

Heart Without a Harbor

by Dementor Delta

Beware of Gryffindors asking favors.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Ask him."

"*You* ask him."

"I'm not going to ask him, I'm not the one having a--"

"Ask me what?"

Three heads turned toward the office door. Ron stepped protectively in front of Hermione, though her protruding belly nearly sent him off balance. She had appropriated the high stool they'd dragged in there since she was having trouble getting up from the rickety office chairs they used. Her cheeks had gone pink but she wasn't saying anything. Harry's mouth snapped closed as though it had been hit by a Lockjaw hex. Thinking quickly he did what he always did under stress. He lied.

"We were, er, talking about someone else."

Snape glided around the desks Harry and Ron had shoved together, making his way to his own desk in the back of the room. "Nonsense," he said dismissively, nodding to Hermione as he passed. "What did you want to ask me?"

Ron looked a little less like he was reaching for his wand and more like he was perfectly willing to let Harry speak for them. Hermione still looked uncomfortable, but these days she always did. She straightened on the stool and smiled, a bit over-brightly.

"Professor," she said, tugging her robes over the bulge as she shifted on the stool. Probably only Harry noticed the slightly pained expression that crossed his face before he sat behind his desk, the pained look vanished, replaced by one they were more familiar with, skeptical expectation. He had asked them all, more than once, to use his given name since he had not been their professor for several years. Harry and Ron, despite spending untold hours cooped up here in their tiny office, had not managed it yet.

"I, we...we were wondering," Hermione was saying, forging ahead where saner heads would have fled. Her reaction to stress was completely different from Harry's...she always waded in doggedly until she sank beneath her own verbiage.

Harry took pity on her since it was obvious Ron was having *his* usual reaction to stress--complete and utter silence. Squaring his shoulders he looked up at Snape with determination...a determination that probably everyone in the room knew was a front. They were in the tiny cluttered office he shared with Ron...and for nearly the last year, with Snape. The Ministry had offered Harry a spacious office of his own, with his name stenciled on the door in gold, in the same corridor as the Minister's office. Harry had never used it, preferring instead this one in the Auror department.

"They, that is, we--" he began, with no better luck than Hermione at the verbal battlefield he'd always felt Snape had the advantage in. "With the baby coming and everything--"

Snape had crossed his arms over his chest. "I wasn't aware that you had anything to do with that event," he said, his gaze flicking quickly to the rounded curve beneath Hermione's robe. "Did I give my congratulations to the wrong man?"

Ron sputtered, but Hermione looked amused. She might have even giggled.

"No!" Harry burst out, scraping his fingers through his hair in frustration. "Ron's family celebrates Hogemany for New Year's," he explained, finding his voice in the midst of his frustration. "Only this year, for good luck, we thought you might be the first footer for them. For Ron and Hermione," he added, then, "And you know, the baby."

Something twitched in Snape's expression. "If I recall, the tradition calls for a tall, dark, *handsome* man," he said, tone flat.

"Oh, not always," Hermione put in, obviously meaning to be helpful. She blanched when Harry gave her a disbelieving look.

"Please, sir," Harry said, rushing to fill the awkward void that was looming overhead, "if you don't have plans, we...I would appreciate it if you'd come."

Harry didn't think he'd been particularly persuasive, and neither Ron or Hermione had been particularly helpful *all* but Snape nodded and swept over to his desk, still a bit dramatic despite the lack of teaching robes. "Very well. Now, do you have those case files for Dolohov?"

Both Harry and Ron scrambled to find the requested files while Hermione slid off her stool and made her way up to her own office. Snape had, as part of the agreement to keep from serving time in Azkaban, been assigned community service after his long recovery. That he had chosen to assist the Auror office, currently in the form of Harry and Ron, in tracking down Death Eaters had surprised Harry. Harry had tried more than once to visit him in hospital, and had even offered to testify at his trial but had been rebuffed each time, though Harry thought the trial dragged on for many more months than it should have without his testimony.

Snape was as vigilant in his duty as he'd ever been in criticizing Harry's potions skills. More often than not, he and Ron left Snape in the office, at the cluttered desk he'd somehow managed to squeeze into the office, when they left at night. Since he was usually there first thing in the morning, Harry had wondered more than once if he ever left at all.

