

Veggie!H/D Episode II: A Portrait of Miracles

by potteresque_ire

Sequel to *Veggie!H/D Episode I: Eggplant Parmesan*. Heaven is where one lets go of the past, while keeping faith in the dreams for the future; this is true for Veggie Heaven as well. An out of this world romance featuring Eggplant!Draco and Tomato!Harry, their veggie and not so veggie friends, and a bundle of ... miracles.

Veggie!H/D Episode II: A Portrait of Miracles

Chapter 1 of 1

Sequel to *Veggie!H/D Episode I: Eggplant Parmesan*. Heaven is where one lets go of the past, while keeping faith in the dreams for the future; this is true for Veggie Heaven as well. An out of this world romance featuring Eggplant!Draco and Tomato!Harry, their veggie and not so veggie friends, and a bundle of ... miracles.

Author's Notes: This is especially for red_ahl (red_ahl.livejournal.com), who has created the loveliest, most cuddly artwork for *Eggplant Parmesan* ~ one of which forms the basis of this story. It is also for my beautiful, talented Draco, Dracontia, for her friendship, encouragement, and, er, interesting advice. More ramblings after the story to keep this spoiler-free ;).

Disclaimer: This story is based on characters and situations created and owned by JK Rowling, various publishers including but not limited to Bloomsbury Books, Scholastic Books and Raincoat Books, and Warner Bros. Inc. No money is being made, and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

A Portrait of Miracles

~ Prologue ~

The rain was falling, a veil of glistening silk on the sunbathed Veggie Heaven.

Cold. So cold. Eyes opened to a sliver, Draco surveyed the unfamiliar landscape, ranches dotting like a thousand islands on a sea of green.

Its vibrant colours mocked the state of his heart, withered liked the ball of newspaper huddled against his aubergine frame. The sodden flyer held his love, whose remains had been tossed so carelessly onto Draco in the last world; the ink on the advertisement had already diffused to a smudge, dark tears that smeared across the photo of Lily and James, halved to show their luscious flesh and delicate seeds, and Sirius and Remus, smoothed into a mouthwatering Bloody Mary sorbet. They had had such wonderful dreams for the tomatoes, prospects of hearty Italian dinners and cool summer desserts

Instead, they had sewed the shroud for Harry, for a funeral held in the howling blaze of an incinerator.

Their words had comforted Draco as he, too, had bid his farewell.

You're nearly there.

Where? The eggplant had inquired.

The answer had been lost in a blast of roaring flames; instead, a drunken song had taken its place.

The wizard's wireless would sing of it ... We're healthy, you and I ...

How could he deserve peace and eternal bliss? Draco buried himself under the paper, took into comfort the way it clung on to him, as if it was guarding the sunken dips on his flesh in return.

Amid the resounding echoes of the tune, the eggplant slipped into oblivion.

~~*~*~*

"You're up! You're up! You're up!"

Draco woke to a chorus of excited squeaks and something bouncing on him as though he had been a spring mattress. The big yellow smile hovering an inch from his face vanished before he could respond. "Gotta tell Papa."

The little omelette paddled away, a wave of rustling in her trail. Draco squinted to the warm light and took in his location a beautiful crystal bowl set in a forest of antique silverware, the glass padded by an ugly sprawl of grey that his weight had resiliently held on to.

The flyer.

It had dried, the wrinkled pages flapping lightly in the breeze. Words and images had long been lost, as if cleansed by the rain along with the past.

Had it? A plane of smooth purple swept his vision, skin curving to the gentle swell that had always been the envy of his fellow eggplants. He traced it with a leaf, unaware for a moment the twinkling eyes focused on him.

"Mr. Malfoy?"

Draco leaned back immediately, his instincts responding by shielding the paper.

"Professor Dumbledore." He nodded stiffly, holding on to Harry's memento even further at the sight of a handsome stranger with eggshell skin, fair and delicate against the supporting parmesan below, jagged and hard like a rock.

"This is Gellert Grindelwald, but " the professor smiled, " I think someone's more eager to greet you."

It must be true, for the eggplant could feel a tickle on his back. With effort he shifted sideways, only to catch the corner of his padding being shoved aside by a curly leaf, then another, then another

A wedge of red came into view, beneath the crown of ruffled green. Its owner, having lost patience, resorted to charging towards the bowl and knocked it over.

"Ow!" Draco landed on his arse on the table, the flyer darting into mid air just in time to blanket him and the plump form that had pounced on to him.

The scent, fresh, tart, and just a tad sweet, was unmistakable.

