

# My Own Worst Enemy

by SS Lupin

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## One-shot.

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I was possessed by the Dark Lord during the writing, editing, and posting of this fic. J.K. Rowling, Scholastic, etc. own the characters and places you recognize.

### My Own Worst Enemy

The alleyways of Soho were dank and dark at night. Hell, they were dark even on a clear and sunny afternoon, as if they were pockets of purgatory dotting London's streets. They barely let in any light at all no matter the hour, and a person had to want to find them before they fully came into view.

Not that Harry was looking for an alley in particular; he only wanted a place to toss his empty bottle of liquor, and the remaining sense of propriety he still had in his intoxicated mind wanted a hidden corner so that the general populace wouldn't be harmed by shards of broken glass.

There ... amongst the bright storefronts promising pain and sex and everything in between ... hid a side street with a dead end. Harry aimed the bottle best he could at the far brick wall and hurled the container at it with all his might. In his drunken state, it didn't go far but still made a resounding crash on the pavement.

Harry smiled to himself at the almost-victory and was headed for the street when he heard a whimper from behind him.

Harry whirled around, his mind immediately alert and his wand out. No matter that he was in a Muggle-infested area, no matter that he was pissed to Merlin's grave and beyond. He would take no chances after everything...

The whimper turned into a groan of pain. Harry slowly inched toward the noise. Maybe it was some stray ... a little dog or cat or ...

A man Harry thought he'd never see again.

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The discovery caused Harry to sober up long enough to wrap an arm around the slight man hunched over in the alleyway and Apparate them both to his flat.

As soon as they'd popped into Harry's home, the man's groans of pain had turned into shouts of rage. Harry ignored them and walked into the small kitchen to start a pot of coffee. It wouldn't do to bring up more than a decade of hate-filled history with a mind clouded by whisky.

As Harry waited for the water to boil, he observed the other man, who'd positioned himself at the end of the living room couch. He was barely visible, almost swallowed up by the dark leather of the furniture. He shook and shivered as he huddled in the corner, wearing a tattered old cloak that barely covered his naked form. His head was mostly bald and dirty, save for some tufts of white-blond hair growing out of his scalp in uneven lengths.

Who could've guessed that, six years after Voldemort's defeat, Harry Potter would have a naked ex-Death Eater in his flat? His childhood enemy, a sneaky ferret, the first guy to appear in his wet dreams and made him realize that girls would never do it for him. Harry would have laughed, but a sudden glimpse of pale skin marred with bruises kept him silent.

He filled two mugs with coffee before returning to the couch and its occupant. He offered a mug to Malfoy and wasn't surprised to hear the former aristocrat snort in disgust.

"As if I'd ever drink anything offered by you, Potter," he croaked.

"If you say so." Harry set one mug down and drank out of his own. Although thousands of questions whizzed through his mind, Harry couldn't voice any of them the moment was too surreal for him. He resigned himself to sipping his coffee and sneaking occasional glances at Malfoy.

The minutes went by and Harry finished his coffee. He left his empty cup next to Malfoy's full one.

"If you want to stay the night, the couch is free. I'll leave some clothes out for you."

Harry walked into his bedroom, came back with a change of clothes, and left them at Malfoy's side. "Good night," he whispered as he headed back to his room to sleep off the strangeness of his encounter.

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When Harry woke the next morning, he yawned and stretched for a few moments before the previous night's stupidity caught up to him.

With a loud curse, Harry leapt out of bed, grabbing his glasses and running into the living room. He'd let Draco Malfoy into his home and stay the night *The slimy bastard could have killed me while I slept or taken everything of value and left ...*

Harry stopped his thoughts at the sound of running water. Seeing that it wasn't coming from the kitchen, Harry entered the bathroom and walked into a haze of steam. He focused his eyes on the shower, where a thin figure stood behind the shower curtain.

The shower ceased its spray, and the curtain was pulled back to reveal a wet, naked Malfoy.

"You were asleep, so I figured I could use your shower before I go," the blond said. His eyes were wide, but he didn't bother to cover his groin or the many cuts, bruises and scars on his skin.

"Er, that's fine," Harry stammered, keeping his eyes set on the tiled floor. "Would you like to stay for breakfast?"

Harry inwardly cursed himself for asking such a thing. Didn't he want the bastard out of his life as quickly as he had come into it?

