

Raising the Bar

by *LiteraryBeauty*

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Scorpius needed a job. It all seemed so simple...

Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Warnings: explicit sex, threesome, unabashed sluttiness, consensual non-monogamy, polygamy

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"No."

Al glared. "Okay, first of all, you can't just say *no* because I wasn't *asking*, just... suggesting. And secondly, why the hell not?"

"Because he's a poncy git, and besides, we can't afford it."

"We *can*, if you'd stop being so ridiculously stingy. It wouldn't kill you to loosen your death grip on the coffers, you miser. And he's not a... well, he's not *always* a git."

Teddy raised an eyebrow without looking at Al, who shifted impatiently from foot to foot as he dried a batch of glasses with a spell. Without missing a beat, Teddy spelled the glasses into the overhead cubby, shaking his head.

It had been almost a year since they'd bought the Hog's Head Inn and Pub. Just before Aberforth Dumbledore had passed, the old curmudgeon had requested an auction for the property, likely with the hopes that he'd get more money. He'd intended, according to gossip, to retire somewhere warm and enjoy the fruits of his labours.

Unfortunately, he'd only had two bidders, and the other dropped out for a signed autograph from Harry Potter. That was how Teddy and Albus Severus had ended up the owners for a song.

Aberforth died the next week, trunks packed for Bermuda.

Officially, the tavern was now known as the Phoenix. Al and Teddy still called it the Hog's Head, mostly as a sign of respect to the permanent sticking charm that had held the old signpost up (they'd had to cover it with their own rather than taking it down).

In the span of a year, their time was monopolized by renovations, redecorations, and flat-out rebuilding, but with their efforts the Phoenix had become the most popular bar in Hogsmeade. It even surpassed the Three Broomsticks in popularity, much to Rosmerta's chagrin.

It was the *only* place around that was almost exclusively for young witches and wizards. Not by design...older patrons were more than welcome if they had the coin, but the

ambiance and reputation had made it the gathering place of people from their teens to mid-thirties.

Al liked to think it was his charm that brought the customers back for more, but Teddy insisted it was his arse. Al didn't care *what* it was; all he knew was that they had to get more help or they'd never find time for themselves, and *that* would be tragic.

"Teddy..." Al adopted his puppy-dog face and pouted at his boyfriend.

"How do you even know he'd work for us, anyway? He doesn't need the money and it wouldn't be good for his family's *reputation*." Teddy drew out the last word as if it had personally insulted him.

"I overheard him talking to his dad in Madam Malkin's," Al admitted.

"What were you doing there?" Teddy asked sharply, giving Al his full attention.

"Buying pants; Merlin, who the fuck cares? Scorpius Malfoy, the sluttiest, dirtiest bottom the wizarding world has ever seen, needs a job and is willing to do *anything*. He said that." Al nodded eagerly.

"Oh, are they holding contests for that sort of thing now?"

Al laughed as Teddy pinned him against the bar, bending him over it and pressing his groin against Al's arse.

"And how'd you place?" Teddy whispered. His hand slipped between Al's thighs. "Should have been a tie."

"Are you calling me a slut?" Al demanded, though his lack of struggle belied his affronted tone. He moaned as Teddy began stroking him. It wasn't Al's fault his legs opened up wider to allow better access...it was what Teddy wanted, and Teddy *always* got what he wanted.

"I'm calling you a slutty, dirty, filthy bottom, and I'd love to hear you try to deny it."

Al didn't.

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"So, what you're telling me is that you have absolutely no experience in any sort of field, paid or otherwise. You've never seen behind a bar counter and you can't name any more than two or three alcoholic beverages."

Al had watched the two volley back and forth for almost an hour. It was obvious that Scorpius would be horrible at the job...at first, anyway. Al had faith that Scorpius was a quick learner and would become an asset within a few weeks at most. If Teddy thought that Al's arse brought in customers, well, Scorpius' would cause an absolute riot. Al knew; he'd checked.

To Al's amusement, Scorpius didn't bother refuting any of Teddy's assertions. He merely raised an eyebrow and crossed his arms over his chest as if his argument had already been made...and won.

Teddy ran his fingers through his hair; dark green streaks stained the normally light brown tresses until Teddy shook them out. He usually didn't let things bother him to that point; not in public.

"Fuck it." Teddy sat up straight, signalling a decision had been made. "We'll take you on, but you better learn quickly, or so help me... And don't rely totally on your looks...you've got the job, but you need to earn it to keep it. I've no problem firing you if you don't prove yourself. For now, shadow Al. You can have half his tips to help you understand how important it is to be congenial."

"*What?*" Al exploded. He needed those tips to pay his half of the rent.

"I don't need the charity," Scorpius interjected, looking displeased. "Just tell me when to start."

"You can start on Thursday. That's our LGBT night...you have a problem with that?"

Scorpius huffed, jerking his head so his ice-blond hair flew from his eyes, only to fall back even more artfully than before. Al tried not to feel jealous...a move like that on him would have put him in a neck brace and his hair probably wouldn't have even moved.

"It's a busy night, but the tips are great, and the people are really nice," Al said. It was his favourite night of the week. Friday was busier and Saturday brought the best tips, but it was Thursdays that he truly felt at home.

"Is there a uniform?" Scorpius asked.

Scorpius' cultured voice was just as Al remembered from school. Even though they'd been in the same house, Al could count on the fingers of one hand the amount of times they'd actually spoken. Al remembered talking to him on the train about the Sorting and how new and strange everything was. They'd walked back to Slytherin house together, though they'd been put in different dorms. They'd never talked again like they had on the train, and Al had always regretted it. He'd had enough friends to not really feel the loss, but Scorpius hadn't become popular until his fifth year, when he'd come out loud and hard.

It turned out that, even if there weren't a lot of gay blokes at Hogwarts, there *were* a lot of boys who'd be gay for Scorpius Malfoy. Al's own coming-out had been met with feigned surprise, even at home, where his father had just smiled and told him how proud he was. Al had heard Draco Malfoy's reaction hadn't been quite as accepting...but then, how could it have been? Rumour had it Draco found out from McGonagall after Scorpius had been caught with Gary Bulstrode so far up his arse they'd had to spell him out. Of course, that was only one of the many, *many* pieces of gossip surrounding Scorpius throughout their schooling. Al had taken to collecting them over the years...not in a creepy way, of course. Just... keeping track. One never knew when information could become one's greatest asset.

Being a Slytherin had taught him that.

"I think you can figure out what the customers will want to see," Teddy said, a little snidely. "And we have a black waist apron for the servers."

"They're not so bad," Al said. They could barely be seen when worn with black trousers.

Scorpius didn't say anything, didn't even raise an eyebrow. The three sat in silence, Al picking at the lacquer on the table of the booth they were sitting in. The bar was closed, but there was at least a half hour's work left to be done after Scorpius left.

"Will there be anything else?" Scorpius asked, rising to his feet.

Teddy beat him to the door to turn the ancient, rusted lock...one of the only things they'd kept of the old Hog's Head. It had a certain charm... not to mention the fact that it had screamed quite vociferously when they'd tried to spell it off.

"Just be prompt, be polite, don't steal, don't start fights, and for Merlin's sake, don't slag about while you're on the clock." It seemed like Teddy tried to lighten his harsh words at the end, but it was too late. Scorpius nodded curtly and walked through the door, his back ramrod stiff.

"You don't have to be such an arsehole," Al said, punching Teddy in the arm.

Teddy grabbed Al's wrist and pulled him in for a kiss. "I didn't like the way he was looking at you."

Meeting Teddy's golden eyes, Al saw the truth behind his words. "You've got to be kidding me. *Of all* the guys I fool around with...the guys we fool around with *together*...you're jealous of the one who didn't even speak to me? Not once?"

