

Tulip in the Sand

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[Complete] Their arranged marriage was a tug-of-war: a war-of-wits, a war-of-pride, a war-of-dominance. But if both ever succumb to each other, will either survive the other's trials or the real war brewing around them? [Draco & Angelina]

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1 - Part One

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By Evilevergreen

Summary: In the loneliest of places, where the rain never falls, and the light of the sun is harsh and eternal, a flower in the desert, blooms through the sand. (Draco & Angelina)

OoOoO

Chapter One: The Arrangement

It was late December as Angelina sat in front of her vanity mirror in a magnificent manor that she soon had learned to call home. She looked at her reflection hard and wondered how long ago she had lost herself under that man she called her husband.

Her raven black hair was pinned up as loose curls fell slightly before reaching her shoulders. Her dress was one he had bought her for the occasion, soft pink and strapless. A slight shimmer reflected from her dress as the light behind her made contact. For all his faults though, she had to admit, he had wonderful taste.

She stood up and slipped on her matching shoes and as she was doing so, she felt that she was no longer alone in the room. She turned her head and, sure enough, there stood her husband. He was a tall man of 6'1" with slate gray eyes and light, silver blonde hair. He was a handsome man, that she would never argue, but if she had had a choice, he would not have been the man she would have chosen to marry. "Ready, Tulip?" he finally spoke.

He had started calling her 'Tulip' within the first year of their marriage and although Angelina never quite understood the reasoning behind it; the name didn't bother her. Besides he had never shown her a lot of affection, nor her him, but they operated on a level of respect for each other and so she welcomed the nickname.

"Of course, Draco." She picked up her purse and Draco offered his right arm which she graciously took it. "Thank you." He nodded his head as he looked at their reflections in the vanity mirror, but his eyes never left his left cheek. On his cheek was a cross like scar that he had received during the Final Battle. He was very self-conscious about it, though only a handful of people were aware that he was. "You look fine," Angelina reassured him.

He smiled slightly and looked down at his wife. "I know."

She smiled too; he was a decent person when in a good mood. "You're a cocky bastard."

"Yes, I know that too," he replied before they Apparated out of the room.

They reappeared in a long hall that was lightly lit and began walking towards the huge wooden doors

that lay before them. Angelina looked to the man she had been married to for five years. Their marriage had been arranged long before they had the voices to protest and backed by the laws of the Wizarding world. As soon as Draco was born, his father, Lucius Malfoy set out looking for the girl that would, one day, be his son's life-long companion.

There were several girls that had made the final cut, Angelina being one of them. Lucius had studied the girls for many years and the backgrounds of their families. By the time Angelina was nine years old the choice had been between her and one other girl. The other girl was born in the same year as Draco, whereas Angelina was two years older. The other child would grow up to be Pansy Parkinson.

Lucius Malfoy had spoken to each set of parents about a possible arrangement. The Parkinsons, who knew that the Malfoys were a rich and powerful pureblood family, eagerly thought arrangements were in order for their Pansy. The Johnsons, on the other hand, were a bit hesitant about it. They didn't think it was right for parents to choose their children's companions, but considering who the Malfoys were and their not-so-good reputation, told Lucius they would think about the offer, if only to avoid being threatened.

Angelina met Draco for the first time when she was ten years old and Draco was only eight. The meeting wasn't a planned one by either Lucius or by Angelina's parents. The two of them had met one day in a children's park near the swings and simply played together that day. Mrs. Johnson immediately recognized the silver blonde headed boy playing with her daughter and was surprised at how well the two got along, because Angelina, even then, had a temper that made other children shy away from her. So perhaps an arranged marriage wasn't as ridiculous as Mrs. Johnson once thought.

Mrs. Johnson was not the only one to notice how well the children had gotten along; Mrs. Malfoy at this point, was certain that Angelina would be the perfect companion for Draco. She then watched as Angelina was being called away by her mother and followed suit to call her own child and take him home.

It would be three years before the two saw each other again, but neither paid any attention to the other when they did, for they had no reason to. They did not know that at the tender ages of eleven and thirteen that their paths had already been chosen.

They had both started dating while attending Hogwarts. Angelina dated one guy, off and on, by the name of Fred Weasley; while Draco, ironically, dated the only other girl his father had thought worthy of him: Pansy Parkinson.

FLASHBACK

Angelina was nineteen years old and on the 'off' side of dating Fred in their relationship, but the rumor was that he had plans on proposing to her as soon as she returned home. She was studying abroad, much to her parent's dismay, in a Muggle university away in America, when she received an owl telling her to come home right away. It was December and the holidays would be coming up soon; she wondered what was so important that her folks could not wait another week to tell her.

When she arrived home, her parents sat her down in the den and told her of the arrangement they had set up for her when she was younger. Needless to say, Angelina was not very happy to hear of this, and was disappointed that her parents didn't think her wise enough to choose her own mate. Her parents then brought up the irresponsible Fred Weasley, and let's just say, it all went down hill for Angelina after that.

As Angelina was asking whom they had chosen for her, there came a knock at the door of the den and in came Lucius and Draco Malfoy. A look of complete horror could be read on Angelina's face while on Draco's it was clear that he wasn't pleased, but neither was he disappointed.

The parents soon left Draco and Angelina alone in the den to speak. "You do know it's in your best interest to marry me," Draco stated as soon as the door closed behind their parents.

"Oh, and why is that?" He watched as she crossed her long legs.

He then leaned on Mr. Johnson's desk. "Because the Dark Lord will rise soon and all that stand against him will perish. And if Saint Potter thinks that he can defeat the Dark Lord once again, he is in for a rude awakening."

"He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named returning is nothing more than a rumor. You act as if you know," she replied.

Draco's eyes shot towards her. "Maybe I do," he said in a low voice. "But no matter, there is absolutely no way out of this arrangement short of death, believe me, I've looked." He pushed himself off of the desk and walked towards Angelina. "You're going to be my wife, whether we like it or not. So before you are , there are going to be a few rules."

"Rules?"

"Yes, rules. Do I need to spell it out for you?" He stood over her.

Feeling a little uncomfortable with him glaring down at her, Angelina rose out of her seat and stood before him. "No," she said with disdain.

"Good. First off, I don't love you. I have never loved you, and will never love you."

"Good. Same thing on this end."

"Second. Once married, we will only be married in name. We will live in the same house to keep up appearances, but I will have my life, and you will have yours. Assuming you have one. I will keep my affairs quiet and out of the public eye, and I expect you to do the same. We Malfoys, if anything, must keep up a strong family front."

"Heaven forbid that we Malfoys appear weak or unstable, huh?" Angelina asked, not realizing she had referred to herself as a Malfoy.

"Glad we're on the same page." He took a pause. "Oh yeah, there's one other little thing."

"What is it?" Angelina asked almost in a manner of blowing him off.

"You will bear me one male heir," he said as calmly as if asking her to pass the salt.

"Hell no! I'll never let you touch me," she replied, giving Draco her full attention once again.

"Believe me; I know where you're coming from, because I don't want to touch you as much as you don't want me to touch you. But eventually you will give me a son." He stepped away from Angelina and went to go look out the window. "But I'll let you know what, whenever you're ready, you come to me. Deal?" He looked back over to her.

"You maybe waiting awhile," she scoffed. "A long while at that."

"Trust me, I'm in no hurry." He crossed his arms and peered out the window once again.

"Whatever." She walked over to him and rested on the other side of the window. "But I have a few rules of my own."

"Oh?" He cocked an eyebrow towards her.

"Rule number one, this is shoot, you are a piece of shoot, and-" She was interrupted.

"So that would make you Mrs. shoot," Draco smiled.

Angelina tilted her head to one side and made a face. "Cute." She then took a deep breath as she looked down at the floor and said to herself. "What in the world am I going to tell Fred?"

"You mean, you're still with that git?" Draco looked at her in disbelief. "And here I thought you were smart. I was sure you would have found someone better by now."

"What? Are you and my parents like mentally linked, because I swear, they said about the same thing not that long ago."

"Yeah, well face it Johnson, I'm a major upgrade from the weasel." He polished his nails on his robes. "If I weren't, do you honestly think your parents would have agreed to this union?"

Angelina always knew that her parents disapproved of Fred, but she never thought enough, to have her married off to someone else. According to the Wizarding Laws, which Angelina completely thought needed to be revised, if they didn't go through with this union, they both faced death. There was really no way out of this.

"Fine, but let's get this over with as soon as possible." *How bad could this really be?* She pondered. She would still be able to be with Fred, her and Draco would only be married in name.

"Set a date and I'll be there," he said casually.

"End of the month. New Year's Eve."

"What?" He looked at her like she was out of her mind. "No. I'm not going to be doing my last term at Hogwarts as a married man. I swear the walls have ears, I won't be able to keep my affairs quiet within them."

"Boohoo. Cry me a river, why don't you? Because I'm sure even you can keep your pants zipped for five months. Besides, I thought you would be pleased, getting married before you're done at Hogwarts would establish to others that you're committed, that we're committed, therefore, we would have the basis of 'a strong family front'," she said mockingly as she made little bunny ears with her fingers.

Draco slowly leaned in closer to Angelina and licked his lips as he studied her face. "You want me, don't you?" he said before giving a small chuckle.

"Yeah." Angelina took a step back, "like I want a yeast infection."

Draco straightened himself back up and gave Angelina an odd look. "What's that?"

Angelina laughed and shook her head. "Nothing Malfoy, forget about it."

He nodded his head in agreement. "You know, for all intent and purposes, I am your fiancé now, you can call me Draco," he shrugged his shoulders, "if you like."

"Fine." She walked toward the den's door. "Draco."

"Can I call you Angelina?" he asked, surprised that he did.

With her hand on the knob, Angelina slightly turned around. "No." She then opened the door and walked out.

Draco smiled contently as he made his way towards the door. "If anything, life with her sure won't be dull."

Chapter Two: The Day She Died

Angelina was about a week into her holiday break and felt like she needed a break from her break. She and Draco had been out and about planning for their wedding, making sure when people saw them together they looked as happy as any other engaged couple would be. Much to Angelina and Draco's amazement, pretending to be happy together wasn't really that difficult for them.

It was late and Angelina was in her room at her parents' home getting ready for bed. She was about to turn off the lights when she heard a popping sound behind her. She turned around and saw Fred standing there. She smiled happily, but her smile soon vanished when she saw the intense look on Fred's face. "What the hell are you playing at, Angel?" Fred shoved a newspaper into her chest.

Angelina took a hold of the paper; it was *The Daily Prophet*. On the cover in big bold letters read: **Wizards World's Most Eligible Bachelor Now Taken – The Malfoy Engagement**. It was

accompanied by a picture of her and Draco, holding hands, and looking very happy as they entered a bridal store.

Angelina looked up from her paper. "Trust me, this is nothing." She tossed the paper aside.

"How is this nothing?" He went and picked up the paper and just stared at the photo, as Draco and Angelina smiled at him and waved. "Please, tell me this is some kind of joke." He looked at her with hope in his eyes. "Because if it is, you got me, you got me good okay. Just tell me it's a joke." He looked back down at the paper. "A very cruel joke."

"Stop looking at this thing." She ripped the paper from his hands. "It's not a joke I'm engaged, but Fred-

He fell onto her bed. "How? Why? When? I'm mean, was he who you were with, when we weren't together?"

"Of course not." She sat next to him. "Look Fred, this is an arranged marriage. Malfoy and I have already discussed this, we will only be married in name. We can still be together Fred." She took his hand. "Just as long as we aren't seen together," she added.

Fred violently pulled his hand away. "You don't get it. You belong to another man!"

"I belong to myself," she defended.

"All the same." He stood up calmly. "I can't be with a married woman." He stepped away. "I just can't."

"Fred." She stood up and took a hold of him. "Don't you dare do this to me!"

"Don't do this to you?" He grew upset. "What about what you've done to me? How come you didn't tell me?" He pulled away again. "How come I had to find out in the damn newspaper!" He pointed to the paper on the floor. "I was with my brothers and Ginny in the shop when we saw that thing." He struck his chest. "You made me feel like a fool!"

Angelina became frightened; this was not her Fred, he had never raised his voice to her before. "Fred." She choked back tears. "Please. I'm sorry. You're right, I should have told you as soon I found out. I'll make it up to you, I promise." She reached for him.

"How Angel?" he said in a harsh whisper, as Angelina embraced him. "How can you make up for being with someone else?" Fred's arms betrayed him as they wrapped around Angelina. "Don't you understand, this destroys any future we had together?"

"We can still be together," Angelina pleaded.

"No, we can't." He gently pulled away from her and looked into her eyes, as moist with tears as his own were. "I refuse to be the other man Angel. I refuse to live and love you in the shadows of your marriage. I know we had some difficult times. . ." He lost his voice for a moment. "But I always thought eventually we would be together; that you would one day take my name and be my wife. That one day you would have my children, and we would grow old together. And if we couldn't have that." he slowly shook his

"You, an angel?" Draco leaned over the table and turned the book in his direction, so he could see what page she stopped on. "Ha! I've heard stories of you and your temper that would make the devil run for cover." He looked down at the book.

"Hey! I've taken classes for that. And I-" She stopped when she saw Draco's head slightly jerk up from the page and look at her. She noticed that his face had turned soft, and it was actually very becoming of him. He looked like what he actually was: a seventeen year old boy and not a man trapped in a boy's body. For a moment he truly looked like an innocent child. "Draco?" she said, a touch above a whisper.

"You remember the day we met?" His reply was more like a statement than a question, but nevertheless his eyes seem to yearn for a certain answer.

Angelina shook her head slightly. "That day outside the Quidditch field?"

"I was a second year by then."

"Look, no offence, but back in school, people didn't exist in my world unless they correlated with Quidditch," she explained, as their waiter, Luke, brought their lattes.

Draco nodded his head and straightened back up to receive his drink. As he took a sip of his latte, Angelina watched as the steam from it swept over his face and his child-like expression melted from his features.

Angelina took her own latte and they sat in a comfortable silence. They were half way through their drinks when Draco looked up and noticed the clock on the wall, and realized he was late for a meeting with his father. He then turned his head and noticed someone with a camera outside the café window.

Draco stood up and put a few Galleons on the table before putting on his winter coat. "I have to go." He then leaned over and touched his right cheek with Angelina's right cheek. To anyone on the other side of them it looked as though he was giving her a parting kiss. "Photographer." He explained and then said bleakly, "I like page thirty-two." With their business for the day concluded, he walked out the café door.

Angelina turned the book back towards herself, and saw that she had left the book on page thirty-two, it was an arrangement of assorted tulips.

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Angelina was once again at home in her room. She was sitting in her bed with a piece of parchment and quill, writing about the tenth "I'm sorry" letter to Fred. He had not responded to any of her letters so far, but she figured if she just kept on trying, that eventually he would come around. She sent the letter on its way before she climbed into bed and fell to sleep.

She decided to sleep in the next day, and was only awoken by a popping sound that she heard. She turned in her bed to see who had Apparated into her bedroom. "I'm sorry, I thought you would be up and dressed by now."

"It's okay." Angelina sat up and saw the face she wanted to see, it just didn't belong to the person she

wanted to see. But nevertheless she was happy to see a friendly face all the same. "I thought you weren't talking me, George."

"I've had some time to think about it. I've decided this isn't your fault." George was always the logical one.

"Thank you. Now could you explain that to Fred?" She then asked anxiously, "How is he?"

"Hurting. Badly." He pulled up her desk chair beside her bed, and took a seat. "You got to stop, Angie."

"Stop what?" she asked.

George reached into his pocket and pulled out the letters she had sent Fred. They were all unopened. "This." He laid the letters on her bed. "I can't stand the way he looks when he receives one of these from you."

"I can't help it. I know he blames me, but it's not like I chose Draco over him."

"You use Malfoy's first name now? Never mind, it's beside the point." George waved it off. "Look when it comes to rules, you know me and Fred, we have no problems being the first to break them, but Angie, what you're doing. . . its marriage," he tried to explain, "See, if it were you and Fred, he would honor the vows of your marriage 'till his dying day, and he would expect you to do the same. And you wanting to be with him even after you're married to Malfoy, throws off everything he has ever believed about marriage, because he never saw you as one to break your vows."

"But George, I don't love Dra- Malfoy. It's not the same." She kept her composure.

"It is to him, " he told her. "Angie, I love you, you're one of my best friends, so please don't take this the wrong way." Angelina only looked at him. "Keep your distance from Fred. The only way he can get over you, is if he believes, mind, body, and soul, that you are dead. So please, give my brother that peace and don't send anymore letters. Let him go, so that he can finally start to get over you."

