

Mr. Bartender

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After Snape and Draco run, Snape stashes the young pure-blood in Muggle London.
How will Draco cope without wizarding contact, a job, and being surrounded by
Muggles?

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 3

After Snape and Draco run, Snape stashes the young pure-blood in Muggle London. How will Draco cope without
wizarding contact, a job, and being surrounded by Muggles?

"Hurry, Draco." The sound of Snape's voice seemed to echo dully against the tall buildings covering the dark road the pair were now standing on.

"Where are we?" Draco asked, lengthening his stride to keep up with Snape. It seemed like hours ago now that he had been in the Astronomy Tower, his wand pointed at Dumbledore, the Death Eaters urging him on.

"Muggle London." Snape turned a corner, and they spilled onto a more crowded, brightly lit street. Clusters of people stood in front of restaurants and shops, chatting animatedly. "Come," he urged, slowing his pace as he peered past each store front, apparently searching for something.

Draco looked at the small groups and sighed. Muggles, none of them aware that magic even existed, let alone burdened by worries about Voldemort, about their families...

"In here," Snape said, turning into a cobble-stone alleyway.

Draco tore his eyes away from a tall redhead, who was wearing a spangly gold top and laughing with her friends. He followed Snape, his eyes darting around the numerous possible hiding places.

They came out onto another road, also clustered with people. Snape led Draco to a multistory building and pushed the door open, motioning for him to go in.

Draco looked at the marble floor lobby and raised an eyebrow. There was a sign for something called 'elevators' off to one side and a sign on the wall, which listed tenant names and corresponding apartments. He followed Snape up a staircase to the fifth floor, and they emerged in a long, dimly lit hallway.

"Number fifty-five," Snape said, pointing to a door a few feet away. "Remember the number."

Draco looked at the faux granite plaque proclaiming '55' and nodded.

Snape opened the door and went in, Draco close behind him. A tall man with brown hair and strange, glittering green eyes stood in one corner.

"Severus." The man nodded. "And you must be Mr. Malfoy."

Draco nodded, swallowing. "Hello," he said cautiously.

"Draco, this is Jared Vannell. He's a wizard who... well, dabbles in everything, really," Snape said curtly. Draco nodded in acknowledgment.

"Jared, as we discussed, Draco will be needing a job," Snape began, looking at the other man.

"I'll have it sorted by tomorrow. I'm just waiting for someone to get back to me," Jared answered with a nod.

"Good. Thank you." Snape appeared to look grateful for a moment before taking Draco's arm and leading him back to the door.

"Draco, I have some other things to take care of. This is where you'll be staying. I trust it suits your needs?"

"Yes, it's fine," Draco replied quickly, now frowning in concern. "When will you come back?"

"I won't be long. For the time being, Draco, avoid using magic unless absolutely necessary. As you heard, Vannell has set up a job for you. Stay out of trouble, and do your best to blend in here. It's the last place anyone would think to look."

Snape sighed deeply, a shadow of regret crossing his face.

"Sir, what about my mother?" Draco asked.

"I'm taking care of it." Snape nodded, then turned and promptly Disapparated.

Sketch

Chapter 2 of 3

Draco gets a taste of how Muggles live and attends a job interview.

Knock knock. Knock knock. Knock ... BANG BANG.

"Aaaarggh!" Draco threw the quilt back and jumped out of the bed he'd been lying comfortably in moments before, wondering why on earth anyone would want to knock on his door at...oh. It was ten thirty in the morning. No wonder.

Draco dashed through the still unfamiliar living room, wincing as he was half blinded by the bright sun shining cheerfully through the huge window. He peered through the spy hole carefully and recognized Vannell. He glanced down at himself to make sure he was decent and pulled the door open.

"Morning," Vannell said brightly. "Did I wake you? Sorry, mate." He entered without waiting for an invitation and closed the door behind him.

Draco glared at him for a moment, then shook his head and walked into the kitchen, pulling a cupboard open at random. It seemed Vannell had at least had the foresight to stock the kitchen with some basic items, including coffee. He pulled the bag of dark roast out and glanced around the kitchen. "Err." He looked at Vannell, holding up the coffee.

"Oh." Vannell took the bag and rummaged around a drawer for a spoon. He pulled an oddly shaped, apparently electrical, gadget out from another cupboard and placed it on the granite counter.