"Just remember, doll: no one can make you feel like I do." With a lecherous wink, Teddy disappeared into the back room.

Al shivered...that much was true. He thought back to exactly how he'd convinced Teddy to allow the interview with Scorpius in the first place. It had taken some serious... manoeuvring. Yes, Teddy was definitely one of a kind, and not just because he was the only bloke Al had been able to be with for longer than a few months. Teddy was his only constant, but neither minded a little variety.

With that in mind, Al slipped out the front door of the pub, listening hard for faint footsteps in the dead of the night. He could only just make out a set and chased after them, counting himself lucky that Scorpius hadn't just Disappeared.

"Hey!" he called, catching up to the slim blond walking with purpose.

Scorpius went as rigid as he had in the bar when Teddy'd used the *words/lag*. He didn't turn, but stopped and let Al circle to face him.

"Sorry about Teddy. He means well, really."

Scorpius' pale grey eyes pinned Al, holding him while the silence seemed to trickle down the air between them.

"He meant to embarrass me," Scorpius said matter-of-factly. "Tell him I won't make it easy, if that's what he intends."

Closing the space between them, Al shook his head. "He didn't mean that, really. He just didn't want to admit that we needed another set of hands. There are other employees, but mostly it's been just us, and..."

"And he doesn't share." Scorpius quirked a small grin. "Not that I blame him."

Al shifted under the suddenly charged atmosphere. Scorpius was looking at him in a way that was patently different from the usual detached, look-through-you sort of way.

It made him admit something he normally wouldn't have. "Actually, Teddy's really good about sharing. But I think he's worried that sharing wouldn't be an option this time."

"Ah," Scorpius said. He didn't seem surprised, but he'd always been good at hiding his emotions...at least, Al assumed so. He couldn't remember Scorpius ever losing his temper or breaking down or even laughing too loudly. What a strange, monotone existence.

Al blushed, realising how much he'd revealed. "I mean, it's still just us two, you know? And he had the crazy idea that you were looking at me a certain way...like he has the monopoly on looking at me or something. Not that you were! Looking at me, I mean. Though, I wouldn't mind. Er..."

"Al," Scorpius whispered, leaning in so Al could feel the warmth of his words against his cheek. "I'll see you on Thursday."

His lips barely brushed Al's cheek before he walked away, and the footsteps faded and disappeared while Al tried to figure out what had just happened.

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"You want him, don't you?" Al stilled, hovering over Teddy's straining cock. Teddy arched up, trying to make contact, but Al just rose up a little more on his knees. He wanted an answer.

"He's fit, all right?" Teddy said, panting. "Maybe I just like the way he doesn't say much." Teddy's smirk earned a pinch to the inside of his thigh.

"Are you saying I talk too much?" Al steadied Teddy's cock, the lubricant making it a messy job. "I seem to remember you telling me to *saymore*... your name, for instance. How much I like it. How much I *want* it..." He pressed the head of Teddy's prick against his hole, just rubbing it, delighting in the tease.

"You know it's you, doll," Teddy said, as serious as Al could remember seeing him at such a moment. "It's you."

"I know, Teddy." And he watched Teddy's eyes change colour as Al finally ended his torment and sank down. "It's you, too."

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When Thursday came around, it wasn't long before it became entirely clear why Scorpius was desperate for *any* job.

He didn't seem capable of working.

It wasn't that he wasn't *trying*...no, he wasn't lounging about or acting as if he was too good for the work at hand. He just couldn't seem to get into the rhythm of things. He forgot orders almost as soon as they were placed, he gave them back in the wrong order or amount, small talk eluded him so much that the customers thought he was rude or ignorant, and he had no idea how to handle wandering hands.

He was a total disaster, and Al was enchanted.

"And you wanted... Firewhisky, right? Two... three fingers? This one... here you go." Scorpius' smile was so hesitant, so eager, that the man who'd ordered mead just smiled back, giving him a hefty tip.

"Okay, Scorpius, that was really good. He actually ordered mead, but you handled the actual interaction very well," Al said as they headed back to the bar to place two more orders and drop off empty glasses.

Scorpius didn't say anything, only frowned at the man who hadn't corrected him. "Why'd he take the drink, then?"

Thank Teddy for that, Al thought. At first, he'd wondered why Teddy would have Scorpius start on one of the busiest nights with some of the pickiest clientele, but this particular group tended to be especially forgiving to tiny, pretty blonds with tight arses.

The lesbians, on the other hand, had less patience, but Al tended to their orders as they asked him why he couldn't have hired a nice waitress, instead.

Al was beginning to wonder that himself. Scorpius had just dropped an entire tray of ice water and was trying to spell it away to no effect. The patrons gave him a round of applause and he flushed, searching out Al.

Teddy rescued him instead. From behind the bar, he used the spell specifically designed to clean up messes like that one...the floor had to be absolutely dry after, or it could become dangerous.

From across the room, Al watched as Scorpius thanked Teddy profusely, leaving him shaking his head with a look of confused wonder. He just handed Scorpius the orders

and went back to serving drinks.

It was only an hour or so into Scorpius' shift that Al realised people were placing their drinks at the bar instead of waiting for Al and Scorpius to make their way around. Al couldn't blame them, but he felt for Teddy, who was a great bartender but didn't do well with a lot of pressure.

"Want to try working behind the bar for a bit?" Al suggested after Teddy shot him a harried look.

Scorpius looked uncertain, but then a man reached out and pinched his arse.

"Hey!" Scorpius cried, spinning around. "Who the fuck do you think you are?"

"Malfoy!" the man cried, looking confused. "You haven't aged a bit!"

Al was surprised and grateful to hear his father's voice at the table. He hadn't realised Harry had come in. "Seamus, that's Draco's son." He shook his head wryly and said hello to Al.

Harry, still happily married despite considerable odds, had no compunction visiting the bar on the designated LGBT night or any other night. Al assumed it was boys' night, because Harry's old Hogwarts crew was there: Professor Longbottom, Dean, who had painted the family portrait over the hearth in the Potter house, Uncle Ron, of course, and Seamus, the one who'd grabbed Scorpius.

"Och, sorry, boy. You've your father's... well, everything."

"How about you apologise for groping me!" Scorpius demanded, glaring down at the table.

Harry laughed and gave Scorpius a good-natured punch on the arm. "You'll have to toughen up, working here, son. Especially beside Al...he's a favourite."

Seamus leered at Al, making everyone laugh...except Scorpius, who turned on his heel and walked through the employee door into the break room.

"You've got your hands full, hmm?" Harry said, shaking his head ruefully. "I can't believe he's actually working."

Al was staring at the door, hoping Scorpius wasn't about to quit. Disaster though he was, he did make Al's job a little easier. "He really needs the job, as far as I can tell, though I don't know why. He's bollocks and obviously hates it. Tell Mr. Finnigan to keep his hands to himself, yeah? I don't want him quitting on me because that old lecher molested him."

"Hey!" Seamus protested. "Who're you calling *old*?"

Al just ignored him and gave his father a pleading look. He might be nineteen years old, but he wasn't above begging for help from his father. Harry had always saved him, in minor and major ways, and Al needed that now.

"Don't you worry about it. We'll put him against the wall so he can't reach and if he tries it again, we'll leave. Tell Scorpius that it won't always be like that. Remember your first few weeks? And that was when the customers were still mostly centenarians who wanted a glass of whisky and a glass for their dentures." Harry winked and sat back down, and Al rolled his eyes but offered a grateful smile before making his way toward the break room.

He shut the door behind him and sat down beside Scorpius, who was lounging across the beaten sofa, back against the armrest, staring morosely at the ceiling.

"It's not that bad," Al said, imbuing cheer into his voice.

"It's worse."

"What's the worst part about it? I mean, we can put you behind the bar if you'd rather, or you can strictly do clean-up instead of taking orders."