"I don't want to hurt him anymore."

"Then stay away. Stop sending letters. Can you do that?"

She mouthed the word, "Yes," but sound seemed incapable of escaping her lips.

"Oh, Angie," George got out of the chair and sat on the bed. "Come here." He allowed Angelina to cry on his shoulder. "It's okay, it's going to be okay," he comforted her.

Angelina didn't want to believe it; that she was no longer a part of Fred's world. The thought of letting him go, she had no words to explain it, but she loved him enough not to want to keep on hurting him. And so, she realized that she could be no more than a memory to him, no more than a passing thought, if that at all. So she would be what he wanted her to be: she would be dead to him. She would give him that gift – she would give him that peace.

Chapter Three: Man and Wife

It was one o'clock in the morning on January first as Angelina sat in front of the vanity mirror in the bedroom of the newest Malfoy Manor, built for her and Draco. She had been Mrs. Draco Lucius Malfoy for at least nine hours and it wasn't sitting with her well. She had this feeling in the pit of her stomach telling her this whole situation was wrong, but what could she do? She thought as she played with the rope around her housecoat.

Soon Draco entered the room, his hair was damp from his shower and he was wearing a pair of silk purple pyjamas that clashed with his slate gray eyes. He looked over at Angelina, but said nothing as he walked over to the bed, turned down the sheets and climbed in.

Angelina continued to stare at herself in the mirror. She drifted in and out of random thoughts, but mostly she thought about the day's event. Many of Angelina's relatives had showed up for the wedding, she never doubted they would, but what left her heart aching, was the absence of her friends. In fact, only one showed up and it had been George, but Angelina was certain that he hadn't told the others where he was headed for the day.

She met up with him at the reception, between her and Draco's act of playing the happy couple. "You look beautiful today, Angie." George told her.

She had given him a half-hearted smile. "Thank you." She hugged him. "I don't know how long I can do this," she confessed in a whisper. "How could my parents do this to me? Why was this union so important?"

"Maybe they just wanted you to be happy," he said as they pulled away from each other and took a seat at a nearby table.

"Don't play. How could I possibly be happy married to a man - a boy, in fact, that I don't love?" She played with a napkin on the table nervously.

"I don't know, but you looked pretty happy with him a little while ago," George commented, not meaning to sound insulting.

Angelina threw her napkin down on the table. "That's a lie!" Several heads turned her way. She smiled at them and gave them a forced chuckle, once again playing the part of the happy bride. She then swiftly turned her head back to George and leaned towards him so only he could hear. "That spectacle you just witnessed, is nothing more than an act and you know it," she said in an angered whisper. "I love Fred."

George leaned towards her as well. "I know that. I'm just saying, look at Malfoy's parents. You know that's an act too, a bad one at that, because you can tell they don't love each other. But for some reason, you and your new husband pull it off just fine." Angelina could tell that now he had meant to sound insulting.

"What are you trying to say, George?"

"What I'm trying to say is, that maybe there's something there that you can't bring yourself to admit."

Angelina couldn't understand where this was coming from. Why was George talking to her like this?

"You have known me since I was eleven years old, have I ever, and I mean *ever*, expressed any interest in Malfoy?"

"That's just it Angie. This," he gestured to their surroundings, "just came out of nowhere. And yes I know this was arranged, but it looks like you didn't even try to fight this." George addressed his concerns.

Angelina tried to explain it the best she could. "My parents love me, and if they had chosen anyone else, I could have simply said no, and I know I would not have to face any kind of punishment. And believe me, there have been moments where I look at Draco and my mind screams 'No.' But then I remember that first day, in my parent's den, with Draco and his father. They only had a few words, but I definitely got the picture, Draco is afraid of his father. And if his own son couldn't convince him, how could I?"

"So you gave up without trying?" George asked her. "That's not like you."

Angelina shook her head. "I really hate to say this, because it's not my style, but some battles can not be won."

Angelina looked defeated in George's eyes, but something inside of him, told him to keep pushing. "Why did it always look like you were avoiding him in school?"

She wasn't expecting that question. "If it looked like I was avoiding someone - you're right I was - but it wasn't Draco. For one thing, he's two years younger than we are." She sat back up. "And he wasn't a threat to me, so he wasn't worth the effort," she defended.

"Is that what you used to tell yourself, Angie?" George said in a low voice.

"What the hell?" She looked at him as if he were a stranger. "This is stupid, George, and I do not wish to discuss this anymore," she said angrily, but then said softly. "So please just drop this, okay?"

George looked down at the table and nodded his head. "I'm sorry. It's just me and the others, we were talking, and Alicia was like-" He was cut off by the touch of Angelina's hand on his.

"No. I can't talk about them." She shook her head and squeezed his hand. "Please, don't let them turn you against me," she begged. "You're all I have left."

"For crying out loud!" Draco's voice boomed, shaking Angelina from her thoughts. She turned around to see him sitting up in bed. "It's two in the morning." He seemed extremely pissed. "I'm not going to bite, so turn off the lights and come to bed." He lay back down and pulled the blanket over his head, and then gave off a loud groan.

Angelina smiled at his frustration, and then George's voice crept into her mind. *Maybe there's something there that you can't bring yourself to admit.* She pushed the thought from her head as she turned off the lights. She then walked over to the bed where she dropped her robe, underneath it she wore a wife beater and a pair of boxer shorts with smiley faces on it. Both Angelina and Draco slept with their backs towards each other; both wondering why the other didn't complain about sleeping in the same bed.

It was early. Really early. So early that the sun was barely up. Yet it was up enough for some light to peak through the curtains. A beam of light hit Angelina square in the face; she squinted her eyes tightly as she made a mental note to have the curtains fixed. She slowly opened her eyes, but as soon as did, she noticed a figure moving around in the darkness. She was frozen for a moment, cursing herself for leaving her wand on the vanity mirror dresser. She gradually, so as not to be noticed, moved her hand to Draco's side of the bed. "What are you doing?" the dark figure asked callously. Angelina realized it was Draco and sighed in relief.

She then snapped up. "Merlin!" Her voice was shrilled. "What are *you* doing stalking around in the dark!" she said angrily, as she got out of bed. She walked over to the window and pulled back the curtains. "It's called sunlight." She turned around and put her hands on her hips. "Say it with me now, sunli-" She stopped.

Draco smiled as he watched Angelina's surprised face. He was standing in the middle of the bedroom with absolutely nothing on. He lifted his arms a bit and made a little circle. "Like what you see?" he asked her, once he had made a full 360 degrees.

Angelina looked up and down at the masculine body that stood before her. She shifted her weight to one side and scratched her head, and said with a straight face, "You need a tan." Draco cocked an eyebrow; it wasn't exactly the answer he was looking for. Angelina then picked up her house robe and put it on. "Put some clothes on before you catch a cold," she said, as she walked out the bedroom door.

It was later in the day as Angelina stood looking out the patio window at the winter wonderland that covered the Malfoy estate. The holiday break was coming to an end and she would be heading back to America to finish her studies. Draco would also be heading back to school to finish his last term at Hogwarts.

"I hired a gardener, to keep the grounds while we're away," Draco stated as he entered the living room with a book in his hand. He sat in an armchair near the fire, and opened the book.

Angelina took a seat in the armchair across from him. "A gardener? So, I'm guessing you wouldn't just hire anyone to look after your home; it must be someone you trust."

He looked up from his book. "Your point?" He seemed annoyed.

Angelina rolled her eyes. "What's the gardener's name?"

"Grayson," he replied as his eyes drifted back down to his book. "Is there anything in particular you would like grown on the estate?"

Angelina thought for a moment, but shook her head. "No, nothing comes to mind, so anything you pick will be fine." She stared at Draco for a while and realized that he wasn't actually reading the book, but staring at something on one of the pages. "What are you reading?"

Draco immediately closed the book. "Nothing you would care about." He then got out of his seat and headed towards the door. He then turned back around. "What time do you plan on leaving tomorrow?"

picking up some things that she needed. Her shopping was long finished when the sun had finally made its descent, yet she continued to walk down the alley, not really sure where her feet were carrying her, as she walked through the crowd of people.

When she finally decided to take a break from her walking, she realized she was across the street from Weasleys Wizard Wheezes. She smiled to herself as she saw Fred and George come from out of the back room and into the main area of the shop. They were laughing and, for Angelina, it was such a good sight to see. Then someone else came out of the back room, it was a woman that Angelina had never seen before. She watched as the woman approached Fred and lovingly wrapped her arms around him. She continued to watch as Fred accepted her embrace, and greeted her with a kiss on the forehead.

Angelina took a sharp intake of breath; it had not even been six months yet and he was already over her, while she felt she was nowhere near being over him. As she blinked back her tears, she wished she had listened to George and had stayed away.

Not being able to watch anymore, she slowly began to walk away, but something was wrong, very wrong. She heard a scream among the crowd and while others ran away from it, others ran towards it. Angelina was confused as to what was going on until she saw lights from wands casting spells. People were still running and someone bumped into Angelina, causing her to lose her balance, she fell to the ground and dropped the bag of the items she had bought that day.

She stood back up and went to reach for her wand. "Ah, ah, ah." Angelina looked up to see a Death Eater standing before her with his wand pointed in her direction. "I wouldn't do that if I were you," he said playfully.

Angelina slowly released her wand. The Death Eater started walking closer, making Angelina retreat until she ran into the wall of a building. She was trapped. She could see that the Death Eater before her was not alone as others seem to invade the streets of Diagon Alley. "It's a shame really," the Death Eater spoke, "having to kill someone so beautiful."

Angelina watched as he lifted his wand ready to cast the spell that would kill her. She closed her eyes to await the inevitable. "Stop!" Angelina heard a thunderous, yet almost frantic voice. She opened her eyes to see what was happening.

"Why?" asked the one who was about to kill her.

A Death Eater emerged from the darkness and gracefully lifted his hand to his white mask and slowly pulled it off while looking towards the one that had questioned him. "Because, she is my wife." The Death Eater nodded his apology as he lowered his wand and backed away into the shadows.

Draco turned towards Angelina, who was almost in a state of shock. He grabbed her by the arm and shook her out of it. She stared at him with wide eyes. "I don't know why you're so surprised. You knew this is what I would become," he said with a cynical tone. "Go home. Stay there," he ordered as he let go of her arm. Angelina opened her mouth to speak. "Now!"

Angelina realized that this was not the perfect time to disagree with Draco, so she simply nodded her head and Apparated. *What was she doing here?* Draco thought as he looked at his surroundings. He

then spotted the Weasleys' shop. *Of course*, he thought as he walked towards the store.

Chapter Four: Dawn of a New Day

It was an hour before midnight as Angelina walked around the ground floor of the manor lit only by candlelight. It had been about two weeks since the incident with Draco. It had also been that long since she'd seen him. Hogwarts had let out for the summer a week ago and Draco had not returned home. There was a war going on outside these walls and, like Draco had instructed, she stayed within them.

Angelina did not want to admit it to herself, but she was scared. She worried for her friends who she knew would be involved with the battle, and also for her family. She tried to get an owl out to them, but her owl refused to go, and she couldn't blame it. She hated being in this big house by herself, especially at night. Though the house was new, it felt as if it had a soul of its own. Angelina constantly felt like she was being watched.

The days were a bit easier though, because she at least had Grayson to talk to when he would take his break to have tea with her. Having lunch together in the manor soon developed into an everyday thing.

Angelina had just reached the bottom of the stairs about to go up to her bedroom, when she heard a thud at the door. She turned to face it when she heard the sound. "Hello?" she called out, but there was nothing. She slowly walked towards the door. "Hello?" she called out again, but there was still nothing.

She pulled out her wand as she put her other hand on the knob and gently turned the handle. She opened the door and jumped back as the body that was leaning on the door collapsed to the floor. "Ahhh!" She pointed her wand to the body that was laying face down on the floor. She knelt down and turned the body over. "Draco?" she whispered to his unconscious form.

He was dressed in his Death Eater robe which was drenched in blood. There was so much that Angelina couldn't tell if it was all his. His face was also covered in the red liquid. It looked as though his white mask had shattered and some of the pieces from it had become lodged in his face, mostly on the left side.

Angelina dragged his body inside. She had to get help, but she couldn't let him be seen in his Death Eater robe. She struggled to get the robe off of him, and when she did, she gathered it in her arms and looked for a place to hide it. She ran to the living room and threw it into the fireplace and lit a fire. She noticed, as she ran back to Draco that the blood from his robe had transferred onto her housecoat.

She soon realized that Draco was too heavy for her to carry and that dragging him around the manor was not practical. She ran through the house and out the back door and to the cabin that Grayson stayed in on the estate. "Grayson!" She banged on the cabin door furiously. "Grayson!" Grayson opened the door and was surprised to see Angelina covered in blood. "I need your help." When Grayson saw her take off back towards the house, he followed.

"My God," Grayson whispered, as he came into the front of the house and saw the drag marks lined with blood, and the lifeless body of his boss on the floor. "We need to get him to a hospital," he said to Angelina as she knelt back down beside Draco to check on him.

“No, no hospitals!” she yelled, not realizing how hysterical she sounded to Grayson. She knew taking Draco to the hospital would eventually expose him as a Death Eater. He would then be put on trial and if that happened, Angelina knew that he would be found guilty and sentenced to life in Azkaban. “Please, let’s just get him upstairs.”

Grayson picked Draco up and carried him up the stairs, while Angelina slowly followed behind them. He put Draco down on the bed while Angelina went and got a bowl of water and a wash towel, along with a pair of tweezers.

She started with the broken pieces of the shattered mask. She carefully removed them with the tweezers, but it wasn’t easy though, since many of the pieces were rooted deep into his face.

It had taken her about half an hour to recover all the pieces. She was going to start cleaning him up with the water and wash towel when to her horror she realized he was bleeding from his side. She looked up and saw that Grayson was still in the room. She had been so involved with Draco that she had forgotten that he was there. “Grayson, go to the bathroom, it’s right down the hall, look in the medicine cabinet and bring me a needle and thread.”

“Of course, Madam Malfoy.” Grayson left the room to fetch the items.

Angelina started to undo the buttons on Draco’s blood stained shirt. “It’s going to be okay Draco. I got you.” She whispered. When she opened his shirt she noticed the long gash on his side and cursed at herself for not seeing to it first, but it didn’t seem to be bleeding before or else she thought she would have noticed it.

Grayson soon returned and Angelina went to work with the stitches on his side. When that was completed, she began to clean off his face realizing that the cuts on them were too deep to heal themselves. She decided it would be best if she seamed them up too. The deepest cuts were on the left side of his face. They formed into a cross.

“Thank you, Grayson,” Angelina said to him when she was finished. “You can return to your cabin now. I have everything under control.” She smiled tiredly.

“Are you sure?” he asked her. Angelina simply nodded, and Grayson made his way out the door.

Though tired, Angelina decided to get Draco out of the rest of the stained clothing; though she could do nothing about the sheets; she wanted to move him as little as possible. She then, once again, took the wash towel and wiped the rest of the blood off of Draco’s body. She went and found his purple pajamas, but only managed to put on the bottoms. She didn’t want to risk undoing her stitching by trying to put on the top. When she was finished she found herself lying beside him, staring at the black skull and snake tattooed on his left arm. She gingerly swept her fingers over the Dark Mark; it hadn’t been there five short months ago, when he had paraded himself in front of her.

She then thought back to that day at the café when he looked like an innocent child, and she realized that then, he was. But she knew now he was a completely different story. She knew that he had witnessed others being killed, and that he had probably participated. Angelina didn’t want to face it before, but she had to now; her husband was a murderer. No, he was more than that, he was a Death

Forcing herself off the very comfortable couch, Angelina went to check on Draco, whom she practically had to force to stay in bed until his side was well enough. "You 'sleep?" she asked, as she stepped into the bedroom and got no reply. She looked at him tucked under the fresh sheets and was relieved that he was finally getting some proper rest.

As she was about to leave the room, she heard a strange sound. She turned around and found that it was coming from Draco. He seem to be talking in his sleep, so Angelina moved in closer to see if she could make out what he was saying. "I lied, I lied . . ." he murmured, "the book . . . time . . ." Angelina couldn't understand anything after that. Just then the door bell rung and Angelina went downstairs to see who it was.

She opened the door to find a tall man with short, curly, black hair and eyes the color of midnight. "What do you want, Montague?"

He slightly pushed the door opened and let himself into the house, much to Angelina's dismay. "So it is true," he said once inside, turning around to face Angelina. "Malfoy has caught himself a little Gryffindor," he smirked.

