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# Honor, Love, & Dignity

A Harry Potter Fan-Fiction:  
Sequel to A Consort's Loyalty

Desolate03

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## Chapter One

The night was cold and dark. Rain cried down from the heavens as a bedraggled figure ran through the night. He didn't have anywhere to go, much less hide as the angry voices of those chasing him came closer and closer...

The lightning strike lit up the sky and before his bright brown eyes stood a Manor house nearly as large as a small palace. He looked over his shoulder at the silhouettes chasing him and immediately ran for the iron gates that lay in front of him. He could not mistake that large intricate *M* that was engraved into the iron bars; this was Malfoy Manor. He squeezed his emaciated body through the bars and stumbled towards the large double doors yards away. As he looked back yet again the angry voices seemed to grow stronger and fiercer. He banged on the door until his knuckles were bloody, hoping and praying that someone, anyone would help.

The door opened, a soft light spilling forth into the desolate night. "Who in Goddess' name is...Remus?" Fathomless black eyes widened in surprise and then worry as Remus Lupin collapsed at his feet. "Remus, Remus!" Severus knelt down beside the slumped figure and then looked out into the night. At least twenty wizards and witches stood before him, held back at least fifteen feet by the powerful wards that surrounded the manor.

"Give it back to us man! You don't know what it is." A voice cried out. Severus narrowed his gaze and stood gracefully and then held up his hand that was glowing softly in the dim light.

"Is that you Mr. Zachariah Smith?" He said imperiously and arched a brow. "I for one would have never thought you'd degrade yourself by becoming part of an unseemly mob. And there is a man lying before you here, not some thing."

"P-Professor *Snape!*" The man's voice wavered and all those present were astounded that the man before them was once the most feared man of Hogwarts. "B-But Sir, it's just a werewolf and..."

"What of it?" Severus sneered. "Right now you are trespassing and to me all of you *just* look like a bunch of sniveling idiots."

"Who cares, the Malfoy family hasn't been here in almost a decade!" A brave soul announced. Severus saw red and as he opened his mouth to unleash something scathing a strong arm wrapped around his middle and both doors slammed open at the force of the magick surging from every pore of the figure standing by his side.

"You are on private lands. You have been on private lands for the last thousand acres or so. Now leave or I shall sue you for every worthless insignificant galleon you all possess." Lucius Malfoy sneered. Severus had never seen twenty wizards apparate so fast in his life.

"Thank you darling, but I think I need help with our burden here." Severus said and he quickly knelt over Remus' slumped body once more. Lucius eyed the werewolf with worry as he brushed past Severus and picked up the soggy man in his arms.

"Get inside beloved before you catch a cold. Wake Draco and Harry, I'm sure with his voice he could probably help heal him." Lucius said gently. Severus nodded; taking one last look at the man in his husband's arms and then hurried down the hallway. Lucius sighed sadly as he gazed down at the half dead man in his arms.

"What has happened here to warrant such hate?" He murmured, but received no answers in the silence that was left in his wake.

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One emerald green eye blearily opened as gentle hands shook him awake. Harry Potter blinked up in the darkness and then frowned in concern when he saw Severus' worried face. "Sev, what's wrong?"

"Remus Lupin just collapsed onto our doorstep." He said without preamble. Harry blinked in surprise and then he felt his entire body go numb.

"Is he dead?"

"No, but he may be if we can't heal him quickly enough. I will need Draco's help. I am so sorry to wake him up at this hour but..." Harry waved off his protest and then gently shook Draco awake. As always Draco's silvery blue eyes snapped open readily and he took one look at his husband and father's faces and was already getting his dressing robe.

"What has happened?" He asked. Harry repeated what Severus said and Draco lost his composure letting his mouth hang open in surprise. "Remus Lupin? Merlin, we haven't seen him in twenty years, almost."

"I know," Severus said as all three of them rushed towards one of the many guest rooms in the house. "That is one of the reasons why it is crucial that we get him stabilized, so that we can find out what exactly has happened since we've been away."

"I agree," Draco said. Harry said nothing but smiled tenderly at the wave of gentle understanding and love that washed over him from his Consort.

*Thank you beloved.*

*I need no thanks, Harry, just stand back and let us work and we can save your honorary Godfather.* Draco told him quite steadily as Draco and Severus rushed to the bedded figure's side and began working diligently on him. Lucius backed away and eased Harry out into the small sitting room where he had lit a fire.

"We will sit here and wait." Lucius said softly. Harry nodded and glared at the flames broodingly. The silence between them was comfortable yet fraught with tension. Nearly twenty minutes past by before Harry spoke up.

"Something has happened here, hasn't it?"

"Yes," Lucius said quietly.

"Remus is in the middle of it?" Harry asked.

"No necessarily the middle of it, but some of what has happened to him has stemmed from it, yes."

"Damn them, damn them all." Harry said through clenched teeth. Lucius raised his steady cerulean gaze to Harry's tormented form and said quietly,

"Do not get angry, not yet, first we must figure out just what is going on and then, only then, can you get angry; for then you will probably have something to be angry about."

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Remus cracked open one eye and then the other, and finally gazed blearily around himself. A smooth husky tenor was singing softly in the room and it was so beautiful that he opened his other eye and began to turn to see who it was. Remus gasped as pain lanced through every cell and every pore of his body. The singing stopped and a figure moved in front of his vision.

"D-Draco Malfoy," He whispered hoarsely. Draco smiled and nodded his head, delicate little bells jingled softly as he did.

"Thank Merlin you are alright, we were worried about you." He said, his voice was melodious and carried the distinct lilt of the Elves in it. "Harry was worried in particular, where have you been? It's been twenty years since we've seen you." His silvery blue eyes had dimmed with sadness, but Remus was confused, why would Draco Malfoy and Harry be on speaking terms?

A door opened outside his vision and then he saw emerald green eyes rest on his figure and a smile appear on an older yet familiar face. "Remus, it's good to see you." Harry said quietly as he came up behind Draco and wrapped his arms around the lithe man like it was something he did every day.

By the confused look on Remus' face, Harry knew that where ever he had been, news of his marriage and leaving the Wizarding World hadn't reached his ears. "Remus, this is my Consort Draco. A lot has changed my friend, in your absence, but we will get to that later. What has happened here?"

"You don't know?" Remus asked in surprise. Harry shook his head and then kissed Draco's temple whispering something as he did. Draco nodded demurely and swept out of the room gracefully before shutting the door behind him.

"Remus, in my Seventh year, it came to my knowledge that Draco was an Elf by birth and that I was his mate. We married and bonded to each other. We've been bonded for twenty years now. You do know that Voldemort is dead right?" Remus nodded carefully, finding that any movement caused all his injuries to protest. "Well, after that Draco, Lucius, Severus, and I left the Wizarding world pretty much all together. The only reason we came back for a brief period eleven or twelve years ago was because our children got their Hogwarts letters." Harry shrugged, "We let them stay for a year but word had reach

my ears that many people were giving them trouble, so we left again. We come back to the manor to have some time to ourselves usually. It is why we are here now."

"Children?" Remus asked and Harry grinned.

"Yeah, Draco and I have a set of twins Galen and Aziza and then our youngest is Demetrius. Lucius and Severus got married and bonded as well. They too have a set of twins, Dysis and Adonia, and then their little one Sebastian. The children go to school now in the Elven realm, they are there now. Their break was last week."

"Merlin, so many things have happened..." Remus trailed off and his warm brown eyes dulled in pain. Harry knelt by his side and took his hand in his.

"I've often thought about you, what happened? Where did you disappear to?"

"At first it was a mission for the Order." Remus said sadly, "And Dumbledore just gave me more and more missions to do. By the time I realized what was happening, Voldemort was dead, you were gone, and I was handed even more missions than before. The wizarding world, after the war, was total chaos. So many people had lost husbands, wives, sisters, brothers...their own children. There was so much pain, and so much anger." Remus paused and then he stared at Harry.

"Many were upset that you just left and didn't stay to help. Others began to hate you because it became known that you aligned yourself with the Malfoy's and Severus. Tension was high and anything and anyone just even a little bit other than wizards and witches were ostracized. The hatred has just built upon itself so much that people like me can't even find jobs. No one will hire us. Prejudice is running rampant through Britain and Dumbledore truly is doing nothing to stop it." Harry laid a calming hand on Remus' shoulder.

"Rest easy now, you're safe. You can stay with us as long as you like." Harry said smiling. He squeezed Remus' hand gently. "It is really good to see you."

"It's good to see you too." Remus said. Harry touched his temple and let soothing magick glide over his mind. Remus' breathing evened out into a deep sleep as Harry rose, a frown marring his handsome face as he walked out of them room.

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Lucius looked up from his position by the fireplace as Harry walked into the small sitting room. His eyes looked haunted and Lucius felt a sense of foreboding wash over him. In a detached voice Harry relayed everything that he'd heard from Remus. Lucius was surprised it was as bad as all of that.

"But what about their trade with the Elven communities," Severus protested, "We haven't heard of anything of the sort through the vendors and such."

"Perhaps it is just those that they equate to 'dark' magick, such as werewolves, vampires, and dark wizards." Draco said softly. He sighed sadly, "It seems that things haven't changed that much after all."

"We really can't say for sure until we venture out into it." Lucius said gravely, "After all, Malfoy Manor is really self-sustaining if you include the crops and the taxes from the village that we receive. We've had no need to really go into regular wizarding society."

"I believe that we have reason to now." Harry said, "If it is as bad as Remus says it is, there is a lot of injustice going on. And as usual, it seems to stem from Dumbledore."

"I guess we will have to pay him a little visit tomorrow, won't we Harry?" Lucius asked arching a regal brow. Harry smiled grimly.

"I guess we shall."

## Chapter Two

Lucius kissed Severus softly on the mouth before stepping out into the crisp cool morning with Harry. "Have no fear Severus, Harry and I will be fine." Lucius said gently as he pulled up the hood to his silvery grey cloak. It hid his startling silver hair and his ears from all those present. Severus nodded but Lucius watched as he bit his bottom lip in worry.

*Draco, take care of your Papa.* Lucius said softly into his son's mind. Draco, who had been helping Harry into his own cloak, nodded and then smiled worriedly.

"Please be careful both of you." He said softly, kissing his father on the cheek and then kissing his Husband on the lips chastely. Harry nudged him gently under his chin and winked.

"Father and I will be careful and we will be alright, there is no sense in both you and Papa worrying so much." Harry said wisely as he too, lifted the hood to his emerald green cloak and pulled it over his head, hiding his face and his trademark lightning bolt scar. Draco nodded and discreetly clasped hands with Severus as they both watched their Husbands fade from sight.

"I have a bad feeling about this." Severus murmured somberly. Draco looked at his other father with a sad knowing expression in his eyes. Through the years that Lucius and Severus had been truly bonded, some of Lucius' talent of foresight and prophecy had seeped into Severus, causing the wizard to sometimes to feel how situations would end. And almost always his predictions would turn out accurate. This time though, Draco was hoping that he was wrong.

"Come," Draco said, "we have Remus to look after, that should help us keep our minds off of what our Husbands are doing for a time." Severus nodded and both consorts retreated into Malfoy Manor.

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Diagon Alley was as it always had been; noisy, jubilant, and overcrowded. Lucius was glad the cloak hid his distaste for it. After being in the forests and open palace of the High Seer's home for so long, the crowded buildings, and shouting grated on his nerves. Next to him Harry chuckled, "I feel the same way Father mine; I had forgotten how chaotic this place could be."

"Well, I would like to forget again and this time for good." Lucius muttered as he bypassed someone about to spill something that looked toxic onto his person. Though all appeared normal, Lucius and Harry both could feel the underlying tension that was in the air. And it was all due to them. Eyes that were wary and vaguely hostile watched them from every corner as they wove their way through the alley. No one did anything, but Harry slow let his wand inch into his hand anyway. Though over the years he had learned a significant amount of wand-less magick, he just felt that it would be easier to deal with people if they still thought he had to use one.

"Perhaps, we should've just apparated to Hogwarts?" Harry asked lightly as he and Lucius glided through the alleyway, hostile stares on both sides now.

"Perhaps," Lucius said, "But then we wouldn't have seen the extent of this hatred. I had my reasons for coming here first." He murmured, shaking his head slightly. The tinkling of bells was soft but someone nearby had heard it anyway.

"What the hell are you?" He man practically growled. "No man I know would weave bells into his hair." He sneered at them both. Harry and Lucius stopped out of sheer surprise of the vehemence of the retort.

"Then you haven't met an Elf have you?" Lucius said slowly, "'Tis custom for us to weave bells and chimes into our hair." A low murmur went up through the crowd and Harry turned to face those at their back while Lucius stared at the one man who chose to confront them.

"An Elf, I thought that all of your kind were aware that you are not welcome to step foot into our world ever again. We'll trade with you no problem, but you are no longer welcome to go in and out as you please." The man narrowed his eyes. "And what's with hiding both of your faces, take the hoods off."

"No." Lucius said softly, "I will not when I am the subject of such hatred." The wand came up to eye level and the crowd around them seemed to come in closer. Lucius saw a number of wands ready to go up at a moment's notice; but he wasn't too concerned. He had enough power himself to stop them all, but then again he would never use it to just protect himself from something that could be remedied by a few choice words.

"Take the hood down from your head, Elf, and your Elf friend too."

*Father?* Harry asked his mental voice giving away his worry at the situation.

*Let's do as they say.*

*Father, this is not going to go over well.* Harry said and Lucius sighed sadly as he lifted his gloved hands to his hood.

*I know, but it seems we have no choice.* Lucius said and he felt Harry nod behind him. Lucius flipped his hood back with all the nonchalant elegance and arrogance he had and watched as the man's eyes widened so far they nearly popped out their his sockets. A resounding gasp alerted him that Harry had to have taken down his hood and was staring defiantly at the wizards and witches in front of him.

"Lucius *Malfoy*," The man hissed and then he tossed a look over Lucius' shoulder, "and what do you know? Our savior, Harry bloody Potter or is it Malfoy now as well?"

"What does it matter?" Harry said calmly. "It is none of your concern. Father, it seems leaving here is the best solution."

"You are right." Lucius said and slowly let his power and magick build in his eyes until they glowed brightly. He looked over at Harry and sneered. "Are you ready son?"



"Always," Harry replied and Lucius laid a calm and graceful hand on Harry's shoulder and they both vanished before all of Diagon Alley.

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"Merlin, what is going on here?" Harry snapped as Lucius and he strode up the steps of Hogwarts. Lucius said nothing but he agreed with his son in law's assessment. Whatever was happening would almost be in direct link to Dumbledore, whether he meant it or not. Lucius flicked a hand at the large doors of Hogwarts' entrance and watched as the doors hastily opened to them so they didn't have to slow down their progress one bit.

The portraits began murmuring as soon as their identities were known and Lucius scanned the school with his own magick and found that all the teachers were with the students in the dining hall for lunch. He and Harry shared a look before making their way there.

Hermione Weasley, the Charms Professor, heard the doors to the Great Hall open and looked up in curiosity and promptly gasped and dropped her goblet. Her reaction gave the other professors pause and they too looked towards the door. "Harry?" She asked faintly. The noise had died to nothing as the students stared up at the two tall men in awe. Their auras were turbulent and a slow helix of power was churning around both of them. "Harry is that you?"

"Hello Granger, or should I say Weasley now?" Harry arched an eyebrow and Hermione was taken aback by his abrupt greeting.

"It's Weasley," she said numbly.

"Oh well then congratulations are in order, but I'm sure they are some years past due."

"Godfather Harry! Grandpa Lucius!" Two voices chorused and they both smiled as they approached the Slytherin table and were hugged by two of the older students. One was nearly as tall as they were and nearly as built with muscle, his dark brown eyes held a wealth of knowledge in them and his dark brown hair was cut short and swept back.

"Damian, it's been awhile, how are you doing?" Harry asked smiling, "and how are your fathers?" Damian Crabbe-Goyle smirked.

"Father is going to be upset that you didn't tell him you were coming and Papa will want to invite you and Grandpa to dinner. Helen will probably show up as well, she's been wanting to fatten you up for ages." Harry laughed. Vincent and Gregory had found a surrogate mother, Helen, to have children. One of them was Luther, who had graduated last year and the other was the young man in front of him. "How is your brother?"

"Flourishing, as usual." He rolled his eyes but eyed the exuberant yet beautiful girl next to him who was clinging to Lucius in a very non-Slytherin like fashion. "That's his fiancé, all though I have no idea why he

would ever go for her." Flashing blue eyes glared at him in exasperation and a cute pert nose sniffed disdainfully.

"I'll have you know that Luther darling loves me, you nitwit. Godfather Harry do not pay attention to anything this buffoon says to you, he's mentally challenged." She flicked lush dark blond locks across her impeccably dressed shoulder and grinned slyly. Harry looked on bemused as she and Lucius plotted. Yes, Gloria Zambini was as sly as Pansy and twice as clever as her father Blaise.

"We will visit with both of you later," Lucius said glancing at the Head Table, "but right now we have to talk with Dumbledore."

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"It is good to see you after so many years Harry," Dumbledore said with his usual twinkle in his eyes and ready smile on his face. Harry merely gave a regal nod of his head and stepped behind Lucius, who was sitting in one of the chairs across from Dumbledore's desk. Hermione was occupying the other chair and Ronald Weasley, Quidditch Coach for Hogwarts, was standing behind her, glaring daggers at them both.

"This is not a social call Dumbledore." Harry said quietly, "Remus fell half dead at our doorstep last night at the Manor. Father and I as well as our Consorts, Severus and Draco, would like to know, what has happened to this world to warrant such hatred from one who had given up so much of himself for their betterment?"

"Times have changed Harry, and trust is not easily won back after someone such as Voldemort has tried to destroy all their happiness."

"And yet you let them torment and belittle magickal creatures that have more right to be in this world than they?" Lucius asked in a disgusted tone. "I was nearly accosted in Diagon Alley because of the mere fact that I am an Elf. Remus Lupin, though he is a werewolf, is still or was a much respected wizard. He can't even find work for himself now that all these absurd new laws have been passed.

"Those laws were not made lightly." Ron said tightly, "They protect us."

"From what?" Harry asked in exasperation, "What do you need protecting from?"

"Anything related to the Dark Arts, including dark creatures."

"Such as werewolves?" Harry asked tightly, "Remus didn't get bitten by a werewolf on purpose Weasley." Ron ground his teeth as his face flushed red.

"I know that Harry, I'm not stupid."

"Could have fooled me spouting all that drivel." Harry snapped and then he turned to Dumbledore. "Are you saying that you have let the Ministry ban people such as Remus and others from working just for the mere fact that they are considered dark?"

"Well, once you had left, many people were just scared of the new world that came after Voldemort's demise. Many lives were lost Harry..."

"...I know that Headmaster," Harry said grimly, "I was at the head of the battle, if your memory is lacking. It isn't right what they are doing. They are persecuting innocent people and magical beings because of one insane man's folly."

"Yes, and that man was one of the strongest and most powerful dark wizards this world's generation had ever seen and people were scared. What was I supposed to do?" Dumbledore asked. Lucius sighed and stood up gracefully.

"You should have used your sway in the Ministry to limit what they were able to do. Now speculation and hatred has run rampant through these streets. I can see now that you will not try to undo what has been done. Come Harry, let us go home; I have had enough of the Wizarding World." Lucius said softly as he pulled on his cloak. Harry nodded and lifted his cloak onto his shoulders.

"Harry you are leaving again?" Hermione asked in surprise. Harry frowned in her direction.

"Why wouldn't I? I am no longer accepted as 'the Savior' of the Wizarding World, I am merely a traitor, am I not?"

"You were the one who chose to side with the Malfoy's." Ron grumbled. Harry smiled at him.

"And I haven't ever regretted my decision. I have a wonderful Consort, three beautiful children, and an entire family around me. It is more than I had ever dreamed of." Harry said quietly. "Father, let's go home." Lucius nodded and placed a hand on Harry's shoulder and both of them disappeared from the room.

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Dumbledore watched them go with solemn blue eyes. He gazed at Ronald and saw the man looking back at him.

"Follow them."

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Draco looked up from the book he was reading as Harry walked through the doors. He smiled and then sighed as Harry kissed him deeply. "How was the outing?"

"Awful, there is so much prejudice going around Draco, if no one is like them they are ostracized." Harry sighed sadly and then smiled slightly as he took in Remus' sleeping face. "How is he?"

"Better, he is healing nicely now that he's not running for his life." Draco said primly and Harry grinned.

"It is good to hear and..." Harry trailed off as a house elf came to the door.

"Lord Potter, sir, there is a man with red hair on the lands." The house elf stated. Harry narrowed his eyes and then nodded.

"Get rid of him."

"Yes, sir, Lord Potter, sir," the house elf replied, snapping its fingers and disappearing with a crack. Draco looked over at Harry worriedly.

"What is it about today that you are not telling me?"

"Besides the fact that Father and I nearly got mauled in Diagon Alley? Dumbledore is up to his old tricks again it seems. He didn't even stop the Ministry from passing all these laws. Any dark creature can find no work here at all. It's hopeless for them. I am sure many of them have moved."

"Ah, so that's what Blaise and Pansy were saying in their last letter to us." Harry looked at him blankly. "Oh, you were at the Council meeting when it came and I was too busy afterwards to tell you about it." Draco blushed at recalling just what they had been doing and Harry's wide grin showed he remembered too.

"What were they talking about my darling?"

"They said that a large group of people had been moving from the British Wizarding World to neighboring countries who worked in harmony with its darker counterparts." Harry frowned at that. "Even Vince and Greg and Blaise and Pansy were considering going, but they don't want to pull their children out of school."

"Are they in a bad way?" Harry asked in concern. Draco shook his head.

"Of course not. The Crabbe, Goyle, Zambini, and Parkinson families all live like the Malfoy family, in that they have a small village that is forever bountiful. They can be self-sustaining, perhaps not on our level, but they will never want for money. Besides, Vincent Crabbe-Goyle is huge on the international market in business and Greg is an international doctor as well. Blaise and Pansy have upped their fortunes as well by going internationally and we have been in the same market for some time now. Of course we all own a lot of British establishments as well, but no quite so many."

"They might leave then too, after Damien and Gloria graduate?"

"Yes, they are thinking about it." Draco admitted quietly. "I asked them to come visit, but there is even a law prohibiting against that it seems and the Ministry keeps watch over all those people who fought in the war that were 'dark'."

"I don't understand it at all." Harry said sadly. Draco clasped Harry's thigh gently and squeezed it in sympathy.

"I feel for you beloved, but we must remain strong. It will help Remus recover. After all, we are a family are we not?" Draco said with calm acceptance and understanding radiating from his eyes. Harry took Draco's hand and kissed it.

"You are truly magnificent, my Consort."

"I do aim to please, my Husband."

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Severus slowly massaged Lucius' temples as the older couple sat in a contemplative silence in their large suite in the North Wing of the Manor. "I take it nothing went as planned?" Severus asked lightly.

"No, everything seems much worse than I had ever feared."

"And what does Harry think of all of this?"

"He is confused and angry. It truly is maddening; did all the sacrifices he made mean nothing to these people? It is almost as if Voldemort is still living, the only difference is that there are still people around and walking free, instead of in chains."

"Although, hatred is another version of those same chains," Severus said softly as he kissed Lucius' temple. Lucius smiled up at Severus and then chuckled softly.

"You are right dear heart, but how can we tell them that when all they seem to want to know is that we are evil because we sided with the 'dark' side?"

"We protected them nearly at the cost of our own lives; if they are not grateful then they didn't need that protecting." Severus said severely.

"It is cruel yes, but it seems this is how it is going to stay." Lucius said simply. They sat in silence for several minutes before Lucius spoke again. "How is our patient?"

"He is very well. Right now he is in a healing sleep. He should feel right as rain tomorrow. What will we do with Remus? We were going to go home tomorrow." Severus asked.

"I was thinking that we might take him with us?" Lucius posed it as a question. "It seems to me that this world has done him not a lot of good for years. I am sure that what he needs right now is a change of scenery and the healing qualities of the Elven Realm."

"I say you are right." Severus murmured. "It is exactly what he needs."

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Remus opened his eyes readily and blinked at the dim lighting. "You are awake." Remus turned his head to find Draco sitting on a sofa and Harry sprawled out beside him, his head lying in Draco's lap sleeping. "How do you feel?"

"A lot better," Remus said in surprise. "What did you do to me?"

"Sang to you and Severus shoved healing potions down your throat." Draco said, his eyes dancing in merriment. "I am High Bard of the Bard House in our realm. When I sing, sometimes I am able to heal." Draco eyed him knowingly, "You needed much healing, Remus."

"I thank you for it, but now I should be on my way."

"And where will you go?" Draco asked coolly, "This world affords you no such luxury at having a place to stay. Besides you are still not fully recovered, you may feel very well, but there is a limit to what my talents and Severus' talents can do." Draco materialized a tray of tea and small pastries before them both and poured Remus a cup. "Come, sit slowly and drink this and you need to eat something. This small snack will help you get through the night before tomorrow morning."

"Thank you very much Draco." Remus said as he sipped the herbal tea. He glanced down at Harry's unruly head and smiled softly. "How has he been all these years?" Draco smiled warmly as he slowly ran his elegant fingers through Harry's black unruly locks.

"Oh he's a wonderful Husband and a wonderful Father. He is Overlord of the north part of the Elven Realm and it suits him very well. I think being away from this world has helped to heal him in many ways. He is no longer so bitter about the injustices of his childhood." Draco smiled, "Now all he thinks about is making sure that his children never have to go through what he went through. He has missed you though. We've all wondered at one point in time what happened to you."

"Dumbledore happened," Remus said sighing. "I wanted to keep in contact but the Order had always been very strict about that. 'It could ruin the mission; give away your location...' On and on the excuses went until finally I stopped asking. By the time I got back to Britain the Ministry had already passed all those crazy laws of theirs and then Dumbledore said he had no more use for me and a few others that worked directly underneath him, and that we couldn't find work anywhere else." Remus paused as he nibbled on a small scone and then looked up at Draco once more. "The others left for other countries, many of the prominent wizarding families did as well. Unbeknownst to the Ministry and all its minions, the economy of Wizarding Britain has dropped significantly. With the wealthiest families leaving and closing down their business or selling them, there is no new capital coming in from anywhere.

"Britain has basically ostracized itself from all its surrounding neighbors. I mean who would willingly stop working for say the Malfoy, Zambini, Parkinson, Crabbe, and Goyle families? It is madness I tell you. When Blaise and Pansy Zambini got married there was nearly a riot, many thought that they should have been put in Azkaban for what they had done during the war, even when finding out that they had been spies for the Order all along. A lot of families said that they would withdraw their children from Hogwarts if the Zambini girl was going to go there. And then Vincent and Gregory Crabbe-Goyle married and it was even more of a mess. Here are two very powerful and wealthy wizards who wanted to have a surrogate mother produce their children. A lot of people physically shunned them because of it, when most of the time, something like that is truly welcome." Remus smiled, "I actually introduced them to Helen, who at the time was in a very bad way."

"Why was that?" Draco asked curiously. Remus smiled sadly as he gazed at him.

"Because her husband of one year had been a dark wizard; he'd been working secretly with Voldemort and had been found out. They gave him the Kiss and then threw his wife out onto the streets with nothing save the clothes on her back. His entire fortune was turned over to the Ministry as 'royalties' and then that was it. She was working in a shabby shop near Knockturn Alley when I happened upon her and heard her story. When she had heard what happened to Vincent and Gregory she was outraged and offered to help. I set up the meeting and all three of them liked each other right away." Remus grinned, "She's had two of their children now and I think she said that they were thinking of a third sometime soon. I am sure you have met her by now?"

"Yes, she's quite a character." Draco said chuckling softly. Helen Deveroux was a curvy beautiful witch with playful hazel eyes and a shock of rich auburn colored hair. She was very bright and loved to laugh. Luther and Damian doted on her endlessly as did their fathers. The family was by no means conventional but the love and respect they had for each other couldn't be denied. "Well, that is enough talking for now. I want you to rest. Tomorrow will be a busy day; we go back to the Eleven Realm in the late morning." Draco paused and looked Remus dead in the eye, "I am sure that Father and Papa will ask that you accompany us. You need a chance to heal Remus and you need a change of scenery. Our realm can provide all of that and more."

"I don't want to impose."

"You could never impose on us." Harry's sleep muddled voice rasped out. Remus looked down into the hooded emerald gaze and Harry smiled a little smile. "You are family."

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Blinding blue eyes opened readily and glanced around his opulent bedroom before gracefully striding from the room in a vision of midnight blue. Servants scurried around him and bowed lowly before returning to their duties. The deceptively young man smiled at them all as he made his way down the hall.

"Your Excellency," A servant said softly bowing low before he gazed up at the almost blinding masculine beauty of his master. Blue eyes glowed with untold power and magick, his full lips curved into a ready smile.

**"Good Morning Drake, how are you doing today?"** His voice was a deep baritone that sent shivers of desire racing down this servant's spine. An elegant hand reached back and pushed a lock of ebon hair back behind his ear that was pierced from the bottom all the way to the top. The dark ebon locks were sprinkled here and there in the water fall of auburn that fell along the man's shoulder and stopped mid back.

"I am doing well Sire. I have good news."

"**Oh?**" he asked, as he stepped into the light and it reflected off of his silver scales that covered the left side of his face.

"Your mate is going to be arriving in the Elven Realm soon, Prince Dion." Drake said. Crown Prince Dion, the Third Head Ancient of the Dragon Clans, smiled widely, his sharp canines glinting in the light and his silver wings flapped gently behind him.

**"That is the best news I've received in twenty years."** He purred, **"Tell Mother and Father that I will be going to visit our friends in the Elven Realm in four hours. It is time to meet my mate."**

"From what we gather, it has been very hard on him these twenty years, because of the laws that the Wizarding world made against him and other dark creatures like them. Dion frowned but shrugged, his brilliant blue eyes glowing with serious intent and all festering anger.

**"They will rue the day they hurt the mate of a Dragon."** He said simply. **"Come we have much to do."** And Drake hurriedly followed his Prince as he walked out of the large palace he inhabited overlooking nearly the entire magickal realm.



### Chapter Three

When Remus woke the next time, a familiar figure was sitting by his side. An elegant hand was holding a Potions book, the other flipping the pages and inky black hair moved slightly at each turn of the page letting out a peal of song as the bells woven into the plaits in his hair moved.

"Who are you?" Remus asked softly. The head came up and an eyebrow arched in disbelief.

"Come now Lupin, I know that you haven't grown that senile in your old age." Remus' eyes widened at the distinct drawl and scorn in that deep voice. Ebon eyes fairly devoured him in their dry amusement.

"Severus?" He asked in awe. Severus smiled softly and bowed his head.

"The one and only, how are you doing this morning?"

"Very well, thanks to you and your son Draco." Remus said. Severus smiled at him and closed his book before getting up regally and busied himself with getting Remus' breakfast ready.

"The house elves brought this earlier, but you were sleeping so soundly and peacefully that I didn't want to wake you. You need as much rest as you can manage before we begin our trip home."

"What? Where are we going?"

"It has been decided that you need a little sabbatical of sorts my friend. We are taking you back to the Elven Realm with us. There you will be able to rest, relax, and heal from the last twenty years or so." Severus scowled, "This world has become far worse than any of us could imagine. It is not safe for us here."

"When was this decided?" Remus asked.

"After Harry and Lucius went to go talk with the Headmaster," Severus said tersely, "They also went to Diagon Alley and nothing went as planned."

"They aren't hurt, are they?" Severus scoffed and tucked some of the loose inky strands of his hair back behind his ear.

"Lucius is the most powerful High Seer the Elven Realm has ever seen and Harry Potter is well...Harry Potter; it will take more than a few coarse words and actions to harm them." Severus placed the finished tray in front of Remus on his lap and then sat down next to him on the bed. "It is you we are most concerned for. You have had to endure this cruelty far longer than we have. It is in your best interest that you come with us," Severus smirked, "who knows, you may find that you like living there."

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Draco finished brushing his long locks before doing one last glance over the room to make sure they weren't forgetting anything. He made his way back into the bedroom and rolled his eyes skyward at the figure of his husband still languishing in bed, fully dressed this time, but still asleep.

"Come along Harry, we are leaving." Draco announced loudly and slapped at Harry's booted feet for good measure. Harry grunted and blinked owlishly at him. "Come beloved, we must make good time." Harry nodded and sighed as he stood and followed Draco out of their rooms. "What is wrong Harry?" Draco asked him in concern.

"This world was my safe haven and now, now just look at it." Harry said solemnly.

"People change Harry," Draco said calmly albeit a little sadly as he felt his husband's hurt through their bond. "However, they are them and you are you. Don't let what they do shadow your perception of every other Wizarding community out there love. Remember that Britain is merely a fraction of the world." Harry nodded and kissed Draco's forehead as he passed him into the hall. Draco sighed; Harry just needed time to think and since they were going home, Draco knew that he would be a lot calmer there than here in the Wizarding World.

"Damnable place this has turned out to be." He murmured as he let the house elves finish their packing. One handed him two cloaks, one a rich emerald and the other a shimmering dark blue. Draco said his thanks and then turned and left the room, not looking back.

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Remus felt his mouth gape at the sheer size of the Palace in front of him. "Careful Remus you might catch flies." Severus said dryly in amusement. Remus snapped his jaw shut and narrowed his eyes at the man, who in turn just laughed at him. "This is the High Seer's Palace, Lucius and my home, as well as our children's." His voice softened at the mention of them and Remus smiled at the thought. This place had been exactly what Severus had needed.

"Will I be staying with you?" He asked as he looked around. Everywhere he looked there were trees and sunlight. Elegant houses were built around the palace as far as he could see, and Elves populated the streets to watch them ride by. Most, he noticed, bowed low to Lucius and Severus and the Elves were equally reverent when bowing to Harry and Draco as well. He got a number of curious looks himself, but he supposed that since he was with these four men that no one would impolitely ask questions about his presence.

"No, you will be staying with Draco and Harry at their Manor. It is another hour or so ride to the North of here." Lucius told him with a small smile. "Severus and Draco thought that you would adjust better surrounded by woods and not by people so much. We shall visit all of you in due time, and..." Lucius trailed off as his head shifted to the side as a light wind wafted through the town. Remus watched in bemusement as the man smiled. "It seems we have company coming."

"Who's coming Luc?" Severus asked.

"Dion, it seems he is stopping in for a visit." Lucius chuckled and Severus grinned knowingly. Draco and Harry both grinned at the name as well and that left only Remus in the dark.

"Who is Dion?"

**"I am Dion, and who might you be?"** Remus gasped and turned on his horse just in time to see a being with wings land gracefully on the cobbled streets next to him. Remus felt his heart hammer and his blood boil as he stared into endlessly brilliant blue eyes. Remus was stunned; it was like he couldn't tear his eyes away from him.

"I-I- well that is to say...my name's Remus." Remus finished lamely. Those blue eyes lit up and the being grinned, flashing straight white teeth and a pair of elongated canines that could rival a wolf's any day.

**"Well it is a pleasure to meet you Remus, I am Dion as I said before. I assume that Luc and Sev have made you feel welcome?"** Dion asked him. That deep baritone raised the hairs on Remus' neck like no other.

"Y-Yes they have. Must you talk like that?" Remus asked. Dion arched an eyebrow and then flicked some ebon locks from his face, letting them fall haphazardly in the mane of auburn running down his leather clad back. "Your voice...it carries such weight I..."

**"It is because of my age and my race, young one. Can you not tell what I am?"** Dion asked him. Remus skittishly looked over at the four men that he had traveled with. All of them were watching the exchange with barely concealed amusement. Remus frowned but shied away from those looks and the brilliant stare in front of him. He blinked and then blinked again just to make sure he was seeing right. Were those scales? Yes, they were; the left side of his face was scales. They bristled and flowed with every movement Dion made. And then Remus focused on the wings, large beautiful leathery looking wings that were tucked behind his back.

"You are a Dragon." Remus breathed in amazement, "Merlin, I have never seen a Dragon before." Dion laughed in amusement and Remus ducked his head, his face burning.