"Prat," Draco muttered as his leaves wrapped around the swell of Harry's shoulder, glad that the shade was there when his voice broke, "don't you ever, ever dare to do this to me again."

~~*~*~*

They were back in the bowl, he and Harry, and Draco tried to not cuddle too much. That nosy omelette brat was giggling behind them, he could tell.

"Every veggie becomes whole in Veggie Heaven," Dumbledore said to them, "although Harry's recovery presented a rather difficult case. The rain and the way your own battered form was flush against the flyer, Mr. Malfoy " Harry snickered and Draco landed him a kick, "made it almost impossible to separate you from him."

Something was fermenting in the air. Draco narrowed his eyes; the foul smell could not escape him even if it wafted right past Harry, who was grinning from leaf to leaf.

"Mr Malfoy," the aged dairy sighed, "we had our differences, but I hope you would never hesitate to ask for assistance regarding yourself " the eyes shone with yet another twinkle, " or Mr Potter."

A curse had been cast on the eggplant.

~~*~*~*

Heaven was a fortress of raw steak camouflaged with a cascade of greens.

Guilt, in a memory of Dumbledore's words, weighed upon Draco, hard and sharp like a T-bone and oozing blood at each passing day. Harry, who always flashed his brightest smile at the eggplant, was never quite the same after the *accident*, as the tomato had casually termed the event that had led to their Earthly demise; the once vivid scarlet coat always carried a tinge of purple, as if Death had conspired to shadow their journey into paradise, constantly reminding Draco of his erroneous past, of the disasters he could instigate.

He could not bring himself to touch Harry the way he had once dreamed of, the way he still dreamed of. It pained him even more with the succulent flesh resting beside his own in the evenings, shimmering in the perpetual rain and every now and then stealing a touch along his length that seemed so careless, only to have the intricately weaved leaves batting above to betray a not so innocent intent.

Harry was a forbidden fruit, and it was leading Draco straight to hell.

~~*~*~*

He could never believe this day would come, but Draco once again found himself at the mountain peak that overlooked the kingdom of veggie green.

The professor welcomed him with mild amusement; Draco grumbled *old git* under his breath. Grindelwald caught the slander, his smirk a spark of understanding between the eggplant and the egg.

Once again settled in the jungle of silver, Draco tried to ignore the distorted reflections of himself as he confessed his all how Harry had saved him from getting a Dark Mark, how they had fallen for each other long before that fateful day, when his carnal desire had destroyed the symbol of hope and resistance against tyranny in the produce department ...

The sigh he took to recover his breath obliterated the makeshift audience with a haze, accentuating the piercing gaze from the other side. The merry dance in the usually

twinkling eyes was gone.

"Mr Malfoy," Dumbledore spoke, "you seemed to have left out some minor details."

Silver eyes widened.

"That time, when you knocked several tomatoes on to the floor " the hoarse, aged voice grated every nerve, like salt on raw flesh, " it was more than because you were head over heels for Harry and lost your footing."

Smooth leaves began to tingle.

"The Malfoys had a long tradition of disdain against organic produce. Your father had schemed their destruction, and Voldie had been his ally, subjecting them to torture." The professor stopped, at the brink of a verdict, a damnation. "You were an enlisted help."

Quivers in the purple flesh had crescendoed to violent shakes. The eggplant desperately wanted to roll out and flee, but was caught by the slippery glass beneath him. Was that the reason of inviting him into the crystal bowl?

"Draco " the professor's tone softened at the given name, " I do not doubt your devotion to Harry. But when we found you in the lettuce fields, you were whispering his name and humming the tune for the organic tomato specials of the week. Your soul was haunted in more ways than one."

So he would be expelled from Veggie Heaven. Smoothing the silky green on his head, Draco straightened, intent on preserving the last fiber of his Malfoy pride.

"I'm at your mercy," he stated, almost managing his customary drawl.

"My mercy matters, yes, but it is not my wish to banish you."

In retrospect, the eggplant had looked up too quickly.

"Instead, I'd like to tell you a story. The tale of the Dairy Hallows."

"Dairy Hallows?"

Dumbledore nodded. Grindelwald huffed and wobbled, apparently ill at ease.

"It happened a long time ago, but Gellert and I " the egg proceeded to roll to the far end of the wedge, sulking, " thought we held the answer to humanity's nutritional needs. Along with milk, we'd initiated a movement: the Dairy Hallows. *Does the body good*, we chanted; our emblem was a stream of milk, an egg on a wedge of parmesan " the professor broke into a chuckle, eyes drawn to a distance as if to pursue a reckless youth, " a blatant claim to be the center of the food pyramid."