They spent a productive afternoon mapping potential hiding places for several Death Eaters on their wanted list, ones who'd fled England after the Dark Lord's death. Ron, ever watchful of the clock in their office, stretched, just as the hand with his picture ticked over to 'time for a pint'.

"Well, I'm for a pint," he said, pushing his desk chair back. "Who's with me?" he asked, politely including them both, though Snape had never accepted or really given any sign that he'd heard.

"Can't," Harry said, looking a bit sheepish. "Date tonight." Ron made a show of rolling his eyes but Harry knew he'd got used to the frequency...and gender...of Harry's dates long before.

"Right then," Ron said, gathering up the plastic lunch bag he always brought to work. It was orange, with an embroidered three pointed crown on one side, emblazoned with the caption 'Weasley is Our King'. It had been a gift from Draco after Ron completed Auror training. "Don't stay out late," Ron continued. "Be a shame to call out on the last day before the holiday."

"I won't," Harry said. The Ministry shut down the week between Christmas and New Year's. "You know all my dates--"

"Always end the same way," supplied Ron, grinning at Harry's rueful expression. "Your own fault, mate."

After Ron had gone, Harry began gathering up his own things, glancing up at Snape, who, despite looking like he was engrossed in maps, had not missed a word. He was debating whether to wish him a merry anything when Snape cleared his throat.

"Am I correct in assuming the Weasley Hogemany will be a social occasion?" he asked.

Harry nodded, sitting down on the edge of his desk. "I suppose they'll have a few friends over," he replied.

"Will I be expected to bring a...date?" asked Snape. Harry was surprised at the wariness in his expression.

"God, I don't think so," Harry replied with feeling. "I'm not. I want one night where I can relax and enjoy myself without someone trying to impress me." He slid off the desk. "We should just go together," he said lightly, "save us both a lot of bother." He regretted the words as soon as they were out of his mouth. Snape had always been distantly polite to both Harry and Ron, and Harry had not meant to be thoughtless in his teasing. He knew how straight men were about such teasing. He'd seen all the memories of Snape and his mom though neither of them ever talked about it. From the beginning Snape had kept their discussions focused on the work they were doing, deflecting or avoiding most other subjects.

Harry had forgotten all about it the next morning when the sight of Malfoy sitting on the edge of Harry's desk soured his mood even further.

"Potter," Draco said, with a nod. He always looked politely disbelieving at nearly everything about Harry, his clothes, his hair.

"Malfoy," returned Harry, making a shoving motion with his hand to get Malfoy off his desk. It never did any good at getting Malfoy to leave since he always just shifted over to the corner of Snape's desk.

If Harry didn't notice that Snape had on the vest with the cord stripe around the collar...a different one from yesterday...he would have sworn that Snape hadn't budged from his desk since last night. He gave Harry a cursory glance before sliding things over to make way for Draco's posterior.

"Anyway, Dad's terribly excited," Draco said, wiggling further back as Snape cleared space, "though he only shows it like this." He put both arms in front of himself, hands folded over each other as if holding the knob of a cane before letting his smallest finger twitch a few times. "See? The height of excitement."

Ron came in just in time to witness this. He heaped his coat and lunch bag on his own desk, grinning. "The clearances came through then?"

Draco unlocked his fingers. "Just in time to make plans for Christmas," he replied. "Severus is coming too."

"Going where?" asked Harry, clearly out of the chatty family loop that only marginally included him since he was, at most, friends with Ginny. Not for the first time he envied the easy camaraderie that had sprung up between them, but not enough to pretend to be something he could never be to achieve.

"Switzerland," Draco supplied. "Ginny's coming too, for a couple of days." He turned back to Snape once he'd made sure Harry had that information. "Oh, don't tell, but Mother's getting you a parka." He was swinging his foot against the front of Snape's desk. He leaned in conspiratorially, even though there was no chance of not being overheard in the cramped office. "Black, of course." He hopped off the desk, tugging down his own tailored jumper before looking back at Ron. "Don't worry, we'll have him back in time for Hogemany." He waved on his way out. "Remember, act surprised about the parka."

He was halfway out the door when Harry muttered a low, "Git."

"I heard that," Draco called out, completely unfazed. He paused in the doorway, a knowing smirk on his face. "How did your date go last night?" he asked with exaggerated sweetness.