Draco watched in fascination, his mouth half open. "You have a wand," he pointed out.

"Yes, but you can't use magic, so you're going to have to learn how to do this manually," Vannell pointed out, spooning coffee into the top of the gadget. He filled a glass with water and poured it in, then pressed a button and stood back. "All you have to do," he began, pointing to where he'd poured the coffee in. "Is put two spoons of coffee in, then pour one large glass of water into this bit," he pointed at the other side, "and then hit the button..."

Draco was still gaping at him as if he had sprouted neon green tentacles.

"And then it comes out, all ready made, in the pot." Vannell motioned to the rapidly filling pot.

"Right." Draco raised an eyebrow, stepping forward. "So you put the coffee in here," he said, pointing to one side of the strange item. Vannell nodded, smiling encouragingly. "And water here," he pointed to the other side.

"Yes..." Vannell pulled two cups from a cupboard and set them on the granite island behind him. "And push the button, yes."

"I see," Draco replied. "Okay. I think I can handle that." he nodded.

"Milk? Sugar?" Vannell enquired.

"Dash of milk and one sugar, please," Draco answered.

Vannell prepared the coffees and handed Draco a cup, which he accepted gratefully.

"Hurry. You've got a job interview in a couple of hours, and we've still got to get there," Vannell told him.

"This is Covent Garden," Vannell explained conversationally as he and Draco stepped out of the building. "There's a few decent shops down that way." He pointed towards a large square. "And this is where we're headed." Vannell nodded towards a building that had a large, circular sign outside it with a strange red and blue symbol, with the words 'Covent Garden' printed across the middle.

"What is it?" Draco asked as they crossed the road.

"A tube station," Vannell replied, leading him inside.

Vannell purchased tickets for both of them and spent several minutes explaining to Draco that you had to simply push the ticket into the stile and it opened. Draco watched in horror as his ticket was eaten, but after a moment it popped out of the top of the stile, and he took it and rushed through the barrier.

"I don't understand Muggles," Draco muttered, breathing heavily as he followed Vannell down a long, moving staircase. "And why is this thing moving? I mean in Hogwarts they move location, not step by step..."

"It's convenience for Muggles," Vannell answered.

"Convenience." Draco shook his head disbelievingly. "What the hell is that?" he asked, staring in bewilderment as they stepped off the escalators and were greeted by a large, colorful map that had various names printed next to a long blue line.

"Tube map. Now, these are the easier ones to read," Vannell replied. "See, if you know where you're going, you just have to find it on one of these, and then you know which train to take. As we need to go to Oxford Circus, which is on a different line, we need to change at Piccadilly Circus, which is listed on this one." Vannell pointed to the map on the left.

"I see," Draco muttered, looking little short of horrified.

They stepped onto the platform, pushing past people in suits, tourists consulting maps and teenagers looking like they'd been dipped in tar and decorated with various scrap yard objects. The train pulled up to the platform and the swarm of people stepped forward onto it.

Draco regarded the massive gap between platform and train and hopped over it, biting his lip. "Unbelievable," he muttered, grabbing onto a pole in the middle of the train to keep from falling over as the train took off.

It took them a little less than ten minutes to reach Oxford Circus, where Draco's ticket was again eaten and spat back out at the stile. Vannell led him out onto a packed road, clusters of people so close together that they had to fight and push their way through.

A short walk brought them to an almost empty side street, an odd and sudden change to the cramped and crowded atmosphere of where they'd been only seconds before.

Vannell pointed to a sign hanging off a building a few feet in front of them. As they got closer, Draco examined the sign and saw that it had only one word on it: 'Sketch'.

"Come on," Vannell said, stepping through the doorway. Draco followed him, looking around curiously. The hallway they were now standing in was painted so that the walls appeared to have a stone texture. At the far end, a chair was built into the wall, made to look as though the hallway was a cave and time had created a chair shape out of the stone. A rather modern looking chair, at that.

"Jared, is that you?" a woman's voice called from inside. Spanish pop rock was blaring loudly from the speakers in the room to the left where Vannell motioned for Draco to go. "Lo, Isabel," Vannell said with a nod to the woman walking towards them.