He didn't hear a response, so Harry looked up to see Malfoy give him a curt nod.

Harry left and closed the door behind him. *He didn't want my coffee, but his stomach tells a different story* Harry thought wryly before he began to make breakfast.

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The meal was a quiet affair. Both wizards tucked into their food with gusto, trying to ignore the fact that the other person was there.

Malfoy was the first to speak. "Thank you," he said, still engrossed in his eggs.

"You're welcome," Harry replied, equally entranced by his glass of juice.

Neither spoke again until the meal was over.

"Where are you going now?" Harry asked.

"I dunno... Somewhere." Malfoy toyed with his fork.

"Well, you're not going back to that alley, are you?"

"Why are you so concerned about my well-being anyway, Potter? Since when were any of you bastards worried about where I was after the war? I thought that day on the battlefield would be my last time seeing any of you, but a twist of fate landed me in your flat last night. I assure you that this is the last time you'll have to hear from me." Harry watched in shock as Malfoy limped out of the door of the flat.

Malfoy was right. In the immediate aftermath of the Final Battle, all Harry was concerned with was nursing his physical and mental wounds. He barely paid attention to the Wizengamot hearings, though he had some memory of learning of Snape's and Malfoy's names being cleared. Harry had been jaded by the cruelty of war before he was old enough to get drunk legally, and Malfoy's disappearance didn't enter his mind until Harry had found him naked, bruised, and abandoned last night.

Though Harry's mind was still altered by his drinking the night before, he figured the best remedy for his pounding headache and resurrected issues with Malfoy would be another healthy dose of alcohol.

He threw on a pair of jeans and slipped on some trainers before leaving in search of a pub. Taking a step forward, he almost tripped over a body sitting in front of his flat.

"I thought you left," Harry said, mesmerized by the war zone of damaged hair on Malfoy's head.

"Don't know where to go," Malfoy said quietly, staring at the wall opposite him.

"Come to the pub with me, then," Harry offered, acting as if Malfoy hadn't stormed out of his home moments ago.

Malfoy stood and pulled the hood of Harry's old jumper over his head. "Lead the way, Potter," he said, his face partially hidden by the hood. Harry shook his head and followed Malfoy out of the building instead.

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It was a slow and silent walk to The Wooden Leg; small talk was useless for both men. They spent several minutes in the pub nursing their drinks before Harry spoke. "You can stay with me, if you want."

Malfoy's head shot up from his pint and stared at the other wizard.

"What?"

"Until you can get a place of your own."

A voice sounding like an eleven-year-old version of Harry protested, repeating phrases such as "bloody ferret" and "crazy bastard" in a loop. Harry ignored it and waited for

a response.

"I don't have any better offers, so I suppose it will have to do." Malfoy sneered over his drink, and Harry could almost imagine they were sixteen again, glaring daggers at each other across the Great Hall.

Almost.

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Harry Apparated into his flat after another boring day at the Ministry. He didn't know why he bothered showing up for work anymore. After three years of grueling but exciting Auror training, Harry had spent the next three years doing paperwork for other Aurors. It was as if his years fighting Voldemort held no importance whatsoever.

"Dinner's in the kitchen," a voice rang out from the bathroom.

The aroma of chicken reached Harry's nose before he could ask what Malfoy had cooked. Though his mouth began to water in earnest, Harry pushed the thoughts of food from his mind and looked into the bathroom's doorway to see Malfoy's head covered in shaving foam and Malfoy staring at the razor with a look of utter confusion on his face.

"What are you trying to do?"

"I'm trying," Malfoy said, gritting his teeth, "to shave my head." He made no move to bring the razor to his head.

"Here, let me have it."

Malfoy grudgingly handed the razor to Harry, who stepped behind him to begin his task.

Malfoy had already trimmed the longer locks that were still on his head, leaving only small patches of closely cropped hair. Harry steadied the razor in his right hand, slowly approaching the other man's head.

"Just get on with it before the food gets cold."

Harry let out a breath and started to shave, making a path of smooth skin through the shaving cream.

He continued shaving, running the razor under water before exposing a new strip of pale skin with the blade. When he finished, Harry set the razor down and looked into the mirror in front of them. He saw a frail but still haughty looking Malfoy observing his reflection, his shorn head showcasing a pointed chin and brilliant grey eyes.