Glowing, Harry looked accusingly at Ron who threw up his hands, unable to deny anything when his guilty blush always gave him away.

Draco heaved an expressive sigh. "Another handshake at the door then?" Harry ignored him. "There must be one or two blokes out there who want to go out with you for real and not just because they want to be seen with the Auror Who Lived."

He ducked out before Harry's hastily aimed spell turned his hair blue again.

"Git," Harry repeated even though he could hear Draco's laughter down the hall. Ron dropped his eyes to avoid his glower so Harry fixed it on Snape who hadn't even made a pretense of not eavesdropping.

"It is your fault, you know," Snape said, neatening a pile of parchment.

"Not you too," groaned Harry, sitting down hard in his chair. It had been a horrible night. His 'date' had wanted to go to the showiest restaurant in Diagon Alley, and had insisted on a table near the front, even though the place had been very crowded. He scrubbed his face with his hands, looking at Snape curiously. Ever since they'd been sharing an office Snape had given every appearance of ignoring Harry's woes. "I can't help it if men want to go out with me and all I ask is that they try to spend some time with me and not want to hop into bed. Oh," he added as if just remembering a crucial point. "And it would be really nice if they weren't an aspiring actor, novelist, reporter, politician or whatever just hoping to be seen with me." He remembered how his date had ended last night, the other man pulling away when Harry had leaned over to give him a perfunctory peck on the cheek. "And it would be really nice...really *different* if they were actually gay!" He slammed his wand down on his desk.

"I meant," Snape said quietly, "that it's your fault that you are the continued victim of Draco's teasing."

Harry sagged. "Oh." He glanced at Ron, who seemed just as nonplussed about Snape's advice. "How do you figure?"

Snape's fingers drummed once over the stack of parchments, as if he already regretted getting involved. "You get angry. Every time. Your anger just gives him a more irresistible target."

"He's the one who takes swipes at me every time he comes in here," argued Harry, tucking his wand back in his pocket. "He gets on fine with Ron."

Ron shrugged, looking at Snape appraisingly, then back at Harry. "It's just his way. He's always done it, except at school he was, you know, not dating my sister."

"It isn't Draco's fault he--" Snape stopped and pursed his lips.

"He what?" Harry demanded.

"I believe you would still be dating Miss Weasley yourself, were you so inclined?" Snape asked, sounding indifferent about the answer. "It isn't his fault he has the life you want."

Harry opened his mouth but didn't know what to say. Ron had come over quietly, dropping a hand on Harry's shoulder. "He has a point. You let him wind you up."

A parchment detached itself from the stack on Harry's desk, hanging in the air between them. "Now," Snape said, with his usual brusque tone, "if we could get some work done in between bouts of Harry's social life?"

Harry Apparated directly to Ron and Hermione's bungalow. As a wedding present the Weasleys had given them a bit of land, just over the rise from the Burrow. It meant there were a lot of Weasleys in and out of both homes. There were cheerful lights coming through nearly every window as he rapped on the door.

"Harry!" It was Ginny who opened the door, her hair shorter now than when they were in school. She always looked more fashionable now that she'd started seeing Draco. She gave him a sisterly hug though she'd just seen him the week before over Christmas dinner at the Burrow. Draco, a possessive hand draped over her shoulder, smirked at him from behind her.

"Potter," he said as they stepped aside to let him in.

"Draco," Harry replied, remembering Snape's advice not to let Draco wind him up enough to lose his temper. The name got him a raised eyebrow as Harry slid past them into the room.

It was a small gathering...by Weasley standards...and it wasn't until he had made the rounds of his friends and adopted family that he realized Snape hadn't arrived yet. At least Ron and Hermione hadn't asked any single men Harry's age tonight, something they'd done before in an attempt to be supportive of his orientation.

"You didn't leave the professor behind in Switzerland, did you?" Harry asked, making a show of looking around the room before sitting beside Ginny and Draco.

Draco, obviously trying not to look suspicious, finally shook his head. "You've never had Christmas until you've spent it with two old school chums trying to outdo each other with boring war stories." He gave an exaggerated shudder. "At least I hadn't heard all of Severus's before. Mummy finally hid the scotch." He blinked as though remembering who he was talking to when Harry laughed.

