

Coming Of Age

by DeeMichelle

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Draco quickly rolled from atop the fallen Death Eater, then clumsily sat up, wiping the blood from his bruised lip, still reeling from Ron's unexpected punch. He heard someone scream and turned in time to watch as Hermione Granger sent Fenrir Greyback flying in his direction. Draco scrambled to get out of the way as the angry werewolf was flung against the marble pillars.

I've got to get out of here, he thought as he hoisted himself up and began to run from the upper landing of the Entrance Hall. He pushed through scattered students, turning corners, sprinting down lengthy hallways, and descending staircase after staircase until the battle above—to anyone who didn't know better—sounded as if it were a faint scuffle.

The path he had taken led him to just outside the Potions classroom, where he reluctantly slowed his pace. His heart and mind were still racing as he stopped and surveyed his surroundings, taking deep breaths while trying to stop the thrumming in his ears, listening for the lightest sound, and watching for the slightest movement in the shadows—any possible clue that he had been followed.

Relief flooded Draco as he leaned against the stone wall and slowly slid downward to sit on the cold floor. *What the hell have I got myself into?* Draco thought as his breathing finally calmed.

'Chicken shit way out ... running away like a hunted ferret,' he said sarcastically, then cringed as he heard the sound of his voice bounce through the empty hallway.

'Draco?' A whispered voice spoke as the Potions classroom door creaked open. 'Is that—'

'Shit, Pans!' Draco quietly chastised. 'What the hell are you doing down here? And alone? I thought McGonagall had Filch send you packing?'

'She tried,' answered Pansy as she moved through the doorway and sat down beside him. 'Filch thought it best that I wait for Headmaster Snape down here.'

'Not a very smart thing, Pans. You should have left.'

Pansy looked over to her long-time friend. 'You're my family, Draco.'

Draco stood, brushed himself off, and offered her his hand. 'Let's go somewhere a bit warmer.'

Taking his proffered hand, Pansy rose, and they walked side by side to the Slytherin common room. Once settled on the settee by the still-warm fireplace, Draco's shoulders slumped, and he put his face in his hands.

Pansy sat staring into the fireplace, not wanting to break the silence.

Draco sat back and raked his fingers through his sweat-soaked blond hair. 'Pans, I've done some terr—'

'Don't,' she interrupted. 'Just stop right there. This isn't a confessional, and I don't give a bloody rat's arse what you've done. We've all made mistakes, Draco. You're not alone in that.'

'But my father ...'

'Your *mother* loves you, and so does your father ... in his own way,' she finished as she reached to stroke a stray tear from his cheek.

Draco flinched. 'I don't need your *pity*, Parkinson.'

Pansy let go of Draco's hand and grabbed his face, turning his head and holding him so that he had to look directly at her. 'Have I ever been one to pity you ... or anyone else for that matter? No?' She continued without pause. 'Don't think this bloody war will change one bloody thing about how I feel toward you.'

Draco reached up and gently pried her fingers from his face, kissing each hand before enfolding them in his lap.

'What happens to me if I lose you?' he asked, his eyes pleading with hers.

Pansy moved and knelt before him, keeping her hands enclosed in his. 'Draco Malfoy, you are the son of a very powerful wizard, the only heir to the Malfoy name, and the man I love. You aren't going to lose me.'

Draco moved forward and pulled Pansy up from the floor to sit next to him once more. 'I'm scared, Pansy. My father can do nothing about that.'

'Oh, yes, he can, my son.'

Both Draco and Pansy started and turned toward the sound of Narcissa Malfoy's commanding tone.

'Lucius,' Narcissa called loudly, never taking her eyes from the couple, 'he's here ... with Pansy Parkinson.'

Draco stood quickly, attempting to straighten his crumpled robes as his father's tall figure moved through the common room doorway.

'Father, I ...'

Lucius took three full strides forward and embraced his son, holding him close.

Pansy moved quietly to stand beside Narcissa, reaching out and grasping her hand, giving it a light squeeze of reassurance.

Lucius whispered, 'You must now take care of Pansy, Draco,' as he slowly allowed his son to step out of his embrace.

Draco stepped around his father and held his hand out for Pansy. She took it, and they walked a few feet away from the elder couple. Draco gave a pleading look towards his father, then turned and spoke directly to Pansy.

'Pans, use the Floo in Snape's office and go to our place ... you know where I mean?' Draco asked somewhat secretly. 'I need to stay with my parents. You can understand that. Right?'

Pansy smiled and nodded, returned to hug Narcissa, then moved back towards Draco, careful to step around Lucius. 'Mr Malfoy,' she acknowledged, then kissed Draco full on the lips. 'Don't make me wait too long for you,' she directed as she made her way through the common room and out the door.

Lucius held his hand out to his waiting wife, lifting his chin and tilting his head as if listening for something. Nodding to his family, he said, 'Let us return. We will await these ... events—together.'

Hand in hand, as to not lose one another, the Malfoy family found themselves shuffling through the horde of people as they made their way back to the Great Hall, stepping over and around the dead bodies of fellow Death Eaters and students.

They sat together against a wall, watching the others grieve for those who had died.

'He's gone.'

Draco heard his mother's whisper and thought he saw the flash of a sneaker move across the floor near the Gryffindor table. Smiling to himself at the memory from his sixth year, Draco felt some relief. Although he had never really cared—or thought he hadn't, until now—Harry was safe, and Draco was glad.

Voldemort was dead.

He still had his family.

Life would move on.

A/n: Thanks to my betas. You know I adore you!