"Either state what you want or get the hell out." She looked at him angrily. "No, scratch that, just get the hell out." She pointed outside the door.

"Still mad, I see. You sure can hold a grudge, can you?" he said as he walked over to the door and tried to close it, but struggled with Angelina. "I'm not leaving, Johnson." He sounded agitated. "Not till I get what I want."

"What? What is it?" She stopped fighting with him on the door and he closed it.

"I'm here to see Malfoy." His eyes scanned around the room. "We have business to discuss."

"Draco is preoccupied at the moment." She reopened the door. "So sorry you came all this way, really hate to see you go." She gave a cartoonish smile.

Montague closed the door again. "I know he's here, because I brought him here the other night. And I know he isn't in any shape to go anywhere."

The cartoonish smiled dropped from Angelina face. "How come you didn't see to him?" she asked. "He was practically dead when I got to him."

Montague shrugged his shoulders. "He refused help, he's stubborn that way. Malfoys always are." He paused. "So where is he? Upstairs, perhaps?" He began walking towards the stairs.

"Stop!" Angelina blocked his way at the bottom of the stairs.

"We aren't in school anymore, Johnson. I'm tired of playing games. So move." he hissed.

"I'm a Malfoy now, I'm stubborn, remember?"

“Please, you were always stubborn.” His dark eyes seem to sparkle and his lips played with a smile. “You always had a fire about you.” His eyes looked her over. “Too bad Malfoy got to you first. We could have had some real fun,” he said huskily, and blew a kiss. “We still could.” He winked.

A little unnerved by his sudden advancement towards her, Angelina wanted to take a step up the stairs to create some distance. But she didn't want him to know that he had rattled her. So she decided to do the opposite, she took a step closer and met him dead on. “You wish, because you know, as well as I do, you could never handle a real woman like me,” she told him. “And like you said yourself, I'm like a fire, so step back or you're bound to be burned.”

“Aw, I've missed your riddle like threats. But tell me, Johnson-” he was interrupted.

“Get out. You're not welcome here.” They heard a powerful and gruff voice from upstairs. Angelina turned her head and saw that Draco was at the top of the stairs. Other than the stitches on his face, he stood as if he were in perfect health.

“You and me aren't done yet, Malfoy.” His somewhat playful façade towards Angelina turned to stone the moment Draco came into his view.

Draco eyes never left Montague. He would not, could not, show weakness. “Another day, Montague.”

“Mal-”

“I said another day!” he yelled angrily.

“Fine,” Montague spat, and then looked back at Angelina. “I know when I'm not wanted.”

“Funny, took you long enough,” she told him, before he turned to walk out the door. As soon as the door closed behind Montague, Draco dropped to his knees at the top of the stairs.

“What the hell are you doing out of bed?” Angelina kept a touch below a yell as she walked up the stairs.

“No, it's okay really, I'm fine,” Draco said sarcastically from the floor. “No need to fuss over me.”

“You're more trouble than you're worth, you know that?” She had Draco put his arm around her neck and she helped him off the floor and down the hall to the bedroom.

“Hmm.” Draco noticed Angelina's fragrance. “You smell funny.”

“Well, you don't smell like a rain fresh meadow yourself.”

“I didn't mean you smelt bad.” He rolled his eyes. “I mean you smell like tulips.”

“I don't see how I couldn't. You got the whole place littered in the things.”

“I thought you liked tulips,” he said, as Angelina helped him back into bed.

“What gave you that idea?” Angelina looked down at him.

He seemed to be thinking. “I don't know. You just always seemed like a tulip kind of girl.” He smiled, “Tulip.”

She gave him an odd look. “Okay,” she simply said, as she got in on the other side. She laid with her back to him like always. “Draco?” she asked after a little while.

“Yes?”

“What will happen if you are found out to be a Death Eater? What will happen when You-Know-Who is defeated?” she asked.

“Tulip, what are you talking about?” he began. “Potter put up a decent fight, but like I told you, he had no chance against our Dark Lord.” An evil grin crept onto his face. “We were victorious.”

Angelina turned around faster than she thought possible. “What?” She didn't know whether to be relieved because the battle was over, or horror struck because the wrong side had won.

Chapter Five: Tears of Rain

Draco was relaxing in a little study upstairs, in a room he usually kept locked. He was laying on the couch with one of his favorite books, though he would never admit to anyone that it was. It was a tale of a little boy who was lost in a forest. While lost, he found a fairy who had been caught in a spider's web. He rescued the fairy and because of this, the fairy said she would grant him one wish. Being lost you would think the boy would wish his way home, but because the boy had never known any type of kindness from his parents, he wished for something he had never known before; he wished for love.

The fairy granted the boy his wish. She gave him an exotic forest flower and told him that the person he gave it to would love him for the rest of his life. She also warned him that he should make his choice wisely, because life meant life, and there was no way to undo the spell of the flower.

The little boy had grown up to be a respectable young man who had fallen for a young lady he went to school with. Heeding the fairy's warning he wanted to make sure that this was the right girl for him, so he became friends with her and they remained friends for many years. After those many years, the young man realized he could not live without her and presented her with the exotic forest flower as he proposed to her. The young lady, of course, accepted.

Many more years passed and the young man soon found that he was an old man, who had lived a happy life with his wife, and raised many children. But something plagued his mind and it would not escape him. So he traveled back to the forest that he had found himself lost in as a little boy, looking for the fairy who had gave him the forest flower.

When he found the fairy, he told her that he was sad, because his wife only loved him because of the fairy's help. The fairy only smiled as she explained to the boy, that he never needed the flower to find love, and that the love that his wife held for him had been nothing but genuine from the start.

Draco frowned as something distracted him from his book. It was Angelina's owl passing by the window. Getting up slowly as he held his side, he put his book back on the shelf along with the others, wondering why he always liked that one so much.

He walked out the room and down the hall towards the stairs. As he was going down, he could have sworn he heard crying from the first floor. "Tulip?" he called as he reached the bottom, and walked into the living room.

Angelina was in the spot Draco usually found her in, staring out the patio window, looking at the estate. He noticed the partially balled up piece of parchment in her hand. "You shouldn't be walking around so much," she said with her back to him.

"I'm fine." He dropped his hand from his side, determined to prove, even to her now, that he was not weak. "What have you got there?" he said, referring to the letter in her hand. She said nothing as she finished balling it up and sticking it into her pocket. She obviously didn't want to talk about it. "Look at me, Tulip," he demanded.

Angelina turned her head towards him as she crossed her arms. Her face showed no signs that she had been crying and Draco wondered what it was he had heard before. "What do you need?" she asked plainly, with a flat expression on her face. Draco shook his head and Angelina turned back to the window. "I'm going out today. I'll be back sometime tonight."

"I'll have the House Elves keep your dinner warm," Draco told her, as she was about to walk past him out the living room door.

She stopped and looked at him. "Are we in any type of danger?"

"What makes you think that?"

"Everyone knows that your father denied being knowledgeable of his actions when You-Know-"

"Our Dark Lord," he corrected her.

"When *he* tried coming into power the first time." She looked at him sternly. "Has he fully forgiven your father's actions after his disappearance?"

Draco had never thought about that before, but he had always figured it was the Dark Lord who had a hand in getting his father out of prison. "We're not in danger," he confirmed. "I fought for our Dark Lord's cause. He would not punish my father through me." *Mostly because my father couldn't care less. Just as long as I don't tarnish the Malfoy name, he doesn't give a damn what I do, just as long as I pass on our name before I die,* Draco thought.

"Then put down the wards."

"That's not a good idea."

"Alright let's call this a night." Draco stood up and the others followed suit. "Goyle, don't forget about that thing I mentioned earlier."

"Of course," Goyle replied, and Angelina realized that was the voice she heard when she came through the door. "Evening." Goyle nodded towards Angelina as he passed. Crabbe also nodded, but said nothing.

"Good night," she said politely.

As Montague passed he slammed his shoulder into Angelina's. "Sweet dreams."

Angelina growled softly as she heard the door open and close behind her. "I thought we were on the same page about him?" She asked Draco.

"Things came up. Things that couldn't be ignored."

"I'm guessing I shouldn't ask?"

"Your guess would be right." He leaned on the dining room chair. "Look, I know you don't like Montague, I don't either, but he can be trusted."

"No, that doesn't sound right." She shook her head. "So let me guess, he has something on you and you have something on him and the two of you have agreed on silence for silence."

"Exactly," Draco said with narrowed eyes, not sure if he should be impressed or weary about how quickly she deduced that.

To Be Continued. . .

2 - Part Two

Chapter Six: The Fire: Ignited

It had been several weeks since Fred's departure. He had sent Angelina an owl to tell her he was doing well, but he didn't want her to reply, incase the owl could be tracked back to him and the rest of his family.

Knock, knock, knock

Angelina stood outside a loft apartment door, thinking maybe this had been a bad idea. She put her hand on her stomach. That feeling was back; that feeling that told her, this was wrong. She then moved her hand over her chest and took a deep breath hoping it would slow her increasing heartbeat down. She was more anxious than she would have liked. "What am I doing here?" she thought out loud, thinking if she left now. . . but, too late, the door swung open.

"Didn't think you would come." Montague smiled as he opened the door fully to allow Angelina in.

"Look." It was time for Angelina to put on that tough façade, "I just need to know what you have on my husband, then I'm gone." She thought that maybe the information Montague had on Draco could somehow help her bring Fred back safely to England.

"Uh-huh." He closed the door and locked it. "Sure."

"I'm willing to pay."

"With your husband's money?" Montague laughed as he walked passed her and took a seat on his couch. "I don't need money," he told her. "Now, why don't you come and sit down, Johnson?"

"No, thank you." She shook her head as she crossed her arms and looked nervously around the spacious loft. It was painted in a shade of blue, a color she didn't think suited him well at all. "I don't plan on staying long."

"Are you afraid of me, Johnson?"

"What?" Her eyes quickly lay upon him. "No."

Montague sighed heavily. "Alright then, if not, then how long are we going to do this?" He looked dangerously at her. "Because frankly, it tires me."

"I don't know what you're talking about." She looked over at the door.

"That's what I mean." He stood up and pointed at her. "Right there. How long are you going to run in the opposite direction? How long are you going to deny this thing between us?"

Angelina's eyes widened for a moment before returning to their original size. "Thing? No. There has never been a *thing*."

"Really?" He quickly walked over to her and forced her up against the hard wall. He then placed his hands on either side of her, trapping her where she stood. "Then look me in the eye and tell me you've never wanted me." His face was inches from hers.

In a slight panic, Angelina stated. "I'm a married woman, Montague."

"Yes, a married woman who's trying to get information to use on her husband." He then said sarcastically, "Oh yeah, that's real love."

"Get off me, now," she said softly, putting her hands on his chest and trying to push him away.

But he would not be budged. "Not till you say it. Say you don't want me. I dare you."

"Monta-"

"Say it!" he demanded.

"I don't want you!" Angelina hissed through clenched teeth. Montague studied her for a moment before slowly starting to back away. "shoot!" Angelina yelled softly, knowing she would regret what she was about to do. She grabbed a hold of Montague's sweater and pulled him into a long, overdue, kiss.

When they broke it, Montague had a small grin on his face. "You know, you almost had me convinced there for a second."

"I know." She found herself smiling too, liberated by the moment, before Montague took her lips with his own. It was a kiss filled with a raw passion that had been building up within him since their first insults towards each other.

Montague, resting his hands on her hips, pulling away from her, took a breath as if breathing for the first time. "So, how you want to play this?"

Angelina rubbed Montague's arms up and down. *Do I really want to do this?* She thought of many reasons of why she shouldn't, but the moment she looked into Montague's dark eyes, all reason went out the window. Angelina then gave Montague a seductive smile and that was all of a reply he needed.

Montague slowly lowered himself closer to the floor and rose back up taking one Angelina's legs with him. "A little help maybe?" he asked her. Angelina wrapped her arms around Montague's neck; she then jumped up enough for him to catch her other leg and for her to cross her ankles behind him.

He then carried her up to his bedroom, planting little wet kisses on her as he did. They entered the bedroom and he kicked the door close behind them. He then unceremoniously dropped her onto his neatly made bed.

two years since they had started their affair and the world had slowly become a different place under the hand of Voldemort. There had been many uprisings and so-called revolutions to take down the Dark Lord and his army, but so far all had failed. Much blood had been spilled in the last two years, and much more, without a doubt, would be spilled in the future.

Montague idly played with the hair of his sleeping lover. Being with her was everything he thought it would be. It was erratic, tantalizing, and full of a fire only she could ignite within him. He loved her; he realized that not too long ago, though he had never voiced it out loud. He didn't want to scare her away like he did before, when they were back in school.

It was their sixth year and he had bumped into her on his way back to his common room. They threw a few insults before he subtly came onto her, thinking maybe he had been a little too subtle because she didn't seem to react to it. But he knew he must of had some kind of effect, because within a few days time, she had starting dating that Weasley boy, and had started avoiding him in the corridors, sometimes going all away around, so she wouldn't have to face him.

"David?" Angelina whispered into the night air. "What's wrong?" she asked when she realized he was watching her sleep.

"Nothing," he lied, as he pulled away from her and sat up. He had concluded that something in his life had to change. When he first got caught up in this war, he sided with Voldemort because he thought it was the most logical choice. But he was so young and so foolish then, he didn't realize how killing innocence people, who were only trying to win back their freedom, would affect him so much. He figured that somehow being with Angelina for so long had given him something he didn't need nor want living in this kind of world, a conscience. "Do you love me, Angelina?" he asked in a hushed voice, readying himself for her response.

If Angelina wasn't awake before, she was now. She and Montague had never discussed their feelings with each other. As far as Angelina knew, their relationship was based on nothing but sex, a strange desire that only the other could fulfill. "I don't know," she said honestly.

He turned to her. "I think you do. I think you love me," he told her. "Angelina, I need to get away from here. . . and I want you to come with me."

"David," she said tenderly as she sat up. "No. I won't leave England. I won't leave Draco." She would not have his death on her hands.

"Why?" he asked, not knowing that their marriage had been arranged. "You don't love him."

"It's complicated."

"Complicated? Okay then, let's make things simple. Give me a little time, I can set something up. It'll look like a complete accident. You can play the grieving widow and tell people you can no longer be in a place filled with so many memories."

"No!" She was mortified at the thought. She got out of bed and had the lights turned on. "I could never allow you to do anything like that to Draco." She searched for her clothes and started to get dressed.

feeling for Draco, because he had never fully trusted anymore in his life. "I've been given orders to go after a found traitor today," he began. "And it's someone I know, someone I thought had my- the Dark Lord's best interest in mind."

"He was a friend, wasn't he?" she asked.

He nodded his head solemnly. "I didn't even realize I considered him one before." He pushed himself off the dresser so he could finish getting dressed. "Dammit! Where are my shoes!" he yelled, but Angelina knew his outburst had nothing to do with his shoes.

Chapter Seven: Tainted

It was noon as Angelina sat in the kitchen eating lunch with Grayson. He was talking about his boyhood as Angelina picked at her salad, half-listening to him. Her mind was preoccupied with the proposal Montague had given her. *Kill Draco?* No, she would not let that happen.

Yes, they got on each other's nerves from time to time, but that really wasn't a good reason to want someone dead. Besides Draco, even being who he was, was a good husband. He respected Angelina and her opinions; their marriage would have been ideal, if they weren't cheating on one another and had actually loved each other, that is.

"Madam?" said a tiny voice.

Angelina turned away from her salad and Grayson. "What is it, Darcy?" she spoke to one of the house elves.

"Darcy wanted the Madam to know that she has a visitor," Darcy spoke timidly.

"Thank you." Angelina smiled at Darcy which made her smile too. "Excuse me, Grayson," she excused herself as she stood up and walked to the front end of the house.

"Hello, Montague," she greeted him in the living room.

"You left in quite a hurry this morning," he said while sitting on the couch.

"Well, excuse me for not thinking your idea to kill my husband was brilliant," she said, before walking over to the patio door and stepping out.

Montague followed her. There was a brisk of wind sweeping by as, from behind, Montague wrapped his arms around her. "It's just, I don't understand how you two work. There's no love there, yet you fight and defend as if he were your entire world."

Angelina turned around as she brought her arms up and rested them on his shoulders. She then started to play with one of his ears. "It's because I know he would do the same for me. It's just an understanding we have," she explained.

She kissed his chest. "Yes, David, I love you." It wasn't the same kind of love she felt for Fred, but it was still love. Besides, Fred had been away for so long, and Montague was right here, loving her right now.

"You love me, even after everything I've done?"