Harry went to get himself another drink, conscious of Draco and Ginny's frantic whispering once he'd left. He was in time to give Hermione a hand out of her chair and a kiss on the cheek. "Snape didn't cancel?" he asked, bypassing the woefully unalcoholic eggnog in favor of some of Ron's spiced cider.

"Oh no," replied Hermione, "He's coming. He called earlier and said he was waiting for something to set." Her hand strayed, as it often did, to her belly.

"Set?" He was about to ask what that meant when a chilly wind from the door made the flames in the fireplace flicker.

Snape was handing Ron something covered in a cloth wrapper but Ron pointed toward Hermione. Ron gave him a hand with his coat, juggling the package.

Harry stayed beside Hermione as Snape made his way toward them, trying to imagine him getting snookered with Lucius Malfoy.

"Hermione, Harry," Snape said, presenting the cloth-wrapped bundle. "I'm reliably informed, by the most Scottish woman I know, that whisky cake is an acceptable Hogmany gift."

"Thank you," replied Hermione, taking the package. "You didn't have to bring anything."

"Minerva insisted it would be quite bad luck if I didn't." Snape's smile was part smirk. "I think she just wanted one too since the recipe makes a double batch. However, the alcohol burns off so it should be quite safe for--" He stopped speaking abruptly as Hermione leaned over impulsively and kissed his cheek.

Harry had rarely seen Snape speechless. It was, he had to admit, a good look on the man's usual dour features.

Suddenly Hermione's face crumpled and she grabbed Snape's arm, bending forward. Startled and alarmed, Harry grabbed her other arm, trying to figure out what Snape had done to her before she waved one hand at them both.

"Sorry," she said, "She's got quite a kick." She let go of Snape's arm almost apologetically, straightening slowly as she rubbed her belly.

"That was the baby?" Harry gazed down at the shape beneath the flowing maternity robes.

Hermione giggled, something she did more often since she and Ron had announced her pregnancy. "You know, that thing we've been talking about for all these months,

the reason I always wear these shapeless clothes, that baby?" She dragged his hand onto the bulge, moving it around until she found the spot she was looking for.

Harry gasped at the firm movement. He spread his fingers out. Hermione let go of his hand and reached for Snape's, tugging it over beside Harry's. Their fingers brushed as his gaze met Harry's. The baby kicked again and Hermione oofed again as they both reached out to steady her.

"She's restless," Ron said, coming up with cups of spiced cider for them both. "Kicks me all night long, she does." He gave them both a chance to sip their cider before continuing, "It's almost time." He lifted a hand like he was about to clap Snape on the shoulder the way he would do with Harry, then dropped it awkwardly. "Er, nearly midnight."

With a nod at them all, Snape started for the door, reaching into the pile of coats for the parka on top.

"Hey, wait," Harry called out, grabbing his own coat under Snape's. "I'll just wait with you," he explained.

He got a startled look for his trouble. "Don't be daft. It's freezing outside."

Harry had already drawn his wand. "If only there was some way to keep warm outside," he said, looking as though he was pondering some deep point while he tapped his wand against his cheek. "Some sort of spell or something..."

Snorting in disgust, Snape swept past him, out into the star-filled night. "Very amusing, Potter," he said, pulling out his own wand and casting the appropriate warming charm around himself. They spent a moment adjusting to the boundaries of their respective fields of warmth.

Overhead the stars hung in the crisp, clear night. Harry knew that some people said they felt small gazing at the wheel of stars overhead, a single human fading to insignificance compared to the panoply of galaxies. Harry had never felt that way. Stargazing made him feel like a part of something bigger than himself, a parade of humanity who had also looked up and felt connected to the wonder overhead--

"About the Pritchard case," Snape said, and Harry's imagination thumped back to Earth.

"I have a theory about where she might be hiding."

"That's the problem with you, sir," replied Harry, shaking his head at Snape.

Snape's mouth snapped shut. "Problem? That I'm attempting to be productive?"

Harry shook his head again. "That it's all about work to you." He glanced overhead then back at the lit windows of the bungalow.

For a moment the other man looked guarded, then the familiar sneer was back. "What should it be about?"

Harry flung one arm out, getting his fingers chilled when they went beyond his warming charm. "We just felt Hermione's baby moving," he said, bringing his hand back close and tracing a shape in the air as if feeling her bulging tummy again. "Didn't that mean anything to you?"

