, you mean?" Hermione said. "Draco always was a bit overdramatic. He could

have been an actor on an American soap."

"A what?"

"Honestly, Ron. You really should have taken Muggle Studies instead of Divination. Spend your precious school years learning something useful instead of making things up." Hermione said as they pushed their way through the crowd.

"Divination's useful!" Ron retorted. "Trelawney's given Harry some good tip offs now and again."

"Learning how to bullshit your way through a homework assignment does not count as a quality learning experience." Hermione told him reproachfully.

"Hermione! Language!" Ron exclaimed, pretending to be shocked.

"How many times did you and Harry die of decapitation each year?"

"A couple." Ron said defensively. "It's all more of a warning than an actual prediction, really."

"If you say so." Hermione said, smiling at him. Ron promptly forgot what they were talking about as he stared at her. Hermione's amber eyes sparkled in the golden light of the Ministry halls, her rich chestnut hair framing a face filled with love. Ron felt somewhat overwhelmed that such a smile would be meant for him. *I must have finally stolen some of Harry's Chimera luck.* Ron thought absently.

"Come on." He said, wrapping his arm around her waist. "Let's catch up to the lovebirds."

Hi, all... sorry about the whole not-updating thing...I have begun higher education and am running around like a chicken with my head chopped off trying to keep up with everything. Especially arabic. Arabic is v. hard... i really do plan to finish this, though, and i just have the epilogue to write and then i will have finished my first ever story, which is very exciting...

anyway, hope this was up to par...

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Chapter: 22

Chapter the Epilogue

The first Potter-Malfoy child was welcomed into the world with the fanfare of a crown prince or a divine being. The boy, James Sirius Potter-Malfoy, gave his doting parents several scares during his first few years of life before becoming a typically indestructible Chimera. Young James was not at all pleased at the announcement that there was to be a second prince of the Potter-Malfoy legacy, and indeed, tried to sell his newborn brother several times within the first week of Lucius Tobias Potter-Malfoy's life.

The birth of the second Potter-Malfoy child came within a day of the birth of the third Weasley-Granger child. Lillian Gabrielle Weasley-Granger, a redheaded chit with far too many similarities to her twined uncles, was actually seven hours older, and she never let Lucius forget that most important fact.

Harry and Draco became the most photographed couple in the entire wizarding world, surpassing every prime minister and celebrity (even Lockhart) put together. Although many urged Harry to run for office, he knew full well what a mess he would make of politics, so he settled down in the renovated manor at Godric's Hollow and became a herpetologist. Draco sniffed in disgust at such plebian activities as working with *animals* and went on to design a clothing line that eventually expanded into a fashion powerhouse, not unlike a wizarding version of Armani or Versace.

When the time finally came for the Sorting Hat to do its job, the entire wizarding world was on tenterhooks to find out who was the bigger man in the Potter-Malfoy household, the Gryffindor or the Slytherin.

The Daily Prophet was delightfully scandalized when James Potter-Malfoy deserted his name sake and went into Slytherin. Harry shrugged when the reporters asked for his comment.

"At the age of four, the boy almost got enough money to buy his own pony when he sold Lucius to some bloke in Ireland. Can't really be surprised about this."

Draco Potter-Malfoy just gave the Prophet a smug smile and kissed his husband of twelve years.

The wizarding world again waited expectantly for Lucius to go to Slytherin with his brother, but received a bit of a shock. Lillian Weasley-Granger went to Slytherin instead, with Lucius Potter-Malfoy taking her expected spot in Gryffindor.

"Congratulations, Hermione." Draco Potter-Malfoy was heard by several reporters permanently assigned to the family. "At least one went the distance."

"Shut it, ferret." Ronald Weasley replied. The years had been kind to the red-headed Gryffindor, lending him an air of maturity that was often undermined by his sniping relationship with his best friend's husband.

"Daddy, you promised me a broom if I got onto the house team." Lillian broke in.

"I actually promised you a broom when you got onto the *Gryffindor* house team." Ronald replied.

"But Daddy, who's going to prevent the rise of a new Dark Lord if I'm not in Slytherin to do it?"

"A Gryffindor." Ronald replied, shaking his head at his only daughter.

"The next Dark Lord will be a Gryffindor." James put in, taking one of his brother's chips and bouncing Lucius' quick slap of power off a handy *Protego*.

"Bite your tongue!" Ronald exclaimed, looking scandalized.

"He's probably right, Daddy." Lillian said, sharing a smirk with her blonde godfather. "I bet it'll be cousin Percival. He's due for a roughing up, you know."

"Draco, please tell me you didn't teach her any violent spells while she was at the manor last week." Harry said with an accusing look.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about." The blonde replied, reaching over to steal a chip off of Harry's plate.

"I'm sure." Harry said with a shake off his head. He caught sight of the avid reporters and flicked a glamour shield into place.

The disappearance of the Chimera who had taught the couple so much was quite a mystery to the Wizarding world. After a brief but startling introduction to the rabid nature of the press, Phaedra had turned several reporters into donkeys with a trick that even Minerva McGonagall, the present Headmistress of Hogwarts, couldn't undo. She had then been arrested for the deed, but her prison stay lasted for approximately ten minutes before she simply got up and walked out of the building. Harry Potter-Malfoy managed to convince her to change the reporters back into humans again, but not for love, money, or magic could anyone convince her to remove the enormous ears.

She attended the Potter-Malfoy marriage, as well as the Granger-Weasley, before stepping into the full sunlight of a July morning and vanishing.

The Potter-Malfoys chose not to comment on the question of where Phaedra might have gone. Draco Potter-Malfoy almost took off the head of the reporter that asked him about her, but that was probably due to the queasiness of early pregnancy.

Through decades of difficult reporters, mischievous chimeric children, and Dark Lord upstarts, the famous Potter-Malfoy love endured, with just a touch of Chimera's luck to smooth the difficult paths of those with great power.

And they lived happily ever after.

The End.