Harry's gaze drifted over to himself another thin man just a bit taller than Malfoy. His lower face hidden by the other man's pale scalp, Harry could only see his bright green eyes, his scar, and his messy black hair in the mirror.

Harry was suddenly tempted to wrap his arms around Malfoy, watching their reflections intertwine and become one on the other side of the glass.

Instead, he reached around Malfoy to grab a bottle of aftershave from a nearby shelf.

"It might sting," he warned as he poured the liquid into his hands and rubbed it into Malfoy's scalp. Harry relished in the feel of Malfoy's shaven skin, smooth and cool under his touch. He continued applying it until he heard a whimper coming from the man in front of him.

Harry's head shot up to the mirror, seeing his hands splayed across Malfoy's head, his eyes darkened with... something.

"I have to reheat dinner," Malfoy said, hastily exiting the bathroom.

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"I didn't know you could cook," Harry said after dinner, a beer bottle in hand as he sat in front of the television.

"Under certain circumstances, I'll learn anything to survive," Malfoy said from the far end of the couch.

"And what would those circumstances be?" Harry realized his error as soon as he'd uttered those words. Malfoy's face grew taut and tired, and he began to stare at his own beer bottle as if it were a newly discovered magical artifact.

Harry knew apologizing would be of no use. He mumbled a 'good night' and walked into his bedroom, not daring to look at what he'd left behind.

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They developed an uneasy routine over the next two weeks: Draco would cook and clean the house without magic (Harry didn't know what had happened to Draco's wand, but he didn't want to bring up the subject) while Harry worked in his stifling cubicle in the Ministry and returned to his flat at night.

"I've been here for fifteen days," Draco observed one night after dinner.

Harry, who was never quite sure on whether his replies would help or hinder the other wizard, opted for silence.

"I know I've been imposing on you for far too long. I should be looking for my own place..."

"You would need a job to pay the rent, and since you don't have one of those, I won't kick you out like the bastards who left you in that alley!"

Harry bit his bottom lip. Damn, he really had shoved his foot into his mouth that time.

"It was Bellatrix."

Harry stared at Draco, who was huddled in what he thought of as Draco's side of the couch the same place Draco had collapsed that night and always sat in since.

"She was the one who... who did that to you?" Harry asked, pointing out a particularly nasty scar wrapping around Draco's neck.

"No, *Uncle Rodolphus* did that."

At Harry's look of confusion, Draco continued. "After the Final Battle, I had to complete one last task so that the Wizengamot would clear my name. I had to find the remaining Death Eaters in England, mainly Bellatrix Lestrange.

"I was able to get the whereabouts of Macnair and others, but I couldn't find *Auntie Bella* for years. Before I could contact the Ministry, they captured me."

"How long did they imprison you?" Harry asked.

"Seven months, one week, and four days. I escaped when Bellatrix got into one of her spells. She had them often would be crazier than usual, casting hexes everywhere and talking to things, thinking they were the Dark Lord. Rodolphus was trying to restrain her and threw her wand to the ground. I crawled my way toward it and grabbed it. I kept Apparating from place to place with it until I passed out... And then you found me." Draco hunched further into the couch.

Harry seethed in anger. How dare the Ministry send Draco off as a teenage civilian to find the craziest and deadliest of the wizarding world? And they didn't even bother to send Aurors after him when he was missing all that time? Harry could have been doing something anything besides filling out useless reports while someone was being victimized with no one to save him.

Harry inched toward Draco and placed a hand on his shoulder. He waited for the other man to push Harry away, but sucked in a breath as Draco leaned his head into the caress and closed his eyes.

Harry took this as a sign that he could go further and removed his hand. Draco's eyes snapped open, but Harry shook his head and spread his arms open in invitation. Draco nodded back and leaned into Harry's embrace. They sat together like that for awhile as Harry ran a hand along Draco's back and felt his chest expand and contract. Harry leaned back and fell asleep to the sound of Draco's breathing.

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Harry awoke the next morning with a stiff neck and a sore back. Despite his body's discomfort, he felt as if he'd had the best sleep of his life.

He stretched, slightly put out that he didn't have a warm body Draco's warm body beside him. Instead, Harry found himself lying on the couch with a blanket spread over him. He sat up, looking for his glasses that had disappeared from his face during the night.