His sudden outpour of emotion was slightly making Angelina feel uneasy. "What are you getting at David?"

"I think we need to talk." She sat back up and she could see the concern on his face.

"This is serious, isn't it?" She completely sat up and Montague rose to meet her.

"Yeah." He took her hands and started to talk in a slow, low voice. "I have done many, many things. Horrible, unforgivable things, since I joined with the Dark Lord. Things I know I will never be forgiven for, but honestly none of those things matter. Only you matter, Angelina, and I need you to forgive me."

"Forgive you for what?"

"For what I'm about to tell you." He didn't look her in the eye. "Know that many may have wanted glory and power, but all I ever wanted was you. Even when I hated you, I knew I only hated you because I thought I could never have you. Yet, even then I knew I would do *anything* to make you mine." Montague figured it was all or nothing at this point. He knew by telling her what he was about to say, would affect their relationship drastically, but he could no longer love her, living behind his omission.

"David, what have you done?" She slipped her hands away from his and put them on either side of his face, forcing him to look at her. "Please, tell me."

"Forgive me, because it was I-" he was interrupted by an urgent pounding on his front door.

He tried to turn his head towards the sound, but Angelina wouldn't let him. "Leave it be and tell me." At this point she needed to know, she *had* to know.

Yet, more pounding could be heard on the door. "I can't with all that noise. I'll get rid of whoever it is." He slipped away from Angelina's touch. He put on some pants and opened the bedroom door. He had started down the steps when his front door was forcibly opened. A small group of Death Eaters barged into his loft. "What is the meaning of this!" Montague yelled angrily.

"David Lestat Montague," came a voice Montague knew all too well. "By the high decree of our Dark Lord, you have been found guilty of treason on several accounts, and it is hereby been. . ." There came a heavy sigh from the Death Eater speaking.

"There's no reason to hide behind that mask." Two other Death Eaters approached Montague and seized him. "I know who you are Malfoy, so face me. Give me that much."

Hearing all the noise, Angelina wrapped a sheet around herself and peered out the slightly adjacent

bedroom door. She watched as Draco complied with Montague's request. Montague looked into Draco's eyes, which were void of any emotion. "What the hell were you thinking, Montague?"

"Nothing none of you haven't thought before," Montague replied.

Draco leaned into Montague so he could whisper in his ear. "Don't worry. Your death will be short and painless." He then backed away. Montague was astonished, Draco had actually shown him mercy.

Draco slowly shook his head as he pulled out his wand and pointed it towards Montague. "Draco, no!" Draco, out of sheer surprise, dropped his wand to the floor as his head turned and spotted his wife, covered only in a sheet, outside of Montague's bedroom door.

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She ignored him and looked back down at Montague, where she saw him mouth the words, 'I love you.'

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When she finished dressing, she pleaded with Draco again, "Draco it's been long enough, please call them off. Please."

He said nothing as he grabbed her around the wrist and Apparated into the living room of their home. He viciously pushed her onto the couch and pointed a finger at her. "All you had to do was stay in the damn bedroom!" He then began to run his fingers repeatedly through his hair. "Do you know what you've

done?" He walked away from her. "Do you have any fracking idea what you have done!"

"Draco, what about David?" She held back her tears as she imagined all the things they could be doing to him.

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Angelina was tired of begging, she stood up and marched over to him. "Dammit Draco, listen to me! I want-"

Draco had warned her to get out; he knew he was in danger of losing his control. And as he was blinded by his anger, he struck Angelina across the face for the second time that day. Angelina was going to retaliate, but he was too quick for her as he grabbed her by the arm and swung her onto the ground. She hit her head on the coffee table before landing on the floor. Her hand went to her forehead, which now had a large bleeding gash across it.

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She fell on top of him and took this as her chance to strike back. She balled her hand up into a fist and struck his face, but before she could get in another hit, Draco, being stronger than her, quickly managed to grab her hand mid-swing and roll over placing him on top of her. As he straddled her, he put both of his hands around her neck and started to squeeze.

Angelina made little sounds as her windpipe was being crushed and although it didn't look good for her, she continued to fight. She started hitting his arms trying to break them from their lock, long enough for her to escape, but it was no use. She soon started to claw and grab at Draco's chest because she couldn't reach his face as he held his chin high. Her attempts to free herself from her husband's grip grew feeble as she started to see spots in front of her eyes. Finally, having no more strength left, her eyes soon closed and her arms dropped to the floor.

As her arms fell, the gleam from Angelina's watch caught Draco's eye and he looked up to see what it was. As he looked up he caught his reflection in the sliding glass patio door, but it was not his face that he saw, but the face of his father. He looked back down and didn't see the face of Angelina, but the face of his mother.

He then heard a soft whimper and turned his head to locate where the sound was coming from. In the doorway, that lead to the front of the house stood Darcy, the little house elf, her hands were over her mouth, trying not to be heard as she cried. But again, Draco did not see what was actually there. What he saw was himself as a small child as he witnessed his father beat his mother, for something his father did not approve of her doing.

Tulip,” he explained. “You’re not going anywhere. I’ve put the wards back up. I also have two men posted at all the doors leading outside. And if, by some chance, you do manage to slip by them, I have several more walking around the gates of the estate.” He turned around and opened the door. “This is Justice. Alan Justice. He’ll be here to make sure you don’t do anything stupid.” Justice nodded towards Angelina.

“You can’t keep me here like some prisoner,” she told him, but he wasn’t listening. “Draco.” He walked out the door and closed it. “Draco!” He heard some object slam up against the door as she started screaming.

Draco shook his head and sighed heavily. “Keep her safe,” he told Justice before leaving. Little did Angelina know, that the men posted around the estate weren’t only there to keep her in, but to keep a certain someone out.

Chapter Seven: Tainted

It was noon as Angelina sat in the kitchen eating lunch with Grayson. He was talking about his boyhood as Angelina picked at her salad, half-listening to him. Her mind was preoccupied with the proposal Montague had given her. *Kill Draco?* No, she would not let that happen.

Yes, they got on each other’s nerves from time to time, but that really wasn’t a good reason to want someone dead. Besides Draco, even being who he was, was a good husband. He respected Angelina and her opinions; their marriage would have been ideal, if they weren’t cheating on one another and had actually loved each other, that is.

“Madam?” said a tiny voice.

Angelina turned away from her salad and Grayson. “What is it, Darcy?” she spoke to one of the house elves.

“Darcy wanted the Madam to know that she has a visitor,” Darcy spoke timidly.

“Thank you.” Angelina smiled at Darcy which made her smile too. “Excuse me, Grayson,” she excused herself as she stood up and walked to the front end of the house.

“Hello, Montague,” she greeted him in the living room.

“You left in quite a hurry this morning,” he said while sitting on the couch.

“Well, excuse me for not thinking your idea to kill my husband was brilliant,” she said, before walking over to the patio door and stepping out.

Montague followed her. There was a brisk of wind sweeping by as, from behind, Montague wrapped his arms around her. “It’s just, I don’t understand how you two work. There’s no love there, yet you fight and defend as if he were your entire world.”

Angelina was quiet for a moment, before saying softly, "I can't give you what I don't have. What we have now, is all I have to give."

"But do you love me?" His tone was almost desperate.

She kissed his chest. "Yes, David, I love you." It wasn't the same kind of love she felt for Fred, but it was still love. Besides, Fred had been away for so long, and Montague was right here, loving her right now.

"You love me, even after everything I've done?"

His sudden outpour of emotion was slightly making Angelina feel uneasy. "What are you getting at David?"

"I think we need to talk." She sat back up and she could see the concern on his face.

"This is serious, isn't it?" She completely sat up and Montague rose to meet her.

"Yeah." He took her hands and started to talk in a slow, low voice. "I have done many, many things. Horrible, unforgivable things, since I joined with the Dark Lord. Things I know I will never be forgiven for, but honestly none of those things matter. Only you matter, Angelina, and I need you to forgive me."

"Forgive you for what?"

"For what I'm about to tell you." He didn't look her in the eye. "Know that many may have wanted glory and power, but all I ever wanted was you. Even when I hated you, I knew I only hated you because I thought I could never have you. Yet, even then I knew I would do *anything* to make you mine." Montague figured it was all or nothing at this point. He knew by telling her what he was about to say, would affect their relationship drastically, but he could no longer love her, living behind his omission.

"David, what have you done?" She slipped her hands away from his and put them on either side of his face, forcing him to look at her. "Please, tell me."

"Forgive me, because it was I-" he was interrupted by an urgent pounding on his front door.

He tried to turn his head towards the sound, but Angelina wouldn't let him. "Leave it be and tell me." At this point she needed to know, she *had* to know.

Yet, more pounding could be heard on the door. "I can't with all that noise. I'll get rid of whoever it is." He slipped away from Angelina's touch. He put on some pants and opened the bedroom door. He had started down the steps when his front door was forcibly opened. A small group of Death Eaters barged into his loft. "What is the meaning of this!" Montague yelled angrily.

"David Lestat Montague," came a voice Montague knew all too well. "By the high decree of our Dark Lord, you have been found guilty of treason on several accounts, and it is hereby been. . ." There came a heavy sigh from the Death Eater speaking.

“There’s no reason to hide behind that mask.” Two other Death Eaters approached Montague and seized him. “I know who you are Malfoy, so face me. Give me that much.”

Hearing all the noise, Angelina wrapped a sheet around herself and peered out the slightly adjacent bedroom door. She watched as Draco complied with Montague’s request. Montague looked into Draco’s eyes, which were void of any emotion. “What the hell were you thinking, Montague?”

“Nothing none of you haven’t thought before,” Montague replied.

Draco leaned into Montague so he could whisper in his ear. “Don’t worry. Your death will be short and painless.” He then backed away. Montague was astonished, Draco had actually shown him mercy.

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Seeing this Draco finally made eye contact as she spoke. "I don't believe you, Draco." A single tear fell down her cheek.

Draco's lips were pressed together in hard thought. His voice was even. "I don't care what you believe, Tulip," he explained. "You're not going anywhere. I've put the wards back up. I also have two men posted at all the doors leading outside. And if, by some chance, you do manage to slip by them, I have several more walking around the gates of the estate." He turned around and opened the door. "This is Justice. Alan Justice. He'll be here to make sure you don't do anything stupid." Justice nodded towards Angelina.

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Chapter Nine: When Doves Cry

"You've fracked up, Malfoy," Goyle was not very happy. "Without Montague's connections, we might as well call this quits now."

"No," Draco shook his head. "We can still do this."

"Do you care to explain how? Because from where I'm sitting, it looks like we've. . . no, excuse me, *you* have just flushed years of work down the drain," Goyle explained. "You weren't actually suppose to kill him!" he yelled.

"Hey!" Draco would not be yelled at in his own home. "He's the one who shouldn't have gotten caught, okay?"

Goyle leaned back in his chair and crossed his arms. "He shouldn't have gotten caught betraying the Dark Lord or shouldn't have gotten caught screwing your wife?" If looks could kill, Goyle would have been dead the moment he finished the question.

"My wife is not an issue in this matter, so I suggest that we change the subject and fast."

Goyle narrowed his eyes and stared at Draco. It was then that Crabbe decided to speak up. "Calm down guys, there is no need to get all uptight about this. Listen, I've gone with Montague before to meet one of his contacts. I can meet up with him and tell him, our version, of what happened and he can inform the others," Crabbe paused and when he had no rejections he continued. "We have to be careful from now on. They have to know by now Montague was working with someone. We can not afford someone else within this operation getting caught."

"Yeah, we're lucky Montague didn't rat us out for the hell of it," Goyle commented.

Please note: Not everything that occurred in the flashback was a memory of Angelina's.

"Tulip. Tulip?" Draco called. "Are you listening to me?"

"Huh? What?" Angelina was pulled from her memories. "I'm sorry, what were you saying?"

"I said, 'Are you ready for the performance of your life?'" Draco asked as they stood outside the huge wooden doors.

Angelina reached in her purse and pulled out a compact mirror and checked her make-up and hair. "As ready as I'm ever going to be."

"Put the mirror away, you look good," he smiled. "Not as good as me of course, but a close second."

"Cute," she tilted her head to one side. As they got closer to the doors, they opened up and Draco and Angelina stepped into a large banquet hall full of many people. The people were made up of followers of the Dark Lord and their spouses. Draco and Angelina were on top of a flight of stairs looking at the people below them as they began their way down. "I don't want to be here all night, Draco."

"It's New Year's Eve. People will think it strange if we leave early," he spoke as they continued down the stairs.

"Alright, but I'm telling you right now, if you leave me alone with your father, while you high tail it to the other side of the room, like you did last year, I will not be responsible for my actions," Draco only laughed. "Go ahead laugh it up, see if I'm playing," he continued to laugh, though he knew she was dead serious.

Later on, much to Draco's amusement, he had done the very thing she had told him not to and she was pissed off for well over an hour, but other than that, the rest of the night, much to their surprise, had gone fairly well. "5. . . 4. . . 3. . . 2. . . 1. . . Happy New Year!" Could be heard throughout the room.

"Happy Anniversary, Tulip," Draco pulled Angelina close and whispered in her ear. He took the champagne glass out of her hand, thinking she had had a bit too much for one night. "Dance with me."

"First off, our anniversary was yesterday," she smiled. "Second, you know I can't dance."

"Okay, first off, I knew that," he lied. "Second, dance with me anyway." He led her out into the dance floor and she did not protest. "This isn't too bad now is it?"

"No, it's not." She had a funny smile on her face.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing. Just a little tired I suppose," after a yawn she felt a tap on her shoulder.

"Mind if I cut in?" Angelina turned her head to see Pansy Parkinson.

"Oh, no I guess not," Angelina started to slip away from Draco, but he took hold of her hand.

"I mind." Draco stared coldly at Pansy.

"Don't get your panties in a bunch," she sassed. "It's not like I'm trying to get you back or something." She purposely put her left hand on her chest showing off her rare, black diamond engagement ring. "You remember Moon, right? Niccolia Moon?"

"Of course, good man. I feel sorry for him."

"Well," Pansy then looked at Angelina. "At least he will have a proper wife."

"Excuse me?" Angelina said angrily. "Proper? And what would you consider proper? A wife that waits on her husband hand and foot? Who doesn't speak until spoken to? And then when she is, she's only allow to say 'Yes sir' or 'No sir'? Please, give me break. If a man wants someone to sit, stay, and beg, he can get a dog. But then again," Angelina looked over Pansy, "maybe Moon already has one."

Pansy gave Angelina a disgusted look and then gave a soft smile. "You know what, I'm going to let that slide. Because I already know you're jealous because you can never be me. It's okay, if I were you, I would be jealous too." And she walked away to join her circle of friends.

"Okay," Angelina drawled. "Did I miss something?"

"No, not really. But if anyone is jealous, it's her of you. I guess she's still bitter about only being second best."

They then continued to dance, but his statement didn't sit too well with Angelina. "What do you mean?" she asked after a moment.

"As you know, I used to date Parkinson." Angelina nodded her head. "Well, my father kind of narrowed my companion choices down to you and her. And early on seventh year, I found out some things about Pansy that I didn't like, so when my father gave me a choice between the two of you. . . I chose you."

-SMACK-

"shoot! What the hell?" Draco yelled as Angelina lifted her dress, so she wouldn't step on it, and stormed off. Draco rubbed his face and noticed people were looking at him and that others were watching her leave.

Draco then laughed nervously and scanned the room with his eyes until they locked with his father's, who did not look very pleased. *Great*, Draco thought. *All I need is another lecture about how I can't control my wife.* And he stormed off after her.

"You chose me!" Angelina yelled once they were in the privacy of their own home.

"Tulip, calm down."

"Don't tell me what to do," she paced around the room. "He chose me," she spoke to herself. "The moron chose me."

"Tulip," he got in front of her and took her by the arms. "Tulip, stop. Why are you so upset?"

She looked at him like he was an idiot and yanked herself away from his grasp. "Why Draco? Why didn't you just choose Pansy? Why did you make me think there was no choice in the matter, like you were forced into this just like I was, huh?"

Draco lowered his head. *After all this time, is that still what she truly wants?* he asked himself. "I don't think you'd understand," he finally told her.

"Try me," she crossed her arms and waited for him to explain.

"Fine. I chose you because Pansy would not have been the kind of wife you have been to me. I know she would have left me to die that night I came home after the battle. I know she would have never forgiven me, for killing off her lover, or losing control like I did later that night. I know she would not have been strong enough to put up with me and stay with me even if I begged on my knees."