**"Do not hide Remus, your curiosity is refreshing, but perhaps you should save your questions for some other occasion. I have come to talk with Luc and Sev for right now."** Dion eyed him up and down as if he wanted to devour him whole. **"We will see each other again."** With that said, Dion walked towards Lucius and Severus, the two men had gotten off their horses by then and led Dion into their home, leaving Draco, Harry, and Remus to look after them.

"That was refreshing." Draco said with a smile, "Remember the last time Dion stopped by, I thought the entire town was going to go into a frenzy trying to make sure everything was perfect for him." Harry laughed and nodded in agreement, as he motioned for Remus to follow him.

"I don't understand. What is so special about him?" Remus asked as he caught up to both of them as they made their way north of the city.

"Dion is not merely a Dragon," Draco said smiling, "He is the Crown Prince and Heir to the entire Dragon Dynasty his parents created." Remus paled, and Harry laughed at his expression.

"It's alright Remus; Dion is very informal when talking amongst friends. He probably thought of you as a breath of fresh air. Most times he bemoans that he cannot go anywhere without people groveling at his feet."

"Oh." Remus said, but he still couldn't shake that fact that he felt that he was missing something. "What does the Dragon Dynasty consist of?" Draco and Harry looked at each other and Remus knew they were speaking telepathically. Draco looked back at him with a mischievous glint in his eye and then spoke lightly.

"The Dragon Dynasty does not just cover all the lands the Dragons inhabit; it covers all Magickal worlds put together. According to legends it is said that the Dragons were put here on this Earth before any other magickal being knew of life. So in essence this entire world is their kingdom and they rule over it."

"Bloody hell," Remus said faintly, "Every realm? That is...incredible. I never knew..."

"Most people don't. There were no books at the time, no written language available, so it was spoken history for a long period of time. After years became decades and decade became centuries, those who knew of the Dragons past on or let the truth fade into legend. For the most part they stay out of the politics and war that happen in our everyday magickal societies, but every now and again they do appear and that means big trouble for whoever was dumb enough to get on their bad sides." Draco shrugged, "Twenty years ago, one of those people happened to be Voldemort. We asked them for help and the Three Ancients responded. You will meet Draconis and his wife sooner or later, they too stop by from time to time."

"This is unbelievable." Harry smiled at him

"Welcome to our life."

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"You are certain he is the one?" Lucius asked, "You must be absolutely sure Dion, Remus is in a fragile state right now, and I'm sure that Harry and Draco have filled him in on just who you are." Dion paced the elegant office restlessly.

***"I am sure, my blood is on fire in his presence and my dragon heart cries out for the blood of those who dared to hurt him. He must be the one; if not then this must be a trick from the Lady Herself.***

"Severus chuckled at Dion's antics and handed him a glass of wine.

"I am sure that the Lady would never do that to her most precious children." Severus commented dryly, but then he turned serious. "There is a lot of hurt inside his heart Dion; he cannot be hurt anymore." Dion stared at the High Seer and Consort all seriousness in his eyes, face, and posture.

***"He will never hurt again; I will make sure of it."***

"Then he is yours, but be gentle, and you will have to go through Harry and Draco to get to him."

**"Bloody hell,"** Dion groaned as he rolled his eyes. Severus and Lucius smirked at him and then chuckled.

"Blessings to you and yours Dion, may the Goddess guide you in all of your endeavors." Lucius said bowing before he left the room. Severus looked after his husband for a moment before turning to Dion again.

"Just follow your instincts. Remus is very skittish, and doesn't like to be reminded of his werewolf status a lot. He thinks it's something to be ashamed of almost, and that is mostly because in the Wizarding World it is." Severus gave Dion a long thorough glance over and Dion felt the scales along his face and back stiffen. "You will just have to show him that it doesn't matter in other realms. And it won't matter at all shortly, because he is your mate and will one day rule with you at your side."

**"I doubt he will want to get anywhere near me now that he knows who and what I am."** Dion said quietly. Severus laughed.

"On the contrary, Remus is as curious as a cat and twice as intelligent. He will want to know everything about you. Use that to your advantage." Severus bowed to him and left. Dion glanced after him and chuckled.

**"Once a Slytherin always a Slytherin; isn't that right Severus?"**

*Oh absolutely.* Severus drawled across his mind and Dion laughed as he gathered a small amount of magick around him and faded from sight.

---

Remus looked around his bedroom in awe. He'd never seen anything like it in his life. The room was done in muted shades of greens, browns and gold. It all reminded him of the woods that he'd had to live in while on the run from the wizards that were after him. The room was made from marble and the bedding looked soft and comfortable. It was the lap of luxury as far as he was concerned.

He'd never lived in a place so nice.

Remus opened the doors and stepped out onto the balcony. The evening sun was setting and a cool breeze whipped around him gently. For some unknown reason to him, he felt like he was almost at home here in this realm. The wolf inside of him wasn't edgy like it usually was; it was calm, peaceful and blessedly quiet and subdued. Remus watched the sun set before going back into his room and closing the doors behind him.

Today had been a day of many revelations about the way Harry had been living for the last twenty years or so. What a man he'd become, Remus thought, smiling to himself as he wandered around the small living room connected to his bedroom. The power that had been with Harry as a child and then a young man had matured and nearly tripled as he grew older. He was happy, confident, and very content with his life. Of course Draco had a lot to do with that. Harry's consort went out of his way to make sure that his Husband was well cared for and happy at all times. Remus could practically feel the bond between

them as if it were tangible. They moved like a well-oiled machine, complimenting one another's strengths and weaknesses perfectly.

He's always hoped to find someone to live his life with that way. Remus stopped as that thought brought Dion's face into the front of his mind. Remus shuddered, that man was something else entirely. He'd never felt more power in his life and he was gorgeous to boot. Although, he conceded, living since the dawn of time could do that to anyone. He shook away his thoughts as he lay down in the bed. It wouldn't do him any good ogling over the Crown Prince; after all, he was a lowly werewolf.

What would a prince want with him anyway?

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Ron Weasley stood outside of the protection wards around Malfoy Manor. Although he could see some movement inside he knew that the people that he was looking for weren't there anymore. The entire Malfoy clan had left.

"They are gone?" His wife asked him. Ron turned towards her and nodded.

"Yes, let's report back to Dumbledore."

"I don't understand something." Hermione said softly.

"What is it?"

"Harry has been gone for twenty years, Ron, why is Dumbledore interested in him now?" Ron scoffed.

"I have no idea, but who are we to go against orders?"

"But Ron,"

"Enough Hermione," Ron snapped, "Let's just go tell him they are gone and then let's go home." Hermione sighed sadly.

"Alright," she said and then they apparated away.

## Chapter Four

It was quite strange, Remus mused thoughtfully; how peace and quiet can actually unnerve a person who wasn't use to it. Flashes of the terror and anger than he'd felt when trying to dodge prejudiced witches and wizards flitted across his honey brown gaze as he stared into the beautiful and peaceful forests that surrounded Harry and Draco's palatal estate. In some ways he was still in awe of how mature and confident Harry had grown. But then again, all Remus or anyone else had to do was see how Harry looked at Draco to see that the young ex-Slytherin was truly the reason behind Harry's dramatic transformation.

The werewolf sighed and went back through the large balcony doors into his room and then out the suite doors into the hallway. Passing elves bowed to him, smiled and said nothing as he made his way a bit warily down the marble hallways and into the downstairs foyer. Harry's rich laughter was accompanied by some other younger voices and Remus followed the sounds into the family sitting room. Harry was lounging on the couch watching two young Elves try to outdo each other in a game of Wizarding Chess.

"Oh Vega, you must lose gracefully, what would Daddy say?" The young male elf said with a smooth drawl and a quirk of his full lips.

"Daddy would tell me to lay a hex on you good and proper for boasting Galen and you know it." The young woman said with a huff. Remus chuckled softly and both silvery blond heads lifted and turned to face him. He blinked at the identical features and watched as confusion and then warmth entered both set of silvery emerald eyes.

"Oh, blessings to you this morning, you must be our Uncle Remus. Papa was telling us that you might come down in time to see us off." The male said as he motioned to Harry.

"Remus I'd like you to meet Galen and Aziza Vega. Galen, Vega, this is your long lost Uncle Remus." Harry said with a bit of mirth. Remus smiled shyly.

"It is a pleasure to meet you." He said quietly. Vega beamed at him and then turned to her father.

"Has he met Demetrius?" She asked. Harry shook his head.

"No not yet, Draco and Demetrius are out in the back gardens. Come Remus I'll take you to meet our youngest." He kissed Vega and Galen on the forehead and then guided him towards the back of the house.

"How was your night?" Harry asked.

"Very restful, I really appreciate what you and Draco are doing for me." Remus said softly.

"I'm glad you like it so far." Harry said. "I really hope you can heal better here." They walked side by side in silence for a few moments. Remus turned toward Harry and smiled.

"You look good, confident and mature, your parents would've been proud." Harry grinned; his green eyes flashing merrily.

"Thanks, for being sixty you don't look so bad yourself." Remus chuckled.

"It is the werewolf in me, they age slower than most. I am lucky for that, because if I didn't have it, I would look ancient right about now."

"Now Remus, I don't think ancient is quite the appropriate term. 'Half-dead' should do just nicely." A drawling tone chipped in. Remus watched as Harry's entire body just softened as did his gaze as it landed on Draco's figure walking towards them with another young man in tow.

"Daddy, you mustn't say things like that." The young man said though his deep emerald eyes were sparkling merrily in laughter. Remus blinked at him for a moment as the sun caught the vivid auburn of his hair as he tossed it back over his shoulder and then greeted Harry with a warm hug.

"Blessings Papa and this must be our long lost Uncle Remus, eh?" He said laughing. Remus smiled and was shocked as he received a hug as well. "Daddy, I must go Grandpa Sev is going to teach me a few more components about one of the flowers he was telling me about."

"Demetrius do be careful." Draco called out behind his son.

"Very well Daddy." He said and then disappeared into the house.

"He looks like Lily." Remus said softly. Draco smiled warmly and bowed slightly.

"Blessings to you Remus, and yes I hear he is the spitting image of Lily from Sev all the time."

"You're children are beautiful and bright, you both must very proud of them all."

Harry and Draco looked at each other and smiled. "Yes, we are very proud of them all." Harry murmured as he gazed at his consort. Draco flushed slightly but his eyes softened in genuine warmth as he gazed at Harry.

Remus felt envious for mere moments, wishing that he could have someone too look at with so much love in his eyes and to have it returned so fervently. The flash of blinding blue eyes in his memory jolted him to a stop and startled Draco and Harry enough to turn to him in concern.

"Remus, are you alright?" Harry asked. Remus smiled and patted Harry's arm softly.

"I am fine, merely feeling my age. After all I am near sixty years old." Remus said with some mirth. Draco and Harry smiled at him in such a way that it made him think he was missing something about this place.

"Remus, Sev is nearly your age and Daddy must be a least a few years older and yet they look as young as Harry or I, have you ever wondered why?"



"No, not particularly. Although I would hazard a guess that it has something to do with Lucius being an Elf and Severus his mate, no?" The three of them began walking through the gardens. The pace was slow enough not to tire Remus too quickly, but also fast enough to where they would be able to finish quickly.

"Partly it does," Harry conceded, "I can tell you for sure that a few months after my thirty second birthday I stopped aging at all." Harry chuckled at Remus' look of astonishment. "It has to do with being married to Draco and being here I think."

"What do you mean?"

"Elves are more or less immortal. They are timeless and will live to be quite old and yet not age a day after they have reached their prime. Consorts stop aging sooner than most; Draco stopped aging a little over ten years ago around his twenty-eighth birthday. Their Husbands take a few years longer but no more. Just because I am a wizard doesn't mean that I won't stop aging as well, as you can see. It is a failsafe I believe that keeps bonded pairs together and whole. I couldn't imagine dying and leaving Draco here by himself even for the briefest of moments.

"The other reason is because this place and the Elven lands in general are saturated with Wild Magick. This place vibrates with life and it restores youth and longevity to all those whom step through the gateway. It is attuned to the magick in people that is why wizards age so slowly, the very land we tread upon keeps us alive."

"Amazing," Remus said, "I had wondered why Severus looked so young. The last time I saw him we could have been equal in age, but that was years ago."

"It will happen to you as well." Draco said assuredly. "Not only are you a powerful wizard but you are also a werewolf, the magick of this place will be hard pressed not to want to have you absorb it."

"Why do you say that Draco?" Draco stared at him through eyes he swore had seen far more years than the man himself.

"You are special even amongst wizards; you would and did stand out in a crowded room. Remember that and never doubt yourself. Soon your path will be clear." Draco murmured and then kissed his husband and left the two men alone as he gracefully walked back to the house. Remus blinked and Harry just sighed in exasperation.

"Between Father and him I don't know who is worst." Harry said in amusement.

"I thought Lucius was the one who was a Seer."

"Oh he is, however, Draco is High Bard and the nature around us has songs of its own that speaks to whoever is most gifted and worthy to hear them. They have probably told him something of importance about you. But do not worry too much about it Remus. This is your time to rest and relax. We took you

from that world to this one so that you can heal and get well." Harry hugged his adopted godparent and gave him a wink. "I am happy that you are here."

"As am I Harry," Remus said as he breathed in his godson's magickal essence, "As am I."

---

Severus felt more than saw his beloved appear in the doorway of his study. He looked up from the large tomb he had been reading and smiled. "How are you doing this morning?"

"I am well, though the news that Dion brought yesterday was quite enlightening."

"It is, however, I am not sure Remus is ready for that. Not just finding someone to really and truly care for him and love him despite everything, but also to become what the Crown Prince needs. He needs a Consort that will rule beside him, that inspires the same confidence and awe to his people, but to also be approachable. Right now I do not think he could do that."

"All it takes is a little time, nurturing and a little bit more in healing." Lucius said as he came over and sat on the edge of the seat alongside his husband. "I am sure once Dion gets a hold of him he will be a marvelous Consort, just like you."

"When Dion gets a hold of him, he will flourish into a marvelous Ruler. Thank you for the compliment dear one, but you do not have to waste small frivolous compliments on me any longer. You are stuck with me now." Severus said with a small smirk. Lucius chuckled quietly and tilted Severus' face back.

"That is not a hardship my darling, not one at all." Lucius murmured as he kissed him gently.

---

Draconis and his wife Illyrian covertly watched their son's mate as he walked through the forest behind Draco and Harry's vast estate. Draconis took in a deep breath and then smirked.

*He is a wolf.*

*Really?* His wife replied back, *How interesting? He has aged quite dramatically from the last time that we saw him.*

*Yes, I think it is because of how the world he grew up in is today. They have grown to hate all of those who are different. He's been running for a long time.* Draconis said thoughtfully. *It is of no importance. In a few months' time he will be as right as rain.*

Illyrian smiled warmly at the thought of her son being mated at last. *He will be a good Consort for our son. Already Dion is falling for him.*

*Yes, it will be a good match. Come beloved; let's leave before he senses we are here.* Draconis and Illyrian grinned at each other and faded from sight.

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Remus looked up at the sudden rustle of leaves above him. He sniffed at the air and caught the smell of ancient magick. He looked around but could see no one and nothing around him.

"Odd," He murmured and continued his trek through the woods.

---

Pansy Zabini gazed out over her beautiful lush gardens a small frown on her beautiful face. She was beginning to hate her country and its people so much, that she rarely left the house anymore.

"Pansy?" Pansy turned and smiled softly as her husband Blaise came up behind her and kissed her tenderly.

"How was your day?" She asked. Blaise grimaced and ran a hand through his hair in agitation.

"I don't think I can take much more of this. It grows worse, it seems, every month."

"How long before the children graduate?" Blaise eyed her carefully, knowing by children she meant Damian Crabbe-Goyle and their own daughter Gloria.

"A month, they are graduating early remember? And then our Gloria and Luther are going to be married, we did set the location to be in England, but given the circumstances..."

"Perhaps they can marry in France or maybe even Italy? I know Gloria loved Italy." Pansy said her voice wavering a little but not a lot. She took a deep breathe of fortitude and then she was back to normal; cold, calculating, and all her fire banked behind a well-constructed mask.

"It will all work out, I promise." Blaise said soothingly.

"Have you heard from Draco or Harry lately?" She asked.

"No, the last letter I sent was intercepted; they are keeping quite a staunch eye on us and the Crabbe-Goyle family."

"I detest this country, Blaise, I want to leave." Pansy said bitterly. Blaise kissed his wife on her temple, his blue eyes cold and calculating.

"Don't worry, Vincent and I have everything under control."

---

Helen Deveroux walked the marble hallways of the Crabbe-Goyle manor with a small smile on her face. If someone would've told her that her husband would be Kissed, and she'd be the surrogate mother for two of the most handsome boys in Britain, well, she probably would've laughed her ass off and then tried to hex them.

Although her life hadn't really gone the way she planned, now she couldn't think of any other way for it to be. It almost seemed like yesterday that that sweet werewolf Remus Lupin hesitantly approached her about talking with Vincent and Greg about being a surrogate mother for their future children.

Helen frowned in memory as the old righteous anger welled up inside of her. Granted both of them had been in Slytherin yes, but neither of them had taken the Mark, they were not quite handsome but striking in their own right; and both had galleons coming out of their ears. But no, everyone had ostracized them for something that was not only common in the Wizarding world, but most times a very happy occasion. Well, Helen thought as she smirked to herself, who got the last laugh now? Both their children Luther and Damian were smart, funny, handsome, and downright charming. Vincent and Greg had let her take a hand in raising their son's as if she were part of the family. Helen smiled in remembrance at the vehemence in which Vincent told her.

*"You are their mother, just as much as Greg and I are their fathers. You carried them, you breastfed them, you are a part of this family and I will not have you thinking otherwise!"*

Helen sighed but shook off the memories as she smiled at the House Elf that opened the door to Vincent's office for her. Vincent Crabbe-Goyle cut an impressive figure. He stood well over six feet, his dark brown hair was cut short and sharp, and did he ever cut a superb figure in a three piece suit.

"I see you went muggle today." Helen said smiling. Vincent looked up at her and smiled.

"How are you today pet?" He asked warmly as he stood and kissed her temple. "And yes, I had business to do today in the muggle world."

"I am doing quite well. The charity event went superbly and then Greg called as well, he said he'd be late again, but don't wait for him for dinner." She perched onto his desk and eyed him shrewdly. "And how was your day today darling?"

"Busy, tiring, and yet it was a good day." Vincent said with a tired smile. Helen smiled but in concern.

"You have been stressed about something Vinny," Helen said carefully, "what is happening out there that has you so bottled up?"

"Everything and nothing." Vincent said. "Everything because no matter all that we do for these people it will never be enough to get out of the stigma of being Slytherin or the fact that we helped the Malfoy family during the war. And nothing because there is nothing I can do to change it and now I find myself not wanting to." Vincent looked at Helen through cool dark brown eyes, "As soon as Damian and Gloria graduate Hogwarts, we are leaving, I will not put my family in danger any longer."

"Vinny," Helen said sadly, "Are you sure? Where will we go? And what about Luther and Gloria's wedding?"

"I have already discussed it with Luther, he says he'll talk to her, but they are deciding on a new place probably either France or Italy from what I'm hearing from them. As to where we will go, that is going to

be determine by the family when Greg gets in tonight." Vincent stood and looked out of his office windows over the gardens of his home. Helen came up behind him and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I've lived here my whole life," Vincent said, "Greg lived right around the corner. We've been together as friends since before I can remember, and lovers by our fourth year at Hogwarts. This is our home and those damn narrow minded sycophants are forcing our hand to make us leave. They want us to break, but I won't give them the damn satisfaction. Blaise and I have been talking; we are going to withdraw all of our monetary support from Britain." Helen gasped, "Our businesses have been sold already, and we are going completely international."

"But what about the villages..."

"They will still be provided for by us, but the rest of the Wizarding world will suffer." Vincent turned to Helen and smiled sadly, "We've pulled you into our problems, Greg and I would completely understand if you decided to walk away, after all you really didn't sign up for all of this."

"Vincent Crabbe-Goyle bite your tongue off!" Helen said hotly. "I love you and that husband of yours and those two handsome boys as well. When I said I would carry your children and be a part of their lives, I meant through thick and thin. Times are hard and I will not let you or anyone in this family down. After all," she sniffed, "Am I a part of this family or not, because I distinctly remember you saying that I was." Vincent laughed out loud and hugged Helen.

"If I was straight I'd hope to marry a woman like you."

"Well thank Merlin you're not because I would be left in the cold." Helen and Vincent turned at the sound of Greg's amused voice. Vincent's eyes softened and Helen stepped back and smiled as Vincent kissed his husband for all he was worth.

"Never." Vincent breathed. Greg chuckled and then walked over and kissed Helen on the cheek in greeting.

"So how are you doing today lovely, happy to see me, while you are stealing my husband away?" Helen snorted.

"Hardly, I don't think I am the right stature or have the right parts to catch his attention Greg. And I thought you, Sir, were going to be late."

"I thought so too, but two of my patients went to other Medi- Wizards because they didn't want to be touched by and I quote 'hands steeped in dark magick', so I left." Helen scowled.

"Am I going to have to beat some head together? What is wrong with these people?" Helen snapped and kept going as she preceded the couple into the dining room. Vincent wrapped an arm around Greg's waist and chuckled.

"Who would've thought that a Hufflepuff would be so protective of a bunch of Slytherins eh?" Greg chuckled.

"The more prudent question would be: could we really set Helen loose on the unsuspecting wizards or would they consider it cruel and unusual punishment?" Vincent laughed out loud and shook his head.

"Cruel and Unusual punishment. Definitely."

---

Luther Crabbe-Goyle stood in his penthouse suite looking out over the London skyline. He was furious with what his Papa had told him. How could people be so spiteful? How could they do this to his fathers? It wasn't right. His chocolate brown eyes narrowed in a calculating fashion and he turned away from the view and approached his desk. He lifted some fire-call powder out of his desk and threw it into the flames.

"Damian." His deep voice filled the silence of the room as he waited and then the head of his younger brother appeared

"Hey, how is everything?" Damian asked. Luther shook his head.

"Not so good. Papa called me today and he is going through with the move. We are leaving England." Damian said nothing but Luther could tell how much it hurt his brother.

"What did Daddy say about this?"

"He agrees as well. It won't be until after you and Glory graduate though, but it is still happening. It's gotten really bad Damian." Damian sighed and nodded his head.

"I know it's getting pretty bad here as well. Gloria and I are trying to care for the first and second years, but there is only so much we can do. Luther, what did we ever do to these people?"

"Nothing," Luther snarled, "They are just spiteful. Don't worry about it. Keep your head up and watch out for my fiancée. If anything happens to her I will take a bludger to your head do you get me?"

"Yes, Sir, big brother Sir." Damian saluted. They chuckled together a bit but then Damian became really solemn. "Take care Luther, love you bro'."

"Love you too, little brother." Luther said calmly and ended the call. Shaking off his anxiety over not being able to be there to protect his brother or Gloria. Luther fed the flames floor powder and stepped into the fireplace. "Crabbe-Goyle Manor!" he called out and vanished.

---

Dion stared out over the British Wizarding world with a look of disgust on his face. "**Pathetic people.**" He murmured to himself. He turned away from the sight and looked to a different part of the room at the large ornate mirror there. "**Show me my mate.**" He said clearly. The mirror rippled and Remus asleep in his bed appeared before Dion's eyes. He took in the exhaustion and the years of hardship that were stamped across his beloved's face and yet to him he was the most handsome being in the entire

world. ***"Soon, Remus, you will get what you were born to have. And they will get what they deserve for hurting you and the rest of your family."***

Dion turned away from the mirror and walked from the room in silence.

---

Dumbledore looked up as Ron came into his office. "Good news? He asked. Ron looked at him grimly and shook his head.

"The Zabini and Crabbe-Goyle families have sold their businesses. They've pulled their funding." Ron said haltingly. Dumbledore grew very quiet and Ron swallowed at the spike of magick in the air.

"Get me Blaise, Vincent and Greg, now." Dumbledore said politely.

"Umm, I can't do that Sir." Ron said hesitantly. Dumbledore arched a superior eyebrow.

"Why is that?"

"They have cut off all contact with any of those in the Wizarding world, save Damian Crabbe-Goyle and Gloria Zabini, and their contacts abroad." Ron finished lamely. Dumbledore frowned.

"Find away."

"But..."

"Now!" Ron didn't wait another second and fled Dumbledore's presence all together. Dumbledore's frown didn't lessen. How dare they try to outsmart him? He would show them.

They will pay dearly.

## Chapter Five

Remus set his book down by his side and breathed in the deep, rich scent of the forest tree that he was sitting in. One of his legs dangled off the branch carelessly as he leaned against the large sturdy old trunk. The green foliage on all the branches was enough to shade him from the sun's rays. He was completely at ease and content, but bored. The last twenty years of his life had been filled with so much tension he had no idea how to just simply live anymore.

It had been a little over a month since he was first brought here. He often wondered what was going on in Britain, but try as he might, he really didn't have the heart to ask. The wizarding populace of Britain hadn't treated Harry with a tenth of the respect the boy deserved for putting not only himself, but his family on the line to save them. Even Blaise and Pansy Zabini, Vincent and Greg Crabbe-Goyle, both couples who were from one of the darkest Houses put their lives on the line for a bunch of ingrates. Now those two families were even thinking of moving away, or so he had last heard.

The only thing, he remembered, that had been stopping them was the fact that Gloria Zabini and Damian Crabbe-Goyle had still yet to graduate from Hogwarts. But Remus knew that both of those children were bright and would probably finish early.

He only hoped that Dumbledore would let them leave. Remus sighed heavily and as he closed his eyes yet again he was confronted with the timeless visage of Dion; unfathomable blue eyes, silver scales, and knowing smile. What was it about that dragon that made Remus' stomach want to do back flips out of his body? And even as he began to settle in for another good read, the hairs on the back of his neck stood straight up and then the branch that he had been carelessly sitting on dipped underneath added weight.

Remus looked up and his gaze locked with that of Dion's grinning face.

**"Good Day to you werewolf; how has life been treating you?"** That voice ran over Remus like dark chocolate and he visibly shuddered in pleasure. Dion's eyes dilated at the sight and he wished to the Goddess he could claim him right then and there...but he had to be patient. Remus was still healing.

"I'm fine, how are you doing? And what brings you here to talk with me? Are you looking for Harry or Draco? They are..."

**"Making love on their balcony,"** Dion said with a cheeky smile. Remus blushed to the tips of his ears and choked back a laugh.

"I truly didn't need to know that." Remus said lightly, but he smiled at the dragon sitting in front of him.

**"Yes you did because you think that you should be beneath my notice considering who and what I am. Well, I am here to tell you, Remus that I am very much aware of you and you just happen to be one of the most striking men I have ever seen or met."** Dion practically purred. Remus blinked at him.



"Don't say things like that. I'm just a werewolf; even the wizarding world doesn't pay that much attention to my kind."

**"Well your wizarding world is run by a pack of idiots."** Dion said put out. **"If you lived anywhere else you would be respected, revered, even feared somewhat. Being a Werewolf is not something to be ashamed of. It is only those who are afraid of what they do not understand that think you are inferior."** Remus stared at him warily; was it really true? Could it be that Britain was really the only ones that treated darker creatures poorly?

"How can I believe you when I only know that life?" Dion gazed at him through hooded blue eyes. He then reached for Remus.

**"Would you come with me? And I will show you my world...soon it will be our world."**

"Our? I don't understand?"

**"Do you trust me Remus?"** Dion asked solemnly. Remus looked at his outstretched hand and then shook his head sadly.

"I barely trust my own shadow. How could I even begin to trust someone that I just met a month or so ago?" he asked.

**"Could you trust me in time? Do you think that you can do that?"** Remus felt his heart thud in his chest; what was it? Merlin what was it about him that made him just want to blurt out that he'd follow the dragon to the ends of the earth if Dion asked him to. As it was, he answered without thinking.

"Yes." Remus slapped a hand over his mouth as he surprised himself by the blunt answer. Dion smiled tenderly at him.

*Take a leap of faith wolf mine and follow me. I swear to the Goddess Herself you will not regret it. Put your trust and faith in me. I will not steer you wrong.* The voice in his head practically sent him to the ground in a puddle of giddiness. Their gazes locked and as if in a trance, Remus placed his hand in Dion's.

He didn't feel an ounce of regret as the world disappeared around him.

---

Severus stirred slightly as Lucius sat up in bed, startled out of his lazy post sex haze by an enormous well of power coming out of nowhere. Then he felt the signature of the power and he smiled.

It seemed Dion was being a little impatient. Lucius sighed and then gazed down at his sleeping Consort. Although, he could definitely relate. If he'd had to wait another few months for Severus, he probably would've kidnapped him as well. Nothing could be done for it now, and Lucius had a feeling that things would be sorting themselves out fairly quickly in regards to those two. He frowned though as he thought of the wizarding world as it was. It seemed as if the threads that were holding it precariously in place were unraveling at an even faster rate.

Blood would run before it was over, Lucius was sure of it. He just prayed to the Goddess that his family would be spared.

However, he already had a feeling that that prayer was too late in coming.

---

Glory beat on the door once more, panic running through her veins like a plague. Large gentle hands grabbed her fist and then arms that were familiar to her wrapped around her. She took a shaky breath and then turned and pressed her face into Damian's robed arms.

"How could he do this? What have we done wrong?" She whispered brokenly. Damian stared straight ahead at the warded door. Today was supposed to be the greatest day of their life. They were to graduate early, their parents were so proud of them. Everything went as planned until coming back to their shared suite. As soon as Glory had let the door shut behind them, Damian knew something was off. And his worst fear was confirmed when he went to the door and found that he couldn't get out.

They were locked in their rooms like chattel. And only one man could have the magick to do it; Dumbledore. It had to be Dumbledore. He touched Glory's temple as he felt her begin to cry and concentrated like his Daddy had taught him. Healing magick flowed through his fingers and he caught her gently as she fell into a healing sleep. Tear tracks marred her perfectly done make up and Damian controlled the rage that ran through him at the sight.

She'd been so excited; this would've been the first time she'd seen Luther since he graduated three years ago. Of course there was Christmas and what not, but this time they were going on a tour of Europe, she had told him excitedly.

"Luther wants to spoil me with a little alone time before our wedding!" Damian had grinned at her un-Slytherin like squeal of joy.

"I thought that was supposed to be the Honeymoon?" He teased. Glory had stuck her tongue out at him, though her blue eyes had sparkled with laughter.

"Call it a pre-wedding Honeymoon then. He knows he's been busy and hasn't spent time with me like I wanted. This is his way of making up for it. You have got to have the best older brother in the world!"

"That is because Mum Helen would have had his head if he didn't learn manners." Damian had retorted and then they had laughed.

Damian laid her down on the couch and snorted to himself; both of them had let down their guards, they should have known something was going to happen. Damn Dumbledore and his manipulations. His dark brown eyes narrowed as he looked at the door.

He'd find a way out of here; even if he had to tear the bloody building apart. No one messes with a Slytherin and gets away with it.

No one.

---

Sometimes, Hermione reflected, you could forget Neville Longbottom existed. He had been so quiet in the school, and was even quieter now after his accident in their late twenties. It was the same accident that had left him quite unforgettable to more than a few and even more forgettable to the rest. At Wizarding University, a few of the more talented potion makers had played a prank on the poor boy. What happened after would forever be branded in Hermione's mind. A few people had died that day as the chemical properties of the potion they were brewing and the additional, still unknown, ingredients made a toxic explosion.

Those that perished were those that played the prank.

Neville survived, though he would forever look different. Hermione stared at the quiet Professor still not believing what she was seeing. The Neville she remembered was a little pudgy, but had an angelic face, with shaggy black hair and gentle dark brown eyes. This man's hair was bleached solid white. And his eyes had faded until they were a cross between flashing gold and topaz; it was a startling contrast. All the people in their year were still surprised he even survived given that the potion blew up right in his face. Hermione eyed his elegant gloved hands and swallowed. That was the other reason most wanted to forget Neville.

The toxic potion had been absorbed into his system by his skin and magick. It had left him in a coma for six months and when he woke and reached out to touch the nurse helping him; she dropped dead.

Poison, the Medi-Wizards said, was the cause of her death. Now, anyone that wasn't one of his precious plants that came into contact with his skin would be poisoned so viciously that they'd drop dead in an instant. Even Hermione didn't pay him that much attention anymore. Neville mostly stayed to himself and had withdrawn so far away from others; she was surprised to see him in attendance.

But then again, even she'd had to be here for what was about to happen. Hermione opened her mouth to speak to her husband as the doors to room were flung open. Ron next to her swallowed heavily as he and the other Professors warily watched Blaise and Pansy Zabini, and Vincent and Gregory Crabbe-Goyle sauntered in with faces set in stone and eye blazing with righteous anger.

"What," Blaise drawled menacingly, "is the damn reason my daughter is locked up like a criminal in this school? She graduated; she should be with her family and her betrothed."

"And what is our son doing locked up with Glory as well?" Vincent's deep voice was no more than a growl and even Dumbledore flinched at the anger in the tall broad muscled form.

"Now please, if you would all calm down," Dumbledore said patronizingly, "we will speak on it." The four ex-Slytherin didn't move an inch. It was frightening really how still they all were as if they were waiting to strike, like a coiled snake, waiting for the kill. "It is true that they graduated early, however, I would like to keep them here for a few more weeks."

"For what purpose?" Pansy asked icily. Dumbledore's eyes narrowed.

"For your and Gregory's husband to come to their senses and re open their business here in England." He said.

"That is blackmail." Vincent said in a dead quiet voice. "Our families have put up with the bull shit of this country for nearly thirty years. All the whispers, rumors, and threats, every single one of the fines that just kept coming after we were promised that they'd stop." Vincent stepped forward and the professors, save Neville, recoiled from the menace in his eyes. "We bled for you, you manipulative bastard, did unspeakable things, so that your precious Hogwarts and your precious Wizarding world of Britain would forever be rid of Voldemort and this is how you repay us? Our lives have been nothing but challenging because of the prejudice and ignorance and arrogance of the wizards and witches that are too cowardly to truly say it to our faces. We've had enough."

"We need your children to be safe..."

"You need our money." Blaise interrupted with a sneer. "The Malfoy, Zabini, Crabbe, Goyle, and Parkinson families have always been the wealthiest of all those in the wizarding community in Britain." He said quietly, "Now that we've married and the Malfoy's have left this world, for good reason, we are all that's left that is standing between Britain and bankruptcy, because she has no more money, does she Dumbledore; the Ministries coffers have finally bled dry with mismanagement and ill use. And you need us," he motioned to the four of them, "to bring it back."

"You have galleons coming out of your ears." Ron said nastily, "what do you need with all that money?"

"What? Want some Weasel?" Gregory said snidely. "That money is ours by right and birth, we can use it as we see fit." He turned to Dumbledore and shook his head, "you will never stop will you? Not until we are all under your control. Where is our son Damian and Pansy and Blaise's daughter Gloria? You have no right and no authority keeping them here. They've graduated; you've lost your sway."

"Not entirely." Dumbledore said with a smile, "Until they set foot outside of Hogwarts they are under my jurisdiction." His smile turned a bit manic, "How can they leave when I am the only one that knows where they are? Hogwarts is a maze if you remember and I've been here for nearly a century."

"You bloody son of a bitch." Pansy breathed. Nothing was said and no sound was made as the four wealthiest of the wizard elite stared at Dumbledore in icy anger and even a little bit of fear. The sound of a chair being scrapped against the ground startled everyone. Neville stood and began walking away.

"Professor Longbottom," Dumbledore's voice stopped him but Neville was eye to eye with Vincent at this point.

"Yes, Headmaster?" Neville's voice had gotten deep over the years and its quietness rang in the still silent room.

"Where are you going?"

"There is no need in my being here." He said despondently as he quickly passed a note to Vincent. The man's eyes widened and Neville gave the four a half smile before disappearing like a ghost into the dark hall.

"You will think about what is at stake?" Dumbledore said imperiously. Vincent said nothing but turned and stalked out. The others followed and the room was quiet as the door slammed behind them.