"They're on the table," Draco said.

Harry turned to face Draco, whose blurry image was standing in the middle of the living room. Harry watched the figure bend over the table and pick up something, handing it over to him. Harry reached for his glasses and put them on. Everything came into focus, including the smirk on Draco's face.

"Sleep alright?" Draco asked, pulling off the blanket and folding it.

"I was about to ask you the same question." Harry ran a hand through his hair as he stood up.

"I asked you first, and breakfast is in the kitchen."

"I slept well. Now it's your turn to answer." Harry followed the smell of eggs into the kitchen.

"It was adequate," Draco said. They didn't talk during their meal, and Harry was determined not to think or speak of what happened the previous night, even when there was something that felt so *right* when he'd had his arms around Draco.

"Let's go somewhere tonight," Harry suggested as he put the dishes into the sink.

Draco set down the copy of the *Daily Prophet* he had been reading.

"What?"

"I need to go somewhere that isn't enclosed by four walls, you've been stuck in this flat for too long, and you can't be wearing my ratty clothes forever."

Harry leaned back against the counter, smiling and hoping he looked relaxed.

"Sure, Harry ... as soon as you come home."

Harry practically beamed when Draco called him by his first name. It helped Harry some, since he had started to think of Draco as *Draco*.

"Okay. I'll see you later then," Harry said as he walked into the bedroom.

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Harry decided to take the day off, though he still planned to go to the Ministry. His excuse was that he had business to attend to of a personal and professional nature, leading to him to the office of Nymphadora Tonks.

"Wotcher, Harry. What brings you here?" Tonks welcomed Harry into her office, which was only a minor upgrade from Harry's cubicle. It took a minute of maneuvering and several mutterings of "*Reparo*" from Tonks, but they were able to find space to sit comfortably.

"Well, Tonks, I was looking to get out of office work and get started on some real cases."

Tonks shifted in her seat. "You know I'd love to help you, Harry, but since the war, the pickings have been slim ... I haven't been in the field for ages myself."

Harry's anger from the night before began to emerge. "You want a case? How about one where several Death Eaters are still missing, the public doesn't know, and to top it all off, a civilian was the only one looking for the crazy bastards. You remember Draco Malfoy?"

"Remember? The brat cousin of mine smashed your nose open when you were a kid!"

"Yeah, he's changed a lot since then." For some reason the memory pulled at his heart in an unfamiliar way.

"He was ordered by the Wizengamot to look for the remaining Death Eaters. Bellatrix Lestrange and her husband captured him and held him for more than half a year, and no investigation was made over it! We've got to find them, Tonks."

"Of course. Where's Malfoy now?"

Was it safe to tell Tonks? Harry hadn't mentioned Draco to anyone... but if Tonks was going to help him, Harry would have to be honest about everything. "He's with me."

"Is he okay? Did you bring him to St. Mungo's and file a report?"

"No, he's fine now. And I'm not filing a report. I'm sick of filing reports ... it's all I've been doing for two years!" Harry closed his eyes and tried not to lose his temper. "Tonks, we've got to move. We're not doing anything useful here... We need to go out and do something."

"We? Ah, don't look at me like that. I'll help you, but we're not going to run around London, wands blazing. I'll talk to Bludmore, and then you and I can arrest some Death Eaters. I'll memo you around noon, okay?"

"I won't be here... I took the day off, you see."

"It's about time you relaxed a bit ... I haven't seen you take a day off in years. You'll need the rest anyway if we're really going to go on a mission. A real mission!"

Harry almost thought he heard Tonks say, "Just wait until I celebrate with Remus tonight," before he shut the door to Tonks' office behind him.

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Harry Apparated into his flat in better spirits than before. Draco's captors were going to get justice, and Harry was going to do the job he had wanted to do for years. Now all he had to do was find the man he wanted to share his good news with.

"Draco, I came home early." Harry checked the kitchen and living room, but both were empty. He knocked on the bathroom door before stepping inside.

Draco was staring at the mirror with intense concentration as he brought the razor up to his chin. Harry looked at the rest of Draco who was naked save for a towel wrapped around his waist, and he couldn't help but become entranced by a thin pink scar that began at Draco's chest, winding its way down until it disappeared beneath the towel. Harry followed the scar's trail several times before he realized someone was staring at him.