He continued upset, "I know she would have ratted me out the moment she suspected that I wasn't one hundred percent loyal to the Dark Lord." Angelina had found out earlier on that Draco, for years, had been planning to bring down the Dark Lord, though she wasn't allowed in all the details. "She was right you know, you'll never be her and I'm thankful everyday for that," he said sincerely. Then without any kind of response from her, he headed upstairs.

Draco was in the middle of getting out of his formal attire when he heard something behind him. "Nice boxers," came the voice.

He turned to see Angelina in the doorway as he softly smiled. "Yes, my wife does have a good sense of style," he informed her.

"I was out of line, Draco," she came out and said as she approached him. "I didn't mean to embarrass you."

Draco shook his head. "It's okay. Believe it or not, I've been more embarrassed than that."

Angelina smiled. "I'm glad you're not upset."

"Yeah, me too." Draco knew if what happened tonight had occurred several years ago, he would not have been this calm.

"Well, I'm going to call it night," Angelina began as she turned her back to him. "But do you think you could you help me, please?" she asked. "I can't quite get the zipper on my own."

Draco took the zipper with his thumb and index finger and as he slowly unzipped the dress he stroked the soft skin of Angelina's back. *Why does she torture me like this, allowing me to be so close?*

The deal had always been that she would come to him and Draco was starting to learn to be a patient man, but tonight he could no longer fight his urge to be with her. So Draco leaned in and with his lips followed by his tongue grazed Angelina's shoulder and the side of her neck as she tilted it to one side.

Not much to his surprise, he heard her give off a soft moan, but then suddenly he felt the zipper slip out of his fingers and she turned to face him. "Um. . ." she clutched the top of her strapless dress so it wouldn't fall off. "I'll just um. . . go now." She started towards the door to go to her own bedroom.

"Tulip, wait," Draco caught her from behind. "Why are you so afraid of the idea of us?" he asked as he slid his hands down the length of her arms. "Is it really that farfetched?"

"No, it's just. . . oh Draco," she said faintly as her eyes closed and her head fell back onto his bare chest. "We've come such a long way, I don't want to ruin that."

"I know, but don't you think it's time for us to stop pretending? I mean, I already have," he began. "You make me happy, Tulip. I just want to make you feel the same way." Draco then once again leaned down and lightly kissed Angelina's shoulder. He slowly reached for her hands, which still had a hold of her dress, and slipped them into his own. The sparkling pink gown cascaded off the curves of Angelina's form and pooled itself around her feet on the floor.

Releasing Draco's hands, Angelina turned around and stepped out of her dress as she wrapped her arms around his neck. Draco snaked his arms around her waist and they guided each other to the edge of the bed, where they stripped the other of their remaining clothes. They then fell onto the bed in one another's embrace.

Angelina landed on her back and Draco landed on top of her. He took her by the wrists and pushed her arms above her head. He then slowly brushed his lips sweetly against hers before slightly pulling away to study her face, but mostly her lips, before once again leaning in so that he could claim them with his own, but he did so with a tenderness Angelina never knew he possessed.

She then heard Draco softly chuckle as his eyes locked with hers. There was a devious spark in his eye as his lips left hers for other places his mouth could explore. As he traveled further down her body, she felt his hands loosen from her wrists and begin to glide down her arms, leaving behind a tingling feeling as they passed.

Draco could feel Angelina's rapid heart beating as he kissed her breast, parts of her stomach, and then the inner part of her thigh. "Stop," she whispered as she reached down and touched his cheek. "That's tickles."

He said nothing as first, but only tilted his head into her touch before once again kissing her thigh. "Angelina?" he then called softly as he crawled back up her body so he could be eye level with her.

Angelina wrapped her arms around him and outlined, with her fingers, the muscles on his back. She could also feel his arousal rubbing up against her. "Yes?"

Draco kissed her cheek and then asked huskily into her ear, "Will you do something for me?"

"Anything," she told him eagerly, but then felt his body become a little tense.

"Tell me- tell me you love me," Draco immediately felt a hand on his chest and with a jerk he was slightly pushed away.

"But we. . . I-" she stammered as she shook her head.

"No, it's okay," Draco cast his eyes away. "I shouldn't have asked you that." Angelina could, unmistakably, hear the hurt in his voice.

She then gingerly moved her hand from his chest and took a hold of his jaw and made him look at her. Her brown eyes locked with his gray ones and somehow, Draco felt as if she was looking into the inner most depths of his soul. Angelina then licked her lips and said with a breath, "I love you, Draco Lucius Malfoy." And she smiled a smile, Draco knew was reserved only for him.

"Say it again," he told her as he returned her smile.

She giggled and pulled him closer to her. "I love you!" she threw her head back and shouted.

"One more time," he whispered.

"I love you," she whispered back and as she did their two bodies became one.

And as they made love, a feeling of completeness took over Draco's senses. Because though he had wealth, though he had power, it was love he could never seem to grasp. When he had Pansy, back in school, he had no doubt that she would be the woman he would marry. She adored him or at least that what she had him believe. So much so that though his father had warn him about their curse which was made at the beginning of time, before he had started school, Draco had thought the curse had run its path and no longer applied. He was as sure of that as the love he knew Pansy held for him.

But then came the day everything changed. The common room was empty as the night's moon had been in the sky for many hours. Draco, as Headboy, was just finishing up a few of his duties around the school when he was making his way quietly back to the Slytherin common room. He was surprised to hear a couple of voices as his form was covered in darkness still near the common room door. He soon recognized one of the voices as Pansy's as she spoke to one of her friends.

Draco could do nothing but close his eyes as Pansy went on about how all her hard work over the years was finally paying off. How she and her family would be set for life once she had the name "Malfoy" attached to her own. Her friend than asked her if she felt anything for him as all. Draco's face set in anger as he heard Pansy only laugh at the question as she told her friend not to be ridiculous. A week later, Draco broke everything off with Pansy, surprised with himself that after years of being with her, that it didn't hurt more. She was naturally upset, but Draco knew it wasn't over him, but his name. He left her crying not for a moment phased by her tears.

But things were different now with this woman, with Angelina his wife. She had never cared about his name. *Her love has be genuine. She has no reason to lie,* Draco thought as he tasted her brown skin; his ears enticed by the sounds of pleasure she made as she laid beneath him. "Oh, Angelina," he called

softly as they both started to approach their climax.

Angelina's head tilted away from Draco as she arched her back, aching to be closer to him than she already was. "David," she breathed.

Draco's forehead crease as he slowly pulled away and looked upon Angelina. Her eyes were still closed and there was a look of pure bliss upon face. She was unaware of what she had just called him or maybe Draco had misheard her. No, he knew he hadn't. All of a sudden Draco didn't feel so well and he completely pulled away from Angelina.

Angelina's eyes opened immediately from the abrupt lost of contact. "Draco?" she was confused as she watched him get out of bed. He didn't even look at her as he put on his housecoat and left the room.

Angelina sat up and wondered what had just happened. A moment ago they were making love, finally consummating their marriage after five years. Then without any kind of warning, he just walked out of the room when they were finished. Angelina drew her legs in and wrapped her arms around them, feeling the last thing she thought she would at this moment. . . used. And as that feeling filled her, she couldn't stop the flow of tears that slid down her cheeks.

But little did she know that Draco was downstairs feeling the exact same way. "How could you be so thick?" he asked himself angrily as he made his way to the living room. "What made you think she actually loved you? Because you asked and she said she did?" He rested on the couch with his elbows on his legs and his face in his hands. "How thick can you be?"

He was determined not to let a tear fall, but unlike many other elements in his life he could control, his tears were not one of them. His father was right those years ago. Draco had allowed Angelina to rule his emotions, and he *hated* her for it. Because she was the only one who could ever make him feel this miserable, this insignificant, and worst of all, this weak.

Chapter Ten: Withering

It was the middle of February and Draco wanted nothing more than to forget about that night him and Angelina had made love. He just wanted to pretend it didn't happen, because he knew if he didn't, it would slowly start to drive him insane, and he just didn't want to be angry anymore.

Angelina had tried once before to confront Draco about that night, but he just didn't want to hear it. Angelina wanted to let it go, but soon found she wasn't able to. That night, she had never felt so alone in her life and today, she was determined to get some kind of answer out of him.

Draco was in his study, surprisingly not reading, but seating at his desk writing a letter to Crabbe, who was on another trip to Iceland. He wanted a full report as soon as possible. As Draco was sealing the letter, he heard Angelina enter the room. He turned around in his chair and it was as if he was looking at her for the first time in a long time. He had not noticed before how frail she had become in the last month. "What do you need?" he asked her.

She came in and took a seat behind him on the couch. "To put some things behind us."

Draco sighed, he knew what this was about. "I've told you before, I don't want to talk about it." He turned back around in his seat.

"Are you mad because of what happened at the party?" she asked. "I thought you weren't angry about that."

"I'm not," he spoke with his back to her. "Tulip, can't you just leave well enough alone?"

"No," she stood and walked over to his desk. She leaned against it and lifted Draco's head so she could look into his eyes. "Not long ago you told me that acting wasn't an option anymore. So you pretending that something isn't wrong, isn't cutting it. I can't leave it alone." She cupped his face gently. "I care about you, Draco."

Draco slapped her hand away. "Don't lie to me."

"I'm not," she stated upset. "But you need to listen to reason." Draco pulled out another piece of parchment and began writing. "Draco." He wasn't listening. "Draco!"

"Well!" he said loudly as he slammed his quill down and then said quietly. "At least I know you haven't forgotten my name."

Angelina shook her head. "I don't follow."

"Of course you wouldn't. One would think after more than two years you would have forgotten about him by now."

Angelina was confused, but knew whom he meant. "You mean David."

Draco turned his head to her. "Of course I mean *David*."

"Alright, but David is gone," she said sadly. "What does he have to do with us now?"

"Do you miss him?" Draco blurted out.

"What kind of question is that?"

"Damn woman, just answer me."

"And if I said yes?" she asked. "What would it mean to you?"

One side of Draco's mouth curled up. "He never told you, did he?" Angelina looked at him strangely. "Of course he didn't, why would he?"

*Even when I hated you, I knew I only hated you because I thought I could never have you. Yet, even then I knew I would do **anything** to make you mine. Forgive me, because it was I-* Angelina thought

back to the last words Montague ever said to her. She had tried to block those words out so many times before, but they constantly replayed in her head. "What did he do?" She found herself whispering.

"Believe it or not, what I have become, under my father's hand, under the rule of Voldemort, was never what I wanted. I was forced to take this." He rolled up his sleeve and showed her the imbedded black ink on his pale white skin. "But your precious Montague took it willingly and did his job with pleasure," Draco explained. "It was he and his group, that volunteered to go after those who had fled the battle ground when Potter was defeated those years ago. It was he alone, that caused the demise of that Mudblood, Granger, and three of the Weasley siblings."

"No," Angelina shook her head.

"Yes. And you want to know what else?" Draco asked her. "With the youngest Weasley boy, it was quick. Ron never knew what hit him, same thing for the girl; he vaporized her on the spot. But with George. . . now he got it the worst. I wasn't there mind you, but I heard his screams and Montague's laughter still haunt the Death Eaters that went with him that day. And wouldn't you like to know, that the only reason George got it so bad, was because Montague had mistaken him for Fred?" Draco watched a tear roll off of Angelina's cheek. "So tell me, do you miss him now?"

"That's not true," she replied.

"Why kid yourself? You knew very well what Montague was. Did you really think being with him would change him?"

"He had changed. He was tired of doing the Dark Lord's dirty work. That's why he joined with you."

Draco laughed as he rose out his seat. "Did he tell you that?" He walked over to his couch and got comfortable. "And let me guess, you believed him?" Draco then said slowly, "Well, guess I can't blame you for that, so did I. But then again, I should have known better, I always knew Montague was out for himself. If he wanted something, believe me, he found a way to get it. And if it did look like he was kind, compassionate, or even just a good friend- it was just one of his many plans in motion. What can say, it was just how Montague worked."

Draco licked his lips and continued. "I can see it now, he probably wanted you two to run away together, am I right?" he got no response from Angelina. "Yeah, that was probably it. And Montague always thought everything out, so if you did decide to leave with him, he wanted to make sure you didn't change your mind, so he probably wanted to kill me off before you left, huh?"

"I wasn't going to let that happen," she said softly with tired eyes.

"Of course not, you're my wife. It's your duty."

"Not everything I do for you is out of some obligation."

Draco sat there a moment. "Okay, I'll bite," he got up and stood in front of her. "You're talking about last month."

"Yes, but that's because you said-" she was cut off.

"What? That we should be something more? That we should stop pretending?" he laughed once more. "And let me guess, you believed that too?" He put his hand on her cheek and noticed she felt a bit warm as he stroked her bottom lip with his thumb. "Face it. I said what I needed to get what I wanted. But if it makes you feel any better, you were all around, a good frack," he smirked.

Angelina slowly pushed Draco's hand away from her. "You know what? I don't know why I ever believed that you were capable of having a heart. Because your heart is nothing more than a desert, where nothing can prosper, where nothing can grow. I realize now that I am nothing more to you than some possession, something you tolerate when it's convenient."

Draco watched as another tear roll down her angry, but sad face. "That night, I thought you were trying to offer me something real, and yes, like a fool I fell for it. But Draco, all I wanted was to be. . ." she trailed off. "You know what? Forget about it, you may have fooled me once, but believe me, I won't make that mistake again." Angelina then bolted towards the exit, but stopped in the doorway and said without looking at him. "Oh, and before I forget, Draco. . . Happy Valentine's Day." And with that, she disappeared down the hall.

Draco cringed the moment she was out of his sight. *What the hell is wrong with you?* he thought. *She didn't have to know about Montague. . . well, at least you didn't tell her everything.*

And as he debated whether or not to go after her, he heard a thud come from down the hall. At first he just thought it was Angelina having one of her temper tantrums, but then, "Master!" A male house elf, whose name Draco could not remember, appeared in the doorway of his study. "Come quickly, it's Madam." The house elf pointed down the hall.

"What?" Draco broke into a run down the hall and found Angelina collapsed on the floor. Draco slid to his knees and turned her over. "Tulip," he called as he tried to wake her. "Angelina, talk to me," but she remained motionless. "Come on baby, please," there was still nothing. "shoot!" he yelled as he picked her up off the floor and Apparated out of the Manor.

Within moments they had arrived at the hospital. With Angelina in his arms, Draco made his way to the front desk. "Get me a Healer!" he demanded of the Head Nurse. Everything else, after they took Angelina away from him, which was a difficult task because he was holding on so tight he couldn't let go, became a blur to him.

He couldn't even remember how he came to be resting in the waiting room when a Healer came in looking for him or how much time had passed by. "Zabini," Draco recognized his former housemate.

"Hello, Malfoy," Zabini greeted him. "I'm sorry that we had to meet under these circumstances."

"How is she?" Draco asked immediately. "I mean, one moment she was fine and the next," he shook his head. "I don't know. I couldn't wake her."

Zabini sighed. "Follow me Malfoy. I'll show you what room we have your wife in." Draco said nothing as he followed the Healer down the hall towards his wife's room. When they got there, Draco looked

3 - Part Three

Chapter Eleven: Something Real

As Angelina's eyes slowly fluttered open she became aware that she wasn't at home, but rather in a hospital bed. Soon a nurse came in on her daily rounds. "Well, good morning, Mrs. Malfoy," she said cheerfully, as she went about her business. "So glad to see you up this morning."

"Morning." Angelina sat up and cleared her throat. "How long have I been here?" she asked.

"Nine days."

"Nine days!" she shouted.

"Yes," the nurse confirmed. "Your husband, bless his soul, barely left your side. Nearly ran me crazy, he did, asking for all kinds of silly things for you."

"That's a joke right?" Angelina refused to believe that Draco was caring enough to do such a thing.

"No, not at all." The nurse shook her head. "In fact, he only just left this morning. He got an owl and I guess it was pretty urgent, because he left soon after reading it." She looked up at the clock on the wall. "Well, I better be on my way. I'll be sure to tell the Healer of your improvement." And she was gone.

Angelina wrapped her arms around her stomach. "No doubt he already knows," she said and looked carefully around the room. She started to get out of bed. "Ow, ow, ow," she cried as she noticed the needle from the I.V. in her hand, she looked at it curiously. *The nurse did say Healer, right? So I must be in a Wizarding hospital,* she thought as she slowly pulled I.V. out.

She was heading towards the bathroom which was located in the room, when all of sudden she dropped to her knees and started coughing; blood came out of her mouth and splattered on the floor. As she sat on her legs, one hand wiped away the blood around her mouth and the other rested on her stomach. She sighed and picked herself up. She searched for her wand and found it resting on a chair with the rest of her belongings and cleaned the blood off the floor.