---

"What does it say?" Pansy hissed as the four sat in the opulent sitting room in the Zabini Manor.

"It says and I quote 'Leave the country as you have planned and do not worry. I will bring your children to you in France in two weeks' time.' And it is signed Neville Longbottom." Vincent said frowning. "Can we trust him?"

"We have no choice." Greg murmured.

---

Neville let his fingers run along the dark stone in the Dungeons as he walked towards the Slytherin common room. He knew those children wouldn't be there. Dumbledore was too cunning for that. He smiled a bit as the memory of Vincent's surprised look early that evening.

He never thought he would see a human emotion on any of the faces of ex-Slytherin and Slytherin alike. However, he thought of the beautiful Glory Zabini, who was thoughtful as well as bright, he grinned as he added, cunning, ambitious, and downright scary when crossed. But the memory of Damian's strong handsome face gave him pause.

He shouldn't be lusting after one of his students. When he'd first seen Damian's name on his roster for the year, he'd been afraid that the child of Vincent and Gregory would be like what they were at his age. However he was surprised when a mature, serious looking young man had entered the room.

And then his entire quiet life went up in a puff of smoke. The boy scared him to put it plainly, scared him to his core. After the accident Neville had resigned himself to a life of no friends, no family, and no lovers. He'd been okay with that, though the first few years had been bad, it got easier.

And then as the years went by and he got into the regime of teaching, his life had taken on a dull sense of regularity. It had been the beginning of this past year, Damian's Seventh Year, when he walked into class after the summer and it was like Neville had seen him for the first time. He was tall, much taller than Neville was, but as tall if not taller than his father's. A head full of silky thick dark brown hair and the deepest darkest chocolate brown eyes Neville had ever seen. Even Luther, who has surprised everyone by his attractiveness when he came to the school, couldn't hold a candle to Damian in Neville's eyes.

"What an absurd time in my life to develop a crush. Especially on a man twenty years my junior." Neville muttered, continually running his gloved fingers along the hallway walls until the distinct texture of

magick changed to something tangible. The entire school had soaked in magick over the years, Neville had found out, and basically had a unique signature of its own. However, anyone that creates magick around it like a door or a particular hall leaves a very faint twinge of presence there. The less time that has passed the better, because Hogwarts would suck the new magick spell up like a sponge and then it would become like everything else in the school, everlasting, and a pain in the neck. Neville stared at the wall in front of him with a small smile. A hidden door, so that's how the old bastard did it. Neville thought to himself as he ran his gloved hands around the perimeter of where the door should be.

Slowly, not to disturb the magick, Neville took off his gloves and placed his hands into the center of the wall, where the portrait would be. "Let me enter, keeper, I want to help those children." He murmured. A faint hiss sounded.

*You smell like my brethren tainted wizard. How is this possible?*

*Potion accident years ago. I am entirely venomous; no one may touch me, save another snake and plants.*

*Ha! Shows how little you know, young one. There is one who can touch you and not die.*

Neville nearly faltered in his concentration. *Who?*

*A special type of healer. One that has a nullifying type of healing that grounds anything that could perpetually harm. It is an innate magick, a blessing if you will, of the lesser Gods. Only one is born in a generation. You will meet soon.* The snake's voice said cryptically before he felt the portrait open.

Neville was shaken, but strengthened his resolve and walked quickly into the room before the alarms on the spell notified someone that something was amiss.

---

Glory and Damian looked up sharply as someone opened the portrait door. "Professor Longbottom!" Glory said quietly. The man smiled a bit shyly but then his face turned once again as grim as a gargoyle.

"There isn't much time." He said quickly, "Get your things or as many as you can carry..."

"We sent them all ahead yesterday, thinking we were going home." Damian told him. "All we have are our wands and a few pouches of galleons."

"That is enough; let's move with haste." Neville said again, pushing open the portrait again and quickly scanning the hall. "Quickly, we must make it to at least the forest floor before using a port key to get to my house." He looked at both of his students, well ex-students and smiled slightly. "We will have to stay there for a few days before trying to get into France, but I am sure anything is better than being here, no?"

Glory and Damian answered by following him out the door. He let the portrait close and the barrier fell back into place. The serpent on the portrait laughed in his mind.

*Your bonded is closer than you think.*

Neville shook his head, and told his heart not to give into the hope that someone out there may be able to touch him. It was not possible.

It couldn't be.

---

Damian shook his head as Glory once again tried to ask where Neville was taking them. It was not the time, he thought, and had told her as much. They'd gotten away from Hogwarts, to the Forbidden Forest, and then port keyed to what seemed to be a rather seedy side of town. Professor Longbottom seemed to know where he was going though; their pace was quick and painless. They looked like everyone else in this alley; dark cloak covering their entire bodies, looking bodiless and frightening if the child crying as she looked up at them was anything to go by.

"Here we are." Damian and Glory looked at the decrepit building but said nothing as he ushered them in, and locked the door the muggle and magical way. He took them down three flights of stairs into the basement of the building and when the lights came on, Damian was prepared for anything than what was lit before his eyes. If the gasp Glory let out was anything to go by; she was equally surprised.

It was like a fine pearl in the middle of a dump. A roaring fire lit the room in a warm and comforting glow. A large oriental carpet covered the floor and a set of black expensive leather furniture sat around the room. What struck Damian most was the fact that plants seemed to be growing everywhere. It was like walking into a mini-rainforest.

"It's beautiful." Glory breathed. Neville chuckled.

"Come this way, I have rooms prepared for you two." He said walking past them into the hall and making a left. As they followed, the two teens glanced around them at the smooth hardwood floors covered with runners in the richest green and walls covered with vines and murals of everything and nothing. Neville opened a door on the left and nodded to Glory. "You can sleep here, I'm sorry that I don't have any clothes for you but if you would give me your sizes, I'm sure I can come by something. It's not much but..."

"No, thank you Professor, it's beautiful." Glory said staring around the room. It was done in rich blues ranging from the darkest of night to the palest light blue she'd ever seen. "Thank you." Neville blushed but nodded and stepped quickly into the hall and closed the door.

"You are right across the hall." He said softly opening another door. The room was the same size, however done it opposite colors. Black and gold merged to form a very masculine but comfortable looking room.

"Thank you for doing this." Damian said, "I know you will be getting into a lot of trouble for this." He watched his Professor redden and duck his head, face disappearing under the startling white hair.

"It is not a problem, besides; it will be a long time before they notice that I am gone." The words were bitter, but tinged with a sadness as well. "I am quite forgettable, it seems." Neville said with a small smile. "Sleep well Mr. Crabbe-Goyle, we should be leaving here in a few days. I've already made arrangements for passage across the Channel by Muggle means in three days. I pray we will make it. Good night." And then he was gone.

*I am quite forgettable it seems.* The words echoed in Damian's head and he whispered,

"I'd never forget you."

---

Draco looked up from his piano, his playing pausing as faint music wafted in with the breeze. He closed his eyes as age old magick swept through and around him, and he smiled, comforted in its embrace.

*Remus is with his Dragon Prince, worry not for him any longer.* Draco was shocked. There was only one Dragon Prince he knew of and he grinned; that was wonderful, but the next thing made his grin fade entirely and jerk up in surprise as he rushed from his music room to find Harry.

*The families you left behind are in much danger, they must leave England or tragedy will befall them. An ally of old will help and then will need your help to heal. Tell your Overlord, NOW.*

---

When Remus opened his eyes next it was to see an amber gaze staring right back at him. He jerked back in surprise as the wolf blinked, then sniffed him again, and finally seemed to shimmer and then a man was standing in the wolf's place. Short auburn hair stuck up every which way, a cheeky grin formed across a pleasant face as a lazy hand scratched his bare but chiseled chest.

"Hey buddy! You're awake!" Amber eyes danced merrily and with so much mischief Remus got the impression this one was used to getting in trouble.

"Um, Hello, that it, what's your name?"

"Oh sorry, my name is Killian, and you are Remus."

"How did you know that?"

"His Majesty said so." Killian sniffed as if Remus' question were an insult. But it was gone in the next instant and replaced with that boyish grin of his. "I am supposed to help you."

"Help me what?" Killian's easy grin turned into a smirk.

"Become a true werewolf, what else?" Remus' eyes went wide behind his glasses.

"A what?"



"You are so weak it's embarrassing, why when I was your age I was nearly five times stronger. We need to fatten you up too; his Majesty Prince Dion likes his lovers with meat on their bones." Killian winked and Remus flushed bright red. "Oh you blush, that's so cute!"

"Wait a minute you said when you were my age. You can't be over thirty!" Remus retorted. Killian rolled his eyes skyward as if praying for patience.

"If you unleashed your full potential you would look this way as well. I, my dear friend, am nearly five hundred years old. My Master, Master Hades, is nearly two thousand and he looks even younger than me!" Killian huffed at that. "I guess it's because I get into a lot more trouble though..." he paused to think about it and then grinned down at Remus again. "Well no matter, you'll meet him tomorrow. Bye!" And with that the man turned back into wolf, licked the side of Remus' face gave a playful growl and was gone.

Remus blinked and then scowled. Trust him, Dion says, well no thank you! Remus snorted to himself and walked towards the balcony thinking he would see the familiar forest of Harry and Draco's land.

Merlin was he wrong. For as far as he could see there was nothing but city streets populated with every creature Remus had ever read about including dragons.

Dragons...

Dragon Prince...

"Oh Merlin, where am I?"

"**You are in Drakken.**" The voice held the same weight as Dion's only Remus got the feeling this Dragon was a lot older. He turned and stared at the tall dragon with black scales running down one side of his face. "**This is our Capitol and you my dear Werewolf are going to be here for quite some time.**" The dragon grinned.

"Who are you?"

"**I am Draconis, Emperor and High King of the Dragon Dynasty. You would know me as Dion's Father and your soon to be Father-in-Law.**"

"I...Father-in law?" Remus finished lamely. Draconis chuckled.

"**I see he hasn't told you yet, well no matter. You are my son's Bonded Mate. You will be living here for eternity ruling this realm and others by his side.**" Remus blinked and then blinked again.

"Bonded Mate to a Dragon Prince...?" Remus felt himself begin to panic and saw Draconis roll his eyes and place a hand to his head. Remus' eyes rolled into the back of his head and fell into blessed darkness, but not before he muttered...

"Damn Dragon Prince..."

And faded into sleep at the sound of Draconis' amused laughter.

## Chapter Six

"Milord, High Consort Severus is at the front door with his children." A maid told Harry quietly. Harry finished signing off on the expense report for the year and smiled at her.

"Thank you, please tell them to meet me in the family room and I will be down shortly.

"Yes your Grace." She said and disappeared into the hall. Harry sighed as he frowned and stared off into space. The news Draco had brought him last evening was still ringing in his ears. Their friends were in danger and they needed help. He could only imagine what Vince, Greg, Blaise, Pansy, and their children were going through. He wanted to help, Merlin he truly did, but he didn't want to leave his home.

"What a mess." Harry murmured to himself as he walked down to meet his father-in-law.

"Uncle Harry!" Three voices exclaimed in unison and then he was grinning and laughing with the twins and Sebastian. Adonia and Dysis grinned at him as he picked up Sebastian and gave him a big hug. The youngest child laughed in delight, his dark fathomless eyes sparkling and as Harry put him down he ruffled his silvery blond hair.

"How are you all?" He asked.

"Very well thank you, we heard that our Uncle Remus was brought here, we wanted to come and see him." Adonia said. Harry sighed and then grinned.

"It seems that Remus has found his mate in Prince Dion and the Prince has taken it upon himself to take Remus to his palace. I'm not sure when we will be seeing Remus again. Although, the children are going riding and should be in the stables by now." Harry winked, "Would you like to join them?"

Three cheers went up, Sebastian's the loudest, and he took off outside. Adonia and Dysis chuckled and followed at a more sedate pace. Severus smiled after them and then turned to Harry.

"It is good to see you Harry."

"You too Papa, how is everything?"

"Good, good, everything has been going well." Severus told him. Harry frowned as he stared at Sev; something was off.

"Are you alright?"

"Of course I am what would make you think...?" Severus didn't finish as his vision blurred slightly. Harry quickly strode to his side and then sat him gently in the chair right beside him.

"Papa...?" Harry trailed off as he became aware of Severus' magickal signature. "You are with child." He didn't pose it as a question; but as a fact. Severus took a few deep breaths and then grimaced.

"I was afraid of that." Severus said softly. Harry summoned a maid as calmly as he could and asked for a pot of tea for them both.

"Does Daddy know?"

"I don't know." Severus admitted after hesitating for a moment. "I would suppose that he did, but Luc can be dumber than a box of rocks when he wants to be." Harry laughed.

"Yes I am sure he can be, but is it wise for you to be pregnant again? After all, in the last twenty odd years, you've had three children as had Draco. The Healer has said for his health Draco can't have any more children for at least a few decades. I wonder if he would say the same of you as well."

"It's too late for that I fear." Severus told him. They were silent as tea was poured but as soon as the maid left, Severus continued. "I had my suspicions months ago. I am probably three months gone already."

"Has anything been happening lately that would make Daddy suspicious?"

"Besides me being a bit tired; nothing that would tip him off." Severus took a sip of his tea. "Anyway, enough about me and mine; what is this about our extended family needing help?"

"Draco said that he was playing his piano when he heard a Song on the wind. I guess you could say that that song told him that our family that was still in the wizarding world was in great danger if they stay in England, and that we had to help them. I don't know what to do, Sev, I really want to help but at the same time..."

"You don't want to leave here, do you?" Severus asked gently. Harry shook his head and Severus sighed. "Harry, Draco wouldn't blame you for not wanting to leave, I'm sure he doesn't want to go back to that evil place either. You don't have that much of a choice. The choices you have are to stay here and let Dumbledore destroy the Crabbe-Goyle and Zabini Houses or you can save them."

Harry stared at his father and sighed.

"There really isn't a choice in that you know." Sev leaned over and clasped Harry's hand and smiled.

"It really wasn't meant to be. You just had to have the fact laid bare to you that's all. So when will you leave?"

"As soon as possible."

---

*He was back in that god forsaken Potions Lab.*

*The tall metal door looked foreboding as it closed behind him. Snickers to his left made him duck his head even lower than it already was, causing him to trip over his own feet. The laughter made him flinch and*

*what was worse was that Granger...well Hermione Weasley was sitting right there and all she did was blush and turn the other way.*

*"If you could be so kind Longbottom as to not contribute to a catastrophe today, I don't think the school budget can take any more of your nonsense." The voice was colder than Snape's had ever been, which in and of itself was a feat of epic proportions. Neville swallowed and mumbled a hasty apology.*

*As the instructor went over the properties of the potion, Neville sat and began taking notes. The jeers and snickers never stopped but it didn't deter him; he was used to it.*

*The potion was going well, and that was when all of his problems started.*

*... "Please leave me alone!"*

*... "What's wrong forgetful Neville? Don't want us picking on you anymore?"*

*... "What are you going to do about it Neville, sic your grandmother on us?"*

*... "Oh you can't right; she's dead isn't she? And now you're alone!"*

*...Alone*

*...Alone ... so Alone...*

*BOOM!*

*Pain...So much screaming...*

*His eyes burning...*

*...his skin felt like it was melting...*

*...the screams finally stopped... and then there was silence.*

*"H...Help me..." He reached for someone and they slapped his hand away.*

*"Don't touch him, get him to the Infirmary!"*

*Magick to levitate him...and then he knew no more.*

*...*

*...*

*...So dark, so peaceful, maybe –maybe I could just stay here...*

*...darkness, blackness, an abyss...*

*...and then light and tears and pain.*

"We're sorry Mr. Longbottom but you won't be able to touch anyone again."

No touch?

"The potion you absorbed has made you as venomous as the deadliest snakes in the world. You could probably touch plants, even some animals even, but not a wizard or witch. I realize that most Longbottom's have a Soul mate, but I doubt even they, whoever they may be, would be able to touch you either. Just become accustomed to being alone for the rest of your life okay? Have a nice day Mr. Longbottom."

No touch, no love, nothing...

...he could have nothing...

... Alone

**I'm so alone...**

He screamed.

---

Damian woke to a scream so heart wrenching he was up out of his bed before he realized he wasn't even at home. He hastily pulled on his pants and opened the door plunging into the pitch black hall. Gloria rushed out of her room as well.

"What was that?"

"I think it was the Professor." Damian said as they both rushed through the hall. The screaming had stopped as abruptly as it had come. They finally reached a set of double doors that had the emblem of a snake engraved on it. As Damian placed his hand on the door knob. The snake hissed and coiled on itself.

"Damian!" Glory whispered harshly. Damian stared at the snake and then flinched in surprise when a voice entered his mind.

*What do you want young one?* The snake hissed.

"I just want to make sure that he's okay. I-I've never heard someone scream like that before."

*He has nightmares about the accident that made him who he is today. Do not upset him more than he already is.* The snake didn't have to tell him twice. Damian knocked on the door, loud enough to be heard, but no more. Nothing happened for a few moments and then the door opened. Haunted eyes stared back at him. Professor Longbottom's hair was twisted and tangled, his face lined and taut. His pain and weariness radiated off him and made Damian itch to touch and give him healing energy, but he couldn't.

"Yes?" Neville's voice was hoarse from screaming and he sounded defeated; Damian hated to see such a beautiful...

...wait what?

"I, uh, I heard you scream, I wanted to make sure you were alright."

"I'm fine, it was just a nightmare. Thank you for your concern, but please return to your beds. Sleep as long as you like, we have to wait three days before we are able to leave. Hopefully by then your parents will be in France and we can just meet them there." He nodded politely to them and closed the door firmly in Damian's face.

"He said it was nothing?" Gloria whispered incredulously. "He screamed as if he were dying."

"Perhaps he is." Damian said, "Just think Glory; he hasn't touched another human being in over a decade. I'm sure it's slowly killing him inside. Nobody deserves living a half existence. No one at all."

---

Helen walked through the now empty house she had called home for more than twenty years. Tears welled in her eyes before she took a deep breath and banished them. She may have been in Hufflepuff when she was at Hogwarts, but living in a house full of Slytherins for two decades had taught her a thing or two. One was to not let anyone know what she was thinking nor how she was feeling on the outside. The only time she truly expressed herself was in the presence of her four boys and Gloria and her parents.

"Hey, are you okay?" Helen smiled and glanced up at Greg.

"Just nostalgic is all, is everything ready?"

"Yes, it is, we must leave now." Greg's voice became a little huskier and he sighed. "Let's go."

"I'm right behind you."

And the two of them walked out the front door and to meet up with Vincent.

The Manor stood silent and dark and would stay that way for many years to come.

---

Pansy stared at her garden for the last time and then turned her back on it. She had her family; a wonderful friend, lover, and husband in Blaise; and the most precious star in her life Gloria. It was all she needed really.

"Darling are you ready?" Blaise asked her. Pansy flipped the hood of her cloak over her blond hair and nodded. She smiled and kissed him softly on the lips.

"I love you Blaise."

"I love you Pansy." He said and wrapped an arm around her shoulder as they quickly disappeared leaving their ancestral home dark and despondent without them.

---

"Damn it, they're gone!" Ron shouted back at the other members of the Order. Hermione bit her bottom lip as she watched her husband and friends terrorize the house elves in Crabbe-Goyle Manor.

"Where have they gone!" he yelled at a house elf. The house elf merely stared at him and then shook its big head.

"Gumpy no tell bad people where the Master's went. Now, the Manor is getting very mad, you leave and do not come back." Gumpy said and snapped its fingers and disappeared.

"Fuck!" And then an ice cold draft ran through the house. Ron was dumb sometimes, Hermione admitted to herself, but he wasn't *that* dumb. He took the ominous feeling as truth to what the house elf had said and called the order to leave.

As soon as they were off the property, ancient wards snapped into place barring entrance for everyone. Ron cursed and Hermione said nothing.

"We have to go the Zabini Manor next." Ron murmured.

"We'll find the same thing." Hermione said. "They too, will be gone."

"But..."

"They've gone Ron, just leave it at that." Hermione snapped. Seamus came running up to them out of breath and face solemn.

"We've got a problem."

"What's that?" Ron asked.

"The Zabini Manor is empty as a shell, the ancient wards on the house are up, and we just found out that Gloria Zabini and Damian Crabbe-Goyle somehow got out of their rooms."

"Impossible, Dumbledore placed those wards himself." Hermione exclaimed.

"They had help."

"Who?"

"Who do you think?" Seamus muttered and Hermione cursed.

"Longbottom."

---



Neville hid in the shadows as Ron, Hermione, and Seamus ran by him. Aurors and Order members were everywhere. Dread filled the pit of Neville's stomach. They didn't have three days, they had to leave tonight. Dumbledore would have this place shut so tight, spells would be monitored and anything out of the norm would be checked. He moved quickly back down the alleyways to his house.

A midnight stroll to calm his heart and mind after the nightmare had turned into a chase. Someone had spotted him and went after him like the jaws of Hell were closing in. He hadn't thought that they would catch onto him so quickly, but perhaps he didn't give them enough credit; they did have Hermione on their side.

As Neville came upon his home he dashed in quickly and bounded down the stairs. He knocked on both of his charges doors and waited. Gloria came out, still dressed for bed, but her blue eyes were alert. Neville felt his body heat in pleasure at the sight of Damian's sleepy look. His hair fell over his eyes, his chest bare giving Neville an eye full of broad shoulders, chiseled abs, and muscular torso.

"Professor?" Gloria asked. Neville smiled a bit sadly.

"Change of plans, we must leave now. It seems they went and checked on your parents first." He paused and then said, "They took my advice and left immediately. Finding them gone, I surmised they went to check on the two of you and..."

"Found us missing as well and you too, I would guess." Damian said yawning as he woke up. "Just give us a few minutes." He said and then disappeared into his room. Gloria did the same. Neville stood there and waited for them. No less than five minutes later, both of them were back in their school uniforms. Neville nodded to both of them and then pressed on a crack in the wall by Gloria's bedroom. The wall moved aside and he slipped through, holding it open for them to follow. Gloria was placed in between the two men as they hurried along the damp passage way.

"Where exactly are we going now?" Gloria asked. Neville didn't respond immediately and Gloria let him have his chance to think. He replied not too long afterwards.

"I will honestly tell you that I'm not sure. Dumbledore is shutting down the city fast. We need to make it into muggle London, which is not too far from where we are now. After that, I will see if I can get us a room there, but I'm not sure if I want to stop now."

Gloria nodded, "I understand, the more miles we get between ourselves and them the better. Do you have any other friends or anyone you trust outside of England?" Neville shook his head.

"Grandmother died two years after I graduated Hogwarts; she left me a modest fortune which I invested and watched grow into more money than I could possibly spend myself. When I turned twenty-one, a year after she died, the accident happened." He turned back to them. "I have no one but I am sure there has to be someone that you both can contact?"

Damian had no idea who he could...wait. "Luther, my brother. He has a flat in muggle London and I know we have a country house somewhere in Germany." He said quietly.

"Is there any way you can contact him while we are on the move?" Neville asked as he stopped in front of a slimy wall. He placed his gloved finger lightly on the stone and watched as the magick recognized its castor and opened slightly. He peered out of the door and sighed with relief and the empty muggle street. From what he estimated they were near Big Ben, which was far enough away from Diagon Alley.

"Just a moment." Damian said and closed his eyes. Neville frowned but Gloria shook her head slightly.

"It's alright, Damian is a powerful Healer, just like Lord Greg, he can even speak telepathically to his family members when need be. It is completely untraceable."

---

Luther was pacing in his office. He'd had a visit from that pompous oaf Ronald Weasley. If there was ever a git he wanted to pummel it was that no good Gryffindor. Damian and Gloria were missing. His parents and the Zabini's had fled Britain. The world was going insane.

*Luther.* He stopped pacing and stared into the fire as if in a trance, but made sure to keep his features brooding, just in case that bumbling idiot left something inside his office that could give himself away.

*Little Brother Damian am I ever glad to hear from you.*

*It's good to hear you too. Listen don't worry about Glory and I. Professor Longbottom is helping us escape. We're in muggle London right now and we are about to board the train into Germany. Lu, please where is our summer house?* Luther wracked his brain and then sighed to himself in relief when he remembered.

*Frankfurt, we have a summer house in the city of Frankfurt and another more remote one in the country outside of Bitburg. The houses are keyed to our blood and those who would do us no harm. Here are the directions.* It took a few minutes to think of them, but Luther trusted Damian. He would get him and Glory to safety. Luther was surprised that Professor Longbottom was the one helping them though.

From his memory he remembered a hauntingly beautiful man, but he'd thought the man much too timid or shy to do anything such as this. Well, Luther smirked; it looked like Professor Longbottom had a bit of Slytherin in him after all.

*I got it, thanks bro.* Damian said. Luther sneered.

*Get out of there safely and leave those buffoons chasing you to me as well. Take care of yourself, Glory, and the Professor. He gorgeous isn't he Damian?* Luther felt Damian get flustered and knew his brother was blushing. While Luther himself was bi, he knew Damian was gay as the sky was blue.

*Shut it Luther.*

*I'm only teasing.*

*Ha! I'll talk to you when we reach the house.* There was a fleeting touch of love that warmed his heart and then Damian was gone. Luther took a deep breath and then there was another knock on his door. This person didn't wait for him to answer and then knew why as soon as he turned around.

"Headmaster, what do I owe the pleasure of you walking into my office unannounced at an ungodly hour of the morning?" Luther drawled.

"Where are your family members?" Dumbledore said with a glacial face and manic look in his eye. Luther narrowed his eyes and blanked his mind as he felt Dumbledore trying to read his mind.

"I don't know." Luther lied smoothly. "And even if I did. I would never tell you."

"I will ruin you boy." Dumbledore thundered and Luther laughed.

"Ruin me with what? I sold my businesses here in England and moved my others abroad. I am leaving the country and I am not under your jurisdiction like my younger brother and fiancé who you wrongly have locked in Hogwarts." Luther snapped, "Get out of my home Dumbledore, you have no leverage here." The old wizard said nothing but did walk out. Luther added another three of the nastiest wards he knew that were blatantly considered 'dark', but he didn't care. That man was trouble.

And he would protect himself and his family at all costs.

---

Neville watched the scenery pass in the luxurious first class train cabin that he'd bought for them. Gloria was in the bedroom fast asleep. There was a comfortable couch and chair in the small sitting room. Neville had taken the chair by the window and Damian had dropped onto the couch and had been asleep in minutes. Neville watched him sleep with an indulgent smile on his face. He was so handsome...Neville sighed and went back to staring out the window.

He didn't see the deep chocolate brown eyes open and he wasn't aware that Damian watched over him until Neville himself fell asleep and then Damian fell into true sleep straight after.

---

Harry kissed his children and gave hugs to his younger brothers and sisters. He gracefully swung into the saddle on his black stallion and looked to his right. Draco sat in a saddle as if he were born there, which knowing how aristocratic the Malfoy's had been and still were, he probably was.

Draco smiled at him and nodded. Harry suddenly felt ten times better. He knew Draco would have his back if anything happened. Harry nodded back and then took off towards the south, Draco following swiftly behind.

So much for not going back to battle. Harry thought vaguely amused.

## Chapter Seven

"Again," Killian commanded.

Remus glared at the other were through exhausted eyes but willed his body to change once more. It was different then having his body change without his consent during a full moon. He'd never really tried to *make* himself change. It was a painful process. He held the form for about five minutes before it reversed on its own. Remus collapsed to the floor in an exhausted heap and Killian nodded to himself.

"That's it for the day. Good job" He said with a wink and a smile.

"Good job? I could barely do it right!" Remus snapped. Killian sighed and before Remus could react, a ball of magick was roaring towards him; he didn't even hesitate. Remus slipped into his wolf form and bounded out the way just in time to see the magick crash into and demolish the wall behind him. He released the form as quickly as he donned it and looked up into Killian's smirking face.

"Good job," He said softly, "It wasn't about getting it 'right' as you put it. It was about making it instinctual, so that when attacked without knowing it, you can easily switch forms. Not many wolves know how. And considering the fact that you've been suppressing yours with potions and the like for nearly five decades and you learned how in mere days shows me just how powerful you truly are." Killian crouched so that he could be eye-level with Remus. "How do you feel?"

"Tired, but excited," Remus said hesitantly, "the wolf is happy."

"Yes, it should be, you've let down your guard, let the wolf emerge more in these past few sessions than you ever have before in your life. Soon the wolf will be so intimately a part of you that you won't even be able to make a distinction between it and yourself. The wolf will be you." Nothing was said for a few moments, and then Killian rose gracefully. "Get some rest, we start first thing again in the morning. His Highness would like to speak with you as well."

Remus watched him walk away and then sighed heavily as he got up and walked back towards his rooms.

---

"***You look wonderful.***" Dion said when Remus appeared on the balcony, freshly showered and attired in bronze silk pants and a sleeveless Mandarin top made from bronze, red, and orange silk. Remus blushed, but glared at the dragon.

"I should hit you for the prank you pulled on me, but I find that I am too tired to do much but eat and sleep." Remus snapped. Dion cocked his head to the side and Remus found that he itched to run his fingers through that mix-matched head.

"***What prank have I pulled?***" Dion asked frowning as he pulled out a seat for Remus, who gladly sat in it, and then walked to his seat and fell into it gracefully.

"Bringing me here, and having your father tell me that I am your mate. It is impossible that I would be anywhere near your caliber to be your mate." Remus said with an aggravated tone. Dion blinked and then laughed.

**"Goddess, you are as suspicious as your friend Severus use to be. We are not playing games with you. You are my Mate and the future High King-Consort of the Dragon Dynasty. Dragons do not joke about these types of things. What made you think that I was the type of person that would be so cruel?"** Dion asked. Remus balked at the hurt in Dion's voice and immediately sought to soothe him. He placed a hand over Dion's and squeezed them gently. As it had before, an electric rush assailed him and he breathed deep letting Dion's ancient magick wash over him in a smooth and gentle wave.

"I'm sorry to have hurt you." Remus said gently, absently stroking Dion's hand and arm as he did so. "It has been many years since I have trusted anyone implicitly and without being wary of a hidden agenda in what they have told me. I'm just being cautious."

**"I understand, but without trust, you will never properly learn to live."** Dion said gently. He tugged at their entwined hands and lifted Remus' hand to his lips and kissed the back of his hand gently. Remus let out a shaky breath as desire flooded his whole body and then he gasped as Dion's endless blue eyes held his and Remus moaned as Dion's tongue licked and his teeth nipped at the sensitive skin in the crevices between each finger of his hand.

"Dion...please..."

**"Mm, you taste divine."** Dion murmured, but released Remus and settled back in his chair. **"Eat beloved, for I know Killian is quite the task master and you will need every spare source of energy for tomorrow and the days ahead."**

Remus stared at him for a few moments but did as he requested and ate. Dion smiled gently at him and joined him. For the first time in a long time Remus felt safe and cared for.

---

Harry and Draco stared at the vacant Zabini Manor with relief. "They left, thank the Goddess." Draco murmured.

"We still have to make sure they get out of Britain. And if they've left then Vince and Greg have probably moved their families as well. Come we have to hurry." Harry said and placed a hand on the small of Draco's back and they both vanished.

---

Damian stirred awake as a hand corded through his hair gently. He sighed in pleasure and blinked sleepily. "Hello, sleepy head." Gloria teased and Damian merely flicked her off and she laughed quietly. "Professor Longbottom is still sleeping, but I am sure he has to be uncomfortable in that chair." Damian lifted his head from the couch and stared at their professor.

He must have woken sometime during his sleep because he was covered from head to toe with a hooded cloak. His fingers were still gloved and the only skin that could be seen was that of Neville's face.

*Luther was right, he is gorgeous.* Damian thought as he continued to stare. Something about the man called to him. He didn't know what it was but he nearly ached to touch him. Damian felt Glory nudge him and he looked over at her and smiled.

"You like him," Glory said and Damian sighed and nodded.

"Nothing will come of it though. He is my professor..."

"Ex-professor you dolt, you've graduated."

"...fine *ex*-Professor and if that wasn't enough, he is twenty years older than I, and oh by the way if he touches me, like *really* touches me, I'll die." Damian said quietly. "What a horrible time to develop a crush."

Gloria just laughed softly, "If anyone can find a way to get around all of those obstacles you can." Damian didn't answer but stood gracefully and walked towards Neville. "Damian!" Gloria hissed in surprise as he lifted the man into his arms.

*He's so light.* Damian thought as Neville curled towards him, laying his cloaked head on Damian's shoulder like a small child. Damian tightened his hold and made sure that he wasn't touching him skin to skin anywhere as he carried him into the bedroom. Gloria hurried to his side and turned down the blankets on the bed as Damian took care in unwrapping Neville from the cloak he wore, laid him down and pulled the covers over him. "Come on, let him sleep." Damian murmured grinning as he watched Gloria fuss over their professor like a mother hen. "Glory he's fine."

"But I just want to make sure he's comfortable after all he didn't have to do this."

"I know, but I'm sure he wouldn't want to be coddled, now come on we can talk in the other room." Gloria huffed and flounced back into the room and Damian rolled his eyes and followed her, closing the door quietly behind him.

---

Golden topaz eyes opened slightly at the door closing and Neville slid further into sleep. He didn't have nightmares for the rest of the night.

---

Blaise, Vincent, and Gregory all watched Pansy and Helen sleep as their limousine drove through the night. "I know Dumbledore had the wizarding world closed off to the muggle realm. Do you think the children made it out alright?" Blaise asked.

"I'm sure they did." Gregory said. "Luther called me not too long ago; he said Damian had contacted him through telepathy. Longbottom found out what they were doing and got them out quickly."

"They went through muggle means didn't they?" Vince asked and Gregory nodded.

"I'm sure they are on the train by now. Longbottom would've gotten on the first ferry out of England and took a train; I think Luther said something about going into Germany."

"Why would he do that?" Blaise asked. "He knows that we will be in France."

"Did he?" Gregory asked him. "We knew where we were going. If he thinks we will be in France then he's probably going to go into Germany, stay at one of our summer houses before coming back into France. It will make them harder to track."

"They need all the help they can get." Vincent said quietly as he looked out the window and watched the shadowy landscape flash by. "All we needed to do was get out of England; we can take care of ourselves. However Damian and Gloria and even Longbottom will be hunted, because they are Dumbledore's ticket to getting us to do his bidding." He finished motioning to them all. "They must be extra cautious."

"How long do you think it will take them to reach Germany?" Blaise asked.

"I'm not sure. A day, maybe two at the most if they have to change trains." Greg said. "I just hope they are alright."

"Have faith in them and in Neville." Pansy's sleepy voice permeated the air and the men turned to look at her. "He's changed, become darker, more like a Slytherin than Gryffindor. He will survive and he will strike down anyone before they touch the children."

---

Draco sneered at Ron and Seamus as they appeared along with about twenty Order members. "Are you looking for someone in particular? If not, you are trespassing; these are private grounds." Draco leaned against the doors of Malfoy Manor.

"We know that you know where Zabini and the Crabbe-Goyle families are. So tell us now!" Ron snapped. Draco looked at him with a cold expression on his face and then shook his head.

"No, you are not master over me Weasley and neither is Dumbledore. You are on private property, get off now." His voice grew colder by the second. Ron didn't look like he was going to move and Draco seethed from the inside but said nothing else and didn't move.

"You will move or..."

"Or you'll what Weasley?" Harry said coming up behind his Consort and then gently but firmly placed him behind himself. Ron and Seamus both flustered as did the other members of the Order. "What will you do Weasley? Curse him? Storm his home like you own it? What?"

"Look Harry, all we want to do is find them, that's all." Ron practically whined.

"Why?" Harry asked softly. "Why do you want to find them so badly?" There was a lot of shuffling, a few mumbled, but no one would answer him. "Get off our land." He said coldly. "Draco."

"Yes," Draco said sighing and then pressed a hand gently to the doors of the Manor. "My home you may ward now. Let no one in that isn't of our family." Harry and Draco closed their eyes as they felt the Manor thrum to life and opened them in time to see Ron, Seamus, and all the Order members pushed back outside of the wards by the ancient magick of the house. The gates slammed shut and the wards became complete. "They are out of Britain." Draco said.