"I was Head Boy, you know," Scorpius said, apropos of nothing. He didn't look at Al.

"Er, I remember." It had only been two years ago, after all.

"Everything I've done, I've done right the first time. There hasn't been a spell I couldn't master or a potion that wasn't perfectly brewed. And I can't even *serve*. What does that say about me? Serving people is like the lowest rung on the employment ladder..."

"Oi!"

"...And I'm not good enough for it. Maybe that's why my family has so much money...to save us from finding out how useless we really are."

"Then why are you here?" Al blurted. Al's own family had money to rival the Malfoys, but he couldn't imagine not working. Scorpius seemed different, though...he didn't have the drive to work. So why bother?

"To prove that I could do it, of course." Scorpius laughed, hard and wry. "I was wrong."

Al rolled his eyes. The bar was too busy for a pity party. "Look, even perfect babies cry for food, perfect children skin their knees, perfect teenagers get inappropriate hard-ons..."

Scorpius chuckled and finally sat up to face Al properly.

Al continued. "And perfect adults need more than a few hours to adapt to one of the toughest gigs out there. Maybe your family thinks serving is for the simple and weak, but the truth is, it takes balls, guts, and brains. You have those things, I'm sure. So suck it up and get back out there and fucking do your job! Have your existential crises on Sundays when we don't work. Let's go."

Al stood and held his hand out. His speech was almost verbatim what Teddy had said to Al when he'd wanted to quit, but even though it was out of character, it seemed to reach Scorpius. He took Al's hand and levered himself out of the chair.

"You're very sexy when you're all worked up," Scorpius said, still holding Al's hand.

Flushing, Al smiled. "And you're sexier when you're *not* getting worked up."

Scorpius winked at him and straightened his apron. "I'll keep that in mind."

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"After that, he was fine." Al ran his hands up Teddy's chest as he ground his hips down. It had been a long night, and it wasn't over yet.

"So you gave him a stern talking-to, did you?" Teddy gripped Al's waist, forcing him to stop his movements, not letting go even when Al whimpered.

"I did. He was gushing with thanks by the end, offering to pick up shifts for me and even do my laundry. 'Nay!' I said unto him. 'I will do my own laundry, and Teddy's, too,

for that is who I am."

Teddy snorted and reared up, slamming Al onto his back. Al's legs automatically fell open to cradle Teddy against his hips.

"You didn't say that." Teddy nipped at his lower lip, his eyes set on Al's, making him feel translucent.

"I didn't," Al admitted quietly. "But whatever I said must have helped because even you said he was like a changed man after we talked."

"There was a marked improvement. I hope it keeps up tomorrow and Saturday. He'll be thankful to have Sunday to himself." Teddy's hips rocked against Al's groin. "So will I."

Al wrapped his legs around Teddy's waist, rolling his lower body and dragging a moan from both their throats. "Actually," Al said a moment later, when Teddy was sufficiently distracted, "I said we'd meet him at the bar on Sunday for drinks. Just the three of us." Al knew he was blushing, but he also knew Teddy was already onto him, so he didn't bother trying to hide it.

"You want him."

"Fuck, he's gorgeous!" Al cried, dropping his head onto the pillow. "And you know I love...love!...getting fucked by you. But there's something about him... I just want to do things to him."

"I know exactly what you mean," Teddy murmured in his ear, slipping a hand between them until his fingers brushed against Al's pants-covered hole.

"It's not just me, right?" Al asked, groaning. He was finding it difficult to sustain the conversation, but he had to be sure before he went through with his plan on Sunday.

"I certainly wouldn't kick him out of bed for making crumbs."

"I'm not talking about just that."

"I know."

"Well?"

"Yeah, me, too."

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"I think you two just bought the bar so you'd have somewhere to be noisy and crude without anyone caring," Scorpius said, tipping back his Firewhisky and chasing it with sparkling water with lime.

Al was noticing that Scorpius was a very picky person. He'd been particular about the time they met at...it had to be after dinner but before eight o'clock. Going out any later on a Sunday wasn't proper. He was choosy about where he sat...he didn't like the armchair in the staff room, so he'd taken the sofa, which meant that Al was perched on Teddy's lap on the armchair. He even had very vocal preferences as to what music they listened to. Al wasn't sure what was playing now, but it was rather loud and had a thrumming beat that made him want to dance.

Scorpius was so, so picky...why was it, then, that he was so indiscriminate about who he slept with?

"We're noisy and crude all the time," Teddy countered. "But sometimes it's nice to be noisy with other people."

Al couldn't see, but from the blush on Scorpius' cheeks, he guessed Teddy had winked at him.

"Plus, the booze is free," Al said, lifting his glass and slopping a little onto his hand. He sucked it off, probably more loudly than was sexy. "Sort of."

"The truth is, Scorpius," Teddy said, leaning forward a little so Al had to scramble to stay seated. "Al just likes it when I tell him what to do." Teddy leaned back again, his hand firmly planted on Al's belly, thumb caressing his navel through his shirt.

Scorpius' cheeks were bright red and Al was sure his matched. "Teddy," he groaned, squirming a little. His hands gripped the armrests, but Teddy wouldn't let him leave his seat.

"Look at him, Al," Teddy whispered against Al's ear. "He's not going to run away."

Scorpius had shifted into a more upright position and tucked his hands between his knees. He seemed to be looking anywhere but at Al, until finally their eyes met.

Al had noticed, in a second-hand, distant sort of way, that Scorpius was beautiful. But there was something more than that about him. He was sweet, too, if you knew where to look. And there was something so innocent, just beneath the surface, that by all rights shouldn't be there. Everyone knew the stories about Scorpius...so why was he blushing so hard just hearing Teddy's innuendo?

"You okay, princess?" Teddy asked Scorpius, who scowled.

"Fuck off," he muttered, slurring a little. He took another sip from his empty glass, glaring at it when he realised it would provide no more.

"I think he needs another drink, doll." Teddy pushed Al from his lap, steadying him when Al lost his footing.

Al grabbed up the Firewhisky bottle and lurched over to where Scorpius was sitting. He looked at the empty space on the sofa beside Scorpius before shrugging and climbing onto Scorpius' lap, straddling him.

"He doesn't mean it in a mean way, you know," Al said.

Scorpius didn't seem capable of holding up his own glass, so Al braced his hand and poured the liquid in. Predictably, some spilled over onto Scorpius' fingers, and the blond absently shifted the glass to his other hand and licked up the mess, much as Al had before. Al didn't think Scorpius should have to lick his own hand...someone should do it for him. Deciding it was best if he took up that position himself, Al grabbed the hand in question and popped a finger into his mouth. There was only a slight taste of alcohol over Scorpius' own taste. Al hummed and repeated the treatment, going so far as to nibble on his thumb before Scorpius pulled his hand away.

"Mean what?" Scorpius asked breathlessly. His pupils were blown, and he was constantly shifting his gaze from Al to Teddy.

Al couldn't see Teddy, but he knew there'd be no protestations coming from the armchair. "The nicknames. He doesn't *really* think you're a princess, just like he doesn't *really* think I'm a doll."

Teddy laughed, and Al turned to glare at him, but the rapid movement made his head spin. He'd had more to drink than he really should have. Abandoning the glare, Al rested his head on Scorpius' shoulder, nuzzling him. "Means he likes us," he added, licking Scorpius for emphasis.

"Should you be..." Scorpius gasped as Al bit down; he directed his question to Teddy, instead. "Should he be doing this?"

Al could practically feel Teddy shrug. "He can do whatever he wants. But if you're worried about whether I'll get all jealous and beat you up, the answer's no. All the better for me if I can join in, of course."

That reminded Al... "Teddy! C'mere! He tastes so good..." Al shifted to one side, freeing up Scorpius' left for Teddy.