Angelina once again headed towards the bathroom where she started the water and took a long shower. When she was finished she came out and saw Draco sitting on the bed with his head down. "Hi," she said quietly.

He rose his head. "Hey." Was his response. Angelina noticed he looked tired, as if he hadn't slept in days. Draco then got up and reached for a white paper bag on the stand next to the bed. "When I first came in you were in the shower, so I figured you might be hungry and I went and got you some lunch."

"Thank you." She reached for the bag shyly, not really sure how to act; their last argument was still fresh on her mind.

Draco then asked carefully as he helped her back in bed. "When were you planning on telling me. . . about the baby that is?"

"When was I supposed to? You didn't want to hear anything I had to say." She was right and he knew it. He was so caught up and how she had made him feel, that he never took the time to realize how his actions were affecting her. "What?" Angelina heard him murmur something.

"I'm sorry," he said a bit louder.

Angelina couldn't believe her ears. It was the first time that she had ever heard him apologize to anyone, nevertheless her. "Are you playing with me, Draco? Because I'm letting you know right now, I am sick and tired of it," she started to become defensive.

"No, no games." He shook his head. "I just don't want to fight anymore. Everything I told you the other day- I shouldn't have told you that, I was angry and. . . and I'm sorry."

"So it's true then? Montague killed George?" she asked in a hushed tone. Draco nodded as he noticed she had finally stopped calling Montague by his first name.

Angelina sighed heavily and they sat in silence for awhile. "Draco," she finally spoke. "I want to know something. I know it's probably irrelevant now, but what did you guys have on each other?"

"You're right, it's irrelevant." He took a harder tone than he meant to.

But if Angelina was afraid of anything, it was surely not his bark. "You hold your secrets so close, Draco. You and Montague were very alike in that way. I asked him plenty of times what he had on you and he never said a word about it."

"That's because he knew if he did that he would only be exposing himself."

"What was it, Draco? Do you trust me enough to tell me your secrets?"

Draco finally took a seat in the chair beside the bed. "You should eat. We can't afford you losing anymore weight."

"Don't change the subject," she said, as she uncovered the plate of food Draco had brought her. For some strange reason she wasn't hungry, but she forced herself to eat anyway.

"I don't want you look at me differently," he told her after awhile.

"Then I won't."

"You can't promise that."

"Was it really that bad?"

"No, just something I didn't want known," he said as he watched Angelina eat.

"Fine, I don't need to know then."

Draco shifted in his chair uncomfortably. "It was fifth year," he finally began. "And I guess I went into it trying to figure out who I was, you know, minus the Malfoy." He then lowered his head as he continued, "I was with Parkinson then, but being with her, I knew something was missing, I just didn't know what it was. At the time it wasn't her -she didn't show her true colors until seventh year- so I had figured the problem was with me." He shrugged.

"Anyway, it was right after the first Quidditch practice and I was alone in the locker room, or so I thought. I was coming out of one of the showers when I noticed Montague at his locker, I guess he had just taken one too," Draco's voice became quieter. "He didn't see me and I kind of found myself staring at him as he dressed. I then realized I had never looked at a guy like that before."

Angelina dropped her fork as she realized where Draco's story was headed. Draco continued as if he didn't notice her reaction. "When he did see me, he had this smile on his face and he asked me if I liked what I saw. I was a little dumbfounded, but I told him I did. I started to approach him and I don't know what came over me. . . I just wanted to know what his lips felt like and"

"Draco you can stop, I get the picture," Angelina told him quickly, not wanting the image in her mind.

With his head still down, he told her one last thing. "You should also know, we were together more than once." He then looked up to face her, ready for her judgment. "Well?" he said after a moment.

"Nothing," she shook her head. "Wait, I do have a question. When did you guys end?"

Draco thought for a moment. "We didn't," he answered. "We just stopped."

"Okay, then when did it stop?" she asked as she put her plate on the stand next to the bed.

Draco then said in a monotone voice. "When I had him killed," Angelina was speechless. "You would think one of us would have noticed we were sleeping with the same man." A smile toyed at his lips as he lowered his head.

Angelina looked at him very carefully and then all of sudden yelled. "You sick bastard! Now I *know* you're playing with me," she said angrily.

Draco lifted his head back up. "Of course I am," he started laughing. "Come on now, do I really seem the type?"

Angelina hit him across the arm and spat. "You're a moron, you know that?"

"Yeah," he laid his head on her legs. "But I'm your moron," he said sweetly, and though Angelina was still quite angry, she couldn't help but laugh at him. A moment later Draco stood up. "It's good to hear you laugh." He told her as he bent down and kissed her forehead. "I'm going to go find the doctor and see how soon I can get you home."

take you away from me. I told him, that if he saw it fit to keep you here on this earth that I would do right by you.” He then said softly, “So I’m going to give you the choice you never had.”

“Draco wait, I don’t understand.”

“If you make the choice to leave, I won’t stop you,” he told her. “I’ll get you set up wherever you want to live. And I’ll take care of all the money matters; you would never have to worry about a thing. I’ll even deal with my father and allow you equal time with our child. But-” He snapped his fingers and a little red ring box appeared and Draco took a hold of it. “-If you decide to stay, it will be because you want to and not because you have to.” He handed her the box. “Open it.”

Angelina took a breath as she opened the box and her eyes laid upon a new wedding band and the 1.5ct Princess Cut diamond set in white gold. Angelina's dream ring. “Draco, it’s beautiful.” She looked into Draco’s warming eyes.

“I’m offering you something real,” he told her. “So if you decide to stay- no more affairs, no more sleeping in separate bedrooms, no more-” He paused. “Okay, I can’t promise you no more arguments, but I promise less of them.” He smiled, but only for a moment. “I should let you know that. . . I can tell you Fred where is, if you want.”

“Fred?” she said, almost in a whisper, she had to admit, it had been awhile since she had thought about him, but the possibility of being with him again excited her. “Why tell me something like that?” she asked.

“Because I need to know where you stand, when it comes to us. I can offer you many things you know that, but if what you need is somewhere else out there in the world, take it and take it now.” He explained softly.

Angelina looked down as she seriously debated the matter at hand. *Something real*. This was not the illusion that she had convinced herself that it was. And then she realized that she had never thought about it before, because it was too much of a depressing thought then, but could she really see herself growing old. . . with Draco? Or should she just take him up on his offer and run while she still had the chance? Go and find Fred and finally have the happy ending she had always dreamed.

After much thought, Angelina nodded to herself and looked back at her husband. “Like I told you before, Draco.” And she slipped the rings onto her finger. “I don’t need the world.”

“Are you sure?” He didn’t want to get his hopes up too soon.

“Yes,” she replied with only a slight hesitation. Angelina then watched as Draco began to stare into the fireplace and his facial features harden. She watched as the reflection of the flames danced in his ice like eyes.

“Angelina?” His voice was serious as he continued to stare into the fire.

“Yes?” she asked shyly.

His gray eyes then stared pensively into hers. “Tulip, there’s something else I’ve been meaning to say. . .” Angelina felt his body become stiff as his breathing became labored. He stared at her for a long time, before he just put his head down and shook his head. As he tilted his head back up a small grin appeared across his face and he put his hand on her stomach. “What do you think of the name, Damien?”

“Damien?” She smiled politely and then arched an eyebrow. “What makes you so certain it’ll be a boy?”

The smile on Draco’s face faded. “Malfoys have always had a male as a firstborn.”

“Always? How is that possible?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” he said softly. “And also, that firstborn is usually the only child.”

“Well,” Angelina wrapped her arms around Draco’s neck as she straddled him. She then kissed him before saying. “I think we may be able to do something about that one.”

A devilish look came over Draco’s features. “Yeah?” he asked, looking up at her as he rubbed her thighs.

“Yeah,” she confirmed, and kissed him again.

“Angelina?” he managed to say in between kisses.

“Hmm?”

“I’d die for you,” she barely heard him say. She then pulled away and looked into his fear ridden eyes; uncertainty plastered all over his face.

Angelina couldn’t do anything but stare at him for a moment. The significance of his words, stopped her breath in her throat, but then slowly a smile appeared on her lips as she deciphered his words, and she told him, “Likewise.”

Draco then laughed joyously in relief as he pulled Angelina closer and hugged her. He knew they were now embarking on something new, on something real, but no matter how happy he wanted to feel, he couldn’t ignore that nagging thought in the back of his mind asking, *How long can this last?*

Chapter Thirteen: The Attachment of Solum

Angelina was in the living room decorating a seven foot Christmas tree with the help of several of the

House Elves. Grayson had bought in the tree the night before, knowing Angelina would want to put up Christmas decorations right away. Grayson was now sitting on the couch with Rosalina in his arms. "How old is she now?" he asked Angelina.

She smiled as Darcy handed her another ornament for the tree. "Well, she was born September fifth, so in four days she'll be three months."

"Master Malfoy really adores her, it's quite surprising," Grayson commented.

Angelina turned to him. "Why wouldn't he adore his own daughter?"

"Oh, I didn't mean to offend." His eyes were a bit wide as he shook his head. "It's just my father was the Groundskeeper for Master Malfoy's father, so I was there quite a lot. I was about ten years old when your husband was born, but I don't recall any moment where I saw him being held by his father. That's all I meant, Madam."

Angelina focused her attention back on the tree. "Well, sometimes you just have to remember that Draco is not his father. He's a kinder man than that."

Then, as if on cue, they heard the front door open and loudly slam shut. "Tulip!" Draco yelled. "I need you in my study in five minutes!"

Grayson turned a skeptical eye towards Angelina. "Most of time anyway," she said to him as she looked at the clock on the wall.

Draco quickly made it to his study where he began writing a letter just as quickly, but still remarkably neat. He had just sealed it and attached it to their family owl when Angelina lightly knocked on the door and stepped inside. Draco opened a window and the owl flew off.

"You wanted to see me?" she asked, as she closed and leaned on the door with her hand still on the knob.

She was surprised as he pounced on her and roughly claimed her lips with his own. His tongue was probing, searching, as if looking for something he wanted to find within her. Being caught off guard it took Angelina a moment before she responded. Her hands then went around his back and she started to pull his shirt out his pants. "Draco," she breathed, as he moved from her lips, to her cheek, and down to her neck.

"Don't speak," he told her as he unbuttoned and then unzipped her pants. He didn't like for her to speak during love making. . . it only brought up troublesome thoughts.

"Take them off," he demanded, as he pulled away and undid his own pants. Within moments Draco had Angelina's legs wrapped around his body. He carried her over to his desk where he pushed everything off of it before setting her down.

As he did this an unfamiliar scent came across Angelina's nose. "Draco, what's that smell?"

Draco, who had been nibbling on her neck, froze immediately at the question. “Nothing.” He then continued what he was doing.

“Draco you smell like perfume,” she said in a tiny voice.

With his hands planted firmly on the desk, Draco pulled away and looked into his wife’s eyes. “Are you accusing me of something?” His forehead creased as he asked, and Angelina shook her head. “Do you not want to make love to me?”

“That’s not it.”

“Then what’s wrong?” He seemed annoyed.

“Nothing,” she said, and drew him back to her. Draco then violently penetrated Angelina's body before she was ready to receive him. She bit her lip as she tried not to cry out at the pain coursing throughout her body.

Each rhythmic thrust was more painful than the last and Angelina soon felt her nails sinking into Draco’s back as they broke through the skin. Blood slowly began to ooze from the small crescent cuts. Draco had never been this rough or this forceful with her before; he had always been a, surprisingly, gentle lover. So Angelina knew something was wrong and that he was desperately trying to escape his pain by sharing it with her.

A few minutes later, a burst of ecstasy screamed throughout both of their bodies, and though their love making was finished, they stayed connected for a few moments more. Draco then gradually pulled away and Angelina could read the look of guilt and concern written on his face.

He then slowly slipped his fingers around Angelina’s neck and started to kiss away the tears Angelina didn’t know she had shed. He then proceeded to lick the blood off her lips. “I didn’t hurt you, did I?” His voice was calm as he put his arms around her again.

Angelina rested her head on his shoulder. “Only a little,” she lied.

Draco sighed. “Come on.” He helped her off the desk and they walked over to the couch and they laid on it lengthwise. Their naked bodies melted into one another. “Tulip, I know I don’t really say it, but you know that I- that I um-”

“It’s okay, baby, I know,” Angelina didn’t have to hear those words to know she was loved by her husband.

“Tulip, I’m going to have to send you and Rose away.”

Angelina’s head snapped up. “What? Why?”

“I messed up today, baby. I messed up bad and I don’t know if it’s all going to work out.”

“Tell me what happened.”

Ginevra Weasley: you could describe her as sweet, kind, and innocence, but you would all be wrong. Ginny, as she was known, had pledged her allegiance to the Dark Lord when she was merely a child of eleven years old. But of course, when she met him, he went by the name of Tom Riddle. Riddle told her of a world where he would one day be King, and if she vowed to stand by him through all of her days, then she would be his Queen.

Ginny had grown up the last of seven children, and though she knew her parents loved her, there was never any time for her. So when she found the diary of Riddle and was showered with his attention, she knew there was no way she could ever go back to a life of being ignored.

So Ginny bought her time and she played her part, until the day she knew she could be back with her beloved Riddle. So they faked her death, and though she was greatly saddened by her brothers' deaths, she would not let it defer her from taking her rightful place as Queen, her rightful place as Lady Dark Lord.

"It's been months since you have come to see me. If I didn't know better I would think you were trying to avoid me." She smiled seductively, placing her hand on his chest and standing on her toes to give him a kiss on his chin.

"Lady-"

"Ginny," she spat angrily, before her doll-like smile reappeared on her face.

"Ginny." Draco removed her hand from his chest and took a small step back. "I haven't been avoiding you. It's just. . . my wife and I are finally seeing eye to eye and I promised her no more affairs."

"Well then, you shouldn't have made promises you knew you couldn't keep." Ginny wrapped her free arm around Draco. "Now follow me to my bedchamber." She released him and started down the hall when she realized, she only heard her own footsteps. She turned her head slightly with her back still towards him. "Don't make me angry. You wouldn't like to see me angry." She soon heard his footstep behind her and she continued on her way.

Ginny entered her bedchamber and with the flick of her wrist the room lit as if the sun had risen. She then heard a thump from behind her and turned around to see Draco on his butt outside her door. A look of confusion came across her face as Draco stood up and put his arm out, he couldn't cross into her bedroom.

"That's funny," Ginny gathered as she walked back towards the door. "This ward only comes up if someone wishes to harm someone in this room." She looked dangerously at Draco.

Draco laughed and a brash smile came across his face. "What can I say? You did always like it rough."

Ginny's smile returned as she relaxed at his comment. "Now that sounds more like my lovable boy toy." She raised her hands and traced the invisible wall that stood between her and Draco with her elegantly long fingers and whispered a chant he did not recognize. Ginny had long ago learned wandless magic and had become a very powerful witch in her time with Voldemort. "Try it now," she said after a minute.

Draco was now able to enter the room. Ginny took his hand and lead him to the bed.

“Be gentle with me now,” she teased.

About two hours later, Draco sat up next to a sleeping Ginny. With his face in one of his hands, he took a deep breath and wondered why he could never resist this red headed woman next to him. Sure, she was powerful and maybe getting one up on Voldemort wasn't too bad either, but all he could think was: *I promised her no more affairs.*

Then as Draco sat there he realized that no one knew that he was here. *I could kill her in her sleep*, he thought, *who would know?* Draco slowly leaned over the edge of the bed and reached for his cloak, which had been discarded on the floor, and reached for his wand inside of it. He turned to Ginny and placed a gentle kiss on her temple and then pointed his wand towards her. “*Avada Keda-*”

All of sudden, Ginny's eyes snapped opened and Draco's wand flew out of his hand and landed clear across the room. Ginny growled and bared her teeth. “You insolent fool!” She rose her hand and Draco flew out of the bed and hit the wall with impeccable force and there he stayed, glued against the wall. “How dare you attack your Queen!” She levitated out of the bed and a sheet wrapped itself around her body. Her feet then gently landed upon the floor. “Answer me!” she demanded as she marched towards him.

Draco felt as if a stone, the weight of a ton, was sitting upon his chest. “frack you!” his voice was forced, for it was hard to breathe. Ginny placed her hand on Draco's chest, right above his heart and a rush of pain poured throughout his body, from his head all the way down to his toes. He gritted his teeth, but soon yelled out in pain.