"Good, let's head into France then; that is where they are staying, right?" Harry asked as he guided Draco inside of the house.

"Yes."

---

Hermione bit her lip as she looked either way on Diagon Alley before venturing into Knockturn. Her destination was a little on her left and she stepped into the shop hastily. "Running from someone?" A sultry voice asked. Hermione gasped and spun around watching warily as the attractive older woman came out of the shadows.

"No, I am..."

"Ahh yes Hermione Weasley. I've been expecting you. You've come for a reading have you?" She asked and Hermione nodded hesitantly. The woman snorted. "They have stripped you of your character. That husband of yours has been neglecting you has he not? Well, it is of no matter, your fate lies with someone else. Come; let me look upon you in the light." The woman turned to her right and struck a match, she lit a candle and Hermione gasped as candles lit up across the room.

"Wand-less magick," Hermione murmured. "Who are you?"

"My name is Francesca and my father was heavily steeped in the Arts. Wand-less magick was a good thing to learn as a child. Now sit with me. All I need is a moment of your time." Francesca said and then grinned as Hermione stepped forward. "My you are striking. Your hair is a bit...bushy and unkempt but with a little time and effort that too can be resolved." Hermione sat in the chair that was offered and then pulled back the rest of her hood. "Yes, you are a beautiful witch. Your husband used to tell you that all the time. Now he doesn't spare you a look, does he?"

"No, how did you know that?"

"The Sight comes in all forms and to all those who believe in the Goddess. It is one of Her most precious gifts to give. Some have more talent than others. Your Divinations professor I believe was one who had the gift, just not a lot of it." Hermione chuckled as a smile lit the other witch's face. "Your friend's Father though, Lucius Malfoy, now he truly has the gift of Sight. He is a powerful Seer and sees all and nothing at the same time."



"I don't understand."

"What I am about to tell you about yourself, was not his to tell. You were once a strong woman Hermione and once you took the Weasley name you fell apart, became submissive and complacent. Ronald doted on you endlessly until you miscarried. Your problems started then and grew with every passing year that you couldn't conceive. Now the Headmaster of Hogwarts is going with his vendetta against those who helped save this world from disaster and your Ron is in the thick of it. But let me tell you why some of the things that have happened to you have come to pass." Francesca said and grasped Hermione's hand while she did it.

"Look at me. Don't hold your head in shame." Hermione's head snapped up; tears ran down her cheeks. "Why do you cry?"

"I tried; I tried so hard to give him the child he desperately wanted. I don't understand why I wasn't able to. I'm a failure. And I am weak, and I *despise* myself for that weakness." Francesca crooned as Hermione cried and she rubbed her shoulder soothingly, until the tears subsided and Hermione was able to listen.

"Heed my words wisely child, your future is about to take a turn, for the better or worse is for you to decide." Francesca said seriously. Hermione blinked but nodded and the woman began speaking again. "The Wizarding world of Britain is crumbling. Dumbledore and the Ministry have bled it dry and looks for other means of getting the money back into it. You know this." Hermione nodded. "Well it will not work. Even as we speak those that have the money to give life back to the coffers of this country have fled and are already safely inside of French Wizarding borders. Your old friend Harry and his consort are headed to France to make sure they are okay."

"What about the children?" Hermione asked. Francesca stared at her for a moment and then nodded to herself.

"The children are with the Serpent King in Germany." She said slowly and Hermione blinked.

"Serpent King?"

"Well, High King, actually, is his destiny. But young Neville will learn about that soon. Now, here is the most important part and you must listen and listen well. The Lady Pansy Zabini is going to die to protect her family. Her husband, who loves her greatly, will slowly fade away as she crosses over. If you do not make it there in time, both of them will die and leave their daughter alone in this world."

"Oh my God," Hermione covered her mouth in horror. "And is Dumbledore...?"

"Yes, that miserable old man will be responsible. However, if you are able to get there in time, you won't be able to save Lady Zabini, but you will be able to save her husband. It is an ancient rite, but Lady Zabini knows this and when she sees you, she will know that you are to take her place as the next Lady Zabini."

"I...but I'm already married, what the hell are you talking about? I love my husband!"

"But your husband doesn't love you!" Francesca hissed. "*That* is the truth you are blinding yourself to. He covets you, but there is no love left in his heart, only anger and jealousy. He will kill an innocent woman at the behest of your Headmaster because of this and if you are not there in time, he will kill two people and leave a young girl in this world alone with no parents of her own. Do you want that hanging over your head?"

"No!" Hermione sobbed, "I don't want that to happen. I don't want any of this to happen."

"It is too late; the wheels of Fate are already turning and making it so. You wanted to know your fate and the fate of those closest to you, well this is it. Hermione," she said gently, "you are a bright star in the middle of the ugliest storm. Do this one thing, and the entire world could be yours. The Goddess has already blessed those who have helped Harry and his immediate family escape."

"The Goddess has blessed them with what?"

"They will never age another day." Francesca said simply. "It is fated that all those who are entwined in Harry Potter's life will disappear into the other magical realms at the end of this. You can go with them, have a family...be a mother, if you just make it in time to help the Lady Zabini. If not..."

"If not...?" Hermione questioned. Francesca stared at her hard.

"You will die; choose your fate." She said harshly.

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Hermione hurried away from the shop. Francesca stood by and solemnly watched her go. "May the Goddess bless and have mercy on you." Francesca murmured and then slipped back into her shop and disappeared in a shimmering sparkle of light.

---

Remus woke up covered in sweat, his limbs shaking like a leaf. Whatever he had dreamt was gone and replaced with a fear so bone deep he knew it would be a while before he slept again. An arm wrapped around his middle and he flinched until he felt the tell-tale signs of scales against his back. He sighed.

***"I felt a disturbance in your room. I came to make sure you were okay. You seemed to sleep better when I was around you so I stayed. Is that okay?"*** Dion asked. Remus nodded and leaned against him silently. ***"What is it that you dreamed?"***

"I don't know, but it had something to do with Harry." He whispered. "Something bad is going to happen."

***"Well, then you will just have to get stronger than won't you?"*** Dion murmured in his ear. And Remus smiled.

"Yes, I will just get stronger."

---

Lucius slowly blinked and then stood gracefully from his office chair. He walked towards his private balcony and looked out over the Elven Realm and sighed. "Are you sure Fran?" He asked gently.

A shimmer of magick shone in his peripheral vision and he turned and smiled at the woman dressed in all black; her blood red hair held in a neat bun, revealing her pointed ears, and her bright blue eyes as she dipped into a low curtsy.

"Milord," she breathed. "I am certain, the Goddess never tells false tales."

"Yes," Lucius smiled sadly. "That is correct. Well, it seems my sons will have their work cut out for them." Francesca just smiled. "You did well."

"Thank you Milord." She murmured and then vanished. Lucius sighed heavily and turned back to the trees and silently waited. He followed Francesca's magick back to her little shop and bowed his head when he felt it be snuffed out forever.

"You did well child, the Goddess waits for you." He murmured and then turned back to his desk and walked passed it. He walked down the hall, down the stairs, and out into the forest beneath the trees. Being a Seer was never an easy task and losing one that you consider a friend but not being able to prepare them, cut more deeply than he would've ever imagined.

Sometimes he felt no better than Voldemort's whore.

This was one of those moments.

---

Severus watched his husband walk the forest; he could hear the trees sing their sorrow from losing one of their own. Francesca knew the dangers, but still she went, her vision too pressing and far too important not to tell the one person who could make a difference. He sighed and watched as Lucius disappeared deep into the forest. He wouldn't come back for hours.

"Daddy, where is Papa going?" Severus smiled and looked down at Sebastian.

"He's going to think sweet, there are many things that he sees because of who he is and some of those are not good."

"Oh," Sebastian's face lost some of its levity but then he perked up again his dark eyes flashing. "But he will be happy again right?"

"Yes he will." Severus said smiling and Sebastian cheered. Severus looked up at another movement in the room and smiled; Dysis had come to visit. His black locks were held back by a long braid that fell to his rear, his blue silver eyes flashed and he grinned as Sebastian bounced toward him with all the enthusiasm of an eleven year old.

"Dysis!" He cried and leaped at his older brother who caught him and gave him a hug.

"Hello you little terror!" Dysis' voice was deep like his father's and as smooth as aged whiskey like Severus' own.

"Sebastian, you must continue your studies. Run along now."

"Yes Daddy," Sebastian sang and then scampered out of the room. Dysis walked further into the room and watched his Daddy with a narrowed expression.

"What is it Dysis?" Severus asked. Dysis rolled his eyes and approached his Daddy and pressed a hand to his stomach. Severus gasped as his son's magick cancelled out the glamour he had put up and his hand was on Severus slightly protruding abdomen.

"When were you going to tell us?" Dysis asked. "You are three months along."

"Almost," Severus whispered, "I was going to wait until I was further along. I wasn't sure..." Severus couldn't say it.

"You weren't sure if you could or would carry to term?" Dysis asked gently and Severus nodded. "Oh, Daddy, why do you not lean on your family more? There is no need for such secrets now. Father would support whatever decision you make."

"No he wouldn't; not if it meant he would lose me." Severus said quickly. "I know your Father very well. He would rather lose this child than lose me and I can't let him do that."

"You won't have to." Dysis murmured. "Ady and I have known for a while. And Father, well, for all he can see the future and what not, he is dumber than a box of rocks when it comes to things like this." Dysis said with a grin. Severus laughed and kissed him gently on the forehead.

"What would I do without you my beautiful sunset?" Severus murmured. Dysis shrugged.

"You will never have to find out." He said seriously and then grinned. "Now let's go and tell Father he is about to have another child yet again."

---

Hermione stared at herself in the mirror. Solemn brown eyes stared back at her, framed by an elegant face and bushy chestnut brown hair. She looked around the room and then at the plain gold band on her finger. She had given twenty years of her life to Ron and what did she have to show for it?

Nothing...

Her gaze hardened with resolve and she pulled her ring off and left it sitting on the vanity. She crossed the room and picked up the small bag she'd packed for herself, walked down the hall and opened the front door and stepped out into the depths of the night.

She didn't look back.

---

Ron stared down at the body of the Elf before him. She'd been one with the Gift of Sight, Dumbledore said.

"*She has to be dealt with.*" Dumbledore had said. Seamus had really been the one to kill her, but Ron still felt her blood was on his hands as well.

"Let's tell the Headmaster it has been done." Seamus said casually. Ron nodded.

"Yeah, let's go."

---

Ron stepped into his home and knew that something was not right. He walked past the kitchen where his dinner was sitting on the counter. He walked into the bedroom and his anger went straight to rage. The closet was open; some of her things were gone.

The ring he gave her was sitting on her vanity.

"*HERMIONE!*"

## Chapter Eight

Pansy rolled over in Blaise's arms to stare at him. He was so beautiful to her. Blond locks fell haphazardly around his face, his long lashes fluttered as he dreamt. Pansy sighed and curled around him, Blaise tightened his arms in response and Pansy smiled. They fought, killed, and bled together for the Order as teenagers and once in University, it was no surprise to others when they dated and eventually married. Their dynastic families were happy enough when it happened. As long as the money stayed within the families their parents were happy. Although once Dumbledore and the stupid Ministry began fining those supporters of the Dark Lord, or those they thought of as supporters, things went sour.

Pansy lost both of her parents to the Kiss and Blaise's parents went into hiding but were found and summarily put to death when they resisted. Pansy frowned at the injustice of it all, but there was nothing that could be done. Glory had been on her way by then and they had their own child to think about. And now...Pansy glanced around their Parisian chateau with bittersweet contentment. They were out of England, but their daughter was somewhere in Germany with Damian and Neville, being chased, as their parents slept off their own fatigue that came with hasty traveling.

And not only did Pansy have to contend with that, but she also had to contend with her own death being on the horizon. She smirked when she thought of it, but the foreboding in the back of her mind would not let her rest. She knew her time was coming and it was coming soon.

...And Hermione would take her place. She found it odd, but then again, Hermione was a cunning witch and very bright. If anyone could handle Blaise it would be her.

She wasn't happy about it, but she'd been promised that Blaise and Glory would be well taken care of and well loved. Pansy sent a whispered thanks to the Goddess that at least through the pain that her death would cause, her family would be okay in the end. She smiled gently as she watched Blaise wake. And his full lips turned into a teasing grin as his eyes sparkled.

"What are you thinking in that devious mind of yours?" He teased quietly.

*Never forget, Blaise, that all I do...I do it because I love you.* Pansy thought to herself and she leaned over and kissed him.

"I love you." She whispered. Blaise pulled her into a hug and tears burned her eyes as she heard him respond in kind.

"I love you too dear heart."

Sometimes fate was a bitch.

---

Neville looked out in the forest from the office window and sighed with relief. Germany was a beautiful place and it looked even better with the shimmering of ancient wards that he could see that hid the Crabbe-Goyle summer residence from everyone, including wizards.

"Professor?" He turned and smiled at Gloria.

"You don't need to call me Professor Miss Zabini, Neville or Longbottom will do just fine."

"Well then, you should call me Gloria." Gloria sniffed and Neville grinned.

"Gloria it is." He conceded with a small nod. Rich laughter filled the air and Neville felt a blush creep into his cheeks as Damian came into the room.

"She will always get her way. I don't even try anymore." Damian said as he dodged a well-aimed book that was flying towards his head. Neville laughed at their antics but then he saw the seriousness in Damian's face and knew the young man had questions.

"Go ahead and ask, whatever it is that you desire." Neville told him quietly. Damian smiled boyishly for a moment and Neville was reminded yet again of how young he was.

"Why are you doing this?" Damian asked. "What made you do it?"

"It is a complicated answer you seek from me." Neville sighed. Gloria perched on the couch and Damian sprawled onto it.

"We have nothing but time." Gloria said and Neville chuckled albeit a bit sadly.

"Where to begin..." Neville thought about it and then sighed again, "I guess it had to begin as long ago as my accident. I don't think anyone has ever really said what exactly happened?" Gloria and Damian shook their heads.

"No, all we heard were the rumors."

"Well the truth of the matter is this. Severus Snape scared the living breath out of me so badly that I never learned Potions while in school at Hogwarts." He said sheepishly and the two teens laughed.

"Yeah I know. Anyway, at Wizing University, I decided to try my hand at it again though with a different teacher. For all his bravado he couldn't hold a candle to Snape. I flourished in the class, but sometimes I was still a klutz and very forgetful.

"That day a few of the older students decided to play a prank on me. We were brewing a healing potion, to combat poison no less, and they added dragon's bone and a few other ingredients into it." Neville stared out the window, pain as well as confusion etched in his features. "I knew something was wrong when it turned black so quickly. There wasn't any time. As soon as it turned black it exploded. I was covered in the stuff. Everything gets a little hazy after that point. All I remember was screaming and ragged retching. The smell of burning flesh and bone..." Neville shuddered and shook his head. "I must have passed out because when I came to, I reached for help only to be thwarted by the professor. They levitated me to the hospital ward and then later to the hospital. I passed out again.

"Time really has no meaning when in a coma. All I remember was the darkness and feeling very peaceful. I didn't want to leave; it was far better than what my life had been." Neville shrugged, "I think I

wanted to die at some point but I woke up. The nurse that was helping was running some test to see how I was doing. I reached out to get her attention and as soon as I touched her...her skin became gray, her veins were a clear visible blue and purple. She was dead before she hit the floor."

"Merlin." Gloria murmured and then covered her mouth in shock. She was horrified. Damian looked at the bleakness in his eyes and ached to hold him. To kill someone on accident after coming out of a coma for six months...no wonder he was so withdrawn.

"I think at that moment the Medi-Wizards told me I could never touch anyone again, I realized that I would be alone for the rest of my days. The few friends I had shunned me, the wizarding world turned their back on me. I was ostracized like a dark creature or wizard. At first the only work I found was in Knockturn Alley and then Dumbledore approached me with an offer to teach Herbology.

"It was a dream come true for me. I thought things would be different, but they weren't. I might as well have been in Slytherin or have been the right hand of Voldemort for all the distaste they showed at having me there. I turned to my plants and the serpents from the Forbidden Forest for comfort and companionship. As I grew older, the venom grew stronger in my veins. I can speak to any snake just using thought and they can do the same to me.

"It was then that I became comfortable with whom I was and after that I started seeing things differently. I saw how manipulative Dumbledore was to those around him. Coaxing, bribing, threatening even to people who practically worshipped the ground he walked on. He first scared me and then he angered me. What he did to the two of you and then your parents was the last straw. I knew I could no longer overlook it and I decided to act. It was the only way I knew that you would be able to get out alive and well. And it was also the only way I knew that I would be able to be free of that old tyrant." Neville finished. He looked to Damian and smiled, "Does that answer your question?"

"Yes." Damian choked out.

"When will we be traveling again?" Gloria asked.

"Probably in a week or so. If they haven't found us by then, then we can head back to the train and carry on to France." Neville said. "I believe we've reached a climax in our situation. Once we get to France, it will end there." Nothing was said for brief moments and then Gloria stood up and twirled around a bit.

"Well, I for one am famished. I will see if the house elves can make us a meal fit for a king." She grinned and quietly left the room. Neville turned back towards the window, to relieve himself of the tempting sight of Damian's form sprawled elegantly across the couch.

"You want me, don't you?" Damian's voice cut through the silence. Neville whirled around, white strands of hair falling into his eyes. He hastily tucked them behind his ear and stammered out a reply.

"W-What makes you think that?" Damian got to his feet and strode towards him, in a predatory type fashion.



"You watch me constantly." Damian said simply and then smiled gently. "And you look at me the way my Father looks at Dad." Neville started to speak but Damian shook his head. "Don't deny it; you've been doing it for months. And it is okay because I feel the same about you as well."

"Damian, it's not right. You're..."

"What? Too young? Believe me, living with two fathers, a surrogate mother, and the entirety of Wizarding Britain breathing down our necks for being who we are, has made me, Luther, and Glory grow up fast. I am aged beyond my years and it doesn't even matter that much anyway. You are beautiful. You look like a man half his age. Attraction isn't something you can hide or deny forever. Come what may, I will have you." Desire lit Damian's dark eyes and Neville leaned against the glass window as Damian pressed closer to him. "Now try to lie and tell me I am wrong."

"I can't." Neville said clearly panicked. "I've tried, for so long, and it just won't go away. Damian, you are..." Neville trailed off as he stared up into the handsome face of the one he truly desired above all other things. "Exquisite." He murmured. "I can't stop watching you nor thinking of you. But it pains me to do so. I can never touch you or be touched by you. Skin to skin contact would kill you and I would rather *die* than to see your life taken by something I have no control over."

Damian looked frustrated but Neville could see the knowledge in his eyes. "I understand but..." Damian hesitated but a moment before quickly easing Neville's hood back over his head. Neville looked puzzled but then he gasped as Damian pulled him close, their bodies touching through the layers of clothes covering them. Neville felt tears burning his eyes at the sheer *rightness* of feeling Damian's strong arms around his slender form. They fit perfectly and Neville splayed his gloved fingers over the broad muscled shoulders under Damian's turtleneck reveling in the feel of him.

Damian sighed as he ran his hands over Neville's cloaked back. He was so lithe, but muscled as well; Damian so wanted to feel his skin, but knew it wasn't possible. At least not yet. He kissed Neville's hooded head as he stared out the glass window.

"We will find a way. I swear it." He murmured.

Neville's hands tightening around his waist was the only response.

---

Gloria watched them from the hallway, a tender smile on her face. They looked perfect together. It had to be fate that they met...and fate would never let two such as these wizards not have their true heart's desire.

She just prayed they could find a way to make it work.

There had to be a way.

---

Draco murmured his thanks as the waiter poured him a glass of wine. He took a sip and then stared at the passing scenery that kept flashing by. They would be in France shortly and then they would find which château their friends were staying at. Probably the Zabini château, the Crabbe-Goyle one was too far away. They'd want to be in the city at least for a time.

"What are you thinking darling?" Harry asked.

"We will go to the Zabini estate when we get into Paris. They should be there." Draco frowned. "They only got a day's head start, they'd be tired."

"So more than likely they will not be going anywhere until we get there." Harry said and Draco nodded. They sat in companionable silence for a time until Harry shifted and gazed at Draco again. "Do you suppose the children made it out?"

"I'm not sure." Draco said hesitantly, "If they left, they either retrieved Gloria and Damian or had it under good authority that they would be gone as well. Blaise and Vincent would never leave their children in harm's way. Besides Pansy and Greg and even Helen would have their hides if they tried. Speaking of children, has Sev told anyone that he's pregnant again?" Harry's eyes went wide.

"You knew?"

"Of course I did," Draco scoffed, "He's been avoiding me like the plague for nearly three months. The only reason he would do that is because he knows that I would be able to sense that he was with child. All Consorts are able to do this. It is the only reason I can think of that he would willingly not come and see me." Draco said simply.

"He hasn't even told Father yet." Draco arched an eyebrow incredulously. "You know what the doctor said about your health being in jeopardy if you got pregnant again so soon, wouldn't it apply doubly for Sev?" Harry asked patiently. "He is worried. He's twenty years our senior and had three children in the span of twenty odd years. Even on a wizard that is hazardous for one's health."

"I understand why he did it. He's not sure if he can carry the child to term. The older a person gets be it wizard, witch, or Elf; the likelihood of miscarriage gets higher with age." Draco bit his lip, "I am sure he would say something after he is at least four or five months along, but even then there is a good chance of complication." Draco sighed heavily, "Well, it's too late to start guessing about it now. What is done is done. We just have to take it a day at a time."

"You're right, but who will tell Father that when he finds out?" Harry chuckled. Draco smirked.

"Sev will of course."

---

"*You're what?*" Lucius' voice roared. Severus rolled his eyes and then glared at his son. Dysis sat serenely on the window sill trying and failing to disguise his laughter by coughing.

"I'm pregnant Luc, now sit down before you break something," Severus ordered. Lucius glared at him but sat behind his desk in a huff.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Lucius asked angrily. "I would've..."

"Locked me to our bed and not let me move for nine months, yes I know. And that is exactly why I didn't tell you in the first place." Severus told him quietly. Lucius glared at him but slowly relented and motioned for Severus to come to him. As Severus moved he caught Dysis quietly closing the door behind him, leaving his parent's alone.

"How are you feeling?"

"Tired, a bit moody, but for the most part I am fine." Severus told him gently as he corded his fingers through Lucius' silver hair.

"Yes, you are fine for now. Sev, I...I can't lose you." The uncertainty in his voice more than anything told Sev just how fragile Lucius was about him leaving under any circumstances, especially one such as death. He had an unlimited life span now; due to being Lucius' Consort, but even such a thing as pregnancy could take him away from his love.

"You won't lose me." Severus told him seriously. Lucius looked up at him and sighed. There was no use talking Severus out of anything that he really wanted to do.

"Alright," Lucius conceded. He brushed a hand along Severus' slightly protruding stomach and then grinned. "Another child...the Goddess blesses us."

"Hmm, you always did want a brood of children." Severus murmured with a small smile. Lucius laughed huskily, gripping Severus' black strands as he pulled him down to kiss him ardently.

*I adore you my Consort.*

---

Hermione quickly got off the ferry and walked briskly down the street of the French town she was in. Getting out of the wizarding world in Britain had been hard, but manageable. Dumbledore had locked down all the exits tightly, so tightly in fact that Hermione had to use other means, namely going through Knockturn Alley to escape.

Tears burned her eyes as she remembered seeing Francesca's dead body dumped onto the street by Aurors as they combed through the small shop. It was at that time that she had finally seen the pointed ears that revealed Francesca as an Elf, not a witch, as she had thought. Hermione had a funny feeling that they wouldn't find anything in the shop at all. It seemed as if Francesca had done her part in this chaotic battle and nothing was left behind to give away any information that wasn't supposed to be known.

Her night had been a harsh one, having not really been outside of Britain in years. That was all Ron's doing. He'd never wanted to travel abroad, even when Hermione had wanted to go seek fertility clinics to help save their crumbling marriage. Well it was of no import now. She had all but divorced Ron and now was running for her life, she was sure, because when Ron caught up with her, he'd surely kill her for humiliating him like she did.

She looked up from where she'd been walking and followed the instructions of one of the attendants on the ferry to the train station. Once she found it, she bought a one-way ticket to Paris. Hopefully, she'd know where she was to go by then. Hermione hurried onto the train and sat by a window and waited for the train to leave.

"Please let this be the right thing for me." She murmured, almost laughing; it was too late for second thoughts now. As the train departed Hermione began to feel pressure inside of her, near her heart, it was almost suffocating. Hermione gasped at the burning feeling, tears falling down her face. "What...is happening?" She moaned in pain.

*It is alright child.* The voice was a woman's and it reverberated through her like the peals of bells.

"Who are you?"

*I am She that sent Francesca to you.*

"Goddess..." Hermione murmured, her breath hitching in pain.

*Yes, now listen to me Hermione. You have chosen your fate wisely. Many years of happiness are before you. However, as of now and into the present future you will be fighting an uphill battle. What you are experiencing now is something that is quite rare. I am giving you and Pansy, the Lady Zabini, the gift of telepathy between each other. Pansy's time is extremely short.*

*By tomorrow evening she will be dead and you will be in her place. The pain that is in your chest is also a gift of sorts. It will allow you to sense where Pansy is in relation to yourself as well as let you know how much life remains in her body. It will be like have a second heartbeat that you can feel and hear in the back of your mind and once it stops...you will only have a few minutes after that to find Pansy and perform the ritual. Do you understand?*

"Yes." Hermione croaked. The pain had finally relented and as the Goddess had said, she could hear and feel the beat of a second heart; it was faint but she knew instinctively as Pansy's time grew even shorter, it was be as loud as anything around her.

*Rest now, Pansy will contact you shortly.* The voice left as abruptly as it came and Hermione fell into a restless sleep immediately.

---

Pansy held onto the railing of the balcony overlooking Paris. She took in a deep breath and waited until her heartbeat settled and then listened carefully. Sure enough she could hear the beat of Hermione's heart as the witch slept.

*Soon.*

Pansy heard the voice and the sense of foreboding eating at her grew even more.

"Hurry Hermione, I am counting on you."

---

Blaise watched his wife through a narrowed gaze. Something was wrong; he could almost taste it. She stood there, back ramrod straight as she stared at the city with a look that was akin to fear and resignation.

She knew; whatever it was that was going to happen, Pansy knew about it.

The dread building in his gut wouldn't go away, no matter how many times he tried to assuage it. Greg said it was nerves and Vincent said he needed to relax, but Blaise couldn't. He couldn't relax until he knew what was bothering his wife and why when she told him she loved him...

...it sounded like good-bye.

---

"Where is Hermione, Ron?" Dumbledore asked him at the next Order meeting. It had been only hours since he'd come home and found his wife missing. Ron swallowed down his anger and said tensely,

"I think she defected." Exclamations of surprise and horror went up around the room. "She left her ring; barley took any clothes with her, and fled. I got home around three this morning; she was long gone by the time I got there." Dumbledore nodded and then gazed down the table.

"I'm taking all of you off the case of trying to find the children. This takes top priority." He glanced around the room. "All other countries are our enemies as of now. They harbor dark creatures and wizards alike; they are beneath our notice." Murmurs of agreement went through the room. "Focus all searches around Germany and France; the dark wizarding community is strong in those two places. Once you find the families; get rid of them." Dumbledore said coolly. "No mercy will be given. Find ways to make it look like a muggle accident if you can."

The Order nodded and Ron grinned smugly.

Revenge would be his.

## Chapter Nine

Draco looked out into the night on the balcony of their hotel room. The night was quiet; too quiet. He took a deep breath and felt a sense of trepidation enter his being. Someone would die soon. His calm gaze was hard and assessing as he tried to figure out who it was. The children were safe he knew, as was Longbottom. The death centered around one of his old school chums. His heart ached at the thought, but he could sense that it was their time.

"Draco?" Harry's sleepy muddled voice caused him to turn from his vigil and he smiled.

*Go back to sleep Harry.* Draco murmured to him in his mind and used a little magick to ease him back into sleep. Draco smiled at him a moment and then sighed and turned back toward the night. Tomorrow they would go to the Zabini Manor and hopefully make some sense of what was going on in the Wizarding World.

He stood there until the morning light and then he finally fell into a restless sleep.

---

"Are you sure this will work?" Ronald asked Seamus. Seamus nodded his head.

"Definitely, we just have to connect it."

"And the Muggle police will think it was an accident?" Ron asked. Seamus shrugged.

"Either that or a vigilante crime. Don't worry so much Ron; it will go off without a hitch. No mercy, mate." Seamus said with a hard gleam in his eyes. Ron nodded.

"Yeah, no mercy."

---

Hermione thanked the waitress for her tea and took a sip and tried to look calm, but she wasn't calm on the inside. The second beat that was aligned with her own heart had gotten so loud she was sure that someone else besides her could hear it. However, as she looked around, the patrons of the small café went about their business as if a traveling British woman was an everyday thing.

*Good Morning Hermione.* Hermione started and spilled some of the tea on her hand. She hissed quietly and heard the smooth husky voice of Pansy chuckle in her mind.

*A little warning would be nice.* Hermione said. Pansy laughed at that.

*We are talking mind to mind, Hermione, there will never be a warning unless we were a bonded pair like Harry and Draco and we are not. I just wanted to know where you were.*

*In a little café, right across the street from the Eiffel Tower.* Hermione said. Pansy seemed to nod her head.

*We are actually not too far away from you, but we can meet there later and talk okay? I want to explain to you the ritual that will take place.*

*Is there a reason you can't say now?*

*Well, no. Okay we will exchange blood and magick, through the transfusion. You will receive all my memories and I believe all my magick save some of it. All of this will take place at the time of my last heart beat and last breath. The Goddess was vague on exactly when all of this would take place, but somewhere in that time period.*

*That is not a lot of time.* Hermione said, paling as they discussed Pansy's death as if they were reading a clothing magazine.

*No, that is why you must be there within ten minutes.* Pansy said. They were silent for some time and Hermione continued to drink her tea. *I wanted to thank you.*

*Thank me for what?* Hermione asked.

*You didn't have to do this; you could've stayed in your life.*

*What life? I didn't have a life, merely an existence.* Hermione sighed. *Are you sure there is no one more qualified than me?* Pansy snorted.

*Are you serious? You are probably the most qualified. Could you see Blaise with Luna Lovegood or someone else?* Hermione chuckled quietly to herself. Luna had taken over for her father's job at the Quibbler and was as crazy as ever.

*No.*

*Okay then.*

*Well, you're welcome. And I promise that I will take care of them for you. I swear it even.* She felt fleeting warmth as if Pansy had just smiled.

*I know you will; that's why I chose you. See you later Hermione at the same café you are at now.*

*What time?*

*Eight this evening.* Pansy said. Hermione nodded and checked her watch.

*I'll be here.*

Pansy closed the connection and looked out towards the Eiffel Tower and sighed. Tonight she would die; she was sure of it. She swallowed as an inkling of fear went through her, but the ever present feel of the Goddess calmed her. She turned and looked at the sleeping visage of her husband and then went to go get ready.

She had many things to do today.

---

Vincent threw powder into the flames and then called out, "Longbottom." A moment passed and then Longbottom's head appeared in the flames.

"Lord Crabbe-Goyle." He said bowing his head slightly. Vincent snorted.

"It's Vincent or Vince choose one."

"It's Neville or Nev choose as well." Vincent grinned.

"Neville how is everything?" Neville smirked and then smiled softly.

"They are alright, they are still sleeping. We had to leave quickly..."

"I know, I heard from Luther." Vincent said. "I was just making sure everything was well besides that."

"It is. The wards are in place and the house and house elves have done a stellar job as per their usual. You have a beautiful home Vincent. I need to know your address in France; we will be coming up there at the end of this week." Vincent looked at a calendar.

"So around June eighth?" Neville nodded, "Alright we'll be here at the Zabini Manor until then. Our house is further out in the country. We can go there afterwards."

"Sounds like a plan. Well, call back later, and I'll make sure the children are up and ready." Vincent smiled.

"They're adults now." Neville rolled his eyes.

"Yes, and I'm sure you thought the same when you were their age." He said sarcastically. Vincent laughed and ended the call. He stood fluidly and turned and found Greg leaning against the doorframe.

"Morning," Vincent said and kissed Greg chastely. Greg grinned at him.

"Kids okay?"

"Yep, sleeping at the summer house in the country," Vincent said. Greg glanced at him as Vincent took his hand and led him down into the garden.

"Have you noticed anything strange going on with Pansy?" Vincent asked when they were far enough away from the house. Greg frowned but nodded.

"Yes, she seems distant, and a little afraid. I get a vague feeling of..." Greg trailed off and his face became unreadable. Vincent looked at him in concern.

"What is it?" He asked. Greg sighed.

"You promise not to tell Blaise?" He asked. Vincent nodded hesitantly.



"Yes, I promise." He said finally.

"I sense death around her." Greg told him quietly. Vincent didn't move, "it's like a heavy stench that permeates the air around her whenever she walks by. It's been getting stronger since we've come to Paris. Today it is the strongest it's ever been."

"And you thought that you shouldn't tell anyone?" Vincent asked angrily. Greg glared at him.

"If I had told what then? It's not like death just chose her to die at a specific place and we could go someplace different. Every death is planned. People, especially wizards and witches and all other magical creatures, know when they are to die, as long as their fate isn't altered." Vincent swallowed heavily.

"So you are saying that it wouldn't have mattered where we were, Pansy still would die?"

"Yes, it is her time." Vincent cursed under his breath; this is not what they needed right now.

"Does Blaise know?" He asked his husband. Greg looked off into the distance before turning back to Vincent.

"I think he realizes that something bad is going to happen. Wizards do not bond as Elves do, so Pansy is able to keep things from him, however some of her anxiety will bleed into him. And I think that is what he's feeling right now."

"If she dies will he follow her?" Vincent asked in horror. Greg shrugged looking miserable.

"I'm not sure. If their bond is strong enough then yes, there may be a good chance that he will die as well. However, he may live. I just don't have all the answers." Greg said quietly. Vincent rubbed his neck and then looked towards the house. This whole situation was fucked up and he said so. Greg just nodded.

There was nothing else to say.

---

Dion sat with his mother and father as they watched the rat race that was the Wizarding World.

**"How is your mate doing?"** Draconis asked his son. Dion grinned.

**"He's doing well. Killian says he's the best student he's ever had. I'm so proud of him."** Dion said but then he sighed and motioned to the Wizarding World. **"I sense much despair is about to take place. One of Harry and Draco's friends will die this day. Remus will be sad when he hears."**

**"There is nothing to be done for it now. It is in the Goddess' hands."** Illyrian said quietly as she leaned against her husband. **"Besides this was all in Her plan anyway. She has other plans for Pansy. The cunning witch will be reborn when the time is right."**

***"Do you think Remus will be ready when he is needed to go back into that world?"*** Draconis asked his son. ***"His task is coming soon; he needs to do this, for them and himself."***

***"He will be ready."*** Dion said confidently.

---

"You want to go out?" Blaise asked with a frown. "But Pansy,"

"Just to the café across from the Eiffel Tower." Pansy said. "We can all go, even at different times. Vince, Greg and Helen can go first and then you and finally me. We will meet there until I am the last to get there at eight o'clock." Blaise knew he was being irrational but something just wasn't right.

He didn't want to go out. He wanted to stay here, in their French Manor and be safe. Vincent, Greg and Helen sat silently watching them. Her strategy sounded doable and okay in this circumstance, so why did he not want to do it?

"I don't know Pansy," Blaise hedged. He rarely denied her anything she wanted. Pansy looked up at him imploringly and Blaise knew that he'd lost.

"Please darling?" Pansy asked. Blaise caved.

"Alright."

---

Helen frowned as the men went to get the cars ready. She walked up to Pansy and whispered, "What is going on?"

"I have no idea what you are talking about." Pansy said equally quiet. Helen snorted.

"I've lived with five Slytherin students for twenty years and I am friends with four more including an ex-Head of House," Helen smiled, "I know when you are up to something. Now spill."

"Who ever thought a Hufflepuff would be so pushy?" Pansy joked; but Helen just smiled faintly.