The smile faded before he spoke again. "Of course, that didn't turn out the way we envisioned. Dairy products ... are not to be abused. Gellert still bears the burden of his sins."

The egg grunted.

"Years later, your father's generation would be swept into another movement; this time, genetic engineering took the stage. The Malfoys were designed to be ideal vegetables, touted as so until concerns arose "

"That purebloods were fragile against the storms of life and had an alarming lust to rule over our kind," Draco finished for the professor, muttering almost inaudibly, *and natural produce took over.*"

"Correct, and it takes courage for a Malfoy to admit that." Dumbledore nodded, smiling. "Did you see that yourself?"

Silence ensued. Draco inhaled, his eyes shuttered closed, horrific scenes leaping into the darkness.

"I saw those grimy fingernails dug into Harry." The eggplant swallowed hard. "He got a permanent scar and managed to live. Voldie was a crazy grocer boy. If it were me ..."

"Harry's strength as an organic could not explain it alone. He would not have survived without the sacrifice from the others."

"He was lucky." The young veggie shook his head, hating the way his leaves were dragging along teary flesh. "He had all the luck in the world, until he found me."

"Now, now, Draco," the professor chided. "Remind me, how did Harry escape?"

The eggplant dried his eyes with a leaf. "Voldie slipped." He had watched the final battle from behind his mother's arm, Harry valiantly fighting the death grip crushed upon him until its bearer had collapsed. Later, a produce of stealth, its nose large and black as a bat, had been found in the scene, cracked open, its soft, green heart spilt to swathe the floor with grease. "On an ... avocado?"

Dumbledore remained silent. Grindelwald had returned to the cheese's front edge, looking rather smug.

Oh.

"That was Severus, a true Prince who had lived among the scum of his tribe. He left the world as a hermit, but I'm sure he would want a soul mate for Harry. It seems " the wedge curved into a smile, " that Harry has already found one."

Draco could not be more thankful for the genes of his perfect aubergine coat; he could feel heat creeping up his cheeks.

"Harry survives on love. He needs you, especially now."

"Professor " for the first time, the eggplant's mind did not insert *you old loon* afterwards, " why did you tell me about this? And the Dairy Hallows?"

"Because we have all made mistakes in the past; also, you must have wondered why Gellert and I have a place in Veggie Heaven, topping the lettuce fields and tomato farms." A twinkle had returned to the eyes. "The world works at the tip of a delicate balance, Draco. Look around you, venture beyond history; your surname may have been associated with the shades of the night, but it may also be your call to soothe old wounds, to bring to end ancient rivalries and "

Another pause. Draco shifted uneasily.

"Defy the impossible."

"I don't understand."

"Have you been taking good care of Harry as I've asked of you?"

Leaves drooped to conceal Draco's face; he had been too absorbed in self-pity.

"Your seeds must have mingled with his during the transition, Mr Malfoy." The calm in the professor's words was evanescent to the sentiments rippling underneath. "You're going to be a parent."

This time, the eggplant almost succeeded in toppling the bowl over. "How can that be? I mean, my father always told me never to cross a tomato."

"But this is Veggie Heaven."

"So it isn't real?"

"Draco, Draco," Dumbledore laughed heartily, "it's a miracle, of course, but why in the heavens should that mean it is not real?"

~~*~*~*

Pushing the cabbage leaves apart to a crack, Draco looked in to watch Harry carefully for the first time in weeks.

How could he not have noticed? Not only had his lover been showing a violet hue, he was also waddling a little, having put on weight on the once plump but toned body. The flesh had become tenderer, its smooth skin roughened by delicate lines that vanished beneath the leaves, like wrinkles on ripened tomatoes.

Unlike the elders of his kind, however, Harry was positively glowing, lambent like the green eyes directing to him at the moment.

"Hey," he whispered. For an instant, he had seemed to want to approach the eggplant, to rub himself against him, but then he caught himself.

Draco gasped under his breath. Had he been so distant?

Splashing over the puddles of rain, he glided towards the tomato before planting kisses all over the crimson skin. "I'm sorry, Harry. I'm so sorry."

The tomato simply shook his head and curled his ruffled leaves around Draco's long, slender ones. "I know you'll come through." He then returned a passionate kiss, before pressing into the bend of Draco's length, barely suppressing the urge to snuggle there. "Miss you though."

"Harry " the eggplant twisted his leaves to draw the tomato to a breath's distance, " tell me what you want."