She had dark hair that fell to past her shoulders and strange, dark eyes that seemed to be flecked with green. She shot Draco a smile, which he returned brightly. This couldn't be so bad if she was the boss...

"Draco, this is Isabel. She's the manager," Vannell told him, pulling a stick of Drooble's Best Blowing Gum out of his jeans pocket.

"Nice to meet you." Draco nodded, extending a hand. He wondered briefly if she was a witch; she might have been a Muggle, yet there was something about her that seemed vaguely... offbeat.

"So, Vannell tells me you're looking for a job," Isabel said, walking back through what Draco now realized was a bar. Instead of a door leading back to the hallway, there was a stone archway; the walls were done in the same stone texture. The room had a very high ceiling, and as it was still light outside and the actual bar was still closed, the only lights on were over the bar. Four large, crescent top windows showered the room in light.

"Have a seat," Isabel told them, motioning to the bar stools as she walked around the other side of the bar.

"Err, yes, a job." Draco nodded, sliding onto the stool.

"Good," Isabel replied. "We need another bartender to work eight to two," she said.

"Bartender," Draco repeated, glancing sideways at Vannell. "Well, I'd love the job," he told her, smiling confidently. Vannell, he noticed, was muttering something under his breath.

Isabel nodded, smiling knowingly. "And, ah, you know magic is strictly prohibited in the bar, yes?"

Draco's eyes widened, but he didn't express his surprise. "I don't plan on using any while in the close vicinity of Muggles," he answered.

"Okay, good. Then, come around here." Isabel motioned to the end

of the bar.

Draco obliged, sliding off the stool and walking around next to her.

"Ingredients." Isabel pointed behind them, where there was a shelf that stretched to at least ten feet, piled to the edge with various bottles. She pointed to three compact refrigerators under the shelf. "More ingredients." She pointed to the smaller, stacked shelves next to the refrigerators. "And tools. I want you to mix me a basic Cosmopolitan."

Draco nodded, flashing her a brief smile, and moved toward the shelves filled with glasses and other utensils. He had no idea how he knew a Cosmopolitan was supposed to be served in a martini glass, but suddenly Vannell's odd muttering made sense. He pulled the glass off the shelf and placed it on the counter opposite, before moving to grab a large bottle of plain vodka off the top shelf. He added the other ingredients and finished by adding lime garnish, doing so with a flourish. "Cosmopolitan." Draco nodded, flashing Isabel another smile.

She returned the smile knowingly and picked up the glass to take a sip. "Hmm," she said, nodding. "Not bad. Well, you'll do for now," she told him with a smirk.

"Good. When do I start?" Draco slid a glance at Vannell and nodded his thanks.

"Tonight," Isabel replied. "Get Vannell to show you around here. He can explain what sort of service you'll need to provide and what sort of clientele we get. Be back by six thirty."

"Okay. Thanks." Draco nodded.

Vannell gave Isabel a friendly handshake and nodded to the door.

"Think you can handle that?" he asked Draco as they stepped outside.

"Yeah. Handy bit of magic you did," Draco answered. "All right then. Well, Mr. Malfoy, you'll be tending the bar at one of the hippest in London, so keep your head down and play the role."

"Does it get easier, being constantly surrounded by Muggles?" Draco asked. He said 'Muggles' as though it were a disease.

"Yeah," Vannell replied. "Just takes some getting used to."

Draco nodded thoughtfully.

"Anyway, how about we grab a cup of tea before I show you around?" Vannell suggested cheerfully. "There's a coffee shop just around the corner, which might be worth remembering."

Draco chuckled lightly and nodded. "Tea it is."

Fantastic

Chapter 3 of 3

Draco adjusts to his life working in a bar and meets a surprising stranger. Narcissa is whisked away by Snape in order to ensure her safety.

"Narcissa?" Snape hammered impatiently on the door of the Malfoy Manor, wincing as his hand turned bright red. "Narcissa!"

Narcissa pulled the door open and gaped at Snape standing there, out of breath, rubbing his scarlet hand. "Severus?"

"Narcissa, come, we have no time for questions." Snape took her arm and Apparated out, ignoring her confused expression.

They reappeared in a dimly lit street lined with apartment buildings and houses, Snape letting go of Narcissa as she regained her balance.

"Where are we?" she asked, glancing around.