"Only when we are trying to protect our own," She replied. Pansy stopped fussing with the collar of her coat and sighed heavily. "Please tell me."

"We are meeting Hermione Weasley." Pansy said. Helen blinked in surprise but Pansy raised a hand to silence her before the sweet woman flooded her with questions. "All will be explained once we get there." Pansy looked at the clock in the entrance hall and then smiled. "It's time for you, Vince, and Greg to head out. Go on, I'll see you when I get there." Helen frowned but hugged Pansy tightly and hurried to the car where Vincent and Greg were already waiting for her. Pansy watched them drive off and pressed a hand to her chest.

She could hear Hermione's heart beating as if it were her own.

---

Hermione made her way back to the café. Pansy's heartbeat was roaring in her ears. It was soon; it had to be for it to be this loud. She felt sick her stomach, and scared beyond belief. It wasn't right what was happening to these people. It wasn't right. Hermione felt tears burn in her eyes and she hastily blinked them away. She couldn't fall apart; Pansy needed her to be strong and able to complete this. She had to do this, she had to.

"I wonder why she wanted to come to this place in particular," a familiar voice asked. Hermione hid deeper into her hood as Vincent, Greg, and another woman came into the café.

Her heart was racing now.

So was Pansy's.

---

"So," Ron said, "who's first?"

Seamus shrugged, "Last one that gets there?"

"Sounds good to me."

---

Blaise stepped out of the black Mercedes and walked up the steps to the café as casually as he could. It took a tremendous amount of effort. He walked up to his friends and tried to smile, but knew he'd failed when Vincent looked at him in concern.

"Are you alright with this?"

"No," he said through clenched teeth. "Something bad is going to happen, I know it." It was a surreal experience for him; to be this afraid again after so many years of laughter and peace. The twenty years he'd been married to Pansy had been the best of his life. He'd never trade it any for anything. He didn't know what he would do without her. He shook his head as if trying to get rid of the morbid thoughts in them and looked down at his watch. "It's one minute to eight."

"Yep and here she comes, right on time." Helen said her smiling trembling as she noticed a figure standing in the shadows of the café. Scared brown eyes stared back at her and Helen, gasped.

"Hermione!" Vincent, Greg, and Blaise all turned to look at her.

"What are *you* doing here?" Blaise sneered.

---

Hermione began to speak, but then she gasped in horror as the resounding sound of Pansy's heart beat stopped completely. It was so quiet. She looked passed Blaise to the window and saw another black Mercedes come to a stop in front of the café.

*No, Pan-*

BOOM!

---

Pansy saw the café come into view, her heart was beating furiously.

She grabbed for her purse and then opened the back door. Her foot touched the ground when she realized what unnerved her.

Hermione's heartbeat had stopped beating in her ears. Pansy closed her eyes.

*No Pan-*

BOOM!

---

The shock, heat, and force of the explosion swept through the café like a tidal wave. Hermione was thrown back against the wall she had just stopped leaning on. Blaise was thrown sideways into a few customers and tables and chairs. Greg and Vincent shielded the woman who had come with them on the floor. Screams of terror and pain wrapped around Hermione like a nightmare. But she didn't care. All she could see was the horrifying skeleton of the car Pansy had been riding in still engulfed in flames.

"*Pansy!*" Blaise's scream of heart wrenching pain cut at her gut as she and he both ran towards the car, tripping over the debris as they went. The smoke was suffocating and Hermione coughed repeatedly as she reached the car first and found it empty. Hermione searched frantically until she saw blond hair mixing with red blood smeared on the pavement and glass and metal that had been the entrance to the café.

"*Pansy!*" She cried out and grabbed Blaise as she turned and ran to the rubble and began moving the chunks of concrete and metal off the woman. "*Oh, Merlin,*" Hermione sobbed. Dull blue eyes looked up at her and Pansy coughed up blood as the pressure was removed from her torso. Half her face was burned to the point that if it hadn't been for the blond hair, she would be unrecognizable. The burns went down the entire left side of her body. Hermione felt bile fill her mouth and the gut churning smell of burnt flesh. "I..."

*Y...you must.* Pansy's mental voice was weak. "*P-plea-s-e.*" She said brokenly. Hermione turned at the gasp of horror and found Vincent, Greg, and the other woman standing there. She realized finally that this must be Helen, Luther and Damian's surrogate mother. Blaise was silent, his eyes blank of anything. His hand was holding Pansy's good one and then a spark of life entered Pansy's eyes.

*He's feeding me his magick, he's inconsolable. Let me die please, it hurts so much. You promised.* It seemed Blaise was feeding her a lot of his magick, because Pansy sounded coherent.

"B-blood and magick you said right?" Hermione sobbed, "I don't..." Pansy burnt arm and hand came up with surprising quickness. Pansy's pain screamed down the bond; it had cost her much to make such a movement. She jerked Hermione down and pressed her lips to her own.

Blood was forced into Hermione's mouth by Pansy's tongue and she nearly choked on it but then she was released long enough to cry out softly as more than blood entered her body. Magick swept through her, and along with it memories. Memories of weddings, sex, the painful process of giving birth, the joy that came with looking into Gloria's blue eyes for the first time, birthdays, anniversaries; Hermione cried through it all. Pansy gave everything to her...

*Take care of them for me...* Pansy's mental voice became fainter, weaker as time passed. *Tell...Blaise...love...* Hermione's eyes snapped open wide as Pansy's last breath entered her. She sat back and stared at the corpse of Pansy and shuddered. Her body was soaking in the magick like a leech. She could faintly hear the ambulance's sirens coming, but she didn't care. She looked over at Blaise and blinked; he was being cradled in Gregory Crabbe-Goyle's arms, his face pale as death.

"Is he...?" She croaked. Greg shook his head.

"He depleted himself, trying to..." Greg swallowed and tears made his dark brown eyes shine in the eerie golden red light of the flames still burning behind them.

"Oh," Hermione said softly. Hermione scrambled to her feet and then gasped as the world seemed to spin nearly completely into darkness.

"Easy," A deep voice said firmly. Hermione looked up; Vincent was holding her to him to steady her. "We have to get out of here. Helen, call the car back around." Vincent said calmly. Helen pointed and he and Hermione turned to see a car coming towards them quickly. "Good work pet." Vincent said and then placed a hand to Hermione's temple.

She was thrust into darkness.

---

Helen couldn't stop crying. She brushed the tears away yet again, and knew she had smudged her make up more than it already was, as well as all the dirt and grime from the explosion.

She could've cared less. Her best friend was dead. Blaise had fallen to pieces, Greg was silently tending to the broken man, and Vincent was cradling Hermione in his arms and had been since he'd forced the poor woman into a dreamless sleep. It was really amazing what taking in another person's magickal essence did to you. Hermione's skin was paling, her bushy brown hair had already straightened and was falling around her face in a disarray of gentle waves. And before she had succumbed to Vincent's mental suggestion Helen had seen that her eyes were now a vivid blue; just like Pansy's had been.

Helen had never heard of anything happening quite like what took place not five minutes ago. But now that she'd seen it, she never wanted to see it again. The heartache wasn't worth it.

"Who's going to tell Glory?" Helen whispered tearfully. Vincent visibly flinched and then shook his head.

"I don't know." He replied, "I don't know about anything anymore."

---

When Hermione woke, she was looking straight at Blaise. She gasped, startled and wary, as she took in the opulent surroundings. A fire was roaring in the fireplace and the lights had been dimmed. She let her eyes wander around the room that felt at once strange and familiar to her. Hesitantly she looked at Blaise again and felt her heart constrict.

He was pale; his skin was ashen as if the very life had been sucked out of him. His blue eyes were dull and his proud bearing was slumped. He had a glass of whiskey dangling in his fingers as he regarded her silently. Hermione turned and watched as Vincent, Greg, and Helen came into the room and closed the door softly behind them. Helen came to sit by her and placed a calm hand on her shaking ones. "Do you need something sweetheart?" She asked gently. Hermione shook her head and then she blinked as tears started to form again.

Dead, Pansy was dead and she...Hermione looked at Blaise and could feel the tiny instance of magick that came to life when she did. They were bound as any married wizarding couple would be. She needed no ring on her finger to tell her that. "I'm okay," Hermione replied quietly.

"You knew," Blaise asked softly, "didn't you?" She didn't pretend to not know what he was talking about. Hermione nodded her head.

"Yes, the Goddess told me as she told Pansy and she prepared us both as best she could." She said shakily, "Pansy knew far longer than I did."

"And did you know that you would take her place?" Blaise asked. Hermione sighed and then nodded again.

"Yes, but I had nothing to do with how or why or even when. I just knew it was soon. I...I'm sorry." She finished quietly. Blaise said nothing, merely tipped back his glass and drank. A house elf popped in and bowed to Hermione then.

"Can Gumpy get Lady Zabini something to drink?" Hermione thought she heard a pin drop in the silence. She didn't know what to say. Lady Zabini, Merlin, she had a title and everything and it wasn't even hers by love, friendship, or even an arranged marriage. The title was hers by the death of a beloved friend and wife to these people. Hermione felt awful and Helen just held her as she cried.

"Yes, Lady Zabini needs some tea. Thank you Gumpy." Helen said nicely to the house elf. Gumpy bowed and left with a small 'pop'. "It will be okay Hermione."

"Will it? Will it truly ever be okay?" Hermione sobbed. "I don't understand! I don't understand any of this. Why her? Why me? Why, why, why! Maybe if I hadn't agreed none of this would've happened."

"You're wrong." Blaise said hollowly. "It would've happened anyway. Fate is a not a fickle thing, it was her time. She knew it, the Goddess knew it, and I knew it too." He stood and came and crouched in front of her. "Listen to me Hermione," he said sternly and Hermione blinked back her tears and looked him in the eye. "I loved Pansy, I always will, but the fact of the matter is; she's dead. Now I am bound to you. I'm your husband and you're my wife, Dumbledore won't stop until we are all dead, including you now. We will get through this okay? It's just going to take some time to get used to." Hermione nodded.

"Alright." She said and that seemed good enough for him. As he stood fluidly, he kissed her forehead lightly and then walked out of the door. Hermione watched him go and then smiled sadly. "He's broken inside, but he hides it well."

"What will you do about it?" Greg asked as he slumped into the couch besides his husband. Hermione looked at them for a moment before she got up and left as well. Vincent stared after her.

"Where is she going?"

"She's going after him." Helen said.

---

Hermione took a deep breath and then pushed open the door to the master bedroom. Surprisingly the walls were painted a dark rich wine colored red. A huge bed stood in the center of the room and on it, curled into a ball was Blaise. Crying. Hermione said nothing merely toed off her shoes and threw her cloak on the floor; it was destroyed anyway, and climbed into the bed behind him. She put his head in her lap and corded her fingers through his fine blond locks and let him cry to his heart's content. She'd never seen someone from the House of Slytherin break down so completely before. But then again he'd lost his wife of twenty years and gained a new one all in the span of one night.

So what if he broke down; he practically earned the right. She held him as he cried. When he had nightmares she woke him up and soothed him back to sleep. All the while she held stoically to her own emotions. She had to be strong for herself as well as Blaise and his daughter Gloria now.

*Take care of them for me...*

"I swear it Pansy, I'll take care of them, I swear." Hermione whispered and kept to her silent vigil all through the night.

---

Dumbledore opened the book he had 'borrowed' from the Ministry. In it were all the birth, deaths, and marriages of every single wizard and witch in their history. He turned to the Zabini family and watched with satisfaction as the date of Pansy's death was entered by her name.

"One obstacle removed." He murmured and smiled to himself. Then his smile faded and his eyes turned glacial. He turned away from the book and walked to his desk writing a quick message to send to Ron and Seamus. "Minerva! See that Ron and Seamus get this." He said. "I've some fire calls to make." Minerva nodded hesitantly but already Dumbledore was out the door.

What got him riled? She wondered and ventured over to the book; where Dumbledore had left it open. What she saw made her gasp. Next to Blaise's name, a new one appeared.

*Wife to the Lord of the Zabini Family: Lady Hermione Zabini*

"Hermione, what have you done?" She whispered under her breath. But as she rushed from the room in the back of her mind was the sense that things had just gotten that much more treacherous. Hermione was now a target.

No one was safe.

---

Helen jerked awake when there was a frantic knock on the door. Vince and Greg had long gone to bed and when she looked at the clock she found it was midnight. Who on earth would come calling at such an appalling hour? The knocking continued and she waved away the house elves and went and answered the door herself.

"Who is it?"

"Friends, we mean you no harm." The voice was deep and it had a familiar ring to it. "Helen, you can trust us." What was that lilt in his voice? She cracked open the door, her wand in her hand and as soon as she saw emerald green eyes she sighed with relief. Only one family she knew of had eyes like that.

"Harry," She said and opened the door wide. Harry and Draco hurried in and closed the door behind them. Harry hugged her and then Draco grinned and kissed her cheek. "What are you two doing here? Do you know how dangerous the times are?"

"That's why we are here." Draco said calmly. "We're sorry to come so late but we sensed that Ronald Weasley and Seamus Finnegan were in the city, so we had to wait till deep night. We wanted to catch all of you and make sure everyone was alright." Helen sighed and shook her head.

"Pansy was murdered today." She said and Draco went pale. Harry tugged the slightly shorter man to him in concern, sadness radiating from his eyes.

"Damn we were too late." Harry murmured. "Where did it happen?"

"At a muggle café, no less. They made it look like a muggle bomb went off. We left before the authorities got there, but we had to leave Pansy's body behind. Blaise has fallen to pieces and then, well, now Hermione is the new Lady Zabini."

"*Hermione Weasley?*" Draco asked incredulously, "How...?"



"I'm thinking it is a long story, but for right now everyone is tired and in grief. We really didn't have her explain too much. All we know is that this Goddess of yours prepared Pansy and Hermione for what was to come and this is the turn out."

Harry and Draco looked at each other in shock.

What was going on?

## Chapter Ten

Blue eyes gazed back at her as Hermione looked into the bathroom mirror after her shower. Her formerly bushy hair now hung down her back in smooth gentle waves. Her skin was slightly paler, and she could feel a significant change in her magick. She was stronger than she had been and if she closed her eyes, Hermione could see the dark spells that Pansy had used during the war blink across her vision.

She knew that the magick of the ritual had fundamentally changed her, gave her characteristics of the woman she was essentially replacing. However, she also knew that she was the same as she'd ever been. She still hated showing her body, thinking over the years she'd gotten fat, she still hated spinach, and she still loved her books. The only difference now was that she'd be doing all of those things with a different husband; a completely different man to the one she had married twenty years ago. Hermione sighed and peeked out of the bathroom door; the bedroom was empty. Blaise must've gotten up and left while she'd been in the shower. The house elves were diligent; the bed was already made and an expensive black A-line skirt and a sleeveless blue collared top were on the bed. Hermione walked over and looked at the sizes; they were her size. A letter was sitting beside the clothes addressed to her so she opened it.

*Lady Zabini,*

*Heh, it's kind of strange calling you that, considering I am writing this when I am still legally the Lady Zabini. Oh well. I took the liberty of shopping for you. I remembered from school you really have very understated taste. I've decided that you should try your hand at more figure flattering styles instead. I hope you enjoy them...Blaise will.*

*Pansy*

Hermione flushed at that and could see Pansy smirking at her in her mind's eye. "Thanks Pansy," She mumbled and began pulling on the clothing.

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When Blaise walked down the stairs he was surprised to see Harry and Draco sitting on his couch in the family room. Greg, Vince, and Helen were sitting together in a window seat and the love seat had been left open; presumably for himself and Hermione. He thought about the witch and couldn't help but feel indebted to her. He'd fallen apart like a weakling, the devastation and despair consuming him so quickly he couldn't even breathe. His wife was dead, and he had a new one in the same day. Although he understood making slight adjustments to Hermione's features was the Goddess' way of trying to smooth things over, but Blaise knew that it wouldn't work. Even though she had Pansy's eyes, skin, and hair she would never truly be Pansy.

And the sooner he realized that, the sooner they could start getting on with their lives as best as they possibly could.

"Harry, Draco, I would say what a pleasant surprise, but I am sure you are not here with pleasantness in mind." Blaise said solemnly. Draco sighed and smiled sadly at Blaise.

"You have our condolences." Draco said, and then his eyes narrowed, "Now let's get to the business of Hermione W-Zabini, and what happened?" Blaise smirked; ever the leader of Slytherin, he mused as he stared at the Elf. Draco was still gorgeous as he always was, the years not touching him at all, if they ever had. He had the bearing of a king and the cunning of an assassin when he wanted to use it. However even Blaise could tell being with Harry had mellowed him out quite a bit.

"Perhaps we should wait until We- my wife is available to answer your questions." Blaise said as he sat on the love seat.

"I am here." Blaise turned as did everyone and he knew his mouth had fallen open. Hermione strode through the room, an A-line skirt hugging her curves, accentuating her hips and legs, the blue shirt making her eye seem that much bluer and molding around the curve of her breast and slim waist. Her newly straightened hair was pulled back into a coiffed style at the base of her neck. She sat by Blaise her eyes rounding slightly at Draco and Harry.

"Milady," Harry said, surprised at seeing her. Draco himself was speechless and merely nodded. Hermione smiled tremulously at them and then turned to Blaise.

"Are you feeling better?" She asked quietly. Blaise smiled sadly and nodded.

"Yes, thank you. You look – beautiful." He said finally and Hermione flushed. Nothing was said momentarily, but Hermione found her voice and talked after the few moments of silence.

"I am sure that you all want to know what happened." Hermione started off, but heads around the room nodded, "I can't tell you everything because I don't know it. I only know it from the set of events that happened to me. I guess I had better start at the beginning.

"After the war," She said quietly, "the wizarding world fell into chaos. It took ages to get everything straightened out again. And by the time that happened, many people began forming prejudices against anything that could be considered 'dark.'" She sighed, "It wasn't the best thing to have happen and I went to the Headmaster many times to see if there was any way to stop this, but he said no. Ron and I got married while I was still in Wizarding Univ. Everything was fine, except for a few things. One; the world was forming prejudices like I had said before; the other was that they were all turning against Harry, who had saved us all. Most of it stemmed from the fact that you left the wizarding world, and were so deeply associated with the Malfoy's, Snape, and everyone else that's present." She said looking to Harry. "People were really upset when you left. But even I could agree that you needed to be elsewhere, even if I thought that you were wrong.

"It steadily worsened. When Blaise and Pansy married there was nearly a riot. When Greg and Vincent married, I thought it couldn't get any worse. Everyone was calling for them to go to Azkaban, no one cared about all the hard work they had put in during the war. Dumbledore reminded some people of that and things died down for a few years. I guess my problems with Ron started when I miscarried the

first time. He was so angry." Hermione shivered at the remembered coldness he showed her after that. Draco appeared confused.

"But when the children came to Hogwarts there were two Weasley children, twins, I would've assumed. How could..." Hermione gave him a pained smile.

"Ron had an affair after I miscarried. He got the other witch pregnant. I never found out who she was, just that it happened. The children were Weasley children; anyone could tell. To keep his indiscretion from his parents, Ron let his brother Bill pass the children off as his." Hermione said. "I still think people knew though, that something was off, the timing was just too perfect. It went downhill from there.

"I just wanted out. I was tired of Ron. He just kept getting angrier and angrier and more under Dumbledore's thumb with each passing year. And Dumbledore," She frowned, "He's changed somehow. I'm not sure what it is, but something he's doing is changing him, making him more powerful, but changing him nonetheless. I don't think it is for the better." She looked up at all of them. "The stunt that he pulled with Gloria and Damian was the last straw for me. I just couldn't do it anymore. I wanted out of it all.

"I went to Knockturn Alley, I had seen a sign there saying that the person inside had the Sight. I wanted to see what was going on in my life and if I could get out of it. The woman's name was Francesca and she told me everything I ever knew about my life. But she also said that the British wizarding world was crumbling, the Ministry was bankrupt and was trying to force your families to give up money to keep it going. She told me about Pansy dying to save her family and how if I chose I would take her place."

"What was the other choice?" Blaise asked.

"Death," Hermione whispered. Blaise clucked his tongue.

"Well that is not choice at all then. What else did she tell you?"

"She told me that the Goddess blessed all of you with immortality and I guess myself as well." Hermione cocked her head slightly at that, "she said that I would have a long happy life. That same night, I left Ron and I traveled here to France. The Goddess spoke to me and basically gave Pansy and I the gift of telepathy as well as made it possible for each of us to hear the others heart beating until it was Pansy's time." She looked at Blaise, "That is why I was there really. Pansy told me to meet her and she would explain the ritual and everything to me. I never thought..." She trailed off and stayed silent for a moment and then lifted her head high. "That is all I know."

"Thank you for telling us." Harry said. He and Draco shared a look and then motioned for Greg, Vincent, and Helen to come with them. "We must talk and you two must talk as well. We'll be back." The five of them left and then Blaise and Hermione were on their own.

"So how are we going to do this?" Hermione asked. "I'm sure that there are other rooms that I can stay in and then, Merlin, what are we going to tell Gloria?" She plucked at her skirt nervously.

"Well for one, we will tell Gloria the truth. Pansy and I never sheltered her from anything, and I don't think we should now." Blaise said and then he narrowed his eyes at Hermione, "and another thing, you will be sleeping with me."

"What?" Hermione balked at that; why would he want her with him? "But Blaise..."

"Yes, I will mourn Pansy. And I am sure that we will not be getting intimate for quite some time, but..." he paused and then said quietly. "I slept well last night because of you. I...I really appreciate it." He smiled at her and Hermione felt her heart slam in her chest. So gorgeous, she thought, but sad, for good reason too.

"All right, then our sleeping arrangements will stay the same then." Hermione said with a tentative smile. Blaise smiled as well and then grasped her hand gently but firmly, giving it a squeeze and then cradling her hand in his lap. Hermione felt lighter than she had in years. "When will we tell Gloria?" She asked; hating to break their companionable silence with such grave news.

"The sooner the better," Blaise said thoughtfully, "I am sure she will understand; she is much like her mother in that respect."

"Tonight?" Hermione asked gently. Blaise nodded.

"Tonight."

---

Neville corded his gloved fingers through Damian's thick hair as the three of them sat in the family room of the Crabbe-Goyle summer manor. It was a very understated yet elegant house, Neville mused to himself. He could practically feel the tension leaving his body. Damian sighed in his sleep and Gloria giggled. "What is it Gloria?"

"He's such a big guy, but he's so sweet." Gloria whispered; trying not to wake him. "You know, I think he's had a crush you on for years." Neville flushed.

"You must be joking."

"No, I remember when we had first got to Hogwarts," Gloria turned to him and smiled softly, "we had the Welcome Feast and when he looked up and saw you, he was riveted. Of course it could have been your notoriety; you were so withdrawn because of what happened; you were somewhat mysterious. But I noticed that he always kind of looked for you wherever he was and knew you would be there."

"And you think his parents will be okay with this?" Neville asked. Gloria snorted.

"You aren't still hung up on the age thing are you? Please," Gloria waved his concern away airily.

"Neville," her voice was serious and Neville looked up at her in surprise, "you look half your age. You are smart, elegant, and very striking, very handsome. I could go on, but the bottom line is, you are good for Damian and that is all his parents will care about."

"If you say so," he hedged and Gloria winked.

"Hey, I'm marrying into the family, I know so!" She teased. Neville felt himself smile and whatever he was about to say was cut off by the fire blazing a vivid green color and then the appearance of Blaise's head.

"Hello darling." Blaise said to Gloria. Gloria jumped up and began speaking to her father, but Neville frowned. Blaise seemed, fragile, somehow. There were dark circles around his eyes and his face seemed pale and haggard. Gloria must have noticed it as well because she trailed off and then slowly sank to the floor and sat back on her heels.

"What's wrong Daddy? You look ill." Gloria stated. Blaise grimaced and then sighed.

"Glory, your mo- that is to say Pansy was in an accident yesterday." He began softly and Neville felt his stomach drop at how he phrased it. Gloria paled,

"Is Mummy okay?" She asked her breath hitching a little. Blaise shook his head.

"No, she- she's dead baby, she died on the scene of the accident." Gloria did nothing but stare at her father for a moment and as the silence grew more and more pronounced Neville quickly woke Damian from his doze. The young man sat up blearily but his eyes focused and became alert the instant they fell on Gloria's crumbling face.

"Glory?" He asked his voice husky from sleep.

"She's not dead, she can't be!" Gloria said finally. "Mum isn't gone, you're wrong Father." Neville got up and laid gentle hands on Gloria's shoulder.

"Gloria," he said gently, "I'm sure your father has made sure of this, I have the feeling that he was there. Were you not Lord Zabini?" he asked.

Wordlessly, Blaise nodded.

"See? He wouldn't lie to you, you know that." Neville told her quietly. Damian came around and just hugged her and that was all she needed to go ahead and cry. Blaise swallowed and Neville saw that this was not the best time for the lord to fall apart again. So he spoke quietly to Damian and got him to lead Gloria out of the room until she was able to continue the conversation; Neville had a feeling that this was the least of Blaise's news. "What really happened?"

Blaise sighed, "Pansy was murdered by Dumbledore."

"What!" Neville hissed. Blaise nodded solemnly and then began speaking again.

"Actually we are fairly sure that Ronald Weasley and Seamus Finnegan were the ones who planted the...bomb, I think it's called. Anyway, we were going to meet Hermione and then..."

"Wait a minute; Hermione *Weasley* is there as well? What is she doing there?" Blaise gave him a pained smile.

"It's actually Hermione Zabini now."

Neville plopped onto the floor in surprise and he didn't move until Blaise finished explaining all that was going on.

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Damian looked up from Gloria's sleeping form and saw an ashen faced Neville standing in the doorway. "Nev?" He asked in concern, but Neville shook his head and came and sat with him watching over Gloria. Damian was in shock himself; he couldn't believe the fact that Aunt Pansy was dead. It was unreal. Between being held hostage at his school, to his parents having to flee Britain, to his own escape in the dead of night...Damian didn't know how much more he could take.

"We have to leave." Neville said. "We are in danger."

"We've been in danger," Damian snapped, growing angry at the thought of having to move, with Gloria in such a state. "Gloria is practically catatonic right now, at least emotionally, we can't..."

"We have to." Neville said coldly. Damian flinched at the tone and Neville's visage softened and he placed a gloved hand on his knee and squeezed. "There is more to the story than what Lord Zabini told Gloria. She needs to see and hear what he has to say in person, otherwise she will not understand. There is only so much that can be communicated over fire call.

"More than that though, Dumbledore has practically declared war with the rest of the European Wizarding society. He was the mind behind Pansy's death and he won't stop there. Already there are people scouring the countryside for us and it is only a matter of time before they find us here." Neville caught Damian's chin and made the younger man face him. "Damian, this *has* to be done. I'd rather die than let any harm come to either one of you, do you understand?"

"Yes." Damian said sadly, "but I don't have to like it." Neville looked at him and then lifted his hand as if to caress him but then changed his mind. Damian cursed silently; he was really beginning to hate this no touching thing.

"I don't like it any more than you, but at least if we are in Paris, we will be with your family. Strength in numbers. Besides, Harry and Draco are in Paris with your parents now too; they've all decided on this. Let's see it through." Damian said nothing but he began to shake Gloria awake. Neville watched for a moment, before racing down the hall.

He had a very bad feeling.

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Ron stumbled along and cursed as he and Seamus continued along the rocky trails in the dark. His rage just got that much hotter. His fucking wife wasn't his wife any longer, now she was one of *them*. Deserters, dark wizards, traitors; a *Zabini*, Hermione was a fucking Zabini! The missive that Dumbledore had sent had long been demolished. Ron's anger was nearing frightening levels. He just wanted to be rid of them all.

He wasn't even paying attention to where he was going, but he did feel Seamus' nudge and he looked up and grinned.

A manor house the size of a small palace was up ahead. Already he could feel the humming of ancestral wards, but there were lights on in the house. It seemed that someone was home.

"Let's go crash the party shall we?" Seamus asked laughing and Ron nodded.

"Let's do it."

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"Merlin how did they find us?" Damian asked as the light of the fire turned from golden red to black. It was something that his Father Vincent had come up with. When someone was on their property or approaching it, the flames would change colors depending on their intent; black meant death. Whoever was coming, wanted to deal them the most harm.

"Blaise had said he thought that they may have seen who was all in France and sent out Order members to check the surrounding countries. It is well known that France and Germany have good relationships with their darker counterparts. It was only a matter of time." Neville said as both of them doused the flames in the house along with the house elves. Gloria had woken from her stupor, pale faced, but grimly determined. She wanted to see her father and Neville was going to get her to him, even if it killed him. "Where is Gloria?"

"I am here," she said coming out of the dark corner. "It's Weasley and Finnegan, but I didn't see anyone else." She said quietly. The three of them quickly followed the light of the moon throughout the house; the wards began to thrum with tension.

"They're getting closer." Damian hissed and Neville nodded, going towards the garden doors in the back of the house.

"How far do the wards extend?" Damian shook his head.

"Not that far, a mile maybe more." He responded. "The nearest town is maybe twenty kilometers away. There is an apparating point but it is a few miles off."

"Do you know exactly where?" Neville asked hurriedly as he looked furtively around the gardens; they hadn't reached the back of the house yet, but he didn't know if there were others watching the back of the house or not.



"Yes, it is a wide open field, not a house for miles around. No witnesses or anything." Damian assured him. Neville bit his lip as he stared out across the garden. They'd be too open trying to get out now, knowing that there were those hunting them already around the house. Neville turned to Damian who seemed to understand what he was thinking.

"Flunky, come here please." The house elf appeared in front of Damian and he smiled. "Can you go outside into the garden and see if there are any other people out there?" Flunky rung his ears but nodded silently and disappeared and reappeared outside with a soft 'pop'. As soon as the elf appeared a streak of red zapped the poor thing. Damian winced, Neville said nothing, and Gloria turned her head away. The smoke cleared and the elf was dead on the ground. "They have us surrounded."

"Seems like it."

"How are we going to get out?" Gloria asked. Neville looked out into the night and stayed continually silent, but then turned to them.

"Do you trust me?" He asked seemingly out of the blue. Gloria blinked and Damian frowned as they stared at the professor.

"Nev what...?"

"Just answer the question."

"Yes," Gloria whispered, "I trust you." Neville turned to Damian and waited. Damian nodded.

"I trust you."

"Good," he said and disappeared with a *crack*. He reappeared outside. Damian and Gloria gasped and bolted for the garden doors. The house's wards flared as they tried to get out.

"Neville!" Both of them cried out, but it was too late. Spells began to fly and they lost him as he ran straight into the woods...

...exactly where the spells were coming from.

---

Neville dodged another low level hex; as he did he ripped off his gloves and threw them into the snow. He slammed his back into a tree staying as silent and as coiled as a serpent. There were furious whispers around him; he recognized a few and the he saw a flash of red and then another, it was Ron and Seamus. He slide low to the ground and let Ron pass...

...Seamus wasn't so lucky.

Neville moved quickly; he stood fluidly coming up right behind Seamus and grabbed his uncovered neck. Neville felt smooth warm skin and wrapped his fingers around that skin. He closed his eyes as he felt his

blood boil, the hiss of a serpent inside his mind as Seamus stiffened and fell to the ground dead. Ron turned and his eyes bugged out as he saw Neville standing there with a small smirk on his pale face.

"Good evening Weasely, it seems you've just lost one in your number." He murmured and then quickly faded into the darkness. He had to move quickly, already he could feel his blood raging; for the first time in years, Neville had let his deadly brand of blood magick run its course.

It wanted more...

He'd give it more...

Golden topaz eyes flashed as he moved stealthily through the forest that housed the members of the Order. They'd made the mistake of thinking that he was defeated and crippled because of what he'd become...well they were wrong; dead wrong. Bodies dropped in the cold night and the panic among them grew. Ron was running around shouting orders, trying to get the rest of the team mobilized, but it was of no use. The chaos made Neville's job a lot easier.

Soon it was only Neville and Ron, the bodies of his comrades lying scattered around them. "You bastard," Ron snarled. Neville said nothing. "How could you do this?"

"How could you hunt down students? How could you kill a mother and a wife? How could you?" Neville snapped; Ron's face paled, "Yes, I know what you did to Pansy Zabini. How can you live with yourself? You and Seamus murdered her, in cold blood and for what? Just because Dumbledore told you so."

"He's trying to clean up the filth in his world."

"Now you are spouting nonsense. He's getting rid of the obstacles in his path to world domination or haven't you figured it out yet? He's using you, just like he tried to use me. Grow up Weasely the world is changing and you have not. You are still the eleven year old boy talking about nothing and spouting everything that has been fed to him." Ron's face turned an ugly shade of red.

"Dumbledore is going to wipe the floor of all of you." Ron sputtered. Neville gave him a cold smile that sent shivers down his large frame.

"I wish he'd try." Neville said coldly, "and you can tell him I said that personally. Give him my regards Weasely and I hope for your sake that you don't get caught by Zabini right now. He's not too happy as I am sure you know." Ron sputtered but couldn't think of something else to say. He apparated, leaving Neville alone surrounded by the bodies of his victims.

"Neville!" He turned and watched as Damian and Gloria picked through the forms in the snow to get to him. Neville closed his eyes as a wave of dizziness came over him. He felt himself slowly sink into the snow at his feet, his blood still raging. He couldn't speak, couldn't breathe, Merlin. Where were his gloves? "Nev!" Damian's voice again this time it was closer. It was such a nice voice, so warm, so kind...

*Mate...*The word was hissed in the back of his mind. *My Mate...mine...*

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Damian hurried over to Neville, dropping to his knees beside the man. Neville's white hair blended in seamlessly with the snow and Damian, completely instinctively, reached for his face to look into his eyes.

"*Damian!* What are you doing?" Gloria cried out and that was when Damian realized he was touching Neville, *really* touching him. His skin was cool as marble and Damian could feel the venom that made up every part of Neville down to his blood seep into him. And yet it didn't hurt him. Neville's head came up and his pupils were like those of a snake; tiny slits so finely done it was just a line of black in a valley of golden topaz.

"*My mate...mine.*" The words came from Neville's mouth and were echoed in Damian's mind. Neville slid both of his hands into Damian's hair, bringing his head down and capturing his lips into a searing kiss. Damian moaned in passion, wrapping his arms around Neville's lithe form, letting the other man's arms wrap around his neck. The venom he had felt was still pouring into him, almost like it was becoming part of him; he really didn't know what was happening. All he knew was that this felt as natural as breathing. The kiss slowed and then stopped all together. Damian opened his eyes and stared into Neville's shocked ones. "Damian, why aren't you dead? I- I'm touching you, oh my...!" Neville sounded so confused and terrified it wrenched Damian's heart and as he pulled away, Damian held him close.

"No, nothing is going to happen to me, it's okay. I'm alright." He said softly in Neville's ear. "I'm okay. You said something before you kissed me."

"What did I say?" Neville asked.

"You said I was your mate." Damian told him. Neville pulled back slightly to look at him.

"I said that?" He asked and Damian nodded, looking back into the shocked face of Gloria for confirmation. She seemed to pull herself together again and smirked in pure Slytherin fashion.

"He's right you know, you did say that he was your mate. Well, I guess that covers that pesky 'no touching' problem you both had before." She teased gently. Neville flushed and Damian laughed. They both stood up shakily and then looked around them. "What will we do with them?"

"We should at least bury them." Neville said thoughtfully, "and then we need to get to Paris before anything else happens. So let's get to it."

Together, they finished quickly and then hurried to the open field that Damian had told them about and disappeared with a loud '*crack*'.

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Blaise hugged Gloria to him tightly. They'd been startled when Damian, Neville, and Gloria apparated into the living room where they all had been sitting, but happy to see them. Blaise pulled back to look at his beautiful little girl and a smile came over his face. She looked just like Pansy; it was a bittersweet

moment for him, but he wouldn't have it any other way. "Daddy, who is the lady standing behind you?" Gloria asked curiously and then she smiled a bit tiredly at Hermione. "Hi, I'm Gloria Zabini." She said curtseying and then she frowned. "You look vaguely familiar."