“Ah, music to my ears.” Ginny then pulled her hand away and the screaming ceased. Draco breathed heavily trying to catch his breath. “Why do you wish to harm me? And do you wish to harm my Dark Lord?” Draco still did not answer. “Fine, I'll do it myself then.” She placed her hands on either side on this face looking into his cold gray eyes. “Tell me your secrets.”

Draco felt a tingling in his throat, words were beginning to rise, he fought them back, but with no success. “I plan to destroy you, you and your Dark Lord.”

“Why, when your family has been loyal to us for years?”

“Because I am sick and tired of following the Dark Lord's orders. People have feared him far too long, but soon that won't be a problem. It is time for the Malfoy line to rise above the ranks and take their rightful place, which has been foreseen long before Voldemort existed. I will one day -and one day soon- reign over, not only the Wizarding world, but the Muggle world alike. It will be my name that you fear and I will be a God and my wife. . . a Goddess.”

Draco smiled evilly. “Those who stand with me, think I want to see you go down because of what you represent, and as long as I play my part, people will fight and die, not knowing that each life that they take from Voldemort's army gets me one step closer to ruling over them all.”

Ginny only laughed. "Quite ambitious, Malfoy. Too bad you'll never see that happen, because when I'm done with you, you'll be ready to go six feet under. Then I'll finish the job by taking out your disloyal family."

"Fine. Do what you will to me, but if you dare go after my wife and child, I will haunt you from the grave until the day you die."

A smile that sent chills down Draco's spine came across Ginny's face. "You please me Malfoy, so let's make a deal and I'll spare your meaningless life."

"Deal?"

"Yes. Now tell me, your child- boy or girl?"

"Girl."

"Age?"

"Almost three months."

"I want her-"

"Never!" Draco yelled furiously.

"You didn't let me finish!" she spat and then shook her red hair out of face. "I want the child or your wife's life. Give me one or my Dark Lord will know of your disloyalty."

"You can't ask me to choose something like that."

"I can do whatever I want. So choose, who do you love more?" she asked.

With Draco still under the truth spell, he had no choice but to answer truthfully. He closed his eyes and whispered his answer.

"Huh?" Ginny was confused and asked her question again. And again, Draco repeated his answer just as soft.

"Well, it doesn't matter." She shook her head. "Bring me the child or I'll kill your wife. It's as simple as that." Ginny then released him and he dropped to the floor like a bag of rocks. He put his hand over his heart and slumped over. "Get dressed and get out." She flopped back onto her bed casually and watched Draco dress with lustful eyes. "Next time I summon you, that is when you will bring the child."

"Whatever, Ginny." He didn't make eye contact.

"You no longer have the privilege of calling me Ginny. Now get out of sight."

Draco started towards the door, but stopped and turned back around with a sexy smirk on his face.

"Lady Dark Lord, would it be too much to ask for a kiss before I go?"

Ginny looked at him strangely, but then genuinely smiled at him. "You're an arse, Malfoy, but you never could resist me, could you?"

"You know I couldn't." His eyes raked her body.

"Alright, but discard your wand to the floor. I don't want any surprises." Draco did as he was told. Ginny got out of bed and strode towards him. "Let's make this good, huh? It just may be your last."

"I wouldn't want it any other way." Ginny stood before him and coiled her arms around his back. Draco wrapped his arms her and kissed her passionately. His arms then felt up her back and he placed his hands on either side of her face. He then tilted his head up as he heard Ginny gasp.

He then looked down upon the pained expression on her face. "I may be an @\$\$, but at least I'm not a stupid dog." Draco's eyes were colder than any winter's night. "I'm a Malfoy, did you really believe my line was not capable of wandless magic?"

"Draco." Her voice was shrilled and panicked as she was unable to move.

"No one threatens my family." His voice seeped with hatred, but then his eyes soften and he leaned down and kissed Ginny's forehead tenderly. "I'm truly sorry it had to end this way." Ginny's eyes were filled with fear as she frantically searched his. "Good night, sweet Ginny. *Avada Kedavra.*" A green light glowed around his hands.

Ginny's eyes soon closed and her lifeless body dropped to the floor. Then Draco surprisingly heard this gut-wrenching, ear-piercing scream from a man echoing throughout the castle. "The Attachment of Solum? Impossible." Draco eyes grew wide and he quickly picked up his wand off the floor.

The Attachment of Solum was one of the oldest and most powerful of enchantments. It was the closest thing to immortality that one could achieve, which was probably why some people would find it alluring, but many would not have the guts to use it because in time it caused severe insanity. T.A.S. which it was commonly known as, was a spell that bound two souls who dearly loved each other, together for life, which meant to kill one, you had to kill both within a certain time period. The knowledge of that time period had been lost along the ages.

"Just my luck," Draco whispered to himself. He knew that Voldemort must have been able to sense Ginny's pain and he and the in-house Death Eaters would be coming to investigate. Ginny would awaken from her *death* and be able to tell him whom had betrayed them.

Draco had to think quickly. He was no good at memory charms -they had always been a bit lacking- but he had to give it a try. "To the Queen's bedchamber!" Draco heard Voldemort roar.

Draco pointed his wand towards Ginny. "*Obliviate!*" She would have no memory of this incident, but then again, her memory would one day come back. It could be as long as ten years from now or even as soon as a few weeks.

Draco then heard the approaching steps of Voldemort and his small army of men, so he Apparated, and not a moment too soon, because as soon as he left, Voldemort entered the door. He was 5'10" with jet black hair and emerald green eyes. He looked as if he was only twenty-three years old, but then again, that was how old his body was.

The first time Voldemort tried to take over Harry's body, he could not, because he was filled with a love that Voldemort could not understand. But then Ginny came back to him, and she loved him in a way that no one had ever loved him in his life. So when Harry was defeated during the Final Battle, Voldemort had no problem occupying his body as if it were his own.

Voldemort stopped cold in his tracks when he saw his beloved Ginny on the floor. "Fan out. Find the person who did this and you will be greatly rewarded. Go now!"

When the men were gone, Voldemort dropped to his knees beside Ginny and gathered her in his arms. "Come now love, wake for me." His voice was calm and gentle.

"Beloved?" Ginny's voice was tiny and weak.

"Yes, my Queen, I am here. Tell me, who has come and disrespected us and our own home?"

"It was. . ." She concentrated hard. "It was. . ." She sighed in disappointment. "My King, forgive me, for I can not remember."

"It's alright," he told her, as he tenderly held her in his arms and embraced her. "Have no fear my Queen. I will find the one who did this and their punishment will be so great that they will pray for death." Voldemort's eyes were a blazed with fire.

"Tom?" Ginny pulled away and her innocent like smile crept onto her lips.

"Yes?"

"When that time comes," her eyes sparkled. "May I watch?"

Voldemort laughed a deep and hardy laugh. "Of course, my love. Of course."

Chapter Fourteen: The Meaning of Life

Draco was out for the day, leaving Angelina at home with the baby. Rosalina was sleeping soundly in her playpen while Angelina was under the tree, like a child, shaking a present and wondering what was inside.

There soon came a knock at the door and Angelina went to open it. Whom she saw was someone she had not seen in months. "Hello, Lucius." She stood in front of the door way.

"Aren't you going to invite me in?" he asked in his aristocratic voice.

Wasn't thinking about it, Angelina thought. "Of course, come in." She stepped out of the way.

Lucius looked around as he took off his scarf and gloves then handed them to Angelina to hang up as if she were a servant girl. "Where is my boy?"

"He's out for the day," she said. "I'll tell him you came by." She was about to hand him back his things.

"No need, I'll wait." He made his way to the living room where he caught a glimpse of the playpen and walked towards it. He then looked upon Rosalina who was beginning to wake. Lucius shook his head. "I should have chosen for him. Parkinson would have given him an heir."

Angelina stepped passed Lucius and picked up her child. "I have given your son a strong, healthy daughter." She was offended by his comment. "And I would appreciate it if every time I saw you, you didn't mention Parkinson, or Moon, or whatever her damn name is now. If you disapprove so much of his decision, then maybe I shouldn't I have been a choice."

"In my research, it never occurred to me that-" he paused. "You'll break his heart you know," Lucius said out of nowhere.

"Excuse me?"

"No matter how much you *think* you love him, you will eventually leave him and break not only his heart, but his spirit," he said matter-of-factly.

Angelina was not pleased that Lucius had come into her home and had started criticizing her. "You are very well entitled to your opinions, but just so you know, I don't plan of leaving Draco."

"Of course not." Angelina watched as Lucius' bored silver eyes, which looked so much like her husband's, raked her standing form. "Are you hungry?" he suddenly asked.

Angelina looked at him oddly. "Actually, I was about to make lunch before you came." Then without thinking she asked, "Would you like to join me?"

A small smile rested on Lucius' lips. "You are far too kind for this family, Angelina."

"Thank you," she smiled.

He shook his head. "It wasn't a compliment. Now gather you and the child's things. We're going out for lunch."

"I think not. I don't want Draco to come home and wonder where we are."

Lucius gave a soft chuckle. "That would be a first, you doing something my son actually told you to do. Besides, my boy will do fine without his family for a few hours, trust me."

Angelina honestly didn't want to go, but she had to admit, she was still very young and longed for the

"I understand your situation. He is your father, but this is not the first time he has gone against me. Foolishly I forgave him before, because he is the best, but there will be no forgiveness for attacking my Queen," he paused. "Fear not, your father's betrayal will have no bearing on you or those who follow you in your line." Draco merely bowed his head. "Go now and remember, I want him alive."

Draco stood up and followed his fellow Death Eaters out of the room. As soon as it was clear, he apparated outside his home and walked through the doors. "Tulip!" he yelled. "I need you!" He ran up the stairs into the bedroom. Then with a swish of his wand clothes flew around the room folding and placing themselves into a suitcase. He cursed at himself for not sending them away the day he had gotten confirmation. He had been selfish wanting his family close to him.

Draco knew it would not be long before Ginny's memory became clear and she had a face to go along with those silver eyes. He also knew that Voldemort automatically thought that the act of betrayal was done by Malfoy Sr. because of past history. Besides, if he did think it was Draco, he would have thought Draco smart enough not to come back after committing such a high crime. Therefore, in Voldemort's mind, it could have only been Lucius.

"Tulip!" Draco yelled again when he realized she was not on her way. He then started down the staircase in search of his non-compliant wife. He stepped into the living room where he saw a house elf cleaning up Rosalina's toys off the floor. "You," he called. "Where is my wife?"

"Madam went out to lunch, Master," said the timid elf.

"With Grayson?" Which Draco found odd.

"No Master, your father," the House Elf informed him.

Draco's shoulders fell. "Where did they go?"

"Naru does not know, sir," he answered.

Draco growled angrily before heading out the door in his search of his family. He would not have them pay for his crimes, not even his father.
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"You seem tired," Lucius remarked as he and Angelina took their seats at Lucius' favorite restaurant. Amazing enough to Angelina, it was a Muggle restaurant on the far side of town. She had wondered before why they had taken the Towncar.

Angelina gently set Rosalina's carrying seat on the chair as she smiled. "I'm fine, really. It's just the new baby and all."

Lucius picked up his menu and set it in front of himself. "You haven't told him, have you?"

"What do you mean?" Angelina asked him.

“You’re still very ill, Angelina, and you have been so for over a year now. One may not be able to tell by looking at you -you see to that well- but you cannot hide the weariness in your voice. It doesn’t go away,” he spoke from behind his menu.

“The doctors say I’m fine,” she told him. “I’m perfectly healthy.” Angelina didn’t like discussing her health, especially when she thought she was doing a good job of hiding it.

“What do *Healers* know?” he asked stressing the word "Healer" as he laid down his menu. She had lived in the Muggle world far too long, using their terminology annoyed him. “Do you know why you’re ill, Angelina?” She said nothing. “It’s not because you’re not strong. You are, that’s why I chose you. But it seems you are not strong enough to endure my son. You see, Draco is like quicksand. He engulfs your entire being, bring you down into him, unaware that he’s drowning you, and the more you struggle the more he pulls. Face it, you’re sinking and no one is going to be able to pull you out.” He licked his lips. “So I’ll tell you what-”

“Stop right there,” Angelina interrupted him and he looked put out. “Whatever you’re going to say, whatever you’re going to offer, save it because I don’t want to hear it. I love your son, that is the honest truth, and no matter what you believe, I have, can, and will endure,” Angelina explained calmly. “Now please, a change of subject.”

“I’m not done yet,” he told her. “There’s also one other. . . variable to your illness.”

Angelina narrowed her eyes and studied his face closely; she then felt her stomach drop. “You know, don’t you?” she asked.

Lucius smiled. “You mean about your. . . how do I put it delicately? Your ‘complication’ when you were younger?”

“How do you know about that?” she whispered. “Nobody knew, nobody but. . .” she took an unsteady breath.

“Don’t worry yourself, child, it’s not good for you. Besides, I know what lengths you went through to keep it all quiet. It was quite impressive, even if I do say so myself.”

“Are you trying to blackmail me?” she inquired angrily. “Because know, if I have to, I’ll tell Draco myself. I won’t let you hang this over my head.”

“Do you really think he’ll want to keep you then?” His question, made Angelina look down at her daughter as she realized she didn’t have the answer. “I know what you have promised him and you know very well you can’t deliver. And because of your lies he thinks he can break the curse.” Lucius stated as he signaled the waiter over.

“Curse? What curse?” Lucius’ statement had rattled her a bit.

“Yes, I will have the shrimp and crab pasta along with the veal. The lady will have the same. We’ll also have that with a bottle of white wine,” Lucius ignored Angelina’s question. “And for the appetizer we will have the calamari,” but then continued as if never interrupted as he shooed the waiter. “And

because he thinks he can, he has given you everything right down to his very soul and that has left him vulnerable.”

“Are you telling me, I'm Draco's weakness?”

Lucius made eye contact. “Yes,” and then looked down at his grandchild. “And her, of course.”

“Well, then you're wrong. Your son's love for me, for his family, which includes you, isn't a weakness, but a strength,” Angelina said, not for Lucius, but for herself.

Lucius smirked. “Must be blissful to be that naive.”

Angelina sighed in agitation. *Maybe lunch with Lucius wasn't a good idea.* “Excuse me, will you?” She rose from her seat and headed towards the restroom.

Lucius turned Rosalina towards him and chuckled. “You're not what I expected,” he told her. “But you will do. . . for now.” The waiter then appeared by Lucius' side and placed the bottle of chilled white wine on the table. When the waiter was gone, Lucius poured himself and Angelina a glass.

He then checked to make sure Angelina was not coming back. He snapped his fingers below the table and a vial was soon in his hand. “The doctors say I'm fine. I'm perfectly healthy,” Lucius said to himself with a smile and then looked to Rosalina as he poured a portion of the vial's content into Angelina's glass. “First lesson, child: if you want something done right, never rely on your father to do it.”

He closed the bottle. “Half a vial, once a year, so not to be detected by any known charm.” He then sighed. “I fear, either way this goes, it will not turn out well.” He confided in Rosalina as he looked at her. “You, your mother's ghost child,” he shook his head as he looked at the vial in his hand. “It's only a matter of time.”

With the vial being small, it was easy for Lucius to slip it into his pocket as he saw Angelina approach the table and sit down. He then picked up his glass of wine and sipped it with a satisfied expression on his face as he watched Angelina drink her own.

They continued to speak and disagree as they waited for their food. When it did arrive Angelina found herself on her third glass of wine. “Quite a drinker, aren't we?” Lucius commented.

She smiled. “Just trying to suppress my urge to stab you with my fork.”

“Then by all means,” he filled her glass, “have another.” The waiter then walked away, but not without thinking the pair dysfunctional.

A few minutes later, Draco came through the doors of the restaurant. “Excuse me, sir, do you have a reservation?” asked the host behind the podium.

“Get out of my way.” Draco shoved the host to the floor when he spotted his father and Angelina across the restaurant.

“Draco.” Angelina looked up from her meal, which she had barely touched, as she saw her husband approach.

“Hello, son,” Lucius drawled.

“Angelina, take Rose and go home now,” he demanded loudly. People were starting to look at the young man that had pushed his way in. “You know where to go. Don’t wait for me. The Portkey is in the dresser.”

“Draco surely you don’t mean-”

“Yes, now go.” Angelina gathered her daughter and started to walk out of the restaurant. “Damn woman, what are you doing? I meant *right* now.”

“Draco,” she looked around; she was already being stared at. “Do you see where we are?”

“I. Don’t. Care. Home now!” he growled.

Angelina huffed loudly and then Apparated. “My God, did you see that?” yelled some man.

“Check please,” said a woman.