The veggie nestling in his arm had never smelled better, the fresh sweetness having morphed into something rich and saccharine, like the finest Italian wine; and just like that, Draco fell prey to its seduction, inebriated with the scent that had awakened his deepest desires, unleashing the wild fantasies ensnared within. A tip of his leaves darted for a tentative lick at the calyx hidden under Harry's ruffled crown.

"Oh!" The gasp from the tomato was unexpected; curious and impossibly aroused, Draco reached in again.

"Not there " the tomato was squirming, " dirty ... water can't reach ..." In spite of the protest, however, his already curly leaves were bowing into arches. Golden rays of sun filtered in to illuminate the covert fountain of pleasure, a luscious, pale core that beckoned the world with its delicate shimmers.

Who was Draco to resist? He rinsed a leaf in the rain puddle, flexing the slender green as it wetted itself, the fine soil leaving a trail of pebbles dirty as the promise they insinuated. Upon twisting a lustful dance before Harry's darkening, watchful eyes, Draco pressed the leaf's surface against the red skin and proceeded to lap, excruciatingly slowly, from the tender swell of the shoulder and up, and up, seeking the source of the rippling lines that would soon converge to that ultra sensitive nub, the secret oasis for him to pleasure alone.

Harry, meanwhile, had transformed into a fiery mess, a spoonful of Tabasco bubbling nonsense at every motion of the eggplant's wicked leaf. When the tip of the green reached and circled the puckered calyx, the small sands massaging the surprisingly tender flesh between the body and its leaves, Harry could not stand it any longer. Bearing his crown flush against his flesh, Draco's leaf was held captive in a snare of foliage. The tomato braided his leaves with it, twisting and tugging and thrusting against every inch of its surface.

The friction, the heat radiated all the way back to the eggplant. Like distant rolls of thunder before lightning, Draco could feel the deep quakes gathering beneath his hardened flesh as they closed in towards his own calyx, an equally fragile heart shivering in fear, in anticipation of the imminent attack.

Malfoys, however, were never cloned to submit. True, Draco had spent his childhood in the magnificent greenhouse, but he would prove himself to be nature's dirtiest fighter. Plunging all his other leaves into the mud, he went to his prisoner's rescue by stretching every single one of them, slithered them past the ruffled crown and straight to the tomato's core.

"Gods, Draco ...," Harry moaned. The eggplant had swaddled his calyx with the slender end of his leaves and was *pulling*, despoiling the untouched walls with soggy lumps of mud. The curly leaves retaliated, looping around the aggressors in desperate attempt to pry them away; brown splashed everywhere as the greens fought for dominance, until the leaves were so entangled with one another that the two veggies were locked in their place.

Fused. As one.

The splatters ended.

Silence reigned, save for the *tap, tap, tap* of raindrops on cabbage leaves, and the quiet panting from the tomato and the eggplant.

They looked into each other for what could be an eternity of sunlit days, before Draco gently shook his leaves free, Harry untwisting his own to help the way. Rubbing the bodies lightly against one another, they shed themselves of the mud before the purple length once again spooned the crimson globe, and the two vegetables shared slow, tender kisses before drifting into a peaceful nap.

It was evening when they found themselves skinny-dipping in a large puddle, Draco using his larger frame to protect Harry against other swimmers.

Below skies blazingly beautiful as his skin, Harry offered that shy, tilted glance that had never failed to make Draco hot and bothered in the produce section.

"You're a naughty, filthy eggplant."

Draco quirked a smooth, clean leaf.

"Thank you."

"You'll pay, after I have the babies."

Oh, the way Harry was looking at him. Draco forced his mind to picture how omelettes were conceived, trying to quell the swelling of his lower body. No, not here, not in a public pool!

A nudge distracted him, and the tomato breathed the terms of payment before leisurely waddling back to the soil, leaving the poor eggplant rooted in the water, failing to meet either heaven's or hell's decency laws to follow.

A peach batted her fuzzy eyelashes at his embarrassment; Draco shot her a death glare.

You'll be dressed in one of those packaging nets, Mr Malfoy ... oh no, not those for aubergines, the ones for the zucchinis will do. They'll fit you so snugly ... those foam restraints are just a little too tight, you'd think? Don't worry, I'll pull ... and snap them against your rock-hard length, one by one, relieving the pressure as I roll along, massaging every inch of your skin. Your leaves will curl just like mine because it feels so, so good...

The tomato who lived was one kinky bastard.

~~*~*~*

Neither Draco nor Harry was ready for their children.

How could one prepare for a miracle? They had interviewed small lettuce leaves for nanny posts in their living quarters and fought on whether to hire the red-leaves or the romaines. Draco had won that round, citing that romaines were fantastic story tellers and seriously, Harry would lose the babies on the reds with his poor eyesight; Harry had mumbled that the reds made the most adorable artwork, but had failed to find fault in the other argument.