"Like what you see?" An amused Draco looked at Harry's reflection in the mirror.

"Er..." Harry could feel his face heat up. "You've gotten better at shaving now," he said, hoping his voice was steady.

"I guess I have." Draco slapped some aftershave on and checked his reflection one more time. "So why did you show so early?"

"Change of plans. You want to go now?"

"Sure, I just need to get dressed." Draco fingered the edge of his towel.

"I'll be in the living room." Harry left and tried not to think about Draco taking off his towel.

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Harry and Draco had a good time shopping in Muggle London. They ate lunch in a small restaurant before buying Draco some clothes that fit him properly, unlike "the rags" that Draco joked about.

They were walking along a slightly familiar street when Harry stopped.

"What is it?" Draco asked, shifting his bags to his other hand. He said no more as he followed Harry's gaze to a deserted alleyway.

They stood and stared at the shadowed pavement for some time.

"It's okay now. You found me." Draco set the bags on the ground and placed a hand on Harry's shoulder.

"It's not okay." Harry took Draco's hand and put it between his own. "It's not okay until I get the bitch that killed my godfather and hurt you. Come on." Harry picked up Draco's bags and grabbed Draco's hand again. "We have somewhere else to go."

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At the end of the war, Oliver Ollivander came out of hiding once his job of safeguarding the Horcrux that was Godric Gryffindor's wand was over. While his grandson took over the shop in Diagon Alley, Mr. Ollivander retired to a small cottage on the outskirts of Hogsmeade, occasionally making and selling wands at his leisure.

Harry Apparated Draco and himself to the cottage, hoping that the old wizard would help him. The front door opened, revealing Mr. Ollivander clad in a purple robe.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," Mr. Ollivander said, his odd gaze still able to send shivers down Harry's spine.

"Er... hello, sir." Harry lowered the fist he was about to use to knock at the door.

"In town for a wand, Mr. Potter? I'd be happy to serve you, though your eleven inches of holly must be one of the most important magical items in wizarding history. Come in." Mr. Ollivander left the door open and shuffled inside his home.

Harry entered the house, Draco not far behind. "Well, sir, the wand isn't for me. It's for my friend." Harry gestured to Draco.

Mr. Ollivander's head whirled around to meet Draco, as if he'd finally noticed that the wizard was in the room. "Yes, yours was maple and dragon heartstring, nine inches ... a stable wand. It must have taken a lot to damage it."

"A lot indeed." Draco, who had been taking in the details of the house, looked Mr. Ollivander straight in the eye.

The two wizards appraised each other for some time before Harry spoke. "So, can you help us?"

"Yes, but my prices are higher than they used to be, and I don't know if any of my wands here will suit you." Mr. Ollivander gave Draco a cursory glance.

"I can afford whatever you charge. As for the wand, there must be something." Draco quirked an eyebrow at Harry's words.

"What? I can afford your wand even though I'm not a Malfoy."

"Did I say anything?" Draco moved past Harry to a shelf that Mr. Ollivander was inspecting.

"I have five here so far... here, try this one." Draco waved the wand, but nothing happened at all.

"No, no, that's not good... Try this instead." Draco swished the wand, but nothing magical happened with that one or the next wands he was given.

"Perfect!" Mr. Ollivander clapped his hands as green sparks flew from the latest wand in Draco's hand.

"I guess fourth time's the charm," Draco said, twirling the wand in his hands.

"Ah, this one's elm and unicorn hair, nine inches. Perfect for spells of any level."

"Still nine inches after all this time, Draco?" Harry teased.

"Not everyone can reach eleven, Potter. Besides, it's not how big it is, but how you use it." Draco pointed the wand at Harry, making a hat shouting "Slytherin rules!" in a high-pitched voice appear on Harry's head.

Mr. Ollivander shook his head once the transaction had been completed. The other men laughed and left the cottage.

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"*Accio remote*," Draco said, smirking in triumph as the piece of plastic flew under Harry's nose and fell into his waiting hands.

"You think one Summoning Charm is going to stop me from hexing you?" Harry crossed his arms and waited for Draco to give him back the remote.

"Not if you don't want this to get harmed during the process." Draco sat on the couch and tossed the remote from one hand to the other.