Teddy took the empty seat, one hand caressing Al's back. Al arched up into the touch and then down against Scorpius' hips. He couldn't decide which he liked better, so he moved between the two, getting frustrated when Teddy's hand pulled away.

"So what do you think? About me joining in?" Teddy took Scorpius' drink, which Al thought was rude, but he was too busy running his hands through Scorpius' crazy-soft hair to say anything.

"Yeah, I... yeah." Scorpius gave a brave smile and Al just had to kiss it.

Al leaned forward, stopping about a millimetre from Scorpius' lips, giving him the chance to turn away if it wasn't what he wanted. Scorpius didn't move. Al kissed him softly, closing Scorpius' lower lip between his. It was barely a kiss, really; when Al pulled away, their lips stuck together a little.

Then Al saw that Scorpius' eyes were closed, and it was suddenly too much. He had to do more than just kiss him; he wanted *inside* him. He crashed their mouths together with a clink of teeth so loud it echoed inside his head. Then he plunged his tongue into Scorpius' mouth, where it burned a little from the residual alcohol, but it just added to the *painpleasure* of the moment.

Al was so wrapped up in kissing Scorpius...and biting and licking and sucking...that he barely noticed when Teddy started kissing Scorpius, too, on the neck. That was okay, though; he didn't mind sharing, not with Teddy. Teddy was a good sharer.

Drawing back, Al watched Teddy take over the kiss. He wondered for a moment if Scorpius even noticed, but then Scorpius grabbed the back of Al's head and drew him closer, and Al, being so obliging, turned his attentions to the pale, blue-veined neck in front of him.

"Fuck, fuck, Al, stop," Scorpius said, inhaling sharply and clamping his hands on Al's hips, stopping Al's increasingly frantic movements.

"What's wrong?" Al asked, pouting a little. Teddy reached up to pinch his lip, but Al saw him coming and bit his finger instead.

"So bad," Teddy murmured. "Getting Scorpius all worked up like that."

"Do you think I'm bad, Scorpius?" Al asked, glaring playfully at Teddy.

"I just... don't think we should do this... like this. You're really drunk, Al. And I'm not exactly myself."

Actually, Al thought, *according to rumour, you're exactly yourself* Scorpius was reputed to have done things *he* blushed at, and even if Al disregarded half for flights of fancy, that was still significant.

"I have sobering draughts in the loo upstairs," Teddy offered, hope clear in his voice.

"It's true; we do," Al agreed, nodding rapidly.

Scorpius still looked torn. Al's mind cleared enough for a moment to offer reassurance.

"We'll take good care of you," he promised, stroking the smooth skin of Scorpius' cheek.

"Come on, princess," Teddy added with a rough grin. "Scared?"

"That's ridiculous," Scorpius snapped. "Let's go."

"Great, I'll Apparate us," Teddy said, reaching to wrap an arm around them both.

"Wait!" Scorpius shouted, loud enough that Al tumbled off his lap in reaction. "Isn't it just upstairs? You guys live above the bar, right? Let's just walk. There's stairs, right?"

"Er, yeah. Yeah, let's take the stairs." Teddy looked a little confused at Scorpius' outburst, but he helped Al to his feet and then reached out for Scorpius as well.

The stairs were through the storeroom, which was kept cold for the drink. Scorpius shivered and Al wrapped an arm around his waist, gratified when Scorpius leaned into the touch.

Just about the only thing that hadn't been renovated, the stairs were steep and creaky, but they made it up in one piece.

Al watched for Scorpius' reaction to their flat. It wasn't much, that was for sure. The foyer was tiny with peeling wallpaper, the sitting area on the small side as well. Their furniture had been gifted by Al's dad, so it was nice and new, if not exactly the style Al would have chosen himself. They had a haphazardly working television set and bookshelves full of Teddy's books. A huge reader, Teddy's habit took up most of their available wall space. The kitchen was barebones only, with a table covered in paperwork for the pub.

Scorpius seemed to take it all in, nodding to himself. He raised his eyebrow at a pair of pants draped over the back of the couch, and Al blushed when he remembered what he'd been doing...and what had been done to him...when they'd been torn from his body.

"Through here," Al said, coughing and stuffing the pants into his pocket. He led the way into the bedroom, which was the only room that was worth seeing.

The original hardwood floor and rafters gave the room a warmth that was only slightly offset by the cool grey walls. Not much for decorating, Teddy and Al had let the room unfold as it would, and as a result, it was fairly messy but undeniably theirs. More bookshelves took up precious space, but it was the four-poster bed that held Scorpius' gaze. The dark blue comforter and linens called to Al, and not because he fancied sleeping amongst them.

"Come here," Al urged Scorpius, sitting back against the headboard.

Scorpius obeyed, very quiet all of a sudden. They shared a slow and sweet kiss, neither noticing that Teddy had left the room.

"You taste good," Al whispered, leaning in again to make sure.

"I taste like alcohol."

"I like alcohol," Al said, grinning. He almost cried out when Scorpius pushed him against the bed, straddling him.

For a bottom, Scorpius seemed to enjoy taking control and being on top.

"Here," Teddy said, breaking into Al's thoughts. He pressed a vial into Al's hand, closing his fingers around it. "I don't want you to forget this..." He got onto the bed, his hand stroking Scorpius' back. "Or you to regret this."

It was a good idea. Al took a swig of the sobering potion; the blurriness faded, but the decided lowering of inhibitions didn't abate...or maybe that was because he was

already so involved that it didn't matter.

He handed the drink to Scorpius, who took a sip as well. He cringed at the taste, and Al pulled him back to replace the bitterness with something better.

Scorpius moaned into the kiss, a sound Al vowed to get from him again and again. A part of him was thinking it had been almost too easy to get Scorpius in bed...it hadn't been much of a seduction at all, and Al did like to seduce. It wasn't of any consequence, though, because Scorpius was there with them, and easy or not, it was definitely a good thing.

His frustrated scrabble at Scorpius' clothes was indulged by Teddy, who disrobed Scorpius with an ease Al could only pretend at.

Scorpius was fit, thin and pale with an easy power beneath the surface of flawless skin. He was unashamed of his near nudity, though his eyes were almost defiant, as if daring either of them to criticize. That was the last thing on Al's mind as he struggled to sit up and take off his own robe. Scorpius got off of him so he could, turning to help Teddy undress.

There was a moment of awkwardness when the three of them were fully naked, sitting on the bed together. Al looked at Teddy with desperation in his eyes. Teddy was usually the one to take charge in situations like this, but Teddy just kept staring at Scorpius, until it began to ruffle Scorpius' collected confidence.

Scorpius' face betrayed a fleeting uncertainty, so Al took matters into his own hands and pulled Scorpius onto the bed on his side, facing him. "I thought about this in school, you know. Well, I guess everyone did."

Scorpius looked shocked at this confession, and Al cursed himself for being so obvious.

"Al," Teddy said, moving behind Scorpius and kissing his pale shoulder. "Shut up and kiss him."

Al proved that he did actually like doing as Teddy told him. Scorpius' lips were soft, incredibly pliable, and he took control of the kiss from Al within seconds.

A gasp against Al's lips turned into a moan, and Al felt Teddy's knuckles move against his stomach, which meant his hand was on Scorpius' cock. Al shifted forward so he could feel that cock against his; it was hot and thick in a way that Scorpius should be thankful for; Al certainly was.

"I can't wait to be inside you," Scorpius whispered to Al, rocking his hips back and forth between the two lovers.

"Oh," Al said, shocked. He raised his eyes to Teddy, who looked equally surprised. He'd been certain, as had Teddy, that Scorpius would be the bottom in their little threesome. Al was perfectly happy...ecstatic, really...to be fucked by Scorpius. And it was more than fair; this way, they'd both get to enjoy him.