Grunting, Snape said, "It means Weasley is not quite as inept with female anatomy as his schoolboy behavior suggested. Why?"

"God, you're hopeless," said Harry, shaking his head sadly. "No wonder it's all about the job to you."

Snape was giving him an odd look. "What does Hermione's fecund state have to do with my concern about doing a good job?" He wrapped his arms around himself as though his warming charm had failed.

"Because it shouldn't always be about work. I know you lot laugh at me when I go out with bloke after bloke, but at least I'm trying to do something, find something...more," Harry said, feeling again that in a war of words and meanings, Snape would always outstrip him.

"You don't need to atone for anything," was Snape's reply, and he seemed to wrap his arms tighter, pulling into himself.

Harry felt a shiver go through him that had nothing to do with the cold. "You think...that by tracking down Death Eaters, you're atoning for what you did?" he asked curiously. He had never questioned why Snape had requested this particular assignment, nor why he worked so hard at it.

However, Snape shrugged. "No," he answered, "but it's all I have." Snape wasn't looking at Harry but at the bungalow, as if reconsidering going back inside.

"Professor...sir," Harry said, taking a step closer. "No one, not the Wizengamot, not me, not Ron and Hermione, thinks you need to spend the rest of your life paying for what happened." He tilted his head, trying to get Snape to look at him, but the hooded gaze was not budging. "You're still young, you could have a family--"

Snape drew his wand and Harry jumped back reflexively. Snape renewed the warming charm before tucking it away. "I don't need Perfect Potter's advice to the lovelorn," he said acidly.

"I'm not--" Harry huffed in exasperation. "Fine, have it your way. Don't know why I bother with a thick git like you."

"Thick?" Snape's eyes had gone dangerously narrow. Harry used to think of this as his detention until the end of time face. "Thick as in bloody well trying to get you to call me by my first name thick? Or thick as in trying to get you to see me as human thick? Is that how thick I am, Potter?" He was looming over Harry, his eyes flashing.

"I see you as--" Harry began, realizing they were standing close enough for their fields of warmth to be overlapping. Close enough for him to see the reflected starlight in Snape's eyes. "Human," he finished, watching that gaze drop to Harry's parted lips and realizing Snape wasn't moving away.

"Time!" Ron called out cheerfully, flinging open the front door. With a start, Snape whirled away from Harry, all but stalking back to the house. Ron held two cups of something that steamed in the chilly air, his grin faltering when he looked between Snape and Harry in confusion. "It's just past midnight," he said, though his cheer sounded a bit forced as he sought out Harry's gaze for explanation.

Snape took the mug without a comment and strode over the threshold, leaving Harry to follow. A cry rose up as he entered, swallowed up by a fresh round of happy voices.

"Mate," Ron said, handing Harry a mug of the cider. "Was Snape going to--" He shook his head. "Course not," he said, answering his own question. "Just that it looked like..." He looked back inside at Snape, standing beside a glowing Hermione.

"It's just a silly superstition, really," Hermione was saying to anyone who would listen. Snape was stoically enduring many comradely slaps on the back, keeping his eye on the door where Harry and Ron still stood. "Just in case, you know?" she went on.

"It really looked like--" Ron began again.

"He didn't." Harry took a gulp of cider. "He didn't kiss me."

"Looked like he wanted to though," Ron said, closing the door behind them just as Hermione, her cheeks rosy, wrapped her arms around Snape's neck and hugged him.

"Thank you, Severus," she said.

Ron rolled his eyes. "Suppose we'll have to name the baby after him now," he said, picking up his own mug from the sill.

"Rotten thing to do to a girl," answered Harry cheekily and they both laughed like the schoolboys they were only a few years away from being.

Snape was looking a bit like a cornered animal or as though an Affection Bomb had gone off in the room. Harry watched him making his way toward the kitchen, slipping from Hermione's protective custody. Harry set out after him.

"What was that?" Harry demanded as soon as he closed the kitchen door behind them. Snape had gotten only a few steps inside the cozy kitchen. The counters were littered with butterbeer bottles and cracker boxes and the ends of cheese.

"Surely you remember that I was invited here to be the First Footer," explained Snape with exaggerated patience.

"Don't," Harry said, running his hand through his hair in exasperation. "You always do that literal thing when you're trying to avoid the question."