"You prat." Harry gave up all hope on using magical means and resorted to tackling Draco for the remote. *A few weeks alone with the telly and he's in love with it now* Harry thought as his hand closed over the remote and Draco's fingers.

He pulled back, his breathing quick as his eyes went from the remote in his hand to Draco's flushed face. Harry tried to convince himself that there couldn't be anything in what happened when Draco lunged for him.

"No fair, you bastard," Draco gasped, trying to wrench the remote from Harry's hands.

"It was rightfully fair."

Harry turned on the telly and was prepared to enjoy a night of ruling the television without any more awkward moments when a barn owl flew through the open window and dropped a letter into his lap.

"What's that about, Harry?" Draco asked.

Harry opened the parchment and read the note from Tonks. "I've got to go. I'll be back later."

"For what? I thought you were going to monopolize the telly... Give me that." Draco snatched the letter from Harry and scanned through it. "Why are you going to meet Tonks to go shopping?"

"It's a code," Harry admitted as he put on his trainers. "I've got Auror work to do tonight."

"I'm sure the paperwork can wait..." Draco grew silent as he watched Harry inspect his wand. "You're going after her, aren't you?"

Harry tried not to look at Draco as he answered. "Yes. The letter also says that a small taskforce in the Ministry knew about the locations of all the missing Death Eaters, but couldn't go after them because of all this legal nonsense that I don't understand and don't want to. The important thing is that I'm going to get her."

"And I'm coming with you."

Harry stilled his movements. "You're not going anywhere. This is just me and Tonks and them."

"Would you cut the hero shit? It's annoying as hell."

"I can't let her hurt you again."

"Who says she will?" Draco pulled out his wand. "I haven't had my old one for awhile, but I know more hexes and curses than you do. You can 'Stupefy' all you want, but if it gets bad... if she has others with her, I can help."

"No."

"You arse." Draco stood in front of Harry and placed his hands on Harry's chest, lightly touching the other man through his jumper. He suddenly grabbed handfuls of Harry's jumper and pulled the Auror down to him. "You're not going without me," he whispered, sending goosebumps along Harry's neck and back.

Harry tried to say something, tried to push Draco away and tell him to mind his own fucking business. But Draco's lips were close to his ear, and all he had to do was move his head a little to the left...

Harry stepped back and went to the bedroom, returning with a long piece of silvery fabric.

"Fine, but you're wearing the cloak."

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Harry and Draco arrived at the specified meeting place via the Portkey provided in Tonks' letter. They waited some minutes before a loud 'pop' sounded through the air and a black-haired Tonks appeared.

"Wotcher, Harry. I tried to get reinforcements, but Bludmore just signed us off as a suicide mission."

Harry cursed under his breath. The new Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement had no interest in having his officers actually do their jobs, as if Voldemort's death meant that dark wizards no longer existed.

"Who's with you?" Tonks asked conversationally as she began to walk to Bellatrix's hiding place.

"No one," Harry lied.

"Harry, I may not have a magical eye, but I know how to detect people without using sight. It's Draco, isn't it?"

"Yeah, it is." Harry focused on the soft ground, where a trail of footprints was forming next to his own, though he couldn't see his companion's feet.

"Well, I usually don't want civilians in my mission, but we don't have much in the way of numbers... Can he use a wand?"

"I'm not dim ... of course I can use a wand."

"Pleasure to talk to you too, dear cousin. Aha, the Lestrangle residence." Tonks motioned to Harry, who caught sight of a ramshackle old building that seemed out of place in the surrounding wilderness.

Draco dropped the hood of the cloak so that his head came into view. "Shall we go?"

"You bet." Tonks held out her wand, and the wizards did the same. They carefully approached the building and paused when they heard shouting coming from within.

"...Dark Lord will return... I'm still the most faithful..."

"Can you let it go, Bella? We had to replace your wand, and we've tried the spells so many times. We're also almost out of Draco's blood and hair..."

"If we run out, we'll find another. Wasn't Vincent Crabbe one of the young ones the Dark Lord planned on training? One of the traitors? Or maybe we can dig up Regulus Black's remains..."

"Bella. There are no more Horcruxes. Even if we could create a body..."