Al was beginning to suspect that the rumours about Scorpius were slightly exaggerated.

"God, yes, that sounds so hot," Teddy said, covering for Al's blankness. "Don't you like the sound of that, doll?"

"Sounds perfect."

Scorpius' smile was both victorious and sweet. He grabbed Al's arse and yanked him forward, until their bodies pressed together, heat running between them and the friction made Al shiver. When Scorpius kissed him, it was overwhelming in its passion; Scorpius kissed like he thought it would be the last, and just as Al thought that, he heard Scorpius whisper, "What will happen next?"

Al met Teddy's eyes...it wasn't a question any of their other conquests had asked. Teddy and Al might have their own reputation for being free inside their relationship, but there was still a relationship. It'd always been just the two of them. And Al had always been content with that... But if that were true, why did Al want to reassure Scorpius that there would be more?

As if sensing Al's approaching promise...foolish as it was...Teddy reached over Scorpius and pulled Al against him, sandwiching Scorpius and bringing all sorts of skin into contact.

Deliberately misinterpreting Scorpius' question, Teddy said, "Now, I fuck you. But first, you should fuck Al."

If there was disappointment in Scorpius' face, it disappeared too quickly to pin down. Scorpius simply pushed Al onto his back and settled between his legs, which were spread wide in waiting.

Al couldn't help the hiss and whimper that passed his lips as Scorpius bit his nipple. Teddy was beside him, a hand between Al's legs as he helped Scorpius overstimulate Al.

"Put your leg up, Al," Teddy whispered. He turned to get the lubricant from the nightstand, returning as Scorpius hitched Al's leg up high, opening him for Teddy's fingers.

Teddy was familiar with Al's body, knowing every place, every pressure, every speed that Al loved; in contrast, Scorpius' touches were more hesitant, more in the interest of discovering hidden desires that exploiting known ones. The dual sensation turned Al into a writhing, gasping mass of nerves, his hands gripping hair, smoothing cheeks, covering his own mouth.

"Look at how he wants you, princess," Teddy said, his voice so low Al felt it more than heard it. His eyes were on Scorpius, devouring.

Following his gaze, Al's breath hitched. Scorpius' tongue dipped into Al's navel, nibbling on the edges. His eyes cast upward to catch Al's; they were dark with want, with need. Al touched Scorpius' cheek, silently promising to deliver.

Teddy's fingers finished stretching Al...or maybe they were both impatient enough to have decided so. Without thinking, Al grabbed Teddy's wand...it was the closest, tucked under the pillow...and cast the protection spell that had become habit when anyone else shared their bed.

The confusion on Scorpius' face made Al pause, but then they were kissing again, and Teddy was lining Scorpius' deep red cock up to Al's glistening hole, and all that remained was his desperation to be filled.

"Fuck me," he whispered, canting his hips up. Teddy would make fun of him later for his obviousness, *fobegging*, but he didn't care.

Scorpius slid inside, pressing through the tight ring with singular intent. Al inhaled through the minor burn until he felt Scorpius' hips press against his arse cheeks. He wrapped his legs around Scorpius' slender waist, tilting until the angle was perfect, and Scorpius thrust past his prostate with ease. He noticed with secondary interest that Teddy was slipping down the bed, disappearing behind Scorpius. When Scorpius gave a surprised groan, lowering his weight onto Al and spreading his own legs, Al knew what Teddy was doing, and moaned in sympathy.

"His tongue might be harsh sometimes," Al said, gasping up into Scorpius' pink face, "but he does know what he's doing with it."

Scorpius didn't really answer, only whispered Al's name, and a moment later, Teddy's. Hearing their names from Scorpius made Al place his hands on Scorpius' cheeks and bring his face down for a hard kiss, not letting go even when Teddy drove his cock in Scorpius. The chain reaction made Scorpius' teeth close down on Al's lips, made him dive so deep inside Al that he ached. Al just rode out the sensation, accepting all that Scorpius gave, all that Teddy gave through him.

Al cried out when Teddy grabbed his ankles and drew them up, making Scorpius fall even deeper inside...had it not been for Scorpius' hand on his cock, Al might have needed mercy. As it was, there was so much to feel that he had to close his eyes.

"He makes such a pretty doll, doesn't he?" Teddy asked, chuckling through his harsh breathing. His lips were against Scorpius' ear, but Al could hear him anyway.

"Yes," Scorpius hissed. The heat, the *meaning* in his face was so intense, so hard that Al couldn't stand it.

He came just to escape everything that happened around him without him understanding. Scorpius' cries followed him, and Teddy's gentle encouragements chased them both over the edge.

Scorpius was limp, hot and sweaty against Al's chest as Teddy pounded away to completion. Scorpius' hands stroked Al's satisfied body, leaving jagged trails of warmth, his hands skipping whenever Teddy thrust hard.

Al's arms were around Scorpius, but that didn't stop Scorpius from slipping from his body. Al gave a disappointed sound, clenching down to keep Scorpius' come inside. The noise seemed to trigger Teddy's climax, for he came hard and loud, pulling out almost too quickly so as to save Scorpius the weight.

"And he makes such a pretty princess, doesn't he?" Teddy murmured, one hand stroking the vestiges of come from his cock, the other pulling Scorpius off of Al to rest between them. Scorpius' body, limp and light, went easily. His eyes were closed, his lips parted, but he didn't seem fully asleep.

Al pushed damp, white-blond hair from his forehead. "Yeah, he does."

Scorpius smiled a little, just a twitch, and rolled his eyes. Al's heart surged with the need to protect this strange and fleeting thing between the three of them. A connection he'd never experienced with anyone since he'd met Teddy...that was something important. Something necessary.

Teddy left the bed, and the sound of the shower drew Al from his half-sleep a few moments later. Normally, he would have joined Teddy. But he just drew Scorpius into a tight embrace and slept instead.

*

Both Teddy and Scorpius were gone the next morning. Teddy was the early riser, and there was a Monday morning rush at the pub for people who wanted coffee and a quick breakfast. Teddy liked to oversee the morning staff, and he always let Al sleep in until the afternoon shift. Then Teddy would usually beg off early, leaving Al and the kitchen staff to hold the fort until Teddy came back before closing.

Scorpius, though, wasn't scheduled to work that day. Al knew, of course, because he'd made Scorpius' schedule himself. He'd given him Monday off so Scorpius could have a proper weekend, though a little skewed...two days off in a row was more than Al booked for himself or Teddy.

A small part of him...or perhaps medium-sized...had hoped that Scorpius would take that opportunity to stay with Al, maybe go to the pub for breakfast that morning. It was always nice to make Teddy wait on him, and it'd be way more fun to do it with another person.

There wasn't even a trace of Scorpius, though. His clothes had all been gathered, his wand absent from the nightstand, and even his glass from the water he'd gotten from the bathroom in the middle of the night was gone.

The bed was too big for *two* people, let alone one. Al had never felt so... void and barren, like something important had been taken from him, something he'd barely known to hold onto in the first place.

When Al finally made the decision to get up and make his way downstairs, he blessed Teddy for the coffee left percolating. He took a deep drink to clear away the fogginess that was his reward for drinking a little too much.

Al hoped things wouldn't become awkward between the three of them. Teddy and Al had done this sort of thing before, of course, but never when they had to actually work with the person afterward. Still, Al didn't think there would be a problem. Given what they knew about Scorpius' reputation, he was probably accustomed to morning-after situations.

*

The dinner rush had already begun when Scorpius showed up to work. He was early by about ten minutes, and they needed him on the floor and quick, so Al ushered him into the back to get him changed and started. He wished there was time to talk about what had happened, but the tables were bustling and the wait staff needed the extra help.