Nonetheless, Draco had a more significant victory to score.

They had bantered for weeks about the proper classification of their progeny. The tomato had opted for tomaplant, the eggplant, eggmato. Both had refused to yield, and finally, Harry had come up with this brilliant idea to take the issue to the hierophant on Mount Veggie.

He had forgotten that the professor had an egghead for a mate.

Thus they had found themselves in the crystal bowl again, more crowded this time due to Harry's bulging frame. It had made a convenient excuse for the eggplant to cuddle.

Grindelwald, much to Harry's dismay, had voted for eggmato immediately. The professor, who had lectured not so long ago on world order being a balancing act, had promptly instigated chaos by casting a tying ballot for tomaplant.

It had brought them to this moment, when all eyes laid upon the little omelette at the center of the table.

"What?!" the brat squeaked.

If his child were so *yellow* and spoilt, Draco would banish himself from Veggie Heaven forever; but he needed her vote, and omelettes had always made better friends with tomatoes than his own kind.

He would appeal to her sense of self. She was related to eggs, after all.

"I'm an eggplant ..."

"Oh, now you're that," Harry grumbled beside him, "didn't you kick the Americans who didn't call you *anaubergine* ..."

Draco tutted. "Do not let that redneck " Harry rolled his eyes " interrupt our friendly conversation. Little Miss, I'm also curious ... the way your name is spelled, do you happen to have a French heritage?"

The omelette blinked for a second. Then she began hopping like the first time Draco had seen, or rather, felt her; her happy screams could only be described as a torrent of deafening SQUEEs before something intelligible finally tumbled out between those wide, yellow lips.

"I'm going to Paris! I'm going to be a model!"

Jackpot.

"Well, you see, *ma belle Parisienne*, my surname is Malfoy, *mal foi* en français..."

"AND IT SUITS YOU RIGHT!" The tomato finally exploded. "YOU'RE NOT FRENCH! NEITHER IS SHE! SHE'S "

"*Omelette*." The flabby corners flung for a dramatic exit as she paddled away.

With that, eggmato's triumph was sealed.

~~*~*~*

In the end, eggmatos or tomaplants didn't really matter.

Draco learned that as he stood panicking, lost in a vast cabbage field with a sick Harry in tow.

It was a beautiful day. A light shower accentuated the blue of the sky, which was adorned with bountiful cotton candy clouds. Harry had wanted to venture out into the fields for weeks; the memory of his shipping days, locked in an overstuffed carton, still haunted him.

Draco could never deny the quiet plea in those green eyes. He could sneer and tease and improvise brilliant speeches, but if the tomato insisted, then he stood absolutely no chance.

Now, he despised himself for it.

He tried to maintain a calm façade. It was his strength, just as it was Harry's to have endured silently for hours as they had wandered further and further away from home before finally admitting that he had been in pain.

Stupid, stupid tomato.

And said stupid tomato, his crimson skin taut with flesh seemingly about to ooze from the scar, still had the courage to curl his leaves against Draco's and console in that blunt, direct way of his that everything was going to be all right.

The eggplant could not see how. Mount Veggie was miles away, and the cabbage patches all looked the same to him. He had no idea how to get the babies out; why had he bothered with naming them in the first place?

His leaves twisted into a knot. Blinking furiously, he dug his end into the soil, not wanting Harry to catch him shaking, willing himself to channel his fears down and far, far away.

He stumbled. For a moment, he thought his tremor had crumbled the foundation of Veggie Heaven; instead, a potato was peering at him from where he had stood.

"Hello." She gave a lazy shake, her blond skin still caked with mud, but she didn't seem to care. She stared at Draco for a moment, decided that he wasn't interesting and turned her eyes to Harry.

Her face immediately brightened. "Oh! You're having babies!"

Draco wanted to drag Harry away. This was no time for socializing, and the potato looked ... loopy.

"Yeah." Apparently, their dire situation had yet to register with his love, who even braved a smile and asked, "How did you know that?"

She responded, eyes impossibly wide, "Because babies come from under cabbage leaves, of course."

With a side order of nutty French fries Draco thought, but he was desperate. "So, do you mean, Miss, that there's someone nearby who can deliver?"

"That would be me." She beamed. Harry actually grinned back; he must be delirious.

"Er." Draco's head must be malfunctioning as well; he never stuttered, or negotiated with crazy potatoes. "Have you worked with tomatoes? Aubergines?"