"And the question?"

Harry leaned back against the counter. "What was that...that moment outside?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," replied Snape, but he had turned away.

Outside the kitchen Harry could hear Ron telling that story about the Chinese Fireball fledgling that had nearly ruined his wedding, even though everyone in the other room had been there or heard the story before or both.

"You must," insisted Harry. "All that about having me see you as human then looking at me like...like--"

"Like what?" flung back Snape. "Like I was going to kiss you? Is that what you were going to say? Don't flatter yourself."

Harry shook his head. "I wasn't. I know you aren't gay."

Snape straightened back up, glaring. "You don't know anything about me."

The memories Snape had entrusted to him were still very sharp and clear in Harry's mind despite not having seen them for nearly four years. "I saw things, things you showed me," Harry said, clenching his fingers behind him on the counter top to keep from running them through his hair in frustration. "You know I did." When he'd learned that Snape's body had been brought back to Hogwarts, and that the corpse was not quite a corpse yet, Harry had gone up to the headmaster's office and collected the memories. It had taken a week before Snape had even woken up but he hadn't even said thank you when Harry had returned them to him in the Infirmary.

There was a moment when he thought Snape was going to bolt, not talk about any of this the way they'd been not talking about Harry's mum for all this time. At first Harry had believed Snape was just grumpy about being alive, but when he'd tried to visit again, Snape had never wanted to see him.

"I saw things too," Snape said at last, "When I was trying to pound Occlumency into your skull. Somehow I don't think your adolescent thoughts about Miss Chang or Miss Weasley ever stopped you from sucking a cock when the opportunity presented itself."

"Wha..." Harry was too focused on the words 'sucking a cock' out of Snape's mouth to register the rest of the sentence for a moment. "What are you saying?"

Snape stepped back when Harry pushed away from the counter. "That you and I will never have a 'moment'" He turned toward the kitchen door.

Harry grabbed his arm. "That isn't what I'm asking."

He could hear the sounds of merriment just beyond the door. Draco was doing an impression of someone that was making Ginny laugh. He could hear Hermione giggling. Snape did not answer him but he didn't pull away.

And didn't pull away when Harry looked down at his hand wrapped around his sleeve. "There's another tradition at New Year's," Harry said slowly, doing his best to act without thinking because if he thought about what he was doing his brain would show him ample proof, using Snape's own memories, that this was quite mad. Snape had worn another of those black jumpers he found in endless supply, that never looked mussed or out of place. Harry could feel the warmth coming off him, heating the hand on his sleeve. Which was strange, because that warmth had always been there, even during those hated Occlumency lessons even though Harry had always thought of Snape as cold.

He didn't feel cold now. Harry was close enough that his fingers felt like they were holding a warm tea cup. "You don't want to forget about it and take away all the luck your first footing did, do you?"

"And what tradition is that?" asked Snape, in a voice Harry thought meant to snarl but it didn't come out that way. Snape looked as surprised by this as Harry did. Though a muscle twitched in Snape's forearm beneath Harry's fingers he still didn't pull away.

"You're supposed to kiss someone to ring in the new year," Harry said, feeling that muscle twitch under his fingers again, though Snape had not moved. "Someone close," he went on, noting in some distant part of his brain that his voice had gone husky in a way he'd never heard before. "Someone who's going to be hexed if you aren't gay," Harry finished, all but whispering the last word against Snape's mouth. The mouth that was also not pulling away. That was, in fact, moving closer, not much but by slow aching movements as if they'd both forgotten how close you had to be to kiss.

Harry's mouth closed over Snape's, holding him for no longer than a breath before pulling back. "Why didn't you tell me?" he asked, sneaking in another kiss in case Snape was going to kill him and this would be his last kiss ever.

"Why would I even think you'd want to know?" Snape said, sliding his arms around Harry's waist. There was an assurance in the gesture that Harry had never found in a straight man, and Harry had been on dates with enough of them to know.

Even Snape's breath was warm, flavored with the cider's spices, flowing against Harry's mouth, mingling as easily as lips met tongue again. Harry lifted his arms around Snape's neck, not minding that their next kiss didn't even remotely feel like it might be his last. Fingers pushed up under his jumper, spreading apart against the cotton of Harry's shirt.