"I have one. He made one more, before the end. *He's inside of me* ... been telling me what to do, bit by bit. He was so weak before, but he'll get stronger..."

"I've heard enough," Tonks said, and Harry couldn't agree more. They both placed their hands close to the building's walls, mapping out the building's dark magic with their fingertips.

"You know what to do?"

Harry nodded. "Draco, stay in the cloak. Only come out and help if things get bad."

"You mean more than usual?"

"Shut it."

"As cute as your married talk is, we have to get started," Tonks said, her voice authoritative. She began to chant the spells necessary for them to enter the building undetected and unharmed. Harry took a deep breath to combat the adrenaline running through his veins.

He was on a mission.

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Harry dodged the hex aimed at him as soon as he had Apparated into the building.

"Look, Rodolphus, we have visitors!" Bellatrix laughed and aimed a curse at Tonks. The Auror jumped to the ground and aimed an *Expelliarmus* at the other witch, who fell backwards as her wand flew out of her hand.

"Surrender now, Mrs. Lestrangle, we've got you surrounded."

"Why all the formalities, Nymphadora? I'm family ... call me Auntie Bella." She raised her arms and murmured some indistinguishable words. Harry's wand was wrenched away from him by invisible hands and floated into Bellatrix's outstretched palm.

"This will be the new wand for the Dark Lord."

"Bella, please, stop this..."

"Rodolphus, you aren't the faithful Death Eater I knew before. But do not worry, the Dark Lord will take care of you when he returns... ahh!" Bellatrix seemed to be dragged backwards, though no one was behind her.

"Get her!"

The invisibility cloak fell, revealing two pale arms restraining Bellatrix's body. Draco Banished Harry's wand back to its owner, and the Aurors cast the necessary binding spells on Bellatrix and her husband.

As the Death Eaters' unconscious bodies fell to the floor, Harry called forth his Patronus and sent to the Ministry. "You think we'll get reinforcements now?"

"I think we will. I also think we'll be getting more work from now on. Thanks for the tip, Harry."

"Don't thank me ... thank the civilian." Draco crossed over to Harry.

"Thank you, Draco." Tonks smiled and turned toward the Lestranges. Bellatrix mumbled in her stupor.

"*Stupefy!*" The witch fell silent, and the others waited for reinforcements to come.

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"It was a bit anticlimactic, wasn't it?" Harry asked later that night or early the next morning back in his flat.

"I don't know ... it was hard enough for me not to just *Avada* her right there." Draco grimaced and eased himself into the corner of the couch.

"Thank Merlin we got her."

Harry sat next to Draco and faced him. "There are still more of them, aren't there ... dark wizards and witches, I mean?"

"Loads."

"Then I'll be working steadily from now on... What is it?" Harry saw something change in Draco's face.

"I just don't have a job yet, that's all. And now that I have a wand..."

"You can come with me! I could talk to Tonks, make you a specialist on Death Eaters or something. Snape was offered a position like that a while back ... he told the Ministry to piss off."

"Really?"

"No, but he did refuse Snape-ishly, which is ten times worse. So how about it? I could ask Tonks tomorrow and..."

"Okay, Harry, we'll do it." Draco reached for his pillow and blanket. "I'm going to sleep now, if you don't mind."

"What if I do mind?"

"What did you say?" Draco placed the bedclothes on his lap.

"What if I *do* mind?" Harry put his head in his hands. This wasn't the way it was supposed to go. He knew how he felt now... He wasn't supposed to antagonize him; he was supposed to say how he wanted Draco in his bed instead of on his couch and didn't want him to get a place of his own. Harry didn't hate Draco anymore; he cared about him, but he felt his stomach forming knots and his throat clenching up, all the whirlwind emotions of the past weeks racing through him, and he couldn't choke out one more word to express it.

Harry lifted his head, almost bumping it against Draco, who was closer to him than before.

Draco's image blurred as his hand reached out and removed Harry's glasses.

"You feel it, too?" Draco said softly.

"I thought you didn't."

"Does this change your mind?" Draco leant in and brushed his lips against Harry's.

Harry answered by kissing Draco back, his lips insistent.

"This makes things okay then?" Harry asked once they parted.

"Until you say something stupid like you always do."

"Are you ever in the wrong?"

"No, not even when I'm snarling at you in an alleyway."

Harry smiled then.

- end.

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