"No. Mediveggies for those are over " the starchy head stretched towards the horizon, " there."

"So your experience "

"Zapote, caimito, moya, ceriman ..." She looked bored by the second, distracted by a fluffy cloud before the fifth.

It was infuriating. "What are those? Do they even exist?"

"Draco."

The eggplant turned, only to watch the green eyes fade as Harry collapsed into the puddle.

~~~~~~*

Mediveggie Luna Lovegood was a specialist of exotic veggies and fruits. She could also give Dumbledore a serious run for the looniest Veggie Heaven resident award.

Nonetheless, the bath she had prepared for Harry was sturdy and comfortable, and the tomato woke on the cabbage leaf as she applied dressings on him. The dollop of creamy concoction was soothingly tart, its onion scent invigorating.

The cabbage patch was a mellow dream of bubbling and light steam as the potato hopped on a cradle of potato skin to fill it with warm water. The eggplant almost relaxed, until his attention was called to a greenish-brown cone, its sharp apex planted inside the soil.

"It's time for you to cut Harry open!" she announced happily.

Draco could have fainted himself.

The cone, as it turned out, was a magical scribe from a durian Mediveggie she had studied with in the tropics. It opened the smallest incision possible, thus minimizing the healing time.

Draco wrapped a leaf around it; it was surprisingly light.

"Nothing to worry about." Somehow, Luna's dreamy voice was calming as the delivery time approached; she was feeling around Harry's body, pressing gently in search for tender locules and the bump inside.

Every count of hers radiated with excitement. *One. Two.* A sigh of *You're so macho, Draco!* interrupted before it ended at ...

Five.

Five eggmatos?

Luna was spinning as she nodded, dancing to herself. As she fell on the soil, cross-eyed with dizziness, she told Draco to make a shallow cut along the circumference of the tomato's chest.

"I don't know the spell!" the eggplant almost screamed.

"How could you not know?" The Mediveggie basked in a peaceful glow. *'Sectumsempra*, of course."

~~~~~~*

The scribe was incredible indeed; Harry could only feel a whiff of chill as it had performed its task; he hadn't lost any seeds at all.

The babies were already catching their first glimpse of the sun, their purplish red coat showing just a sliver beneath the cut. The two larger ones were particularly restless, engaged in a squirming match to become the first eggmato in Veggie Heaven.

"Now, Draco, just reach in with your leaves and spoon them out, one by one."

The eggmatos had other ideas though, for two crowns of leaves popped out from the incision at the sound of these words, one smooth and straight like Draco's, the other one, a wavy mess like Harry's.

Angry eyes followed - a silver pair and a green.

"Loser!" The first word spoken by an eggmato was a boyish drawl, still muffled by the pulp clinging on the newborn skin. Draco made a mental note to bribe the archivist later.

"Shut up!" Another voice piped up, also subdued. A girl's.

"Scared?"

"You wish!"

The babies were on the verge of tumbling out. Draco panicked and pulled one of them by the leaves; instinctively, he chose the one more like him and it dove into the water just a split second ahead.

"You're playing favorites!" the twin and her tomato Daddy whined simultaneously.

"Oh, interocular rivalry!" Luna guided the two eggmatos to the cradle for a proper bath, the babies still glowering at each other. "How sweet."

Harry's flesh had relaxed significantly.

"May I?" Draco asked as he planted a soft kiss on the scar (a collective "Ewww!" was heard from behind), his leaves delving in to receive his third child.

After a wiggle, the third eggmato squinted to the light, squirming reluctantly.

The boy's leaves were disheveled too; his eyes glistened like emerald, already welled up with tears.

"I must return, Father, she ... she ..." The husky baritone was an echo of his tomato dad's. The stammering was, too; but then, a cough later. "Her physical movement is severely impaired, and due to this unfortunate disability, she is at risk of suffocation from locular debris, and nobody is of any assistance to ameliorate the situation, and I must devise a suitable means to rescue her!"

Eloquence as such could only be attributed to a Malfoy. Draco smirked with pride; this child would only need to learn the virtues of concision. The saving veggie thing though ...

Indeed, Harry's leaves had bent to a frown.

"What is he trying to say?"

The eggplant sighed, placed the newborn son in the water and extended his leaves into the adjacent locule.

He tugged on the very still eggmato there, wrapped the tips around it and tried to maneuver it out.

He couldn't. It was stuck.

A horrible idea struck the parents.

"Luna!"

The potato rolled over.

"It... wouldn't come out."

The Mediveggie prodded a little.

"Well?"

"The baby isn't facing the right way."

