

An Unexpected Encounter

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War changes people. Sometimes they change for the worst, sometimes they change for the better.

One Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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The battle was over. It had ended yesterday. Today had been spent caring for the wounded and making funeral preparations for the dead. So many were injured. So many were dead. He was being treated as a hero. But he didn't feel like one.

After being surrounded by friends and grateful students, creatures, teachers, and members of the wizarding world, he had to get away. He needed some time alone to think, to grieve, to clear his mind. He put on his father's invisibility cloak, his wand, and his Firebolt and quietly slipped out of the castle.

The air was clean and fresh, as it often was after a summer rain. The evening sky was filled with stars, and a small sliver of the quarter moon lit up the sky. Though it wasn't particularly bright outside, he knew that he had enough light to see without the use of his wand. Once he was clear of the castle, he removed the cloak and placed it into his robe's pocket, then mounted his broom and flew off toward the Quidditch pitch.

He never had felt more free than when he was riding his broom. The wind tousling his perpetually messy hair, the sound of the wind echoing in his ears, the flapping of his robes—all of them had a calming effect on him. He practiced his favorite moves as he flew, realizing how long it had been since he'd been on his broom. Since he had done anything fun, honestly.

He had been in the Quidditch pitch maybe half an hour when he realized that he was no longer alone. There was someone in the stands, watching him. *Ron? Doubtful.* He was still spending time with his family and grieving over the loss of his brother. *Hermione?* He dismissed that nearly as he dismissed the thought of Ron. She was probably spending time with Ron, showing her support to him.

As he watched, the figure stood and picked up something from the seat. Instinctively, he drew his wand, ready for the possibility that a Death Eater had gotten away. But he soon realized that the object that the person had picked up was a broom, as the figure mounted it and flew toward him.

As the figure came into focus, he recognized the thin, gaunt figure of Draco Malfoy. His eyes were downcast and sad. His face no longer held the ever-present smirk that had been there during their days at school together. His air of superiority seemed to have vanished.

Draco didn't say a word, didn't wield his wand. He simply flew over Harry and held out his hand. Harry shook Draco's hand, then watched as the other boy flew off back in the direction of the castle.

As Harry watched Draco fly off, he knew that something had changed between the two of them. They would never be friends, he realized, but he knew that they were no longer enemies, either.

Prompt from Rose oTW: The night after the Battle of Hogwarts outside, and a rare pair... gen/romantic/whatever...