"Switzerland," Snape replied, walking over and examining the number tag on the nearest building.

"Draco, we need another bottle of raspberry vodka," Isabel said, turning to look at him momentarily.

Draco glanced across the blue mosaic counter and smirked. "Of course, Isabel," he said, his voice dripping with mock obsequiousness. He said nothing of the fact that she had somehow managed to spill a large drop of something on her dress, and there was now a large, dark spot on her thigh.

He walked around the bar and to a door marked, 'Employees Only.' He disappeared through and reappeared a few minutes later, holding a red glass bottle.

"Vodka," he said brightly, putting the bottle down in the now empty space where the previous bottle had sat.

"Thank you," Isabel replied, flashing him a smile.

"Mm hm." Draco sauntered to the opposite end of the bar, leaning back against the counter as his eyes raked over the clusters of people. It was strangely intriguing to just sit and watch people. A pretty blonde was laughing with a dark-haired man in a business suit — he seemed oblivious to how she was gazing at him so adoringly.

"Hey, can I get a White Russian please? Half and half." A strangely calm, friendly voice brought Draco back to where he was standing.

A brunette was smiling at him, a menu in her hands. She was sitting on a stool not two feet from him. For a long moment he had trouble focusing on her words; she was stunningly beautiful.

"Um, White Russian. Absolutely." Draco nodded, turning around to grab a glass and gather ingredients.

He began mixing vodka and Kahlúa, concentrating very hard on the drink itself and not on looking back up at the woman sitting there so casually. Draco bent down and opened one of the small refrigerators, peering intently inside. *Where the bloody hell is the half and half when you need it... And how often do you heathat sentence?* He found it and grabbed it, standing back up and closing the door as smoothly as he could manage. After finishing mixing the drink, he turned to hand her the glass, his breath catching in his throat as he did so.

"Thank you," she said with a smile. Her accent was distinct and somewhat peculiar. It was tinged with British, but she was definitely not a native.

"Can I ask where you're from?" Draco inquired politely, leaning back against the counter and folding his arms casually as she took a sip of her drink.

"Spain," she replied, setting the glass down.

"Your English is fantastic," Draco answered and immediately smacked himself mentally. *Fantastic? Of course it is, you dolt.*

She laughed, and the tinkling sound was like chimes to Draco's ears. "Your White Russians are fantastic," she stated, taking another slow sip.

"Draco!" Isabel's voice cut through his haze of thoughts rudely.

He winced and looked up at the beautiful brunette. "Excuse me," he said, flashing her a smile as he began walking.

"Yes?" he asked, stopping in front of Isabel and watching apathetically as she glanced over a thick sheaf of paper.

"Phone for you. Take the one in the office, it's loud out here," she said without looking up.

"Pho-" Draco broke off, remember mention of the strange devices Muggles used to communicate. "Office. Right. Thanks." He began walking towards the door at the end of the bar.

"Lindsey, do us a favor," he murmured, stopping for a moment to address the other bartender on duty that night.

Lindsey looked up, her green eyes meeting Draco's. "Yeah, what can I do you for?"

"That brunette at the very end of the bar. Keep her happy and give her some incentive to come back, will you?" Draco asked politely, smiling.

"No problem, mate." Lindsey grinned back.

"Cheers." Draco moved towards the door and pushed it open, glancing at the desk as he walked in.

The black plastic device known as a phone was sitting atop the oak desk. He frowned and walked over to examine it. He'd seen Isabel using it — she stuck part of it against her ear and spoke into it, he recalled. He picked it up experimentally. "Hello?"

"Draco? Is that you?" Snape's voice asked.

Draco looked up, bewildered, wondering if Snape had Apparated into the room. Apparently not, the room was still empty.

"Er... yes, I'm here," Draco answered, still puzzled over the strange device.

"I just wanted to let you know that your mother is safe, Draco. I'll be along in a couple of days. Is everything all right?"

"Everything's fine. Thank you, Professor." Draco breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"I had best be going. Keep your head down, Draco." There was a click and then silence.

Draco pulled the receiver away from his ear and peered at it for a long moment. *Strange Muggle inventions*, he thought and reached down to put the receiver back in place. It took several tries, but he eventually got it to sit in what looked like a normal position.

A/N: Thank you, pajamapants, for betaing!