"Glory," Blaise said, "You remember Hermione don't you?" Gloria frowned; hearing the question Damian turned as well and looked at her curiously.

"You mean Mrs. Ronald Weasley?" Blaise nodded, "of course I remember, why you would...?" Gloria looked closer and then she paled. "I don't understand. She has Mum's eyes, but she's not...Daddy what is going on?"

"This is why I asked Neville to bring the two of you post haste. Many things have been happening." Blaise looked over to where Neville stood by the window and then at the way Damian constantly looked over to the older man. "And it seems something else has happened that everyone should now about between Neville and Damian."

"Yes," Neville said, "but Damian and Glory have been through the ringer for the past few days as have we all. Perhaps it is wise to reconvene in the morning?" There were nods all around. Hermione and Helen took Damian and Gloria out of the room as the rest of them stayed and turned to Neville with questioning looks. He sighed, "You will not be bothered by the Order for some time."

"And why is that?" Vincent asked. Neville smirked.

"Because I killed Seamus Finnegan and many others when they surrounded your summer house. The children are fine besides the fact that your son seems to be the only person that is able to touch me and not die." Vincent's eyes widened and Greg opened his mouth to begin speaking but Neville shook his head. "I'm too tired from what I did tonight to put a coherent thought together that would satisfy you both. All I know is that he's my mate, I know nothing else."

"I think we all should get some rest." Harry said, "like Neville said, it's been a trying few days for us all. We can discuss this in the morning." Vincent and Greg were the first to leave, followed by Neville and Blaise. Harry looked to Draco and said seriously, "This goes far beyond anything we thought would happen."

"I know," Draco murmured and then asked thoughtfully, "do you think we should contact Draconis? After all something this big, that is clearly getting out of control, should surely get his attention."

"I think you're right. I'll write him in the morning. Perhaps we can start making sense of all that is going on then."

"Perhaps, but when has it ever gotten better before it's gotten much worse?" Draco asked solemnly. Harry snorted.

"Never," he responded and then they too went to up to bed.

## Chapter Eleven

Remus knew that there was something wrong. It wasn't anything that Killian or Dion did that really tipped him off. For the most part things remained the same. Dion ate with him and slept with him, slowly and gently, easing him into the life he would have as his Consort. In fact sometimes Remus thought he was moving *too* slow. Remus blushed at this thought, but wasn't upset by it. Dion was a very attractive man, and if all the rumors about his sexual prowess were anything to go by, then Remus himself was a lucky man.

...A *very* lucky man.

Killian continued to train him. Remus was getting better and better at becoming a true werewolf and magickal creature. He could still use his wizarding magick, only now he was able to do it without his wand which was much easier. And despite the fact that the older wolf worked him to the dregs day in and day out and Dion kept him sufficiently busy with the small bit of his time that was left; Remus still knew that there was something going on and knew that it had something to do with the world he had left behind.

With that in mind, Remus found himself walking to Draconis' opulent office at a horrid hour of the night. But he wasn't going with false pretense in mind. He was tired of being kept in the dark; he wanted to know what was happening to his family. When he reached the ornate double doors, he knocked confidently twice and then waited. There was a rustle of fabric against skin and then the doors were open. Draconis smiled when he saw him.

***"I knew that you would be coming soon. Come, my wife, and your mate wait for you."*** Draconis said in greeting. Remus walked through and Dion stood as soon as he came within the doors. Remus let his gaze wander over Dion, his heart thudding against his chest. The dragon was too fine to be real and yet Remus melted into his strong arms as Dion came to him and kissed him in greeting.

***"How are you pet?"*** Dion rumbled. Remus smiled and replied quietly.

"I am well. I just want to know what is happening. I can see that it is serious, if all three of you are talking about it."

***"It is, come; your opinion will be valuable in this discussion. We were just waiting for you to come in your own time. You yourself have a part to play in this game as well."***

"Me?" Remus asked as he made himself comfortable sitting beside Dion. The dragon was having none of that and Remus found himself pulled onto his lap and forced to sit there when Dion's arms wrapped around him like steel bands. Remus rolled his eyes and Illyrian and Draconis chuckled. "Very well, what are we talking about?"

***"I just received a letter from your godson Harry. In it he tells us that things in the wizarding world are getting worse by the day. Gloria Zabini and Damian Crabbe-Goyle were locked inside of Hogwarts, before a Professor by the name of Neville Longbottom broke them out. Those three have been on the***

***run for a few days and are finally safely in Paris." Draconis frowned, "However, tragedy has begun already. Pansy Zabini was murdered two days ago."***

"What?" Remus gasped in horror; this was madness. Gloria and Damian held against their will? Neville rescuing them and getting them to Paris? Pansy was dead? "Merlin, I had no idea things were getting as bad as all of that."

***"It gets worse. Your Headmaster has practically declared war on the rest of the European Wizarding society. He was the one that made it possible for two wizards to go and kill the late Lady Zabini and hunt down one of his own professors and two of his students." Draconis sighed and then added, "We Rulers of this Dynasty try to stay out of the everyday running of all the worlds that are encompassed in this dynasty. However, what this Dumbledore is doing is wrong, and he must be stopped."*** Remus processed what he said and felt his face pale.

"You are going to let the magickal world know of you again aren't you?" The Three Elders nodded. "You will rule over all of them again?"

***"Yes," Draconis said, "It is the only way to ensure that nothing like this happens again. Wizards of the ages have been persecuting creatures, such as yourself, who have more right to be in the magickal realms than they themselves do. They have set labels to people and persecuted them for using magick that comes easier to them. Hell, Dumbledore is waging a war just so that he will have dominion over all and make the world the way he wants it. I can't let that happen. We can't let it happen."***

***"Also, one of the realms in our charge is without their High King. The way the Goddess has rectified this mistake is by actually making them a new High King."***

"How did She do that?" Remus asked. Draconis smiled.

***"By having an accident caused to fundamentally change this person's entire being. He is now more venomous than the deadliest of snakes in the known magickal world. He has been using his power of late to help his charges, and in doing so has also found his Mate. This one person is the only one who can touch him and not die of poisoning."***

"Neville Longbottom." Remus murmured and they nodded. He remembered seeing Neville after his accident. The man had been completely different; still Neville, only much...*more*. "Who is his mate?" Dion rubbed a soothing hand on his lower back.

***"One of the charges he was bringing to your family. I believe it is the boy, Damian Crabbe-Goyle. The child has marvelous potential to be one of the best healers in the magickal realm. His father Greg already puts many of our own to shame. It will only be a matter of time before he too, follows his son in coming into the magickal realms that exist parallel to that of your own."***

"Is that your plan? Just to bring them all over here? These people have others depending on them in the wizarding world. The Crabbe-Goyle's and the Zabini's are some of the wealthiest and most powerful wizarding families in Europe, maybe even in the world. The only family more powerful is the Malfoy

family and that family is practically gone from the world as it is, with Draco being married to Harry and both of them living in the Elven realm."

**"We realize that. It is why the Goddess has given them a gift beyond measure. She's made sure that they will never age a day more in their lives. They have youth and longevity for years to come.**

"Draconis murmured.

"Immortality," Remus murmured, "well, as close as they can be."

**"That is correct. When they are able to leave this world behind, they will. Already Luther Crabbe-Goyle and Gloria are engaged to be married. I doubt that they will come over into another realm, if they had a choice. What children they have will be Heirs to both of their family's dynasties. Harry and Draco, as well as Lucius and Severus, have many children between the two houses that make up the Malfoy Dynasty. I am sure at some point one of those children will take up the mantle of being the Lord Malfoy in the wizarding realm. Right now Draco does splendidly, splitting his time as Duke Consort and Head of the Malfoy family as was his wish years ago.**

**"The only people who must come over here now are Neville and his Mate. The Serpentine Realm is run by us, due to the fact that their High King was murdered centuries ago. No Serpentine born since then has had the potential to lead. It was why such power was exerted over the life of one who had the potential and then the ability to lead these people. The Goddess chose and She and the Fates made it happen. Although from my understanding, it was already preordained that Neville would be a King, it was just choosing what realm he would rule. And now comes the task that was made for you."**

"Me?" Remus asked, "Pray what can I do; I'm just a werewolf." Illyrian laughed as did Dion.

**"Child, you are the High Consort of the Heir to this great Dragon Dynasty. You are not a 'just' anything. Do you know that people will bow down at your feet simply because you are in their presence? They would give their lives over to you if asked, bleed for you if ordered, and the list goes on. To be Consort to my son is a huge responsibility and yet it is also the dream of many. To be his mate though...that is truly special and that is who you are and who you were born to be. The task set for you is not an easy one, because to complete it you will have to go back and face the world that belittled you from the start.**

**"Your task, Remus, is to bring Neville and Damian back to this realm. Not only must you do this, but you also must confront your Headmaster as well. Blood may be spilt but it has to be done."** Remus shuddered at the thought of going up against Dumbledore.

"He's changed; he isn't the same as he once was. I wonder what has happened to change him so." Draconis and Illyrian cast glances at each other and Remus' eyes narrowed. "You know why he is the way he is?" Draconis nodded.

**"Yes, it may be time to tell you this as well. And you can tell Harry, because he's asked for our help and you will be the help that we send."** Draconis said; Remus nodded and waited quietly as Draconis thought of what he was about to say. **"Magick is a gift from above, no matter what deity you honor. It**

***is a blessing as well as a curse. It is a huge responsibility and yet it is so liberating that many become enthralled to its seductiveness.***" Draconis eyed Remus and said in a serious tone, ***"That is what has truly happened to your Headmaster. He is brilliant, a genius of his day. The power and the magick that he has amassed over his life has slowly but surely corrupted him from the inside merely because of the fact that he wants more of it. It really does not help him when he has one of the greatest magickal structures around him at all times."***

"Hogwarts," Remus breathed and the Elder dragon nodded.

***"Hogwarts was built by four of the greatest witches and wizards that have ever lived. In the millennia of its life, Hogwarts has been the home of many great wizards and a multitude of different magickal signatures. It has absorbed all the magick that has come through its doors, whether it be magick leaning towards the defense of wizards or 'light magick' as wizards say, or the magick that is offensive and takes much more than a simple hope and prayer and that is the 'dark magick' that your Headmaster finds so detestable.***

***"All those years and Hogwarts became more saturated as the years went by only to let some of its knowledge and own power seeped into those persons who end up running the school. And by giving the Headmaster and mistresses access to that knowledge, is also giving them access to the power that the school itself has amassed."*** Draconis stopped speaking for a moment and Remus felt as if he were going to throw up.

"So you are saying that Dumbledore not only has his own formidable magick at his beck and call, but also that of Hogwarts?" The three dragons nodded. "We are so fucked." Remus groaned. "If the power he has within himself is enough to make him go crazy, how do you hope to stop him from going even more around the bend with Hogwarts giving him access to its own magick?" Remus retorted. Illyrian shook her head slowly and sadly looked at him.

***"You have not grasped what we have told you. It is already too late for your Headmaster. The reason he's become so unstable and much more powerful is because he already is consumed by his magick and the magick that Hogwarts is giving him. He's sustaining himself off of Hogwarts alone. The castle has merely become an extension of himself. It's why he never leaves anymore. He is at his most powerful within the walls of his castle. There is only one true way to destroy him and that is to destroy the one thing that has become his only means of living."***

"Hogwarts."

"***Hogwarts,***" Illyrian nodded as she said it. ***"It's the only way."*** Remus sighed sadly and leaned back into Dion, letting the man soothe him as best as he could. They had to destroy Hogwarts; the only home he'd ever truly known. But was it home anymore? He thought of all the rage, hate, anger, prejudice that was feeding the magick in the castle and everyone who lived in it. Now he could see how it had all just become like a big festering wound.



So much negativity and if Dumbledore was truly being sustained just from the castle feeding him its knowledge and own magick then Remus could see why the Headmaster went slowly insane, but Remus wouldn't let him off that easily. Just because Dumbledore was now slowly losing his mind, that didn't mean the man hadn't planned a lot of this in advance, which was Dumbledore's way. He was still there, Remus knew, inside that vortex of power, calling the shots. Otherwise things would've fallen apart years ago.

"Well, he's still in there somewhere. Dumbledore is quite methodical like he usually is. Obviously he's still not as loony we all think. Everything would have went up in smoke years ago if that were the case." Remus said. "Well, I guess there isn't that much of a choice is there? So what destroys a building made by magick?"

***"A magick that is the very opposite of it. Hogwarts would never destroy itself nor its subsequent master, so you'd have to feed it magick that would essentially 'kill' it and kill Dumbledore at the same time."*** Draconis said. Remus frowned.

"Well who has magick like that?" He asked.

***"The Serpentine High King."***

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Neville realized that someone was in his bed before he even fully woke up. His eyes snapped wide open and then he sighed with relief as his eyes landed on Damian's sleeping face. He ran his fingers through his hair, reveling in the distinct softness of it all; things tended to have no texture when feeling it through gloves. He knew by the way Damian started shifting a little that he was awake. "When did you come into my bed?" Neville asked him teasingly. He felt Damian smile as his lips brushed across Neville's exposed collar bone.

"As soon as Dad stopped fussing over me and Father practically drug him from my room. And then I had to wait until you were asleep of course." Damian added with a small smirk in his voice. Neville snorted; sneaky Slytherins, the lot of them. "I know you aren't mad."

"No, but I am sure there are many things your Father Vincent and Dad Greg want to discuss with me."

"Not really, I already told Dad that like it or not I was going to stay with you. He just gave me this half smile and said that was all he needed to hear." Damian curled himself around Neville even more at that and began trailing kisses along every available patch of skin. Neville shivered under his ministrations but chuckled as well.

"That covers your dad; you didn't say anything about Vincent."

"Whatever Dad wants Father always caves to it; so we are okay. No can you shut up about it and kiss me?" Damian asked aggressively as he used his height and weight to loom over Neville. Neville glanced up into his pouting face and smiled.

"Gladly," He whispered and brought Damian's head down for the kiss his lover had wanted.

Nothing was said for quite some time.

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Draco gasped and then moaned long and loud as Harry thrust into him slowly. "I'm going to kill you." Draco said through clenched teeth. Silvery blue eyes sparkled in mischief and then Harry's laugh was choked off with a groan of his own as Draco shifted his hips and then contracted his muscles around Harry's cock.

"You fiend," Harry said teasingly upping the pace slightly. Draco found the rhythm Harry was setting and then his eyes rolled as they both worked together like a well-oiled machine to reach that pinnacle of pleasure they wanted. "My beautiful fiend," Harry whispered and bit into Draco's throat. Draco keened softly grabbing fistfuls of Harry's hair and yanked his head back and then down as Draco leaned up to kiss him frantically.

"So good, it's always so good..." He moaned and Harry lifted his body, causing his cock to slide deeper, right along Draco's prostate. Harry caught his Consort's mouth in a kiss, swallowing Draco's cry of pleasure and reveling in it as well.

It wasn't long after that that both reached completion and fell onto the bed sated and content. Draco cradled Harry's head to his chest as he panted, trying to get his breathing back under control. "We need to get up; there is a lot that should be discussed today." Draco said when he could finally talk without gasping. "Did you send off that letter?"

"Yes," Harry said as he gently slipped out of Draco and turned to lie on his back. "I actually sent it off last night after you fell asleep. Draconis should've gotten it by now."

"And you think he will help?" Draco asked softly; Harry chuckled.

"I am sure he knows more about what's going on than we do."

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Hermione blinked and then sighed as she slowly woke up. She turned sleepily and realized that sometime during the night she'd moved. Blaise's chest rose and fell underneath her hand as he continued to sleep, his arm was wrapped tightly around her waist, and their legs were hopelessly tangled together. Hermione glanced at the clock and groaned as she settled once more next to him, her head resting on his shoulder; it was much too early.

Even as she fell back to sleep, she heard the door click open. The shuffling of footsteps on the plush rug was her only warning. A gasp of surprise echoed throughout the room and Hermione's eyes shot wide open and she sat up and looked at the source of the noise and closed her eyes in surprise and horror.

Gloria was standing at the edge of the bed, looking at her as if she'd seen something that defied all of her worst nightmares. Those blue eyes hardened, and turned glacial especially when Blaise woke up placed a reassuring hand on Hermione's back.

"Hermione?" His voice was thick with sleep, "What's going on?" Hermione squeezed his hand so hard he winced in pain and then looked straight at his daughter in surprise and groaned, "Damn it."

"Would someone please tell me, what the *fuck* is going on?" Gloria seethed. Hermione winced and then began speaking.

"It all started when I went to see one with the Sight..."

"So you are supposed to take Mum's place?" Gloria asked angrily, "Just like that? Did this Goddess know what a mess this is? You are not and never will be my mother, whether you're fucking my Dad or not!" Blaise glared at Gloria.

"Language Glory, your Mother and I didn't raise you in a brothel. You need to show her the same respect and courtesy you would to one of your elder." Blaise retorted. Hermione could almost see the bonds of this family breaking apart and she hastily wanted to correct it.

"I know, I can never replace Pansy, I would not even try." Hermione hastily reassured her, "The Goddess merely gave her a choice at who would take the place as Blaise's wife and she chose me."

"Why? Why would she choose one of the people who condemned us so?" Gloria asked hatefully. Hermione shrugged her shoulder helplessly.

"I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know?" Gloria asked sarcastically, "you should know, you're the one here in bed with my Father as if you are Lady of the Manor. And you're not; you're nothing close to it. You're nothing but a whore!" Gloria shrieked. Blaise, who had been silent up to that point lashed out.

"That is *enough!* Apologize now!" He roared. Hermione felt tears running down her face. And she felt even worse when Gloria shook her head, her own eyes tearing up.

"I won't! Mum's been dead two days and she's already in your bed, the one you and Mum shared for over two decades! That's not right." She turned to Hermione and screamed, "What do you want from us? Huh? Is this your chance to gloat? To see the mighty Slytherin families fall apart at the seams when one of them loses their own! What do you gain by being here! Why you! Why out of all the women on this fucking planet did it have to be *you?*"

"Because Pansy only asked me!" Hermione cried and that made Gloria even angrier.

"Why!" Gloria demanded.

"Because she and the Goddess knew I would accept." Hermione sobbed.

"WHY!" Gloria shouted.

"Because my life was hell on earth and I didn't want to be there!" Hermione found her anger and she glared back at Gloria. "My husband, the one I loved, threw me to the side when I miscarried our child. He emotionally and verbally cut me down until I was a shell of my former self. He cheated on me!" Hermione shudder, "and broke his vows to me; in front of me and all of our friends. They looked at me with pity in their eyes and I hated it! I *hated* it. I endured it all and for what? I thought he still loved me but when I saw those two Weasely children enter Hogwarts I knew then that somewhere along the way he stopped loving me!" Gloria was looking at her in horror and pain was etched into her young and beautiful face.

"So when I was given the chance to get out of my loveless marriage I took it! I didn't know it would end like it did. If I had my choice I would've died in her place. But all I knew was that every time I saw your family, I wished that I had what you did." Hermione brushed angrily at her wet cheeks and said quietly, "She loved you both so much, she begged me with her dying breath to take care of you and by the Goddess, Merlin, and whoever the hell else had a hand in this I will take care of you! I promised her, I – p-promised..." Hermione collapsed into tears, covering her face as she cried.

"I'm sorry," she heard her whisper and then her arms were filled with Gloria and she wrapped her arms around her and held her as she let go. "I was just so angry about everything, and then seeing you here...I'm sorry I didn't mean any of those things I said! I-I just miss my Mum!" Gloria sobbed. Hermione held her tightly still crying and then she felt Blaise's arms wrap around both of them. She heard him murmuring soothing words to his daughter, his voice thick with pain, but she knew they would all heal, someday.

They stayed like that wrapped together for the majority of the morning.

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Greg sighed when he heard the shouting coming from the hall cease. Vincent and Helen turned to him in concern but he just shook his head. "Let's leave them alone for now. I'm sure they will figure something out." He murmured and then opened Damian's door. His bed was empty as Greg knew it would be and he chuckled. "It seems Damian is with Neville."

"What?" Vincent said through clenched teeth. Greg just clucked his tongue and winked at Vincent.

"Now, now, calm down you big brute. Damian is a big boy and can make his own decisions. In fact, I am sure he could do a lot worse than Neville Longbottom."

"But I was under the impression that Neville couldn't touch anyone. No skin to skin contact, remember?"

"Well obviously they have found a way around it." Helen said and then was startled when she heard a knock on the main doors. "Well whoever could that be?" The three of them ventured down the stairs and Helen opened the door a crack and then gasped in horror. "Luther!"

"M-Mum Helen," He gasped and would've dropped to the floor if Vincent hadn't caught him. He was a mess; cuts ran along his face, his hair was matted with blood and looked like debris. His expensive clothes here in tatters and he was holding his side; blood was gushing from the wound.

"Son, what happened?" Vincent asked guiding him to the floor and Greg began to tear open his clothes to get to the wounds.

"Order," Luther murmured, "F-Father they've declared war on Europe." Luther winced as Greg prodded his bruised midsection. "I-I was talking with a few business partners and was a-bout t-to leave when I noticed something under m-my car. It e-exploded as I was running back into the b-building."

"Easy. Easy, Luther," Greg said gently, "Just rest for a while okay?" Luther nodded and gratefully lost consciousness. "Gods, isn't there any safe place anymore?"

"I'm not sure there was to begin with." Vincent said gravely.

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Lucius stared out the window, the laughter of his children and grandchildren wasn't even enough to lift his melancholy mood. Severus came to sit by him and he caressed Lucius' face to get his attention. "Why are you brooding?"

"Had a vision." Lucius said. Severus' eyes went wide as he looked at his husband.

"About what?"

"Pansy is dead; Hermione Weasley has taken her place as Lady Zabini." Severus swallowed his pain and said nothing, letting Lucius speak. "Luther barely made it out of another explosion meant to kill him and some of his associates. It seems that Dumbledore has declared war on Europe, trying to purge them of anything dark."

"He's no better than Voldemort now." Lucius nodded.

"Yes, that sounds about right." He sighed heavily, "However that is not all that is happening I just know those as facts. The tide of power is changing my love; the Ancients are growing tired of this unrest. They will be making themselves known shortly." Severus nodded.

"So they will take back the reins of what is rightfully theirs?"

"Yes, I believe they will." Lucius cocked his head to the side causing the bells woven in his hair to make a soft melody. "Tell Aziza to go answer the door, we have a guest coming." Severus by now was used to this and he nodded.

"Vega my dear, could you answer the door?" The young Elf nodded her head with a smile and gracefully walked to the front door. When she returned, Severus stood up out of sheer surprise.

Remus smiled at him, amber eyes glowing softly. His hair was bound at his nape with a leather tie and his body was encased in a dragon leather Mandarin style robe that was shifting colors from blood red to bronze. The transformation of the werewolf kept Severus stunned, but then as he saw the stone in the choker Remus wore he bowed his head.

"Your Excellency, what a pleasant surprise." Severus murmured. Remus blushed and then scoffed.

"Please don't do that, I have a hard enough time getting most people to look me in the face." Remus said with his usual wit and humbleness. Lucius smiled and bowed as well.

"It is out of respect dear Remus, after all you are the High Consort of the Heir to the Dragon Dynasty." Remus looked at Lucius and then rolled his eyes.

"I've not come here to banter with you." Remus said sadly, "I wish it was under better circumstances that I'm here. I'm sure you know by now what is going on in the wizarding world?" Severus and Lucius nodded, "Well, Draconis wants me to lead the families here first into the Elven realm and then finally to Drakken, the capital of Draconis' Dynasty."

"So the end is coming?" Lucius said and Remus nodded.

"It is very near."

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Helen nearly groaned when there was yet another knock on the door. She really couldn't handle any more bad news, hell, any more news at all. Luther was finally placed in his room here, Gloria by his side caring for him. Damian, Neville, Harry and Draco were all in the living room discussing the incidents occurring with Vince and Greg. Hermione and Blaise were still in their room, but from the shouting Helen had heard that morning, she was sure they still needed some time to their selves.

Helen answered the door and gasped in surprise at the person standing there. "Remus!" She said and opened the door to him. He smiled flipping back his hooded cloak. By the time she'd taken his cloak and guided him to where everyone was at, Hermione and Blaise had joined them. All were surprised to see him, and Remus grinned at them all.

"It's good to see you."

"What brings you here?" Draco asked as he sat down next to Harry.

"I bring you news from Draconis. I believe Harry, you were the one who sent him the message?" Harry nodded, "Well I guess you can say that I am the response. I'm here to take all of you back to Drakken. However we will make a stopover in the Elven realm to rest. He agrees that it is no longer safe for you all to be here and until there is a time when you are needed, his Majesty wants you where he knows you are safe." Remus glanced over at Neville and smiled.

"What is it?" Neville asked warily.

"It seems that the most important thing I do, is get you and your mate Damian to Draconis post haste."

"And why is that?" Vincent asked; shocked that Neville and his son seemed destined to be together. Remus grinned.

"Neville is the High King of the Serpentine realm. It is one of the largest and most prosperous of the realm parallel to this one and they are most anxious to get him and his mate settled."

"A king?" Neville said his eyes going wide, "I'm a king?"

"You are High King, putting you on the same par with Lucius being High Seer and Ruler of all the Elven realms. You are naturally going to be Ruler of all the Serpentine kingdoms as well." No one said anything for a moment but then Neville sighed.

"I need a drink." He grumbled; Remus chuckled a little and then sat down.

"You might want to hold off on that. I've a lot to explain and not a lot of time to do it in." He said. The rest of the people in the room seemed to settle in and make themselves comfortable and Remus told them everything.

## Chapter Twelve

It was a surreal experience for all of them as they walked through the city of Drakken. The capitol was streaming with magical creatures; dragons, shifters, vampires, and more walked the streets around them. The Elves that they came across stopped and bowed low to Harry and Draco as they walked by and then would smile and go back to their business.

"Why do they do that?" Neville asked Harry lowly. Harry smiled.

"We are probably well known. Draco and I are the sons of Lucius Malfoy, I'm sure everyone knows of us." He said vastly amused by it. Their group chuckled slightly and kept moving. Neville watched as people made way for Remus in awe and some fear, but he guessed that it was only natural; Remus was the High Consort of the heir to this vast dynasty, he deserved respect and was in his rights to demand it.

His gaze shifted to Damian who walked beside him at a calm, sedate pace. He was looking everywhere his face a blank mask, and yet Neville could see by the life in his eyes that he was taking everything with great pleasure. Neville himself was trying to enjoy it as well, but the things Remus had told him were keeping a damper on his feelings.

*High King of the Serpentine*, mused Neville and he shook his head with a soft chuckle. Well they were going to be sorely disappointed when they met him. He didn't want to have anything to do with his gift. He felt Damian place a hand on his back and he glanced up and around the hood of his cloak and found him smiling at him. "We are almost to the palace. I believe they said that you and I would be speaking to Draconis alone first and then he'd speak with the group."

"Where was I when this was decided?" Neville asked teasingly. Damian laughed.

"Up in the clouds I assume. I think you were still reeling over the fact that you are a High King."

"Yes, there was that small little detail." Neville said sarcastically. Damian snorted.

"You should've been in Slytherin," he said lightly.

---

Draconis watched as Neville Longbottom and his mate Damian Crabbe-Goyle entered the room. He knew some would automatically expect the taller and more muscular of the two to be the High King. However, Draconis had come to know many of the Serpentine over the last few centuries of being their pseudo leader and he knew it was the smaller lithe figure inside the large hood that was the High King he was looking forward to meeting.

***"You may make yourself comfortable Neville; there will be no others in this room but you, your mate, and myself."*** He said casually as he sat in a chair that was placed by the windows overlooking his sprawling city. Draconis watched as Neville hesitated, but then pushed back the hood of his cloak. Draconis gasped; he'd never seen a man quite so striking. Hair as white as snow cascaded down into the hood, disappearing down his back. Golden topaz eyes stared at him warily and that pale skin looked like



marble and cool to the touch in the warm rays of the sun. **"You are exquisite."** Draconis purred with a shark's smile. Neville flushed and his mate laughed in sheer delight.

"I tell him all the time, he still doesn't believe me. Perhaps if enough people say it, you will finally yield. What do you think Nev?" Damian teased. Neville scoffed and gracefully took the seat closest to the door.

"Whatever, it merely means that more people have bad taste." He said, amusement lighting his eyes. Draconis chuckled and the two of them looked at him.

**"Yes, you two must be mates. I am pleased to finally meet you both. Neville especially; the Serpentine have sorely missed having a High King to take over the rule of their realm. I am sure that the highest most King, King Dante will be on his way shortly to speak with you."**

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind explaining the Serpentine realm to me then. I've never heard of such a place." Neville motioned around him with an elegantly gloved hand, "Actually all of this is very new to me."

**"Naturally, I will explain, but I will start off by telling you this. The Dynasty I built is split several different ways. Most times you can place it into three categories; one is the human world, the second is the wizarding world, and the third is here in the magickal world. Now inside the magickal world, which runs parallel with the human and wizarding worlds, there are several distinctions and many races of magickal creatures. For now we will focus on the Five: the five are the most powerful and influential of the races. These five are the Dragons, the Elves, the Serpentine, the Vampires, and finally the Shifters.**

**"Together we form a collective government. As Head of the Five it falls to me to make the more serious decisions. From the Elves, Lucius Malfoy the High Seer rules, from the Serpentine you Neville are High King and the highest authority, from the Vampires there is the Grand Duchess Alexandria, and finally from the Shifters there is Master Hades he is the Oldest of the Shifters and the wisest.**

"Draconis stopped speaking and let the information soak in. To alleviate the tediousness of explaining himself again, he'd made sure that Dion met with the rest of them to explain the realms; he'd wanted to meet with the new High King and his High Consort alone to make sure they would be able to handle the full plate he was about to saddle them with. Draconis smiled to himself...they were perfect for the job.

"So you are much like the Parliament in Britain," Damian said and Draconis nodded.

"Makes sense," Neville said quietly and then he turned to Damian, "Are you sure that you want to get yourself into this mess?" Neville looked to Draconis and smiled a bit sadly, "It doesn't look as if I have much choice." Damian lifted one of Neville's gloved hands to his lips and kissed the back of it.

"Of course I'm staying with you. I doubt now I could live without you. And what would you do if you could not interact with our people? You need me as I need you. We'll work it out, I'm sure we can think of something." Damian winked. Neville's lips curved into a gentle smile and Draconis let the last of his doubts fade away; they would prosper, he was sure of it.

**"The other thing we must talk about is the next level of your magick Neville. It has not fully matured."** He saw Neville blanch.

"I- well what more do I need?" He asked hollowly, "I would think not being able to touch anyone save for the one bound to me would be enough."

**"You will find that most of the Serpentine cannot touch anyone outside their own race because they are so poisonous. However for the High King it is different, your power is much more fluid. The price of being the one to lead is that you give all of yourself for you people. Neville, you are the most poisonous of all Serpentine. Not only does it flow through your skin and blood, but your eyes as well."** Neville's eyes widened and Damian's jaw dropped. **"Because you are still able to look at me, it is a sign that you haven't undergone that final change. The only ones you will be able to look at are your own people, including your mate, but no one else."**

"That's..." Neville looked at Damian and then he swallowed as he looked out the window for a brief period of time. "When will this happen?"

**"As soon as you are crowned High King. It is a very private, very small ceremony, only between you, Damian here, and then King Dante and me. After your crowning King Dante will bind your eyes, so you are able to walk among the rest of us. I am told that you will basically be able to function normally; other senses will open and help you move around without assistance all the time. However considering at most times you will be inside your realm, you will not be blind folded that much."**

Neville felt his heart pounding. Could he really do this? Be a King and never leave his land? And not be able to see if he were to move outside that realm...Merlin, it was just too much. He stood nearly stumbling in his haste to leave. Draconis stood in concern, and yet Damian sat and watched calmly as Neville hurried from the room, slamming the doors behind him.

**"I do apologize,"** Draconis said sadly, **"I know that it is a lot to take in but I..."**

"It is alright your Excellency." Damian murmured staring after his mate. "When he calms down, he will agree to the ceremony." Draconis stared at the younger man in surprise.

**"How can you be so sure?"** Draconis asked. Damian smiled and then chuckled a bit.

"Because, after his accident he was left with nothing; he didn't have any friends, any lovers, a counselor or confidant because of what he became." Damian looked Draconis in the eye and said seriously, "He would never let an entire realm falter and be without the leadership they desire. Not if he could do something about it. Plan the ceremony; we will be there." With that, Damian bowed to Draconis and he too, swept out of the room. Draconis looked at the doors for a few brief moments before he smiled with a sort of sad wisdom.

**"They are ready."** He murmured to himself.

---

Harry found Neville standing on one of the balconies that overlooked the city. It was quite beautiful he reflected with all the torches giving the city a very warm glow. The man was standing, leaning against the railing; his hood had fallen back letting his white hair cascaded over his back stopping in the middle. His fingers were gloved as usual, and his expression was one of resignation.

"I see Draconis has talked to you."

"You knew?" Neville asked him as he turned around. Harry shook his head.

"No, I knew who you would become, I found out like you did, but I just ran into Damian, and he filled me in. He wanted to come and get you himself but decided against it."

"Why would he do that?" Neville asked averting his gaze away from Harry. Harry smiled.

"He knew that you needed more time, and he didn't want to pressure you into doing anything that you wouldn't want to do." Harry replied softly. Neville sighed and then turned back to the view behind him.

"I wonder how much more I will be put through before the Goddess, other gods, and whatever deities decided this fate for me will see that I cannot handle it." Neville said. "I'm not fit to be a King."

"They have faith in you." Harry said, "I wasn't fit to defeat Voldemort, but somehow I did it without killing myself or those that I love."

"You were born to do that." Neville said.

"And you were born for this. It is no mistake they made you the way you are now." Harry said seriously, "And besides what's one more thing to give them? You've lived a half-life for too long Nev, and even if you cannot look on the faces of those who truly are your friends, you will still have the more important things."

"And what are those?" Neville retorted. Harry caught his eyes and held them.

"Your Consort Damian, your people, and your land." He murmured and then left Neville to his thoughts.

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Neville watched Harry leave and then turned to the balcony once more and looked down on the city below. He smirked to himself; knowing his mind was already made up. He watched as a lone rider came through the gates of the palace; a dark hood covered the rider's head, but the rider's regal bearing and how the people around him gave him a wide berth was more telling than anything.

It seemed that King Dante had arrived. Neville watched for a minute more and then silently walked back into the palace.

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Dante got off his horse, patting the animal down. "Thank you my friend, you've done well," He murmured and then let the attendants take him away. They did not ask for his cloak and glove; he was sure they were warned against it. He smiled though and nodded his head slightly. As he walked through the halls of the palace to his rooms for the night, he noticed the wizards and Elves that were visiting.

*So these must be his Majesty's friends,* he mused to himself quietly. He did not stop to chat with them, preferring to keep more to himself than not. It wasn't just something he liked to do; most Serpentine were born with wanting their own space. Dante walked into his room and took off his cloak.

"So you are Dante," a voice said coming from the shadows. Dante immediately took off one of his gloves and glanced around. "Forgive me for startling you, but I believe you've been expecting me." Dante frowned in the darkness and he could see a male figure leaning against his bed. His magick flared, the torches in the room roared to life. Dante's eyes widened at the lithe figure in the room and then he immediately bowed.

"Your Majesty," He murmured in awe as well as deference. He heard a snort and lifted his head. *Exquisite,* he thought to himself. Golden topaz eyes held him still as surely as the immense well of power that the other man shouldered effortlessly. And Dante was also sure that his High King has no idea how much power he had or would have after he ascended into his final form. White hair was covered mostly by the hood of his cloak, but it couldn't hide the paleness of his skin. This man was Serpentine through and through. "If you had but asked, I would've come to see you and your mate." Those eyes shone with dry amusement now.

"You needn't have bothered, Damian is on his way to bed at this very moment; we've had a few strenuous days and are still recovering." Neville slowly smiled at him, "And if I hadn't wanted to see you and meet you first hand, I wouldn't have come here to see you personally."

"Well said."