"You don't want this," Snape moaned, belying his own desire by pulling Harry's mouth close for another kiss.

"It's you who don't know anything about me if you think I don't," Harry managed despite the temptation to implant the answer directly onto Severus's mouth with his own. "I just didn't know it was possible to have it." The closest thing he could think of to compare it to was discovering he was a wizard...once he'd known it was possible, he'd wanted it more than anything.

"Could we just skip the part where my dates don't work out and straight to the fantastic sex?" Harry asked. He could tell Snape was trying to decide whether he was appalling or charming.

"How do you know it will be fantastic?" asked Snape, leaving Harry to conclude charming had won out.

Harry chuckled, sliding his fingers into the hair at the back of Snape's neck. "Because it's already been better than most of my dates," he replied. Only instead of another of those bone melting kisses Snape shook his head, pulling back. Only Harry's arms around his neck keeping him from breaking apart completely.

"I won't be one of your..."

Harry held on. "You're already more than that," he said. He clenched his fingers in the fabric at Snape's shoulder in frustration. "Is that why you never said? Because I'm really rubbish at yearning from afar."

Whatever charm he might have, as miniscule as it might be, was working. Snape was looking like he might bolt, though Harry suspected that had a bit to do with the feel of something hard poking his trousers. "We'll have to Apparate out," Snape said, and right then it was the most romantic thing Harry had ever heard. "You look like you've been..." One fingertip brushed across Harry's lips. "Kissed."

"I'm going to look like I just came in my pants if you keep doing that," Harry moaned, "Let's go back to my place so you can ravish me properly."

The orderliness of Apparition was soon overcome by the desperation of desire. Who would have thought Snape could kiss like a demon, heating Harry's lips with the whirlwind of desire. True, it had been a long time since any of his dates had gone past the handshake stage, but Snape would never be just a date. And they were definitely not shaking hands.

He'd Apparated them directly into his bedroom but it might have been Trafalgar Square for all the attention either of them paid to anything that didn't involve exposing skin and the divesting of clothing.

Fingers pushed under his shirt, leaving heated trails along his belly. "Fuck!" he wailed, as Snape's fingers slid lower.

"Anything," came the moan of a reply.

Just the possibility of that 'anything' was enough to propel them onto Harry's bed. They weren't quite naked but the remaining bits didn't get in the way of the frantic thrusting and moaning and wet sounds of sucking and kissing.

Harry moaned again when fingers curled around his cock, hindered only by his pants, Snape's thumb rubbing the damp place on the front. "Won't make it to anything," he panted, throwing one leg over Snape's and thrusting against him. "Want...everything."

Snape went still a moment, then groaned. "We don't have time for everything," he said, cutting off Harry's objection with one of those kisses Harry hadn't realized he'd be so brilliant at. He shifted so he was crouching over Harry, the ends of his open shirt trailing over Harry's hips. The slant of his mouth, though a smile, was predatory enough to send an anticipatory shiver through Harry.

Bending down, he kissed Harry's mouth again, then his throat, swiping across the pulse point there as if in reassurance. Lower, never lingering but not rushing since they both knew exactly where he was heading.

"Wait," Harry panted, pushing his fingers against Snape's scalp. "You can't show me that cock and not let me have a taste."

With another of those groans Snape shifted around, keeping his mouth on Harry's cock, something Harry, in a less randy state of mind, might have appreciated more. If Harry had any doubts that Snape was as turned on as he was, he was confronted by the evidence at once. He lapped at the pearl on the head to show his appreciation. Determined to have Snape give him a chance to show him everything, Harry devoted every lick, every kiss, every soft moan solely toward bringing them both pleasure. Such devotion came back in the form of Snape's attentions to Harry's cock. His hips did a little jerking thing that Harry found equal parts arousing and endearing. He wasn't going to last long either. As much as he wanted to show Snape he had more control than a schoolboy, right now he really didn't have any more than the boy he'd been wanking over--

"Fuck!"

Oh god, Snape was definitely not straight. No straight man would have wrapped his mouth around Harry's spurting cock as greedily as that, nor kept it in place while Harry spent himself in sputtering gasps. Nor kissed the tip once he was done, looking up at Harry. If he hadn't just come harder and faster than he had since he was a teenager the sight of Severus Snape smiling at him with Harry's own cock brushing his mouth would have got him hard again.