"So all you have to do is take this bin..." Al held up a dingy grey container. "And collect the used dishes from tables that are unoccupied. Okay? Don't take dishes from tables with people at them. The waiters will do that if needed. You just do the final clean up. Easy. Promise."

"No problem," Scorpius said, taking the bin and smiling.

Al nodded and turned, but Scorpius grabbed his arm, yanking him back. "What..."

His words were cut off by a soft kiss from Scorpius, gentle and nothing that compared to the ones they'd shared the day before. But there was something different about this private kiss...

"Whoa," Al said, pulling back and pushing out of Scorpius' grasp. "You can't do that, Scorpius." Without Teddy there, it felt wrong. And it wasn't that Teddy would be mad... but he might be hurt, and that was something Al couldn't bear. "We have to get to work, anyway."

Scorpius nodded, and though he tried to smile, it was weak and faltering. He looked confused but there was no time to sort him out. They'd have to have a talk after closing when Al had time to explain the rules if they were to repeat last night's events...and Al hoped they would.

"Okay, out you go," Al said, and Scorpius pushed past him without saying a word.

Though the crowd was thick and demanding, Al kept an eye on Scorpius for most of the night. He got through the shift with competence, and Al was actually proud of him, though it wasn't exactly complicated.

There was a strange moment, though, when Scorpius had gone behind the bar for something...possibly looking for a rag for a particularly messy table...and he'd pressed against Teddy, his entire form spilling seduction.

Teddy had pushed him back just as Al had, saying something in low tones to him. Al watched Scorpius' face flicker from confused to angry to impassive, so quickly it barely rated. For the rest of the evening, Scorpius was perfunctory and distant, doing his job silently, even when his break and Al's coincided.

When the last customer left, Scorpius was right behind him, and Al would have missed him entirely if he hadn't popped up from behind the counter just in time to see pale blond locks disappear through the door.

"What did you say to him?" Al asked Teddy, who was mopping up the counter.

"To Scorpius? Just that if he wanted it to be a one-time thing, we have no problem with that. Then I said he probably had more experience with that sort of thing than we did, but if he wanted to do it again, we wouldn't turn him down."

Al frowned. Something had been bothering him all along about Scorpius...

"I'm going to go make sure he's okay," Al said in a rush, already halfway out the door.

"Fine, but you better come back and help clean!" Teddy called after him.

Scorpius seemed to glow in the moonlight, creating a halo in the darkness. Al caught up to him quickly.

"Walking home?" Al asked, confused. It wasn't possible...Malfoy Manor was in an entirely different country.

"No, I have a Portkey." Scorpius didn't slow for Al, but they were nearly the same size, so Al kept up with only a little difficulty.

"Why not just Apparate?"

"Is there something you want? Did I forget something?"

Stung by the abruptness of Scorpius' tone, Al shook his head. "I just wanted to make sure you were all right. Teddy can be a little thoughtless sometimes..."

"Yeah, Teddy." Scorpius scoffed and shook his head. "So you guys do that a lot, huh?"

"Well, a couple times. But..."

"No, that's great. I'll see you around, okay?" Scorpius pulled something...a handkerchief...from his inner pocket. He looked at Al expectantly.

"Yeah, tomorrow at work," Al confirmed. "Listen, do you want to come back for a drink or something?" Al had the distinct impression that he was missing something important.

"I don't think so. *Portus*."

And Scorpius was gone.

*

"Just like that," Al explained, gasping as Teddy's fingers pressed into his arsehole. "Didn't even say goodbye."

"I don't get him." Teddy was trying to keep his words light, Al could tell, but he was upset. "We had a great night together. He was all over me at the bar. I told him to back off a little. I hadn't talked to you about it and I wasn't sure where things stood with a second go. He didn't speak to me again."

Al groaned and dropped his head onto the sheets, moving his hips back into Teddy's firm touch. He wasn't as coherent as Teddy, but he tried. "He's mad at us."

"Yeah, I gathered. But what did we do? What *do* we do?" Teddy slid another finger in, spreading Al to just the point of discomfort.

Al grunted, breathing through the stretch and gasping when Teddy found and stroked his prostate. "Just tell him that we want him again. We do, don't we?"

"Fuck, yes," Teddy said, withdrawing his fingers and lining his cock up to Al's entrance.

Al wasn't sure if Teddy's agreement was regarding Scorpius or the moment. "More than just sex, right?" Al asked, his voice quiet and steady despite Teddy's inexorable cock.

"Definitely more."

*

"I can't believe he didn't even call in," Teddy grouched the next day, shorting Mrs. Mikagan's neat scotch enough that she growled and snatched at the bottle herself. Teddy glared at her but allowed her to top up her drink. His hair was dishwater grey, which Al knew was due to stress, but his eyes were bright gold, too bright...it meant he was hurt by something.

Al knew the feeling, though he couldn't have explained it.

"I know. I hope he's all right." An owl had dropped off Scorpius' letter of resignation, if a scribbled note could be called such. Malfoy Manor was listed as his home address, along with the Apparition coordinates, but neither felt comfortable actually going to find him.

"Oh, I'm sure he's fine," Teddy said, his voice bitter. "He got what he wanted, after all. Was the job just to get close to you or something?"

"Me?" Al repeated, confused. "We were *both* there, Teddy." Al tried to keep his voice low, but the customer base was and always had been excruciatingly nosy.

Teddy pulled Al over, wrapping his arms around him. "You're right. I'm sorry. I'm just really pissed. We took a chance on hiring him and he used us!"

"For sex, though? That seems a little strange. I mean, he could have just *asked*... Merlin knows I would have done it!" Al blushed at his forward words, but it was true. Scorpius was something different.

"Yeah, same. So what do you think happened, then? We were fucking brilliant together, so it wasn't that."

The blush brightened as Al remembered just *how* brilliant they'd been. "I don't know. Maybe he just really hated the job."

"Then he should have said something."

For the rest of the shift, Teddy didn't let up. He would conjecture, speculate, formulate theories that went from flawed to outrageous. Al listened and made comments but it became clear that Teddy didn't really want or need support. He just wanted to rant, to get it out.

At least, that was what Al had thought.

Until, at the end of their shift, Teddy declared that he was going to find Scorpius, and that Al shouldn't wait up.

"You've got to be kidding me," Al said, shaking his head and grabbing Teddy's arm so he couldn't Disapparate without him. "You're not going without me!"

"I just want to talk to him. Nothing's going to happen."

"You think I'm worried about you cheating on me with him?" Al asked, aghast. "I just want to be there, to help clear things up, to understand. And maybe..."

"Maybe you can convince him to come back, right?" Teddy looked so old at that moment, so tired, that Al wrapped his arms around him. He'd pour his own energy into Teddy if he could.

"Maybe." Al's voice was stubborn and he knew it, but if there was even a chance that it had all been a misunderstanding or that they'd done something to make Scorpius

feel uncomfortable... if there was any hope that things could be cleared up, Al needed to be there.

"Al, what if... what if it was just sex to him? What if the sex and him quitting are totally unrelated? Like, he thought the sex was okay but isn't looking for anything more, plus he hated the job so saw no reason to come back. You know what Harry's always said about the Malfoys. That forgiveness can be awarded but trust has to be earned."

"He hasn't done anything wrong, though," Al argued. "And we knew that he wasn't the relationship type. I mean, what did you call him? England's sluttiest bottom? What did we expect?"

Teddy crossed his arms over his chest. Al knew there was no way Teddy was going to let this go. The man was like a bulldog sometimes...not that Al minded. His stubbornness was what had brought them together, really. Al had shied away from his advances, but Teddy hadn't let up. It was the best thing that had ever happened to him...and, he liked to think, to Teddy as well.

That same stubbornness might get Scorpius back, so Al wasn't really against it. He just hoped Scorpius wouldn't release the hounds on them or something.