"Thank you," Neville said lightly and then gracefully sat on the bed. "Now, you can tell me what this ceremony entails, in detail." Neville's gaze hardened. "I want to know everything before I commit to becoming your High King."

"Very well," Dante said and then carefully undid a pouch from his belt and then opened it and carefully took out one of the things that denoted the High King. "This will be yours until the day you die." He murmured, holding out the crown. It was made in the likeness of a coiled snake. No detail had been spared. The scales stood out and looked smooth to the touch. The head of the snake was pointed downward so that when placed upon the head of the High King, the head of the snake would settle into place right in the middle of the wearer's forehead. Its eyes were made from emeralds, its body from platinum.

"May I?" Neville asked, and Dante handed it to him carefully. "It's heavy." Neville commented, "Heavy but beautiful."

"It is said that the burden the High King wears is also heavy but beautiful." Dante murmured without thought. Neville stared at him and gave him a small enigmatic smile.

"I am sure, now please explain the ceremony." Neville said as he handed the crown back.

"Very well, Majesty." Dante murmured. "In the ceremony all that will be asked of you is to swear that you will uphold the desires and needs of the Serpentine, your people, for as long as you draw breath. And to make this vow legal and binding, the rest of the venom in your body, blood, and soul will emerge, making your eyes that of a basilisk. If you are the true High King, this will take place with little pain and suffering and then your mate and Consort will bind your eyes so that you will not hurt his Excellency Draconis, because he will be there to bear witness that you are indeed the one we have been looking for."

"And what if I am not?"

"Instead of having the eyes of a basilisk you will be blind." Dante said. Neville arched his eyebrow and then chuckled.

"I am sure. Well, thank you for indulging me; I guess I will see you on the morrow?" Neville asked. Dante nodded slowly and then watched as the man disappeared out his door and into the hall. Power and magick rolled off him in waves. Dante chuckled.

"Yes, that is our High King." He murmured to himself and then got ready for bed.

---

Neville rested against the pillar right down the hall from Dante's room; his breath was ragged and his heart was beating furiously. As soon as Dante had set the crown in his hands every single cell in his body and mind had reared up and screamed *mine!* It had taken every ounce of his strength to hand it back. If that hadn't told him what he needed to know then nothing would. He was the High King; he could feel it.

As soon as he caught his breath he walked towards his rooms with Damian. As soon as he opened the door, Damian pulled him close. "Are you alright?" he asked in concern, "You left in a hurry."

"I ran as far as I could like a coward; don't try to sugarcoat it darling." Neville said gratefully melting against Damian's hard frame. He was still in awe that he could hold him so close and not hurt him. Damian led him into the room and closed the door behind them. "I went and spoke with Dante."

"He's already here?" Damian asked in surprise. Neville nodded as he untangled himself from Damian long enough to take off his cloak and then his gloves, before pushing him toward the bed and then down onto it as he cuddled close to him. With his head lying on Damian's chest, Neville told him everything that had happened between Dante and he. Damian said nothing until he was finished. "Well it looks like this was meant for you."

"It seems like it."

"Will you bow gracefully?" Damian asked with a small smile. Neville looked up at him and then kissed him softly. Damian sighed happily and then licked his lips; Neville opened his mouth to the gentle prodding and Damian took full advantage. In short order, Neville was underneath him, half his shirt unbuttoned and Damian tugging at his pants. Neville gasped as Damian's fingers tripped over his stomach and teased the opening of his pants. "Are you alright?" Damian asked breathing heavily. Concern radiated off of him and Neville reached up to comfort him.

"I'm fine; I'm just not use to being touched that's all. It's been so long." Neville moaned as Damian bent down and nipped at the skin that was bared to him. Damian chuckled stealing a kiss before he took off Neville's shoes and shirt and then pulled the covers up from under him and repeated the same motions with himself. "What are you doing?"

"Getting ready for bed," Damian said blandly. Neville stared at him through narrowed eyes and then as Damian laughed he huffed and turned over angrily, groaning.

"You tease," he muttered. Damian chuckled and kissed his neck and then curled around him.

"A tease would never follow through, and I am going to, just not right now."

"When?" Neville said pouting.

"You'll know."

---

Hermione looked in on Gloria and discovered her bed empty. At first she panicked but then remembered that Luther was with them and when she'd asked Greg to go check on them it turned out her assumption was right; Gloria was in the bed with Luther making sure he was comfortable and resting. Though they had healed most of Luther's injuries before leaving, his ribs which had been cracked very badly had had to be bound.

Hermione sighed and walked back to the rooms that she shared with Blaise. She opened the door and then just stood quietly and watched him sleep. There were still dark shadows underneath his eyes and a frown marring his face. She knew he'd been exhausted and would fall into a fitful sleep especially if she wasn't there. And then for a moment she felt as if she'd just had a bout of *déjà vu*. Like she had done this before; a memory flashed before her, in another house and another woman watching this man the same way. She smiled, closing the door behind her, and then went to the wardrobe to change into the long dark blue silk nightgown that she'd brought with her.

She climbed into the bed and immediately after she settled, Blaise rolled over and wrapped her in his arms. Hermione could feel the change in him immediately; his breathing evened out and she knew his face lost its frown as he faded further into sleep. She placed her hand on top of one of his and tangled their fingers together. Soon she was asleep as well.

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"Do we have any idea where they've gone?" Dumbledore asked. Ron shook his head.

"No, one moment all of them were in the house, the next it was like they'd all vanished." Ron told him. "I don't understand." Minerva looked at both men through narrowed eyes. Things had gotten way out of control as far as she was concerned. However, her opinion was not warranted these days.

Seamus and about 20 others were presumed dead after the coup on Neville and the children went sour. Ron said that he only saw Seamus die, but then again, Minerva curled her lip, Ron was always spineless and running before he'd even think of staying and fighting himself. Neville probably killed them all. She listened as they again spoke of the disappearance of the families that they were after and she felt a feeling of dread squeeze her heart like a vice.

Her mother had told her stories of a dynasty ruled by dragons. She'd said that in times of great need or great disaster they would emerge from their own central kingdom to take care of the rest of the realm underneath their dynasty. Her mother had learned the stories from her mother and so on from the very beginning of Minerva's family line.

It was just a story...wasn't it?

Minerva excused herself and walked slowly back to her rooms. She had the uncanny feeling that it wasn't just a story. That it was in fact real; but who would believe her? The last time they had seen dragons was the war between Harry and Voldemort. Perhaps they knew of this dynasty.

---

Remus jerked awake as he felt someone get into the bed behind him. *Shh, go back to sleep love, it's just me.* Dion's voice wrapped around his muddled brain and Remus sighed sleepily.

"You're getting in late." Remus murmured to him as he turned over and laid his head on Dion's chest. Dion hummed as he corded his fingers through Remus' thick hair.

*Father and I had a talk, it seems that your Headmaster is still trying to find all of you. You and your friends are safe for now. We will return with you when things get really difficult.* Dion told him. Remus was fighting sleep to talk with him and Dion knew.

**"Go to sleep my inquisitive wolf; you will find out what we are up to."** Dion chuckled. Remus pouted slightly until Dion kissed him hotly, his pout wiped away as lust and desire ignited his body. Remus moaned and shifted closer to Dion, willing and eager. **"No, not right now, but soon."** Dion said huskily as he palmed Remus' tight butt possessively. **"Soon, Remus we will be bonded."**

"I thought we already were."

**"No, you had to trust me and now you do. If we had tried to bond before you would have probably died."** Dion told him. Remus looked up; his eyes widening.

"Why, would that have happened?" He asked and Dion chuckled.

***"When a dragon mates, they mate for life. If the one they try to bond to does not trust them then the magick of the bond distorts itself. Instead of feeling content and love, you feel jealous and angry and betrayed. Dragons are fierce creatures and we do not take to jealousy well. Most fly into a rage so hot we don't even know what we've done until we've come out of it and people have died. So it is better to wait then rush and be sorry."***

"But what about...?"

***"Remus darling, sleep."*** Dion said chuckling and curled up with him and stopped talking. Remus huffed but lay down against him and soon he was sleeping much more peacefully than he had before.

---

Neville stood in a large atrium with Draconis, Dante, and Damian at his side. It led to another large balcony that overlooked the city. It had been a very comfortable and lazy day. Both Damian and Neville had stayed in bed till almost noon before rising and venturing out into the city.

Now it was dusk and time for Neville's coronation ceremony. He turned to Dante and then took off the hood to his cloak, letting it fall down his back. Draconis was standing to Neville's far left, Damian stood immediately to his right, and Dante was standing before him. He was rather good-looking, Neville mused. Dante's hair was the pitch black of the midnight hour and his eyes were the dark blue of the sea. His skin was as pale as Neville's, and looked as if he hadn't aged a day over forty.

"Are you ready?" Dante asked; Neville nodded slowly and kept his gaze unwaveringly on Dante. The king nodded himself and then took out the crown. Neville felt as well as heard Damian's awed gasp. It was beautiful, Neville still thought so. "I am King Dante, ruler of the North province of the Serpentine realm, I come before his Excellency Draconis, Head of the Five, and Neville Longbottom, Heir of the Serpentine, and I beseech the power and magick of this crown, come forth and demand your test."

Neville's eyes widened slightly as a dark and powerful force emerged from the crown. It wasn't evil, but its power was the very antithesis of everything supposed 'light wizards' believed in. A hiss sounded in his ear and he focused on the image of the large basilisk that appeared before him. It reared up, most of its body in coils of ebony in the space before him.

*Ahh, my Heir.* The snake's voice purred in his head. Neville closed his eyes as his body welcomed that cool presence and all it represented. *Are you ready? You cannot go back after this. The only task you must now complete is that of destroying Hogwarts. After that day, you will be bound to our land until time ceases to exist.*

*Won't I die at some point?* Neville asked and the snake hissed with laughter.

*No young one, you will be as immortal as Elves and Dragons, your mate will be immortal as well. That last High King lived for nearly a thousand years; you will live much longer. Now I ask you again...are you ready?*



*Yes, yes I'm ready.* Neville said and the snake wrapped around him in parental affection.

*You will do great things Neville; never doubt it.* The voice vanished and in its wake left the power behind. Neville felt his body absorbing it like a sponge; could feel his powerful magick growing larger and larger. The venom that made up every part of him became that much deadlier and his sensitivity to those around him became a lot more acute. When he came out of it, Neville felt Damian's hand in his and the weight of the crown upon his head. He looked straight into Dante's eyes as the king, as if in a trance fell to his knees and bowed his head to the floor in supplication.

"Rise," Neville murmured and Dante did a smile on his face.

"Majesty," He murmured and then nodded towards Damian, "High Consort." He bowed his head to Damian. Damian returned it in kind and then stepped forward into Neville's field of vision. His smile widened a bit.

"You're eyes are that of a serpents. A slit of black for a pupil and all color, you looked gorgeous Nev." Damian kissed him and Neville sighed happily. "You know what happens next." Neville nodded and let Damian bind his eyes. Even as his world went into darkness he could feel everything and everyone around him. As soon as he was able he turned to where he knew Draconis to be.

"Well, I guess you are off the hook, now you only have your great dynasty to run." Neville said in dry amusement. Draconis laughed.

***"Yes, you will do very well as High King. Come it is getting late and I am sure that you are tired. We will talk more in the coming weeks. I bid you all good night."*** Neville frowned and then cocked his head towards Damian.

"It was dusk when we started this was it not? How much time has passed?"

"A few hours Nev." Damian murmured as they left, Dante bid them a good night as he turned down the first hallway and they continued on. "I could feel you getting stronger and stronger. It was like you were taking more and more magick into yourself. What did you see?"

"A basilisk," Neville murmured, "An ancient one, it was the essence of the crown." Damian entered the room before him and Neville took his time getting used to the feeling of seeing the room but not using his eyes to do so. Everything seemed to glow different and the outlines of their forms were the same. It was the same with people really, only people had magickal auras that were unique only to them. He felt Damian's hands come to the clasps of his cloak and begin to undo them. Neville stood there silently as Damian worked, watching his lover's aura change and flow as he moved. Damian looked like he was bathed in soothing greens and calming hues of blue; the aura of a healer, a strong one too. Neville continued to watch with his mind's eyes until Damian stopped undressing him and kissed him. Neville jumped in surprised delight as his hand came into contact with nothing but smooth skin as he wrapped his arms around him.

Damian slowly eased him back towards their bed his hands strong and gentle and steady, as he kept kissing him, while taking off the crown, setting it gently on the night stand, before pushing Neville backwards onto the bed and climbing in after him. Neville's head fell backwards as Damian kissed his way down his lithe body and then licked the head of his cock. "Oh, Merlin," Neville gasped in pleasure as Damian slowly took him into his mouth and began to suck.

Damian smirked to himself as Neville undulated underneath him, lifting his hips and pushing his cock deeper down Damian's throat; not that he minded. He was so aroused after seeing his lover awash with all that power...Damian moaned around Neville's cock, causing Neville to cry out and thrust harder. Damian watched his lover through half lidded eyes for the right moment and when Neville was off guard, he took his lover's length deeper into his mouth before he suck upwards. The effect was instantaneous. Neville came with a hoarse cry and Damian didn't let him go until he'd milked him dry.

"You...you...serpents save me." Neville gasped breathlessly. Damian chuckled as he fingered Neville's entrance. Neville merely opened his legs wider instinctively, easing Damian's way as he wriggled a finger inside of his lover. "Can you uncover my eyes now?"

"No," Damian said smugly as he searched for Neville's prostate, grinning widely when he found it and watched Neville arch with pleasure. "You are slightly off guard because you don't have your eyes to see what's going on. I find that I like that."

"Slytherins! Bunch of- oh gods – opportunists!" Neville arched again as he felt Damian thrust two fingers inside of him. Neville was, not surprisingly, aroused yet again and he began riding those fingers. When Damian pressed a third finger in him, Neville began to ride them in earnest. "Please..."

"Yes," Damian's voice was husky with arousal. Neville sighed in pleasure as he caught the scent of jasmine oil and then he groaned as Damian slowly and carefully entered him, sliding his cock deep, one inch at a time.

"You're huge." Neville gasped as he reveled in the pain and pleasure. Damian moaned even as he chuckled deeply.

"And you are so tight." He said through clenched teeth. Damian rocked his hips and started slowly thrusting. Neville moaned and rocked back onto Damian's cock with relish. It felt amazing, not only because he was having sex again, but because it was with Damian, his mate, and the one he loved more than anything else on the damn planet.

Soon both were sweating, panting, reaching for orgasm, but enjoying the ride there as well. Damian shifted position again, hitting Neville's prostate now with every thrust. Neville was past anything but the exquisite feeling of Damian inside of him and the way his body sang with pleasure. He felt Damian working his one hand around his head and then realized he was taking the covering off his eyes.

Seeing Damian like he was, his brown eyes so dark and intense as they watched him and then the continued pressure on his prostate, Neville didn't have a chance. He gave a hoarse cry as his orgasm rippled through him, and his cry turned into a wail as his orgasm seemed to go on forever. When he

came to, Damian had already come inside him and was slowly edging away. Neville murmured his disappointment and then sighed as Damian wiped them both down.

"I love you," Damian murmured as they fell asleep. Neville sighed tiredly but smiled and kissed Damian's collar bone.

"I love you too."

## Chapter Thirteen

Remus watched the glimpse of the wizarding world with a pensive frown on his face. By his side stood Dion and Draconis; their expressions were equally grim. Dumbledore was going too far. Countries were beginning to close their borders to anyone but refugees fleeing the Headmaster's tyrannical rule. "It's getting worse and worse." Remus murmured, "I guess it's time to go back." He said it with reluctance, these past few months had been ideal, for everyone involved in this mess.

Dion curled a protective arm around his waist and gave him a gentle squeeze. ***"You are strong enough to confront him. Have faith in yourself my love, I know I have tremendous faith in you."*** Remus smiled up at him and kissed his cheek.

"Thank you for being so supportive." He told him quietly. "So, when do we tell them?"

***"Later today is soon enough. I am sure they know their time is coming to an end."***

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Neville hummed in pleasure as Damian came up behind him and kissed his nape. "What are you doing love?" He was asked. Neville gazed out over the balcony of their suite and smiled a bit sadly.

"It is time to go." He said softly. Damian turned him around and then sat on the bed a bit slower than usual. Neville's smile turned into a smug smirk. "Sore, lover mine?" He purred, and Damian flushed but nipped his neck in retaliation.

"Only a little, however it was *very* well worth it." Damian grinned and then he quieted and said, "It's time?"

"Yes," Neville said, "I've a feeling that Dumbledore has been causing nothing but trouble in our three month absence. We need to make our presence known to him again. Divert his attention a little from the other countries in Europe; it is time to end this."

"I agree."

---

Gloria leaned against the door frame and watched her father interact with Hermione. It was so eerie, even now three months later, how Hermione acted like her Mum sometimes. She remembered how she had reacted that first time. And though it was still a bitter pill to swallow, she found herself becoming use to seeing Hermione around her father. It probably would still be wounding for more time to come, but at least she didn't want to kill the poor woman now.

Hearing what Hermione had gone through made her pity the woman. But as far as Gloria could see; Hermione didn't need anyone's pity. She was a strong woman, and had nearly a genius level intelligence. She was not classically beautiful like her Mum had been, but she was stunning in her own way. She never tried too hard to be friendly with Gloria; and for that Gloria had a grudging respect for the

woman. She knew the grief that Blaise and she were still feeling and she seemed to want to genuinely help them through it.

Hermione keeping her distance from Gloria was suiting the teenager just fine. She needed to let the situation grow on her a bit more before she finally gave in. However, as Gloria watched her father's eyes track over Hermione's figure and saw his gaze softening as it used to with her Mum, Gloria knew that her father needed something entirely different from Hermione than what Hermione herself was giving them both.

---

*She's so beautiful.* Blaise thought to himself as he watched Hermione read a book on bonds. Reading glasses were perched on her nose; chestnut brown hair was pulled back in a messily styled bun piled on her head. The dress she wore was of a jersey type material that molded to her curvy figure, accentuating the roundness of her breasts and hips, the slimness of her waist, and how long her legs were. Blaise felt desire fill him as well as guilt.

Why was he craving her now? It had been three months since Pansy's death and not once in all that time had he been aroused in the slightest, which was unheard of for him. So why was his libido raging at this point in time? He couldn't understand it but he felt guilty as hell for it. Blaise was so confused; he loved Pansy so much it hurt, Hermione had told him that he'd nearly gone with Pansy; he had been pouring so much of his magick into her. So why didn't he wake up dreading the world anymore? He was laughing again and nearly back to his old self.

"Blaise?" He turned to look at Hermione and couldn't stop his heart from beating its staccato beat. Merlin it was like he was falling love again...

*No!* Blaise wrenched his mind from the direction it was going in and gave Hermione a small smile. "I'm fine; I just remembered something that I have to do. Stay here and read darling." He said and then kissed her forehead gently as he walked out of the sitting room.

He needed to talk with someone; someone he could trust. Only one name came to mind and Blaise smiled.

---

Lucius looked up sharply when he felt the presence of someone else in his office. He blinked and then looked at the fireplace in surprise at first and then smiled. "Blaise, how are you doing?" he asked. Blaise hesitantly smiled back and Lucius frowned. "What's bothering you?"

"I- I think I might be falling in love with my wife." Blaise blurted out and Lucius arched an eyebrow. He knew Pansy's death had hit the Zabini family hard. And he also knew of what Francesca had started when she had spoken to Hermione. The very fact that the woman had come with his family said it all; she'd followed her fate splendidly.

"Well that is a good thing right?" Lucius asked, "Why wouldn't you want to love your wife?"

"It's too soon, after Pansy...I'm – damn it I'm scared that she'll leave me too." Blaise said averting his gaze.

Oh. Lucius felt sympathy for the younger man. Life had not dealt them anything but hurt and sorrow. Losing his wife had undermined Blaise's confidence in himself to function without having another to shoulder the burden with him. He'd already lost one wife to people who hated him, now he was falling in love with his new wife and they were so at risk that Hermione might die as well.

He didn't think Blaise could go through the grief again. The first time almost killed him. "I think people grieve over different periods of time, Blaise..."

"...but I'm not ready..."

"Obviously you are, if you are in love with her now. You look a whole lot better than you did three months ago." Lucius told him gently. "There is no time requirement on how long you have to grieve. Are you ready to have a physical relationship with Hermione?"

"In some ways yes, but really and truly? No I don't think so. I just know that we can't keep on going the way we have been." Blaise quickly told him of their arrangement and Lucius chuckled.

"Aren't you two very practical? It must be killing you to sleep so close to each other and not act on your thoughts." Blaise snorted.

"Who are you kidding?" Blaise asked sarcastically and then he sighed, "I have a feeling that we will be leaving very soon for the wizarding world again."

"Well if you are, then please be careful. Things are going downhill very fast." Lucius warned him. Blaise nodded and then smiled.

"Thank you Lucius." He said simply and then vanished. Lucius just smiled slightly and was startled when he turned and found Severus seated in his chair. Severus smirked and Lucius merely chuckled and kissed him.

"How are you my dear?"

"I'm the size of a whale, thank you very much." Severus told him dryly. Lucius merely smirked and rubbed his bulging abdomen tenderly. He was six months pregnant now and Lucius couldn't wait to see what his next child would be like. "So they are going back?"

"It seems so." Lucius said frowning as he glanced out the window. "I am not sure they are ready for what is in store for them, however, when is anyone ready for war?"

"Will it really be all that bad?" Severus asked with a calculated look, "All they must do is destroy Dumbledore and his sycophantic group of idiots. Although they are formidable, they are not like Voldemort's army."

"That is true, but Dumbledore does have the magick of Hogwarts at his fingertips. There is just no saying in what will happen or if they are prepared. All I know is that they will survive."

"Well we must hope for the best then?" Severus said and Lucius nodded.

"That's all we can do right now. The die has already been cast."

---

Draco played slowly, running through scales and then easier songs as he tried to let his tension flow out of him in the music. It usually worked well for him, but right now it was making his agitation merely worse. He wanted to go home; he wanted to see his children and his parents. He didn't want to go back into the world that nearly took so much from him. He sighed heavily; they would be leaving soon, probably within the next day or so.

He looked out the window of his and Harry's suite and watched the dark clouds on the horizon of Drakken grow closer to the city. He watched them in trepidation as if they were a manifestation of the danger lurking on the horizon for their group. Something was going to happen and soon.

He just hoped they would all be ready for it when it came to pass.

---

Hermione packed their meager bags and set them by the door. Then she turned around and made the bed that she and Blaise had slept in for the past three months. She didn't know why she felt as if they'd be leaving in a hurry; she just knew it would come to pass. She smoothed down the slight wrinkles in her dress and continued to tidy up. She didn't hear Blaise come into the room behind her; but she felt him.

Hermione turned slowly in greeting, a smile on her face but at his lost look, her face transformed into one of concern. "Blaise, what's...?" He jerked her against him; one hand curled in her hair tilting her head up towards him and the other wrapped around her waist. Her heart began beating triple time as he lowered his head and kissed her softly. Hermione felt her body shudder with pleasure and then he kissed her again; more confident this time, and she melted against him and kissed him back.

She reveled in the strength of his arms holding her, her hands splayed against his muscled back and when his tongue licked her lips in question she acquiesced and opened her mouth, letting him kiss her deeper than before. She didn't know what made him do this; all she knew was that she didn't want him to stop. They held each other tightly until they finally came apart for air. Hermione looked up at him with wide eyes. "Blaise what was that all about? What's wrong?" Hermione asked. Blaise tried to smile and failed to, he still held her close though and she could feel his tension as she gripped his arms.

"I'm worried," he said quietly. "I just..." He trailed off and said nothing. He kissed her gently on the lips and then let her go. "It's nothing." He murmured and walked back out the door. Hermione sagged against the vanity she'd been cleaning up. It was the first time he'd ever touched her romantically, what

made him do that? Hermione didn't know what to think now. She stood wringing her hands together for a moment and then sighed and went back to straightening the room.

Blaise leaned against the wall outside of their suite. His heart was beating against his chest and his breathing hadn't slowed one bit. She was intoxicating and tasted like honey; all sweet nectar and twice as addicting. He smiled a little and wanted to hit himself.

He *thought* he was in love with his wife? What a joke.

"I am in love with her." Blaise murmured to himself. He looked ahead of himself down the empty hall and cursed. "Damn." He sighed and then walked back the way he came.

---

Remus watched them all gather together. Harry and Draco sat close together on one of the love seats in the room. Greg and Vincent stood near a window conversing, Helen was making sure that Luther and Gloria were alright he assumed as the three chatted. Neville, crown and hood on his head, sat with Damian. Though his eyes were covered by a black silk cloth around his eyes, Remus knew he could see everyone in the room. His eyes turned to Blaise and Hermione who had just walked into the room. Tension radiated from Blaise; Remus already knew that the wizard was in love with his new wife and yet he could sympathize as well. Losing one dear to you made you very cautious the second time around with the idea of giving your heart to someone else yet again. However he could tell from the longing looks from both of them that it was too late. He just hoped nothing else tragic happened.

"Remus?" Harry's voice brought him out of his contemplations. He smiled and looked at them all.

"It's time to go back." He said simply. "I will be able to open one of the portals that are closest to Hogwarts for those going there. Luther, Gloria, and Helen will be dropped off last at the Zabini Manor in France, where I picked you all up from. "Are there any questions?"

"When do we leave?" Neville asked. Remus smiled sadly.

"Now."

---

Dumbledore opened his eyes quickly and sat up in his desk. There was a ...disturbance around the wards of Hogwarts. He cocked his head as he felt along the wards of his castle. A- *portal*- was opening...

Dumbledore grinned.

---

Walking through portals into different realms was quite interesting, Hermione decided. It was just like a short tunnel of a sort, with muted lighting and then coming out into a bright world. She walked side by side with Blaise; Gloria was standing with Luther, his arm around her waist protectively. Gloria glanced her way and Hermione offered her a small smile. Gloria stared for a moment before offering a smile in



kind. Hermione wanted to cheer; one step at a time that was all it took. Remus placed his hand up in front of him and went to open the next doorway. Hermione watched as Hogwarts came into view; but something was wrong.

She frowned as she hedged around Neville and Blaise and approached the opening cautiously. A layer of the wards were missing as if...as if they knew... "Close it back!" She shouted, "They know we're coming!" Remus began to withdraw his hand but hands from the outside grabbed the now tangible opening to the portal and were ripping it open.

"You always were a smart bitch." A voice snarled. Hermione turned, but a hand caught her hair and yanked her back. She screamed in pain and then gasped in horror as she came face to face with Ron. "Hello wife, aren't you happy to see me?" Hermione winced in pain but spit right in his face. Ron snarled and backhanded her across the face. Hermione fell to the ground and slowly got up. "Oh that's right you aren't my wife anymore, are you?" He kicked her in the stomach and Hermione groaned in pain as she crawled away from him. She clawed in her cloak for her wand, gripped it tightly, and stopped moving. Ron grabbed some of her hair and yanked her up. "I'm going to kill you."

"You wish," Hermione snapped and then pointed her wand at his body, "*Adustum!*" Ron roared as his skin began to burn and he dropped her. Hermione scrambled to the portal where Remus and Harry had created a barrier against the spells being cast.

"Hermione!" Blaise called out. She turned around and saw Ron was approaching her quickly. Fear shot through her but she still hurried; they had to get the others out of there. Blaise let loose a string of curses, killing at least three people and injuring another as she made her way back. She collapsed into his arms as he threw another curse, one that erupted next to Ron, slowing his progress. Remus gathered the magick of the portal quickly into his palm and slammed it shut. "Merlin are you okay?" He asked in concern. Hermione edged away from him slightly to look at him. Half her face felt puffy from Ron's backhanding her and her ribs and stomach felt awful. Blaise ran a hand cautiously through her hair; some small clumps came out onto his hand as well as a little blood.

"Mione?" Harry asked in concern as well. Draco brushed passed his husband and slowly went over her injuries with a practiced gaze.

"She'll be fine, but we don't have time to go back." Draco said. Remus nodded and sighed.

"He's right; we have to go out into that mess. Whether we want to or not."

"Fine then we go." Neville spoke up. "Besides this is not everyone's fight anyway. Those who need to stay out of it will." He turned his head and cocked it to the side as if listening or seeing something that no one else heard nor saw. "Helen, Greg, Vincent, Gloria, Luther, Draco, and Harry; all of you are going to the Zabini house. The rest can stay and fight." Protests were on the tips of everyone's tongue but Neville smirked, "And I am not changing my mind."

"Hermione's hurt." Harry protested.

"She's hurt but not dead," Neville said coolly, "And besides, she knows the layout of the castle much better than Remus and I. We have to find Dumbledore and stop him. It is the only way to end this idiocy. We need her." Neville turned to Hermione. "Can you go on?"

"Yes," She said leaning onto Blaise for support and comfort. Neville nodded his head and then turned Damian.

"Stay behind me love and hold these." He took off his gloves and gave them to Damian, he then turned to Remus. "Now, open the portal slowly." Remus nodded and slowly but surely let the portal open one inch at a time.

"Everyone get down in case of a spell." Remus ordered. The others did as directed except Neville, Remus, and Damian. Neville stood like a coiled snake ready to strike; ever still and vigilant. As soon as a hand was able to get into the portal, Neville turned to Remus.

"Now!" He shouted and grabbed the hand; the person's scream was cut off as they died. Remus pulled open the portal and Neville was a blur as he moved, killing most of the people out of sheer surprise alone. Damian and Remus followed him next and then Blaise and Hermione followed them. The portal closed behind them. Remus started disarming people quickly, but as he saw that they weren't going to stop, his eyes hardened and curses and hexes began falling from his lips.

Neville walked amongst them like the grim reaper; dressed in black, taking their lives with a touch. When spells hit his shield he lashed out immediately. He'd lost Damian a few moments ago and yet he could tell where his consort was, his blue green aura shining brightly in his mind's eye. Somehow Ron had disappeared and Neville knew the coward was running off to warn Dumbledore. He looked around when he had a second and spotted Remus.

*Remus, Ron has gone to Dumbledore, you go after him.* Neville told him. Remus looked up startled and then a look of concern shadowed his face.

*But what about you all...*

*We can take care of these people. Go take care of Dumbledore. You have to. I need to destroy Hogwarts.* Neville said and as he did someone ran at him with a sword. He caught the poor man by the neck and pushed him; the man was dead before he hit the ground.

*Alright.* Remus said and then made for the doors to Hogwarts.

"Cover him!" Neville shouted at Blaise and Hermione. Hermione was closest and she whipped around, her wand at the ready a curse already on her lips. Neville knew that she wouldn't have been able to fight as fiercely as she was and so in tune with Blaise if it had not been for Pansy's memories. Neville began approaching the base of Hogwarts.

He had a job to do.

---

Blaise threw another curse at one wizard while he caught another by the throat and snapped it quickly. He watched Hermione cover Remus until he got inside and then she began making her way back towards him. When Ron had grabbed her, Blaise had felt his heart stop. When he'd seen the brute kick her; he knew that he wanted to rip out the man's entrails and shove them down his throat. No one should treat a woman like that, especially not *his* woman.

Blaise hadn't felt such rage in almost twenty years. It had surprised him but it hadn't stopped him from wanting to go after that coward of a man. Hermione reached him and they moved fluidly as one, like a well-oiled machine. Pansy's memories must be flooding her mind, Blaise realized, for her to be so in tune with what he was doing. He and Pansy had done this before, fighting back to back, one curse after another, until their magick was so exhausted they'd thought they'd die.

He was glad to have her by his side; Hermione Zabini was a phenomenal woman.

---

*These memories*, Hermione thought. Flashes of Death Eaters and Dementors blood and screams, the pain of harming her mentor, the stench of burnt flesh; it all assaulted Hermione's mind, was assimilated and discarded. Hermione thanked the gods for the memories Pansy had given her. She wouldn't have been able to fight this well without them. When the last of the Order members that had attacked them fell, Hermione and Blaise tangled their fingers together and walked, still vigilant over to where Damian was standing.

The young man was covered in dirt, blood, and sweat. His eyes were coldly calculating as he surveyed the land in case of a surprise attack. Down on his knees, Neville was flipping back his hood, his white hair shone brightly against the darkness. "So what now?" Blaise asked. "How are you going to destroy this building?"

"Easy," Neville replied and smiled sadly. "I will kill it."

---

Gloria sat wringing her hands as she stared out the window of her family summer home. She would never forget the fear on Hermione's face or how hard the woman's ex-husband had hit her that first time before she'd fallen to the ground. Luther sat with her, saying nothing, but lending his support nonetheless. Helen was bustling around the kitchen and Harry and Draco sat quietly together; Gloria could tell that they were speaking telepathically.

She was worried; worried about Hermione, worried about her father, and worried about Damian and Neville and the werewolf Remus. This was it, the final confrontation against Dumbledore. This was the deciding factor.

"Don't worry," Luther whispered in her ear, "Everything will be fine." Gloria smiled at him but her eyes still shone with worry.

She prayed that it would all be okay.

---

Remus walked through the silent halls, all of his senses alert. He hadn't run into any opposition, yet; he learned from the portraits that the children were gone for Christmas break. It was a good thing that they weren't here. He heard it go quiet outside as he made his way to the Great Hall. He opened the doors slightly and paused.

Minerva stood in the middle of the entrance way. Her eyes were dead and her wand was pointed right at him. Remus glared at her and lifted his wand and pointed it at her as well. "Minerva, I don't want to hurt you, get out of the way. I only came here for Dumbledore."

"Stupid werewolf," the voice that came from her throat was not her own. Remus looked on in horror as a twisted smile appeared on Minerva's face. "This is the kind of respect I get after housing you so long?"

"Dumbledore?"

"Hello Remus," Dumbledore said from Minerva's body. "Good bye Remus," he continued and magick screamed across the distance toward Remus. His eyes went wide but he transformed into his wolf form and sprinted down the hall. The magick tore the door off the hinges to the Great Hall and continued to follow him. He scrambled down the stairs into the dungeons. Talons of the magick licked at his hind legs and Remus growled in pain as they did. He looked for a door that was open and not warded. He found it at the end of the hall and scrambled into it and slammed it shut before changing back quickly and taking off one of the many talismans Dion had given him and embedded it into the door. The magick slammed into the magickal barrier and screamed in fury and disappointment.

Remus dropped to the floor to catch his breath; what the hell had that been?

*The magick of Hogwarts.* Neville replied coolly in his mind. Remus eyed the door in shock. *It has twisted since it's become part of him.*

*What has happened to Minerva?*

*He must have taken over her body. A form of Imperius Curse; but much more complex. I am not sure, I'd only read about such things.*

*How do you know what I'm talking about?* Neville chuckled.

*You keep seeing the same things in your mind over and over again. I am merely a bystander talking to you. Now listen to me carefully. I am about to start the process it takes to destroy Hogwarts. I need you to make him expend as much magick as possible. Once he is tired and listless, kill him with something other than magick, this includes your werewolf form. Do you understand?*

*I get it, sort of.*

*I'll explain later.* Neville's voice began to fade and when he was finally gone, Remus stood and approached the door opening slightly. A little ways down the hall he saw Minerva's body walking jerkily toward him. He could use that to his advantage and then find Dumbledore. He took the talisman off the door and waited. The door opened, her dead eyes watching him. Remus smirked.

"Catch me." He whispered, morphing once more into wolf form, knocking Minerva/Dumbledore off their feet and bolted down the hall. He could feel the amassing magick that was about to be thrown at him and began to run faster.

He just hoped that Neville would hurry.

---

Neville turned to Blaise and Hermione. "I need you two to try and find Dumbledore's body." He quickly explained what he saw in Remus' mind and the two looked at him in horror. "I know, it's worse than we thought, but if we find his body then we can force him back in. I am pretty sure the reason he's having trouble accessing all his power is because Minerva is resisting him. We need to use that to our advantage. Remus is already trying to tire him out, now we just need to find him."

"Alright, come darling, let's go." Blaise said pulling Hermione along. Neville watched as they disappeared and then he sighed and turned back to the wall of Hogwarts. Damian knelt with him and looked at him in concern.

"Are you sure you can do this?" He asked. Neville kissed him and smiled softly.