A heartbroken wail emitted from the dad; the twins stopped fighting in the cradle, and the youngest began to sob.

"Um," the potato pouted, her head tilted in thought.

Draco wrapped a leaf around Harry, fearing for the worst.

"Can you bone Harry now?"

This must be the most absurd request ever made in Veggie Heaven; but if the tomato spayed its seeds, they could push...

"Harry's kind of messed up though. You must be very nice to him or he will just Bam! " the potato collapsed on the soil to demonstrate, her round body rocking to the impact, " turn into salsa ... or ketchup, which takes centuries to heal. We assume it's dead anyway. So " she sat back up again, her face once again split into a goofy smile, " can you do it?"

That was too much. Hadn't Draco's last act of lovemaking summoned the claws of Death? He could not imagine, even for a second, that the same act could call forth the mercy of Life.

As he rubbed his sore eyes with his leaves, an answer came from the cabbage leaf.

Gentle. Firm.

Trusting.

"Of course he can."

~~~~~~*

Draco and Harry were alone again, soaking side by side in the warm water cradled by the cabbage leaf. Luna had taken the eggmatos to the adjacent patch.

Leaves caressing every inch of the tomato's skin, the eggplant begged his love to please reconsider. It would not work. It would simply be brutal for the children to lose a parent this early. What he could not say, but he hoped was clear from every kiss he was pressing on the shoulder, was that *he* could not afford to lose him, not this early, not later, not ever.

Heaven should not be as difficult as this.

Heaven would cease to exist without Harry.

"Shh."

No, the tomato didn't try to make a case; he knew he could never make a decent argument. Instead, he brought back the moments they had had together, some wonderful, some not so much. Did Draco recall the first time they had met, in a crate inside the shipping truck? That Sunday special, on which the eggplant had flaunted his shiny acrylic casing while laughing at the paper trays on which Harry and his friends had sat? The Potter farm's sticker had definitely been prettier though, and hadn't the eggplant gone on a jealous rampage, inching closer and closer in a devious scheme to rub it off, only to flee with a raging hard-on that had sparked their romance?

Could Draco remember?

The tips of curly leaves were combing the smooth greens, and the red body, sagging somewhat with the wounds and the unborn infants, was rocking gently against the purple. Before he realized it, arousal had once again swept Draco aside. It was no vicious beast, it had no desires to consume his senses; instead, it smoldered like the best oven fire, slow and steady, like the flames that baked the heartiest eggplant parmesan.

It was the legend of life. Of love. Veggies immortalized by centuries old recipes, passed from one generation to the next *in la famiglia*.

Thus, the eggplant responded to the heat, to the life and love it promised. When Harry let out an almost inaudible moan and Draco felt a sticky spray of seeds on his chest, he held his veggie tight in his bend, ascertaining that his love was breeched but not broken.

The whispered words of assurance were soon lost to cries as an eggmatto dove into the water with a plop.

~~*~*~*

Eggmatto number four was almost a replica of her eggplant father, except, much to Draco's chagrin, had inherited none of his Malfoy grace.

Almost as soon as she had fallen into the bath, she had to be scooped from the water to keep from drowning; afterwards, she tripped on air and fell on his leaf.

Draco was at a loss; his greens coiled a cone to help her balance, he rocked her gently, a futile effort to hush her howls.

Harry watched with a blissful grin. "I was knobby too."

Draco was about to tout the strength of aubergine genetics and his curvaceous bulge when the tomato broke into a chuckle, "I didn't know crying could sound like a drawl."

Never mind then.

Instead, he decided an emergency lecture on self-preservation was necessary, even with a birth still impending; it simply would not do to have a stumbling Malfoy progeny. Propping the teary eggmatto against the edge of a cabbage, he crossed his leaves and began to drawl on the importance of constant vigilance and basically knocking everything not to her liking out of the way; it began with the outline first, an introduction, then he would proceed to the list of fifty-six precautions she must take before going anywhere and only after explicit approval from him, afterwards there would be a section on the corollaries, special corollaries if she were to go out with boys, then, an address on the possible exceptions, considerations before requesting such exceptions ...

Luna was back with the three eggmatos when Draco was on Part 1.1.1.a.

"I'm not even Father's girl," the second twin huffed as her younger brother stared, starry-eyed; the eldest immediately distracted her with a heated swimming contest.

The Mediveggie delivered the last eggmatto, since the father showed little sign of practicing concision any time soon. She squeezed it out, a tiny Harry-esque baby boy who had yet to learn to talk.

The potato kissed its messy leaves. "Were your parents good fucks?"