"So you're coming, then?"

"Yeah, I'm coming." Al took Teddy's hand. "Do you have the coordinates from his information sheet?"

Teddy did, and with a fierce kiss pressed to Al's lips, he Apparated them both to the opulent gates of Malfoy Manor.

*

Al shifted a little from foot to foot, uncomfortable with the way Draco Malfoy was staring at them.

Scorpius' father had answered the door, showing the two into the parlour and informing a house-elf that Scorpius had visitors. That had been twenty minutes ago. Since then, Draco said nothing, sat in an armchair without offering for Teddy and Al to take a seat, and stared.

And stared.

"Er, your house is even nicer than my father said." Al offered a shaky smile; Scorpius wasn't half as intimidating as Draco, but it was easy to see where he got his aloofness.

Draco nodded once, an eyebrow arching in a way that looked much more judgmental than the wry way Scorpius did it.

"I like the peacocks," Teddy chipped in.

"I've heard," Draco drawled, tapping the arm of the chair and smiling coolly.

Before Teddy could react to the innuendo, Scorpius entered the room. He looked tired and unhappy to have been intruded upon, but Al still smiled brightly to see him.

"Father, I hope you're being polite to the guests," Scorpius said, his tone suggesting he knew Draco had been anything but.

"Of course, Scorpius," Draco said. He rose from his chair and laid a hand on Scorpius' shoulder. A look passed between the two...Draco was clearly offering support and, most likely, his capabilities at making bodies disappear. Scorpius nodded and gave his father a smile, which was returned.

With Draco gone, Scorpius stood by the door, as if in need of an escape.

"Why'd you quit?" Teddy demanded immediately, stepping forward.

Al sometimes wondered just how much of the wolf Teddy had in him. He seemed to instinctively know how to make other people uncomfortable, just by using his voice and the lines of his body. Al put a restraining hand on Teddy's arm.

"We just wanted to make sure everything was okay," Al explained.

"Everything's fine. It just wasn't what I thought it was."

The double meaning of the words swirled around the room. Teddy seemed eager to pounce on them, demand an explanation, but again, Al held him back.

"The job wasn't to your liking, then?" Al pressed. He wanted to close the space between them, but Scorpius looked a little cornered as it was, his eyes a little wide, form tense.

"You and I both know the job was beneath me," Scorpius said, haughtiness infused into every word.

"Then why'd you take it?" Teddy's voice was low, almost coaxing.

Scorpius shrugged and looked away. After a few moments, he seemed to realise they weren't planning on leaving without an explanation. "Because I wanted something different. Somewhere where I could be myself."

"And we couldn't give that to you?" Al asked softly.

"Not when you thought I was someone else entirely." The words were almost a whisper; Scorpius still wasn't looking at them.

"Can we sit, Scorpius? Please?"

Scorpius finally met Al's eyes. They were guarded, so much like Draco's at that moment. There was so little of the free, open Scorpius they'd seen at work and in their bed. This was more like the Scorpius Al had known in school. He didn't like it.

"Go ahead," he said with a sigh, seating himself where Draco had before.

Al and Teddy sat on the loveseat across from the armchair, Al seeking Teddy's hand.

"So what went wrong? How did we think you're something you're not? Did we ask you to work too hard?" There was a sneer in Teddy's voice, but Al knew it was all self-protection. He squeezed Teddy's hand, bringing his boyfriend's attention to him.

'Stop,' Al mouthed, determined to leave satisfied that things were okay.

"I didn't mind the work," Scorpius protested. Then a change, defeat, came over him. "Look, working there was all right. It was a job. Being with you two was brilliant. I thought maybe... but it seems my reputation preceded me. So you two can just go. I'll pay for the advert to find you two another worker if that'll make you happy."

"Why would that make us happy?" Al asked. "We're not here because we're an employee short. Why'd you leave after... after that night?"

"No, let me ask *you* a question. Why'd you invite me to be with you like that? What made you think I'd say yes?"

Al bit his lip, but Teddy seemed unable to keep his mouth shut.

"Well, you've heard stories about us, I'm sure. We'd heard some about you, too. But even if we hadn't, we would have gone for you just the same."

"I can guess what you heard," Scorpius said with an ugly twist to his lips. "I think you should both go. There's no point to this. I have another job lined up and I doubt our paths will cross again, all right?"

"What, you're going to run away and become an accountant because a couple guys gave you the night of your life?" Teddy asked incredulously.

From the look on Scorpius' face, it was clear Teddy wasn't far off on either count...the new job or the fact that Scorpius had enjoyed their night together.

"What do you want me to do?" Scorpius cried, his façade finally falling. He threw his hands up in the air. "You're together! And I can't be just some guy you fuck when fucking each other gets boring."

Teddy rose to his feet and with one stride stood before Scorpius, who looked up with steel eyes.

"First of all, Al and I weren't *bored* when we invited you into our bed. We wanted to be *with you*. It wasn't because we were looking for a *fuck*."

Al winced and Teddy seemed to realise what he'd said when Scorpius scoffed.

"All right, maybe at first. But *you* were the one who took off the next morning!"

"My Portkey was about to expire!"

"What?" Al asked, confused by the apparent non sequitur.

Scorpius just shook his head. "My Portkey. They run out every twenty-four hours and I had no other way of getting home."

"You couldn't have Apparated after breakfast?" Teddy demanded. Though he backed off Scorpius a little, he didn't sit again.

Silence ate at all three of them until Scorpius threw a bone to it. "I can't Apparate."

Al didn't want to get off track, but at least Scorpius was talking to them again. "Why not? You should have your licence by now."

"I've made appointments to get it ever since I was seventeen. They... they always say I didn't, though. They turn me away. Now I can't stand to do it, even Side-Along. Another thing I failed at."

"That's bullshit!" Al hissed. "Why didn't you say something to someone? An Auror or something? Why would they do that to you?"

"Things get really convenient in the Ministry when your last name is Malfoy." There was bitterness in his voice, but also resignation.

"Well, that's true for Potters, too. I'm taking you tomorrow morning to get your licence. They won't turn you down, I promise."

"Take the offer, princess. Al never uses his name like that."

"It wouldn't change anything..." Scorpius couldn't hide the wary hope in his voice.

Al hated to think of how helpless Scorpius must have felt, being discriminated against because of his name. He hadn't realised that sort of thing even happened anymore.

"Even if it doesn't, it's the right thing to do."

Scorpius said his thanks in a small voice. He looked nervous and Al wondered if it was because he'd finally be taking his test, or if there was something else.

"Listen, Scorpius, if we did something to offend you, or..."

"It's *fine*, Teddy," Scorpius said, looking exasperated. "It's nothing. I'm sorry to have quit like that, but it just... it wasn't right for me."

Like with so much of what Scorpius said, Al could sense another meaning just below the surface, but he couldn't quite grasp it. He looked to Teddy to see if he'd had any better luck understanding their enigmatic erstwhile employee, but Teddy looked equally clueless.

"Scorpius..." Al began, but he didn't know what to say. With Scorpius acting like nothing was wrong when something very obviously *was*, what could Al do? He'd love to be able to force to answer out somehow, or maybe let Teddy do it, but Scorpius was so... skittish.

"Al, Teddy, I really appreciate you two taking me in even when it was obvious I was no good at the job. And we had fun together. Al, thanks for coming with me to get my licence. It's more than you have to do. But please understand... that's it. There's nothing else."

Scorpius' rigid facial features were too reminiscent of his father to be anything but borrowed.

Defeated, Al and Teddy rose as one. "We'll see you around, right, prin...right, Scorpius?" Teddy asked, looking nervous quite possibly for the first time in years.

"I'm not going anywhere."

Especially not with us, Al thought, taking Teddy's hand.