"Positive, now just watch my back, will you?"

"Always," Damian replied and turned to face the sprawling grounds around them. Neville closed his eyes and placed both of his hands on the stone walls. They hummed with magick and as soon as his bare flesh came into contact with it, his magick slowly seeped into the stone, eroding away the magickal essence of the building. When he saw that it was working, Neville called up more of his magickal essence and poured it into Hogwarts. The castle was huge, he could see it blazing in his mind's eye, hidden doorways, passages that haven't been used for ages, and twists and turns that could make anyone's head spin. He didn't care, he pressed forward.

Slowly, but surely Hogwarts was dying. Neville knew that by killing off its magickal essence, Hogwarts and Dumbledore didn't stand a chance. Both needed each other to survive. So if he killed off Hogwarts' magick then he killed off Dumbledore's as well.

Now they just need to find the bastard. Neville frowned a little but he kept feeding more and more of his venomous magick into the magickal essence that made Hogwarts what it was today.

They'd find him; they had to.

## Chapter Fourteen

Blaise and Hermione walked together, slowly and stealthily through the halls. It was eerily quiet and that didn't bode well for all of those that were usually inside the castle. "Where are all the other teachers do you suppose?" Blaise asked. Hermione turned to him as she thought.

"I am not sure, usually they don't leave." Hermione said, "I have a really bad feeling about that. If he took over Minerva, do you suppose he took over the others as well?" Blaise shook his head.

"I doubt it; to extend himself so far is just one step short of madness. He would spread himself to thin." Blaise murmured as he peeked into the Great Hall. "It's empty. We should..." he didn't finish the thought as he pulled Hermione down on the floor with him as a spell exploded above their heads. Blaise turned and nearly growled; it was Weasely. His skin was still peeling and blisters were forming from the curse that Hermione had thrown at him, but his eyes were filled with deadly intent; Blaise knew he wouldn't be stopped easily.

"Hello traitors; what a pleasant surprise." Ron said snidely. Hermione stood side by side with Blaise and raised her wand. Blaise could feel her fear at facing Ron once again, but she squared her shoulders and clenched her jaw in determination.

"Let's get this over with." Hermione murmured to him. Blaise came up behind her. He wrapped an arm around her waist and pointed his wand over her opposite shoulder.

"Let's go."

Ron threw the first curse. And Blaise and Hermione retaliated; it was going to be a bloody battle.

---

Draco looked around in distaste at the Minister of Magick's décor and sniffed. Arthur Weasely watched them warily as Harry sprawled elegantly in the chair in front of his desk and Draco reluctantly sat in the one beside him. "What can I do for you?"

"First you will step down as Minister, once Dumbledore is dead, I am sure there will be no need for you here." Harry said coldly. "This government is so corrupt it would probably bleed black blood if it was a living entity."

"You can't ask that of me." Arthur said angrily, "Only a true lord of the wizarding world could ask that."

"Well then, I am not asking, I'm *ordering* you too. As the Lord of the Malfoy line." Draco snapped. "Our house is a prolific one and we've made and broken the back of many Ministers in our history. You are a disgrace to this community for being so cowardly as to let Dumbledore run roughshod over this world. You are not fit to lead and we will find your replacement." Draco said with a sneer.

Harry and he had decided that rather than sit and worry over whether or not their friends were to survive; they'd take evasive actions with the government. After talking with Luther and Gloria, he was

sure that they wouldn't mind Luther being the next Minister of Magick. It would give these buffoons someone to count on that would follow through, but it was also give Draconis and Dion the footing they would need to regain control of the Wizarding world of Britain.

Britain was the one going insane; the rest of Europe was fine and dandy.

Just seeing the look of horror on Arthur's face was a good start on what he and Harry were going to do.

They were dismantling the Ministry; one lousy coward at a time.

---

Remus could feel himself tiring. It was only a matter of time before he was forced to release this form and recuperate a little of the energy he was losing so rapidly. He could already feel the difference in the air; Neville was truly killing Hogwarts. The innate magick of the place was crumbling. He could tell by staircases appearing from nowhere, or room doors that kept opening showing the contents; some of them hadn't been seen for hundreds of years. The magick that was spewing from Dumbledore's fingertips had grown deadlier and deadlier as his intent to kill Remus grew with every frustrating second that passed.

The other thing Remus could tell with his superior sense of smell was that Minerva, wherever she was inside her own body, was fighting back. The jerky movements of her body belied the fact that Dumbledore was losing control; Remus would've smiled if he could; Minerva was not one to cross. He eyed a room that looked empty enough and quickly entered it, slamming the door behind him and transforming back into his human form. Remus sat up against the wall, placing the talisman on the door, breathed a small sigh of relief at Dumbledore's roar of outrage. Remus let his gaze drift over the room and his eyes widened.

The professors were lying on cots, even Madam Pomfrey was there, seemingly asleep and unharmed. Remus edged toward them and could see that it seemed their magick was really low as if someone was draining them...Remus cursed. So Dumbledore had drained his colleagues as well save a few. It must have happened recently, for they were clearly still alive, merely sleeping. The only sure way he knew of breaking something like this was to kill the castor. His attention turned to the door where he could feel Dumbledore waiting for him.

"Neville you need to hurry up." He muttered and went about the room trying to find another way out.

---

Neville's eyes opened wide as he felt the building shift beneath his fingers. Damian, wholly in tune with Neville, turned to him in concern. "Neville what's wrong?"

"I didn't realize," he murmured, "The foundation of Hogwarts was based on magick. I am taking that magick away...what will be left to support this structure?" Damian paled.

"Are you saying that the building will collapse?" Damian asked. Neville bit his lips.

"I'm not sure. I feel that it is a sound building, but I just really can't say."

"We have to warn them." Damian said and Neville nodded.

"I agree but I don't think we will have time to do that. The building is shifting; its already trying to adapt to having no magick for extra support. If part of it falls, they will be able to feel the tremors. Even so, I will try to contact them."

---

Hermione hit the wall with such force she felt her teeth shake as she sank to the ground. The castle was losing its magick and with that the staircases were moving or appearing out of nowhere making it treacherous for them to continue this battle needlessly. Ron was out flanked and yet he wouldn't quit. Hermione felt the ground shake beneath her and she cried out and shoved herself forward barely missing getting hit by stones falling from the ceiling. Blaise turned at her cry and Hermione screamed, "Look out!"

The curse threw him into the nearest wall. Hermione felt her heart stop at the sickening *crack* as his head slammed into the stone. His body fell limp and he didn't move. "No, no, no, no...*Blaise!*" Hermione screamed and she stood up unsteadily and began running toward him. Ron's large hand clamped down on her arm and tugged, stopping her cold. The pain ricocheted from his forceful grip all the way up her arm and she gasped.

"I have a bone to pick with you, you bitch!" Ron slammed her back into the wall and she moaned in pain but stayed still. Her eyes kept going back to Blaise's body and she felt herself start to cry; he couldn't be dead, he couldn't be. It wasn't *fair*. Not after everything... Her head snapped to the side as Ron hit her.

"Pay attention, what the fuck were you thinking by leaving me?"

"I was thinking of my damn freedom you cretin!" She snapped and kned him in the groin. Ron's eyes bulged and Hermione used his surprise to try and wiggle away. His hand caught her ankle and she felt to the floor. A rumbling noise reached her ear and she saw more rubble falling close to her. She kicked Ron in the face, he grunted and let her go and she scrambled back the way she came before she was covered in stone. Ron rose to his feet unsteadily and towered over her. Hermione reached for her wand and suddenly realized that it wasn't there. She looked around and saw that it was close to Ron's feet. Hermione closed her eyes and took a deep breath, before her own anger and helplessness overwhelmed her.

"Seems like you're cornered Mione." Ron sneered. Hermione glared at him as she lifted herself from the floor. "Time to say goodnight. *Avada Ked—*" Ron jerked forward slightly and Hermione watched as he fell to his knees, the light leaving his eyes as he fell forward and died. Hermione stared at the large bladed dagger that was protruding from his back; blood began seeping from him onto the floor. Hermione looked up and eyed Blaise, standing unsteadily but alive, blood was caked in his hair and he was covered in dirt but...



...he was the most handsome man she'd ever seen at that moment. Hermione hurriedly walked around Ron's corpse and hugged him tightly to her body. "Don't you *ever* scare me like that again do you hear me Blaise Zabini?" Her voice was husky from tears.

"Yes, Hermione Zabini," Blaise's voice was tender as he kissed her head and squeezed her gently. "Come on, this place is falling apart we need to find Remus and get the hell out of here."

"What about the other professors?"

"Them too, let's go." Blaise said walking swiftly into the interior of the building.

"And what about Dumbledore?" Hermione asked. Blaise's eyes went cold.

"I'm sure we can think of something for him." His smile was grim.

---

Remus stared at Dumbledore's body, which was slumped over the man's desk. He was amazed that he was able to get here. There had been a small doorway behind the professor's cots and when he'd found it he'd been so relieved, the talisman was losing power. It probably had something to do with Neville destroying the magick of Hogwarts, which was almost completed. The tremors around the castle were picking up in frequency and strength. He had to get out here and quick. He'd brought a port key and transported the professors out to St. Mungo's but that left nothing for himself to use. Remus shook off those thoughts. He would get out, even if he had to crawl. Dion's endless blue eyes flashed in his mind and Remus knew that he wanted to see those eyes and that body for many years to come.

He quickly walked over to Dumbledore and took in the man's vacant eyes; he was still in Minerva's body. He lifted his head and went to snap his neck until he felt another presence...Remus gasp in pain as something sharp was stabbed into his side.

*Silver...*

His visions blurred as the magickal properties of the silver seeped into his veins. The body in his arms came to life and the body behind him fell onto the ground. Dumbledore pushed him away and Remus felt along his midsection and found the handle of the blade and pulled it out. He stumbled away from the man. "You nearly succeeded you filthy wolf." Dumbledore's eyes were bright with power and he lifted his wand. "Too bad for you." He sneered and then whispered, "*Avada Kedavra*." Remus watched that sickly green color begin to appear from his wand, but smiled when nothing happened. "What!"

Remus pulled a dagger out of his boot and threw it with deadly accuracy. The blade found it home in Dumbledore's throat. Remus sagged against the door as dizziness overcame him. He needed to get out of here. He watched through sad eyes as Dumbledore died. The banging on the door brought him out of his sluggish haze and moved away from the door. Blaise and Hermione barged in. "Remus," Blaise said and caught him before he fell.

"S-Silver blade," Remus panted, "Dumbledore is gone."

"Good," Blaise said. "Hermione do you have her?" Hermione nodded and pulled Minerva's limp body closer to her body. "Remus where are the other professors?"

"St. Mungo's, I—portkey," Blaise quieted him.

"You need to save your strength. Let's go, before this whole building collapses." Remus faded into darkness as they apparated away.

---

Damian caught Neville before the man collapsed onto the ground. He'd drained himself to the dregs; he didn't even warn Hermione or Blaise or even Remus. Damian looked at the building in worry. "Merlin..." Hogwarts was coming apart; he could hear the towers falling and saw some of the windows shatter under added pressure.

He turned as he heard two loud noises and breathed a sigh of relief when he saw Blaise and Hermione carrying Remus and Minerva. "Thank Merlin, you all are alright."

"We need to hurry, Remus has silver running through his system, and he needs treatment." Damian nodded as he lifted his lover into his arms.

"I think I can take care of him. At least stabilize him long enough to have Dion come and get him. He's a dragon, I am sure he can do something more than I. We're going to Crabbe-Goyle Manor." Damian added and apparated.

---

Everyone in a seat of power that made up the Ministry sat before Draco. Most looked on him with smugness, just because of the mere fact that he was Consort to Harry; as if it demeaned him in some way. Draco smirked; well, they'd find out the hard way that he was still a Malfoy and they had claws...always.

"Thank you for coming," he began smoothly. "I would just like to let you know that you are as of now fired from your positions." Harry stood in the shadows and Draco could feel his immense amusement. Jaws dropped around the room and then the rebuttals started. Draco let them bounce completely off his shoulders. "This world has turned into a bigoted and prejudice place. People that have sweat and bled for you are ostracized and thrown to the waste side while you fatten yourselves like a bunch of gluttons. It stops now. The Minister of Magick has completely resigned and in his place Luther Crabbe-Goyle will stand as your Minister."

"He's a Slytherin!"

"Traitor!"

"Dark!"

Draco narrowed his eyes and let his power flare slightly. His aura crackled around him and those that were shouting quieted. "That is my godson you are condemning. If you want to keep your tongues, you should stop wagging them. I will personally see the financial and bodily ruination of anyone that attacks my family. Your *concerns* have been duly noted and rejected. A higher authority will be bringing you to heel."

"Oh and who would that be?" Arthur snapped. Draco looked to him and smiled. Then he turned to the doorway where Draconis and Dion materialized. Everyone became very quiet as Draconis flexed his wings and folded his arms across his chest.

***"It seems giving you the power to make your own decisions was a mistake on our part. As of now you are being forced to rejoin The Dragon Dynasty. I am your Emperor. My name is Draconis and this is my Heir, Crown Prince Dion. Draco is family and will be treated accordingly."*** Draconis chuckled as he received fearful looks, but none that were surprised. ***"It seems you already knew who I am. Well that is just no good. Why would you act so despicably if you already knew this was a possibility?"***

"We never knew you'd really force us to come back into your Dynasty." Arthur murmured.

***"Considering you never really left, you have no choice but to listen to us now."*** Dion said smugly. ***"Welcome to the Dragon Dynasty and now you are all placed under house arrest while we clean up the mess you have made. You've all made a mockery of the British Wizarding world. You should all be ashamed of yourselves."*** Dion said in disgust.

***"We want to speak to you Arthur Weasley, the rest of you are dismissed."*** Draconis said imperiously. Draco had never seen anyone move as fast as they did. He turned to Arthur and smirked.

This was so fun.

---

"How is he?" Blaise asked Damian. Damian sighed and shook his head heavily.

"I've stabilized him as much as I dare." Damian said quietly as he tried to make Remus comfortable. "I've never had a werewolf as a patient; their immune system is completely alien to my knowledge. He needs Dion; that's the only answer I can offer. How is Hermione and Minerva?"

"I took Minerva to St. Mungo's with the other professors. They will be fine. And Hermione's sleeping peacefully now. Thank you for healing her. I am sure that you would rather be with your consort." Blaise said smiling. Damian chuckled.

"There is really nothing I can do for Neville, but let him sleep. He pushed himself to the dregs. All that he needs is rest." Damian turned to Remus. "Please, go get Dion. I am sure he can feel that something is wrong, but with their bond only half formed, I am not sure if he can really feel what is happening." Blaise nodded and apparated. Damian glanced worriedly at Remus' pasty coloring. Blaise needed to hurry. Damian sighed and closed his eyes took a deep breath and then reached out for his parents.

*Damian! Are you alright?* Greg's voice was loud in his mind. Damian winced.

*Come on Dad that was too loud. Yes, everything is fine. Dumbledore is dead, so is Weasley apparently.*

*How is everyone?*

*Remus isn't doing so well, he needs Dion here with him. Blaise and Hermione were pretty banged up but I healed them so they are fine. Nev is resting, but we did it. Hogwarts is no more. How is everything going over there?*

*Your brother and Mum Helen are worried sick as is Gloria. Harry and Draco disappeared a while ago, saying something about going to the Ministry. I have a feeling that the government of ours is up for a rude awakening.* Vincent answered him this time. Damian chuckled wearily.

*Well, I just wanted to let you know that everyone is fine. We're at the Manor.* Damian said. He felt his parent's relief.

*We'll be there soon.*

"They're okay." Vincent told his son, Helen, and Gloria. The women gave a great sigh of relief and Luther merely grinned.

"That's good news. So when do we leave?"

"They are at the Manor; we'll be leaving now." Greg said.

---

Blaise spotted Harry and Dion talking in low tones. He hurried over and Dion looked up to see him. **"What is going on, I cannot feel Remus that well."** Blaise winced; great, it seemed that Damian was right after all.

"Dumbledore got in a lucky shot before Remus killed him. He stabbed him with a silver edged blade. Damian has stabilized him but I think he is still not on the mend. I was coming to get you." Blaise said quickly. Dion's eyes glowed softly and then he completely vanished, just like that. Blaise blinked and then looked at Harry as the other man chuckled.

"The look on your face is priceless." Harry said but then he grew serious. "How is everyone?" Blaise explained what happened after they had left. "So Ron is dead then?" He asked sadly. Blaise just nodded, he was still furious at that man.

"I know he was your friend..."

"Blaise, he hadn't been my friend for years." Harry said sighing softly. "He was always easily swayed by popular opinion." They were silent for a few moments and then Blaise smiled.

"So what's going on in there?"

"Draco and Draconis are terrorizing Arthur." Harry said and Blaise laughed.

"Yes, that sounds like them."

---

Dion materialized right into the room that held his Remus. The werewolf looked pale as death. He turned at the small noise on the other side of the bed and saw that Damian was watching him. "Hi, I am sure you can probably do more for him now than I can." Dion nodded.

**"Thank you for helping him."** Damian merely smiled.

"He's family." He said simply and then shut the door on his way out. The room smelled fresh, as if Damian had thoroughly cleaned everything, which he probably did. Dion sat on the bed next to Remus and placed a hand on his head, slowly feeding the wolf enough of his energy to wake him. Dull amber eyes gazed back at him.

"Dion," He rasped. Dion smiled and leaned down and kissed him softly on the mouth. His wings covered them both as if protecting them from the outside world. Remus moaned weakly and wrapped his arms around Dion's neck to hold him there. "Don't stop." Dion kissed his nose.

**"You are very weak, but I feel that you are ready. Are you ready to become mine?"** He asked gently; Remus nodded. Dion kissed him again and then turned his head to the side, baring his neck. Dion licked the skin there, feeling the sluggish heart beat there and bit down. Remus arched up, his mouth opened in a soundless scream as fire raced through him. Dion released him and bit into his own wrist and held it up for Remus. Without hesitating, Remus drank Dion's blood until Dion gently detached his lips from his wrist and laid him back down on the bed.

"More, I want more..." Remus moaned; his body was on fire. Dion's blood was rich, sweet, and filled with magick. Remus shuddered in pleasure and slight pain, it seemed that Dion's blood was counteracting against the silver that had been keeping him ill.

**"You need no more than you have. Sleep now. All will be well when you wake."**

Remus was asleep instantly.

---

Pleasure was what Remus woke up to. His mind was still fuzzy from sleep, but he could feel the tendrils of pleasure licking at his body. He murmured sleepily and arched into the hands of the person who was fondling him. It was when his prostate was hit that his eyes opened wide and the last remnants of sleep left him. Dion was smirking down at him.

**"Hello darling, have a pleasant sleep?"** He purred. Remus tried to glare at him, but Dion chose that moment to begin sliding his cock inside of Remus. The werewolf groaned at the delicious pain/pleasure feeling and rocked gently against Dion to speed up the process. This is what he'd been waiting for,

for *months*. He felt so good, and it felt so right that all Remus could do was count his blessings. "***Goddess you are tight.***"

"It's been a long time." Briefly the image of Sirius flashed before his eyes and Remus smiled and then gasped when Dion was finally seated deep inside of him. "I'm ready."

Dion kissed him once and then twice as he pulled out. He kissed Remus hard as he thrust into him, hitting his prostate with an accuracy that had Remus crying out into Dion's mouth and seeing stars behind his closed eyes. Dion kept the pace moderate, sending Remus higher and higher but with no release in sight. Dion was a blazing brightness now in the back of Remus' mind and he knew that their bond was now complete. He felt fantastic and strong. Remus caught the back of Dion's legs with his own and flipped them. "Can you lose the wings?" He asked breathlessly, his breath hitching as Dion's cock nudged against his prostate again. In answer Dion's wings seemingly retracted into his back and Remus grinned as he made himself comfortable on Dion's lap. "You'll indulge me?" He asked impishly and he began to ride Dion ever so slowly.

Dion's blue eyes rolled and he groaned from the sight of Remus, his hair tousled and his lips swollen from their kisses, riding him as well as the pleasure that traveled up and down his spine. "***You feel divine.***" Dion purred and then thrust up into him. Remus' eyes went wide and he moaned as he tossed his head back and picked up the pace. In minutes both of them were breathless, but Remus was even more so. After being stabbed, then falling ill, and finally bonding with Dion, he really couldn't take anymore.

"Please, please, Dion..." Remus panted, he could feel himself climbing up to that precipice of pleasure.

"***With pleasure,***" Dion murmured, sitting up quickly and then sucking on his claim mark along Remus' neck. Dion lifted his head slightly and murmured. "***Now Remus.***" The effect was instantaneous, Dion caught Remus' cry of pleasure in his mouth as he kissed him harshly coming into his own orgasm as Remus' inner muscles clenched and rippled around him. As the tremors stopped, Remus fell limp into Dion's arms and the dragon laid his mate gently onto the bed, cleaning him off with a warm cloth he'd prepared when he had begun preparing Remus while he was still sleeping.

"Hmm, thank you." Remus murmured sleepily and snuggled closer to him, kissing his chest. "Love you Dion." Dion smiled gently down into Remus' face and then kissed him again on the lips.

"***Love you too my Consort.***" Dion said seriously and settled down beside him and was lulled to sleep by Remus' deep breathing.

---

Damian smiled at the flare of power coming from Remus' room and then he grinned at the muffled cry of pleasure. Yes, Dion was just what he needed. He looked over and saw that Neville was still sleeping, but this time it was the light sleep of normal rest, not the deep sleep of healing. He turned back to his book and continued to read.

All was well.

---

Hermione felt someone messing around with her left hand. She murmured sleepily and tried to shake them off. A deep chuckle startled her slightly and she opened her eyes slowly. Blaise was smiling down on her, and he was holding her hand. She smiled back. "Hey," she said softly.

"Hey," he said and then kissed the back of her hand. Hermione's eyes widened when she saw the large sapphire stone winking at her from a bed of diamonds encrusted in a platinum band. There was also a band sitting in front of the huge sapphire ring that was embedded with diamonds all the way around.

"Blaise..."

"You are my wife. This sapphire reminded me of your eyes. So this is yours." He said solemnly. Hermione struggled to sit up and just stared in awe at the beautiful set of rings he'd just given her.

"But Pansy..." Hermione looked up and saw that he was smiling.

"When I offered this set to Pansy, she told me then that they weren't for her. So I gave her the emerald ones instead because she told me specifically that those were for her." Blaise paused and then began speaking again. "The sapphire is my family stone and this set of rings declares that you are the Lady and Matriarch of the Zabini Family as I am its Lord and Patriarch. The emerald set is that of a mere Lady in my family. I had always wondered why she said that this set wasn't hers. And now I wonder if she knew even then that something would happen." Blaise shook his head and then lifted Hermione's face to his.

"You are my wife, my life, and my love. I love you Hermione and I would like to have the honor of asking for your hand in marriage." He grinned, "I think you deserve to have a proper wedding."

"I love you Blaise." She said and then laughed and nodded, "Yes, yes, I'll marry you, properly this time, no tragedy."

"No tragedy." He murmured and kissed her moaning as she kissed him back.

"Merlin, I really need to work on my timing." Hermione and Blaise broke apart and turned as one to see Gloria smiling a bit shyly at them. "Well if you're going to be my step Mum true and proper then I definitely have to help you pick your dress."

Hermione realized that this was an olive branch. She smiled at Gloria as Blaise squeezed her hand. "I'd love to have your help."

Gloria smiled and walked over to them and they began making plans for the new wedding. Blaise looked on the bent heads of his wife and daughter and sent a silent prayer of thanks to Pansy for sending him Hermione.

He heard Pansy's laughter and knew everything would be alright.

---

Harry and Draco walked arm and arm out of the Ministry. Draco was smiling a bit smugly and Harry was laughing on the inside. The Ministry as he had known it was no more. Between Draco and Draconis they dismantled everything and were slowly bringing around the change that was needed for Britain to get back up on their feet. Harry took a deep breath and sighed happily. Draco turned to look at him.

"What is it love?" Draco asked. Harry grinned and kissed him.

"It's over. It's all over." Harry said happily. "I want to go home; I want to see my children. And Sev is due in another two months or so. We'll have a new sibling." Draco smiled.

"And we all have our happy endings." Draco murmured. Harry nodded and pulled him close. Draco felt Harry's magick envelope them both and they began to fade away.

"Yes, we all have our happy endings."



## Epilogue

*Five years later...*

Gloria brushed her daughter, Elizabeth's curly brown locks. Mischievous blue eyes looked up at her from the giggling little girl and she smiled. "Just what are you up to hmm?"

"Nothing," the little girl said with a grin; Gloria rolled her eyes. Elizabeth and her father were thick as thieves; Gloria was surprised she wasn't going grey because of all their shenanigans. The doorbell rang, and Gloria touched her daughter's head softly and let her get up.

"No running!"

"Yes, Mum!" Elizabeth cried and bolted anyway. Gloria shook her head and eased her way out of the chair, rubbing her aching back. Just one more month and she'd have a second child to care for. She grinned, she really couldn't wait. The Medi-Wizard said this one was a boy. Elizabeth was really excited to have a younger brother. Probably just to boss around.

She made it to the entrance way and opened the door her smile widening when she saw Hermione and Blaise on the stoop. "Mum Hermione!" Hermione grinned and hugged her, kissing her cheek.

"How are you? Gloria you are as big as a house." Hermione said. Gloria snorted and pointed to Hermione's pregnant form as well.

"You just wait; you'll be the same in a few more months." Gloria teased. Blaise laughed at them both as he kissed Gloria on the cheek.

"How are you my girl?" He asked and Gloria hugged him.

"I'm doing just fine thank you. Trying to stay off my feet as much as possible," She rolled her eyes, "I think Elizabeth and Luther get up to half their mischief when I'm napping."

"We do not, we are good little angels, aren't we Lizzie?" Luther said and the little girl in his arms nodded innocently. "See?"

"Humph," Gloria said, her eyes narrowing at them. Hermione watched them in amusement and then glanced down when she felt a tug on her dress. She bent and picked up her little girl. Golden blond locks were pulled back in a braid and endless blue eyes stared at her.

"What's wrong Pansy?" She asked gently. Pansy just tucked her head into Hermione's neck and held her close. Hermione smiled gently and then turned to Blaise. "I think she's still feeling a bit under the weather. I'll just go lay down with her for a few minutes."

"Okay love," Blaise said kissing her temple and then Pansy. "Feel better okay sunshine?" Pansy nodded and smiled sweetly at Blaise before Hermione took her up the stairs toward their rooms in the Manor. Blaise turned back to Luther, Gloria, and Lizzie and smiled. "So how have you all been?"

"Busy, the reformation of the Ministry is still making slow progress, but it is moving into the right direction." Luther said as he walked them into the family room and helped Gloria sit down. Considering I've only been Minister for a few years now, it is actually very good progress."

"Well you did have to start from the ground up, so what you have accomplished is almost looked at as a miracle by everyone else." Blaise said with a grin. "This job was practically made for you."

"Enough about me; how is everything going with you?" Luther asked with a smile.

"Everything is going really well actually. Pansy is just getting over a cold though and Hermione has been worrying over her. The pregnancy is going fine." Blaise grinned, "We decided not to find out the gender of the baby. We want to be surprised this time."

"I don't remember you finding out about Pansy either." Gloria frowned and Blaise chuckled.

"We really didn't need to. Hermione said she knew the moment she got pregnant that she was having a girl and come 'hell or high water' she would be named Pansy." Blaise smiled, "It's uncanny, but that little girl is Pansy. She's just way too knowledgeable for a three-year old not to be."

"Well, perhaps this is the Goddess' way of setting everything to rights." Luther suggested gently. Blaise laughed.

"We'd already figured it was. Once Pansy is of age, Hermione and I will be going into the magical realm, like your parents Luther. It will be our time." Nothing was said for a moment, but Gloria understood even though she really didn't like it much. All those people that were closely associated with Harry or Draco were leaving the human realm. Soon Harry Potter would be nothing but myth and legend to those who didn't know him.

It seemed that was the way it was supposed to be. Greg and Vincent and even Helen had finally made the move just last year. They visited often and already Gloria could see how improved their moods were. They were happy there. And to her keen eyes she saw something else in them.

They weren't aging. Greg and Vincent looked the same as they had five years before. Even Blaise and Hermione still looked the same, nothing had changed. She guessed this was also a gift. Though Hermione had told everyone what the Goddess had said years ago it was still a bit disconcerting to see it in action. However, when Hermione walked into the room and she watched her father's eyes light up, she smiled.

She didn't care what happened; just as long as her parents stayed happy.

---

It never failed to amuse him how the same people who once spit on him now groveled at his feet. Remus watched them with barely concealed amusement and exasperation. He walked down the halls of the Ministry fingering the ornate choker around his neck. He remembered when Dion gave it to him. It was on the eve of their wedding.

***"This has been a tradition in our family since the beginning. My mother has one from my father and now you will have one from me. Most will hardly see it because you like your high collared shirts, but for everyone who does...they will know that you are mine."***

Remus shivered in remembrance of the sheer possessiveness in Dion's gaze that night. Ever since then, he'd worn low collared shirts to let everyone see. He smiled as another person tripped over themselves to bow down to him. His amber eyes rolled.

This was getting ridiculous.

He felt Dion's amusement as well in the back of his mind and he turned and smiled as he saw his husband coming out of an office down the hall. *It is quite annoying isn't it, my love?*

*Tell me about it. How are you? I've missed you.* Remus told him as he was kissed senseless. Dion chuckled.

*I come back to Drakken in a week's time.*

*Not soon enough, besides, Dedric misses you and so do I. Killian is spoiling him rotten.* Dion laughed again, wrapping an arm around his husband and taking them to their suite in London.

As soon as they appeared a little blur latched onto Dion and giggled when the dragon hoisted him up. Remus' eyes softened as he watched his son and husband play. Dedric was a rambunctious four-year old with amber eyes and auburn hair. Dion laughed.

***"How are you Dedric?"***

"Great! Daddy said that I could *finally* come and visit! I missed you Papa!" Dedric was so excited and he hugged Dion tightly. "Why do you have to go so much?"

***"It is just work darling, but soon I will be with you and Daddy all the time. Then you will get sick of me."*** Dion grinned at Dedric's gasp.

"Never Papa! Daddy loves you! I love you! See, we want you with us!" Dedric cheered. His nurse maid entered the room and Dion let him run over to her and they disappeared into his play room down the hall. Dion pulled Remus into his arms and kissed him again, much slower than the first time at the Ministry. Remus felt his toes curl in pleasure and he sighed happily as he wrapped his arms around Dion's neck.

"Yes Papa we've missed you." Remus teased. Dion nipped at his nose and guiding him to the couch; he pulled Remus unto his lap and looked his mate over. The first thing he saw was the ornate choker embedded with onyx, amber, and sapphire stones wrapped around Remus' neck. It never failed to amaze him that Remus didn't cover it up, but he was happy about it. The next was that his mate had on an amber colored vest that accented his eyes and accentuated his slim muscular build and that his legs were encased in black leather pants and some boots. He looked as sexy and as gorgeous as he always did to Dion, but something was still off.

**"Are you hiding something from me?"** Dion asked; Remus tried not to smile, he knew Dion would be asking soon. Remus said nothing but placed Dion's hands on his stomach and waited. It didn't take long. Dion's eyes snapped up to Remus' face and then he grinned. **"Another? Darling are you sure?"**

"Yes, I checked it out with Mum and the doctor and even Damian. They all say the same thing. We'll be having another child running around in about eight months." Remus laughed. Dion purred and wrapped his arms around Remus possessively.

**"You are a gift my love."**

Remus smiled softly and then kissed him slowly.

*So are you Dion, so are you.*

---

Neville smiled to himself, but kept his face impassive. He heard the patter of small feet, trying to be quiet, run around his desk and then he heard the hurried whispers. Now it was hard to keep the grin off his face, but somehow he managed it just in time to laugh out loud in pseudo surprise as his twins pounced on him.

"Daddy no more work! Time to play!" They cried happily. A deep chuckle alerted him to Damian standing in the doorway and he smiled at him and then hummed in appreciation when he was kissed.

"Oh it's time to play is it?" He asked teasingly. Golden topaz eyes stared at him from underneath their chocolate brown mops of curly hair. "Did your Papa put you up to this?"

"No Daddy, we thought it all by ourselves." They chorused. Neville arched an eyebrow at the girl and then the boy child.

"Nadira and Dragos," He said. Nadira huffed and her brother Dragos glared at her.

"See, told you." He said accusingly and stuck out his tongue. Nadira looked at him and then at Neville.

"Papa helped," she replied. Neville looked up at his husband and Damian was laughing. Neville sighed and smiled; he couldn't stay annoyed with the little terrors for long.

"Let me talk to Papa and then we'll play, how about in the garden?" They cheered and ran off. "No running!"

"Yes Daddy!" He could hear them running anyway. Neville rolled his eyes and then smirked at Damian.

"The instigator." He murmured as Damian dipped down to kiss him. "Hmm, I guess I can forgive you now." He smiled; he'd been so surprised when he'd found out he was pregnant four years ago, but then again not really. He'd had *a lot* to catch up on. But they were his life, his mate included. He just resolved that the next time it was Damian's turn.

"I'm glad I am forgiven," Damian said seriously but with mischief in his eyes. "I just got a letter from Dad and Father. They said that they will be coming to visit soon. And to tell you that Helen is bringing a guest."

"Oh she's found someone?" Neville asked with a grin; Greg and Vincent wanted her to find someone to be with, now that the boys were grown and all. They'd been looking so hard too.

"Yep."

"Do we know this man?"

"Oh well, we know *her*." Damian said nonchalantly. Neville blinked; her?

"Her?" He asked.

"Yes, her new lover is the Grand Duchess herself."

"Alex!" Neville asked in surprise. Alex was a gorgeous woman; Egyptian with dusky golden brown skin and flashing green eyes. She was so fun to be with but don't cross her; she'd be a vindictive enemy to have. "Well, I think I can see that." Damian chuckled.

"I can see it too. Mum Helen always did like the stubborn ones." He caressed Neville's head. "Take a break?" He murmured. Neville looked up into Damian's eyes and as always he found that he was home as long as he had this man by his side.

"Yes, let's go play, before the little terrors run off their nanny again."

---

"Vega, can you get the door please?" Draco called out as he finished up with Galen and Dysis and their lessons. Aziza moved gracefully through the door passing Demetrius and Harry playing chess together. She smiled and opened the door and then laughed.

"Grandpa Lucius!" She said and hugged him. Lucius kissed her temple and then moved into the house.

"Grandpa Sev!" She flung her arms around him and Severus laughed.

"Come now Vega, you see me all the time. And you're crushing Magnus." He chided. Aziza pulled away and smiled down at the ebon haired child. He looked at her with big dark eyes like his daddy's and had a sweet smile on his face.

"Vega!" He cried and then launched himself at her. She laughed and then ushered them all inside.

Adonia hugged her and they both walked together with Magnus between them.

"Papa!" Draco said with surprise and then began to stand. Lucius strode to him and hugged him, gently making him sit again.

"You need to conserve your strength." Lucius chided him. Draco rolled his eyes.

"I'm pregnant not sick!" He huffed, "You are as bad as my husband."

"That's right. Thanks Father, he's been a trying patient." Harry teased. Draco narrowed his eyes at him but then he grinned and caught Magnus before the child ran full speed into him.

"Magnus, how are you sweetie."

"Good, missed you Draco!" he said sweetly. Draco started talking with him as his son and brother played in the background for fun. Adonia and Vega went with Sev into the garden and Harry and Lucius began chatting. Draco looked at all of them and smiled serenely.

*Goddess, thank you for this. This is true bliss.* He sent a prayer of thanks and continued to play with his smallest brother.

A warm caress, like a kiss, touched his temple. And voice whispered in his mind.

*You are most welcome.*

---

Draconis and his wife Illyrian looked into the pool at all the reflections of their now diverse family. He smiled and Illyrian smiled back.

"***Shall we love?***" He asked. Illyrian nodded and looped her arm in his. They left the watery looking glass with light hearts and walked out into the moonlit night.