"I hope you're as good at fucking as you are at sucking," Harry said, as Snape's hips gave another of those little jerks.

Doubt warred with the satisfaction on Snape's face. "You don't want--"

Harry pushed off the pillows, sitting up and sliding a hand around Snape's neck. "You really need to stop telling me what I want and don't want. Especially where you're concerned." He rubbed his mouth over Snape's. "I want everything. I want you."

Desire won over doubt. They were kissing again, Harry being guided back exactly in the direction he wanted to go. "Harry," Snape breathed, a prayer, or a groan. Harry wasn't sure, but it sounded good.

"Do you know how sexy it is when you use my name?" he asked, wiggling back on the rumpled pillows.

"You won't use mine," Severus replied, tracing his earlier trail down Harry's chest with his mouth. "It's always 'professor' this and 'sir' that."

"Don't worry, I'm not going to call you 'sir' in bed," replied Harry, delighting in the teasing tone. "Severus."

Snape...Severus--smiled around one nipple, looking a bit predatory again, something Harry had never thought he would find sexy. But he was finding a lot of things about Severus sexy since there was no disputing the desire that flared between them. Had it always lain between them, before Harry had even known he wasn't exactly straight himself? Had he kept the distance between them by not using Severus's given name because he had thought there could never be this sort of intimacy between them?

"Wait," Harry said, reaching over toward his nightstand. It took him a few moments to find the vial of lube and pass it down. "I haven't needed that for a while."

Severus took it without comment, save a sort of assessing gaze that Harry had seen in the office. Severus used it with the same sort of devotion he'd used before, eager and hot, interspersing slow strokes of his fingers with wet attentions to Harry's cock so that when Severus was poised between his legs, Harry was aching hard again.

He wrapped himself around Severus, as eager and hot himself to give him the same measure of devotion. Wispy ends of black hair hung down around his face, trailing over Harry's shoulder as they moved together. Harry wanted to touch it, feel it sliding between his fingers, see it first thing in the morning, fanning out over his pillow.

"Fuck," he moaned again, wanting the images he could see clearly of being together just like this to be made real. "Yes, yes, yes." He was moaning into Severus's hair, rocking with every stroke, pushing himself against the taut belly until he arched and coated them both with seed again.

Severus stilled only a moment, his face very close to Harry's. "Say it again," he said softly, hips jerking once.

"Severus," moaned Harry and Severus's hips jerked again and then he was shuddering against him, moaning Harry's name over and over. "Everything," Harry reassured him, stroking fingers through his hair until the shudders stopped. "I told you."

Still panting, Severus rolled beside him, dragging a hand over his face, pushing the hair back so he could look at Harry.

"I told you it would be fantastic," Harry said, feeling a bit of a self-satisfied smirk was deserved in this case.

"How do you know I don't do that with a different man every night?" Severus replied just as Harry pulled the sheet up over their legs.

"Because you don't." He flopped back onto the bed on his side, resting his head on his hand. "Because I'd know. And I'd have been jealous."

Severus snorted. "We've been working together nearly a year."

"Working," affirmed Harry, sending one fingertip skating over Severus's damp chest. "Getting to know each other." He pressed the fingertip against the protest about to spring forth from Severus's lips. "Sort of like a first date. A really long first date." He shook his head, watching the fingertip traveling back across the open expanse of flesh. "You never wanted to see me then you took your service with me and Ron. And you made us good at it. Was it the job you were devoted to?"

It took a moment but Severus shook his head. His fingers slid around Harry's hand and dragged it up, kissing the palm. "The job, the service was all I had. All I deserved."

"Don't say that!" Harry slid down so his chin was resting on Severus's chest. "Tonight, when Hermione let us feel the baby moving, it made me think--about all the stuff I should want but never did. Stuff like a family. But I've already got the family I want." He tilted his face up to look at Severus, who nodded in understanding. "I think you brought her luck tonight." He reached up for a kiss. "I think you brought me luck too."

"It's just a superstition," Severus replied, without his usual sneer.

"Superstitions come from somewhere," Harry replied, kissing Severus again. If he had to kiss him every time he had doubts, they might be in for a lot of kissing. Which wasn't, Harry thought, as he settled himself against Severus's side, a bad thing for either of them.