The baby's beady green eyes widened; he then beamed and started to chant, "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!"

The new family decided, unanimously, that a pacifier would be the top priority of their shopping list.

~~*~*~*

~ Epilogue ~

Autumn was in the air; the cloudless sky was a pure azure, the shower light as a dance of fairies on the fields.

Draco had commissioned a portrait of his newborns. It was a Malfoy tradition to grace the covers of fair pamphlets and scientific journals, after all.

Rahly had agreed to the task; the red leaf lettuce had been close to the family, and the eggmatos were totally enamored with the sketches she had drawn of them. The babies were truly blessed; not only had they beautiful pictures of themselves, the romaines had crafted wonderful tales just for them too. They knew as much about racing shopper's carts and coin spewing machines as Harry and Draco did.

The ambience of the studio was a pleasant one; the high walls were beige with kernels, iridescent as the maize adjusted the lighting with his leaves. A curtain of corn silk then draped over to create an elegant backdrop.

They would begin with a family portrait. The eggplant father and tomato dad took their positions; before them, on the far left, stood Heinz, distressed by the zigzagging furrows on the lighting crew as his slanted length helped to balance Caponata, who was supported on the other side by her eldest brother. But Moussaka was straying by the minute, engaged in yet another argument with DelMonte, who was similarly seething, the ribbon Harry had placed on her dangling precariously from the untamed leaves.

"Come on, Hunts," Rahly beckoned the youngest with the lacy edge of her leaf; but the nearsighted baby only scuttled further behind Harry, bumping into an ear of corn who grunted as his tassel caught the silk.

"Shit "

Beady eyes blinked as the flesh below inflated at a steady rate. Luckily, a mushroom binkie found its way just in time.

"He can stay here, I suppose," his dad said with a defeated smile.

All was set then. Rahly lowered a leaf for a new canvas and studied her subjects.

"Draco, a happier look please?"

The eggplant refused. A pained expression was customary for a respected head of house; he set his face to a droop, only to be mirrored by Hunts puffing up into a mini magenta balloon on the other side.

This child, he swore, took secret *how to annoy an eggplant* lessons from Harry; Rahly did too, he suspected, leisurely spraying the canvas with rainwater as the corners of her leaves lifted mischievously. "We can wait."

Time was running very short. The mercury in Moussaka's eyes had already reached its boiling point...

Indeed, the next moment, he launched himself against his twin. Caponata fell with a "Waaaahhh!" and Heinz's attention immediately zeroed in on the sparkling tears threatening to pour out, before he commenced to shout a consoling oration against DelMonte's angry shrieks.

Any form of joy had been evicted into the realm of impossibility. Draco wondered how Harry could beam with such pride at the chaos unfolding before them. Rahly was laughing too as her dextrous fibers spun, weaving a splash of colours on the canvas.

No. No evidence could be kept from this mess, this disaster, this

A feathery touch brushed against him. The tomato by his side had seemingly retained his focus on the children, but the tips of his leaves were nervously circling the silken backdrop, the mist on the once again toned flesh pink with blush. A mutter of something, barely audible and decipherable, fluttered under his breath before vanishing in the din.

It was all it took for Draco's smile to match with that of his mate. He must look thoroughly undignified, the eggplant gathered, but the newfound knowledge was rendering such a beautiful melody inside him, its light, joyous notes resonating deep into his soul.

One confession, in three simple words. Even the heavens sang of them, in the way the raindrops were waltzing upon the soil, beads of glass tinkling and refracting the

sunlight through the tassels.

Basking in its glow, he snuggled against Harry, the tomato who *loved*, too eager to have this moment imprinted in time and space.

This moment of absolute perfection.

And it was, forever.

On this portrait of miracles.



~ *Finis*

More Author's Notes:

First of all, the portrait is red_rah!'s *Still Life with Eggmatō*, this, and her equally squishable *A Match made in Veggie Heaven* (<http://red-rah!.livejournal.com/61182.html>), made me wonder about Veggie!Heaven and eggmatōs too ... and this little tale was born.

The eggmatō names ~ Moussaka and Caponata are famous dishes starring the eggplant, while DelMonte, Heinz and Hunts are ketchup brands, of course! :D

Milk, it does the body good was a commercial slogan for milk in the US.

Eggplants belong to the family *Solanaceae*, also known as the nightshades. Dumbledore wiki'ed apparently.

I'd also love to thank ~

pushdragon, who originated the *Vegemagus* concept,

Cinnamon, whose line *The stars will sing of it ... We're immortal, you and I.* from the H/D angst classic [Beautiful World](#) formed the basis of the tomato commercial.