"Thanks for seeing us," he said, unable to keep regret from saturating his voice. "I'll see you tomorrow morning."

"Goodbye."

And never was the word so final.

*

"Oh, Teddy..."

"What is it, doll?"

"I'm just... I can't get into the mood tonight."

"Thank Merlin. I can't either. I just wanted to make you feel a little better."

"You are. You do. Thank you. I just feel like we're missing something. I can't believe he just made us leave like that."

"Yeah, well, there was no convincing him. Maybe you can talk some sense into him in the morning when you go to get his licence."

"Maybe."

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"I knew you could do it, Scorpius!" Al crowed, waving the stamped sheet of paper in the air.

Scorpius looked a little green, but he was in one piece when he laughed and snatched the licence back. "Thanks, Al," he said quietly.

The woman behind the desk had, at first, claimed a backlog was the cause of Scorpius' continued cancelled appointments. She'd said that they'd have to make another and come back, but Al hadn't relented. Invoking his father's name for the first time since he'd left school (and that had only been in regards to a rather embarrassing episode involving himself and a Ravenclaw in a compromising situation), Al convinced the woman to let Scorpius take the test.

And he'd passed.

"You're welcome," Al said. He couldn't resist the urge any longer and hugged Scorpius. His body felt pliable and warm, and Al also didn't hold back the need to press his nose against Scorpius' neck.

To his surprise, Scorpius turned his face slightly toward Al's, lips parted as if in invitation. Al wanted to kiss him so badly...he'd thought his only chance had been wasted. Scorpius' eyes were open for once, unguarded.

If this was what he wanted, why hadn't he told them the night before?

"I can't," Al whispered, horrified and disappointed that he had to turn Scorpius down when he'd been sure the man would never want anything to do with him again.

Scorpius' laugh was hard and bitter as he pulled away from Al. "No problem. Well, guess I'll be using my newly legal ability..."

"No, wait!" Al interrupted, not willing to let it end like that. "Let's go find Teddy, okay? As long as he's there, we... we can do whatever you want."

"What do you mean?"

"I just can't kiss you or anything without Teddy knowing, but he'll be fine with it, don't worry. Just come with me to the Hog's Head, all right?"

"That... *that's* why you didn't kiss me during work that time?" Scorpius asked. His pale brows were drawn in confusion and Al wanted to kiss the little line away. "And that's why Teddy didn't want to touch me that same night?"

Al rubbed the back of his neck. "I know it might seem like a lame rule because of what we do, you know, with other guys. Or should I say, what we used to do." Al laughed nervously. He knew that he had no desire to invite anyone else to their bed except Scorpius. He'd somehow changed things without even trying. "But it's just how things are with us."

"I thought you didn't want me." Scorpius shook his head. "I thought you only wanted a one-time thing because you'd heard the rumours."

Not wanting to admit that they *had*, indeed, heard the rumours, had taken said rumours into consideration while pursuing Scorpius, Al said, "Not a one-time thing, I swear. We wanted you again. We still do." Al reached out and took Scorpius' hand. To his surprise, Scorpius let him.

"I've only ever been with three guys, you know," Scorpius said as Al tugged him forward and they began to make their way to an Apparition point to get back to Hogsmeade.

It didn't take an expert at Arithmancy to figure out that meant Scorpius had only been with one man before them. "But... the stories." There had been *so many*, they'd been so *detailed*.

Scorpius' laugh was self-deprecating. "Yeah, I guess I made the wrong choice the first time."

"You mean... you're not a slutty, dirty bottom?" Al's face burned red as the words escaped his lips without his permission. He clenched Scorpius' hand in case he tried to run off.

"England's biggest, last I heard," Scorpius said wryly. "No. The guy... It was at Hogwarts. Fifth year. It was *ahuge* mistake, and he had a big mouth and a score to settle. He wanted... well, the things he wanted weren't things I'd even *heard* of, let alone could give. At first, I tried. But after we broke up, word got around. Since then, I went on a lot of dates with guys from school, but they'd all heard what the first guy said, the lies, and they wanted that. It got compounded every time I turned a guy down. I'd barely say goodnight to a date before I'd hear about how I went down on him in front of a theatre crowd or begged for his cock in the middle of dinner."

By the time Scorpius trailed off, his face was a deep red. As for Al, *hesaw* red. For those men to be so malicious, starting when Scorpius had been *onlyfifteen*? It was outrageous. Teddy was absolutely going to *lose* it.

"Er, don't tell Teddy the names of any of those guys, okay?" Al thought for a moment. "Well, maybe the first one." He deserved to pay.

Scorpius laughed, some tension seeping from his shoulders. They reached the Apparition point and Scorpius held out his hand. "May I?"

"You'll come back with me, then?" Al asked, trying for some of Scorpius' patented double-speak. If he could get Scorpius to come to the Hog's Head, to talk to Teddy, to just... start again, he knew everything would be okay.

With an anxious but hopeful smile, Scorpius nodded and held his arm out for them to leave together.

Al folded himself into the embrace, letting Scorpius Apparate them to the end of the main street in Hogsmeade.

"I'm really sorry about those arseholes," Al said, his jaw tense from clenching his teeth at the very thought of it. "But more than that, I'm sorry we assumed so much about you. That we believed lies instead of just talking to you."

Scorpius' nonchalant shrug enraged Al, but he reined it in. If it were him... well, in a way, the same rumours circulated about Teddy and himself, but they were mostly true, or at least were based on truth. The fact was, Al and Teddy *had* been wild.

Was it because they were missing something, looking for something all along?

A thought occurred to Al. "If you decide to be with us, Scorpius, those rumours aren't going to die. They'll probably get worse."

"Is that what's on offer here?" Scorpius asked, sounding surprised. He squeezed Al's hand reactively, making him realise they were still locked together.

"Yes," he said with confidence. He knew Teddy felt the same way. Some things he didn't even have to ask. "We want you with us, all the time. And you have to take your job back, too."

Scorpius laughed, and this time, it was clear and honest. Al wanted to rub against it somehow. "I'll think about it. The job," he added quickly when Al's face fell. "I want to be with you and Teddy, to try."

Inside, Al was spinning in circles, light enough to fly right into the air. On the outside, he just smiled like he'd known all along. "People will talk," he warned.

"I've dealt with the rumours for years. It barely even bothers me anymore. My father might be harder to convince," he finished with a smile.

Al's stomach clenched at the thought of making Draco believe they weren't in it for Scorpius' sweet arse (well *only* his arse), but he smiled bravely. "We'll figure it out. I can be very convincing."

"I've noticed this," Scorpius whispered, a playful grin on his lips. They stopped in front of the Hog's Head, the wings of the phoenix logo beckoning them in.

Teddy was on them as soon as they passed through the door. "Did he pass? Did you pass?"

Al and Scorpius exchanged a sly look. They both turned identical sad faces to Teddy, whose countenance became enraged as he obviously fought to keep from railing against injustice in the Ministry.

Then Scorpius took out the licence and handed it over, along with a shit-eating grin. "Just kidding, Wolfie."

"Wolfie, eh?" Teddy smirked as he looked over the licence. "Congratulations, Scorpius."

Al, practically squirming as the two traded longing looks, finally blurted out, "Scorpius isn't a slut but he still wants to be with us and I want to be with him and I think you do, too, so we should all be together or at least give it a try because you never know..."

Scorpius put a halt to the tirade with a firm kiss to Al's lips. Al absently heard a growl past the blood rushing in his ears, but when he opened his eyes it wasn't jealousy that painted Teddy's features, but arousal.

Al propelled Scorpius toward Teddy, holding him between their bodies and kissing his neck as Teddy whispered, "Sure about this, princess?"

"I'm sure, Wolfie." Scorpius leaned up for a kiss, and Teddy delivered it. "And don't call me princess."

The End.