“Father,” Draco turned to Lucius. “The Dark Lord thinks you have attacked Gin- the Queen. He has sent a group after you. We have to put you in hiding.”

“Nonsense boy. I have done no such thing.”

“I know,” Draco cast his eyes away, “because it was me.”

“You attacked the Queen and she’s still alive?” Lucius was astonished. “Can you do nothing right?” He stood and scowled. But had time to say no more as they heard a scream and the sound of shattering dishes. Death Eaters seem to emerge from every corner of the restaurant.

Draco and Lucius pulled out their wands and stood back to back in a defense position. “Only twelve of them?” Lucius asked. “Hardly seems fair.”

“For us?”

“No boy, for them.” Draco couldn’t help but smile at his father’s cockiness. He then noticed the muggles exiting the building.

“Step down, Draco,” said one of the Death Eaters. “We are only here to retrieve your father.”

Draco shook his head. “Sorry, can’t allow you to do that.”

“Step down now or be known as a traitor,” the Death Eater continued.

"Then so be it," Draco said with narrowed eyes and swung this wand toward the man. "*Avada Kedavra!*"

At the murder of their fellow Death Eater, the others readied their wands, but it was already too late, because if they were going to go after a pair of Malfoys their attacks should have been twice as powerful and three times the speed of light.

So by the time their wands were pointed towards the Malfoys, only four of them remained. "*Maxima Expelliarmus!*" yelled one quickly and both Lucius and Draco's wands went flying out of their hands. "Let's see what you can do without your wands!" He spat.

Lucius and his son simultaneously pulled out a dagger from their holster located above the boots that they wore. "Always liked the sight of blood." Lucius' eyes sparkled with delight. He then took off with a cheetah like speed and slit the throat of the closest Death Eater, spattering blood as he did so. As he was doing that, Draco threw his blade at the one aiming his wand towards his father.

"My hand!" The blade was protruding out of it.

Draco made his way towards him and yanked it out unforgivingly. "I'll see you in hell." He then stabbed the man in the chest with more force than necessary.

"*Stupefy!*" Draco heard behind him, but it wasn't his father's voice. He whipped his head around to see that his father had been seized by the remaining two men. "Drop it, Malfoy."

"You won't kill him," Draco stated, his blade still firmly in hand. "You have orders."

"Yes, but we can always say there was an 'accident' trying to bring him in." The other Death Eater catching the hint, pointed his wand towards Lucius. Draco sighed and dropped the soiled blade to the ground. "And since you are a traitor to our Dark Lord, killing you will bring us an even greater reward." Draco could sense that the man was smiling underneath his mask as he aimed his wand towards Draco's chest.

Draco's brow furrowed as a dark figure slid behind where his father was being held. "*Avada Kedavra!*" came the spell and Draco immediately dropped to one knee, grabbed his blade, and threw it into the heart of the Death Eater aiming his wand towards his father. He then watched as both men crumbled to the floor.

"I thought I told you to stay home!" Draco yelled at Angelina as he walked over, pulled his dagger out of the man, wiped it on the his robe, and placed it back into its holster. Angelina stood, with her hand over her mouth, over the fallen man she had just attacked. Draco's anger slipped away as he saw the horrid look on his wife's face. He realized it was the first time she had ever killed anyone. "It's okay, Tulip." He pulled her into his arms and comforted her. "You did well. You did very well."

Chapter Fifteen: The Fire: Spark

(Before being *Ignited* there is always and foremost the *Spark*)

Draco had driven his stupefied father and his too-calm-for-comfort wife home. He had gotten out of his blood-splattered clothes and then watched as his father was starting to stir from the spell in the living room. Grayson soon came in carrying a smiling Rosalina and handed her over to her father before leaving for his cabin. Angelina was nowhere to be seen; she was in the downstairs bathroom being violently sick.

Lucius started to stretch his body as the last of the spell finally wore off. "She's still very disobedient I see."

"Father, not now I don't want to hear it." A House Elf handed him a warm bottle and he fed Rosalina. "Because if it weren't for her, we both may be dead right now."

"Yes, but maybe she would not of had to do anything, if you weren't a screw up!" Lucius yelled. "If you're going to kill someone, do it right!"

"They had T.A.S. father, what could I have done?"

Lucius looked surprised. "The Attachment of Solum?"

"Yes. Believe me, she would have been dead otherwise."

Lucius shook his head as he took a seat on the couch. "Alright, fine. And I'm not even going to ask how she had mistaken you for me."

"Bad memory charm," he confessed quietly.

"Did you learn anything in school?" Lucius asked and then mumbled something that Draco couldn't quite hear.

"I'm sorry if school wasn't the only thing on my mind," he replied. Rose was starting to fuss in his arms. "You wanted me to take The Mark, though we weren't even loyal to the Dark Lord. You wanted me to take a wife and Pansy was surely out of the question. She only wanted to be with me because of who I was and what that would mean for the status of her family. That and her family was too loyal to the Dark Lord. So then, by my last year I was engaged, before the holiday break, to a girl I barely knew. Plus I was preparing for a war I really didn't want to fight," his voice had been rising throughout the ordeal. "So I'm sorry, that a stupid memory charm, was the least of my worries!"

"Draco!" Angelina yelled. "What the hell is going on?" She walked over to him and took her crying baby who was reaching out for her.

"Nothing!" He allowed Rosalina to be taken out of his arms. "Look we only have a few hours, tops, before the Dark Lord realizes that his Death Eaters aren't coming back," he told her. "I already have you and Rose's bags packed. Rest for a little while, but then I need you to go to the address I told you to go to."

"Fine."

Draco looked to his father and started to say something before being cut off. "Don't worry, boy, I can take care of myself."

Draco nodded and then made his way upstairs where he collapsed on his bed. "Why can't this be easy?"

"Because then you wouldn't learn anything." Draco looked up and saw Angelina walk into the room.

He sat up and pulled her to him, wrapping his arms around her legs and resting his head against her chest. "I'd die for you."

Angelina ran her finger through his almost shoulder length hair. "Why do you always say that?"

"Because I would."

"But what if I don't want you to die for me?"

"What do you mean?" He looked up at her.

Angelina slid down to her knees in front of him. "What I mean is, I'm not *asking* you to die for me, because that was never the *question*. The real question is: will you live for me Draco?" She held him close. "When I killed that man earlier, I wasn't upset because he had died at my hands, but because I could have lost you today. I just keep on thinking, what if I had come too late? What if you were killed today? What if. . ." her voice trailed off. "Draco," she cried softly.

"It's okay baby," he kissed the top of her head, "it's all going to be okay." Angelina began to sob loudly realizing it had been a long time since she had just completely broken down.

Draco had seen tears run down her face before, but he had never had to deal with the sound of her crying. And though the sound made his heart ache, deep down within him, he was happy, because he knew he had something, that none of the men in his family had before him, a wife that cried for him and not because of him. After a few minutes Angelina was able to calm herself down. "You must think me foolish," she said as she wiped away the last of her tears.

"Of course I don't." He pulled her up to him and had her lay down on the bed. Propping himself on his side he took his free hand and caressed her damp face. "You are so beautiful."

Angelina's smile was small. "I don't think you've ever said that to me before." She took his hand and held it close to her chest as she started to massage it.

Draco appreciated the gesture, his hand was quite sore, it had been awhile since he had thrown his dagger with such intensity. "No need in stating the obvious," he replied.

"Doesn't mean it's not nice to hear," she said as she concentrated on his hand.

"You're right," he agreed as he slowly slipped his hand out of hers.

"Yes, you made me memorize it." She walked over to him to see him pulling out what looked like a music box. "Is that the Portkey?" she asked.

Draco nodded his head. "Be careful okay? And hold Rosalina close, the feeling of going through a Portkey isn't pleasant." Angelina nodded and allowed herself to be kissed. "I'll come and check on you as soon as I can." She nodded again, the gentleness in his voice stirred something in her and she found herself fighting back tears. That's when she noticed Draco's own face. "Go, now." He turned away from her, hoping she had not caught his falling tear. When he turned back around they were gone. He wrapped his arms around himself and then for the second time in his life, he prayed for his family.

Angelina soon arrived in a rural area out of a Portkey she couldn't quite manage to see under the snow. With her and her daughter's things floating low towards the ground behind her, she headed, as she was told, to the address Draco had made her memorize.

She could see that it was a one floor tan house as she approached it. The house was also covered in snow and decorated for the holidays. She knocked on the door urgently as Rosalina was starting to cry in her arms. And as the door opened she couldn't believe who she saw. She would have been sure that of all the people on Draco's list that he could have sent her to, he would have been *one* of the last.

As their eyes met, he pushed his vibrant red hair out of his face. Angelina smiled as she stared into his calm, ocean deep, blue orbs. She meant to say 'hi' but what she said was, "You still have the most beautiful blue eyes."

"Hello, Angelina," he spoke.

"Hello, Percival." And he allowed her to come into his home. Percy, like all of his siblings, shared in having bright red hair, but when it came to eyes, Percy stood alone. Because while the others either had eyes that looked between brown and hazel like their father's, Percy took after their mother and inherited a pair of forget-me-not blue.

Percy was actually the first Weasley that Angelina had met when she boarded the train to Hogwarts for her first year. She had been walking down the aisle looking for a compartment that wasn't full when she spotted one that only had one boy inside. "Hi. Do you mind if I sit with you? The others seem to be full."

"No, I don't mind, come on in." He told her as he looked up from his book. "I'm Percy Weasley," he said proudly as he offered his hand.

She took it and they shook hands. "Your eyes are really pretty." Percy chuckled as he blushed. Angelina's eyes grew wide. "Did I say that out loud?"

Percy shook his head. "I'm afraid you did Ms. . . I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name."

"Maybe because I didn't throw it," she replied. "It's Angelina. Angelina Johnson." She took a seat across from him and stared out the window for a while before she spoke again. "Are you not well liked?"

"Excuse me?" He looked at her quizzically.

"What?" he asked, but then realized what she meant. "Oh this," he rubbed his leg, "this is nothing," he told her. "I'll show you to your room when you're ready."

"Thank you, Percy."

"No problem, Lina."

The day was coming to an end and Percy and Angelina rested on the floor in front of the fire. Percy was on his back with a pillow under his head as Rosalina lay sleeping on his chest. Angelina was beside him on her stomach, propped up on her elbows, enjoying a cup of hot chocolate. "Honestly, I was surprised when you opened the door."

"Why?"

"Didn't think Draco was fond of you Weasleys."

"That's probably because he doesn't see me as a Weasley. It's been a long time since I've spoken to my family."

Angelina turned from her warm drink and then for the first time noticed his wedding band. "You must think me rude, how is Penelope? Will she be arriving home soon?"

Percy lifted his hand and twirled his wedding band around his finger with his thumb. "I wouldn't know." His expression became sad. "She walked out on me a while back. She said I cared more about work than I did her."

Angelina reached for his hand. "You're still that thirteen year old boy I met, sitting all alone."

"Maybe, but I wasn't alone for long. Now was I?" Percy's smile returned to his face. "Do you know you were my first friend? Outside my family that is."

"I kind of got that. I considered you my first real friend too."

"We had a lot of firsts together, didn't we?"

Angelina stared into the fire as if reminiscing. "Yeah," her voice was low, "you were my first kiss and my first love." She took back her hand and took a hold of her drink. She then blew on it before taking a sip.

"Aren't you forgetting something, Lina?" He asked not looking at her as he pulled Rosalina's thumb out of her mouth and replaced it with a pacifier. "I was definitely more than your first love."

Angelina sighed heavily. "That was a mistake, Percy."

"Maybe, but don't you ever wonder what life would have been like," he stroked the top of Rosalina's head, trying to push down an unruly curl, "if. . . you know. . . we had gone the other way?"

"No," she said without hesitation.

"Eight."

"Huh?"

"If things had gone the other way. . . eight, next month."

She then realized what he meant. "Why are you hurting yourself Percy? It was a mistake. Come on now, who would have believed we were friends, let alone lovers? Besides you were head-over-heels in love with that Clearwater girl then. I was only sixteen and going into my sixth year, you had already graduated and had your life all planned out with Penelope."

"No, no. You know very well I would have left Penelope. I would have stepped up, I would have been a father to my child," he explained. "But you took that away from me Lina and then if that wasn't bad enough, you started dating my brother," he scoffed. "Fred of all people. And you thought people couldn't see *us* together? Like you cared what people thought anyway."

Angelina's face was cold as she turned to him. "I just didn't want to be a mother and tied down at sixteen, okay? And dating Fred. . . well, if you really want know the truth, it was George I fancied, but Fred asked me out first, so I figured what the hell? Besides, no matter which one I dated, they would have been nothing more than a poor replacement for you."

"So you used Fred?"

Angelina rubbed the bridge of her nose, something she picked up from Draco when he was stressed, before turning back to Percy. "At first yes, to help me get over you and for other reasons, but know that I did grow to love him."

"And me?" Percy looked into her round eyes, which were as dark and rich as the chocolate she held in her hands.

She sighed quietly. "You were my first love, Percy," she stated. "You never really get over those." She smiled warmly as she reached and pushed a stray lock of hair out of his face. She meant to take back her hand, but instead it rested on his cheek. Percy's hand then came up to rest on top of hers. She gasped, yanked away her hand, and cast her eyes downward. "I'm sorry, I- I don't know what came over me."

"It's okay," Percy said as he supported Rosalina's body against him as he sat up. "I'm just going to put her to bed and then head in myself. I'll see you in the morning."

"Okay, good night." Angelina then put her cup aside, laid on her back, and stole the pillow Percy had his head rested on. She sighed as an old feeling returned to her, that one in the pit of her stomach, that feeling that told her, that not all of this would go well. And she hoped, for once, it was wrong.

To Be Continued. . .

Draco leaned on the back of the door and smiled as he put his hands in his pockets. "That's a beautiful sight right there." He took in the image of Angelina holding their child. He then pushed himself off the door and walked towards them. "So how's little Damien?"

"Fine, except for the name Damien," she stated.

"What do you mean?" He leaned over the bed and moved the bit of blanket that blocked his sleeping child's face and smiled. "I thought we agreed on Damien?"

"I know, but I didn't think that was proper for a little girl."

Draco's brow furrowed as he looked to Angelina. "Little girl?" He shook his head slightly. "You mean this baby isn't mine?"

"Not yours?" Angelina was a bit confused. "Of course this baby is yours don't be ridiculous."

"I'm not being ridiculous," his voice became cold and flat. "So who does this child belong to?" Noting to himself he would kill any man who touched his wife. "I assure you, I'm not angry," but his tone begged to differ, "I know you had lovers after Montague."

"I had no one after Montague!" she said heatedly, but then whispered. "I was afraid of what would happen if I did."

"You're lying to me."

"No, I'm not," she was starting to get upset. "What would make you think she wasn't yours?" The anxiety Angelina was feeling could be sensed by the baby and she started to stir.

"I told you. Malfoys have *a/ways* had males as firstborns. It's been that way since-" he stopped when he heard the baby cry.

"Shh, it's okay," Angelina cooed as she rocked the baby. She then looked back up at Draco with determination in her eyes. "If you don't believe me, then see for yourself. I want you to hold her and after you really look at her, I want you to try to tell me she isn't yours."

Draco took the crying child in his arms. She had fair brown skin and matted down curly brown hair. Draco imitated Angelina by rocking her. Then as her crying slowly ceased and her eyes began to open, a smile spread across Draco's face. His daughter had big, bright slate gray eyes.

Draco laughed in relief, feeling like a fool, as he sat on the bed. He felt the hand of Angelina on his back and then a kiss on his cheek. "I forgive you, but next time I tell you I'm not lying, don't question me." She said harsher than she intended to.

But Draco didn't seem to notice the harshness in her voice. "I'm sorry love, you're right. I'll never doubt you again," he promised her. "Have you chosen a name already?"

"Yes, Rosalina. Rosalina Draconna Malfoy."

and making his way to the bed. He then climbed in and rested his head on her lap looking up at her.

"It's okay. I know you're tired," she spoke, running her fingers through his hair. "You'll be careful, won't you?"

Draco closed his eyes for a moment and felt her touch. "You worry too much. I've got everything under control," was his answer to her.

"I know, it's just," she put her hand on her stomach. "I've got a bad feeling."

"You know what? It's December first, way don't you get the house elves to help you put up the Christmas tree, huh? That always seems to cheer you up."

"Yes, but I don't want to do it alone."

"Get Dick to help you. I'm sure he'll be happy to."

"Dick?" Angelina shook her head.

"Grayson. His first name is Dick. For crying out loud, Tulip. How long have you known the man and never knew his first name?"

"I thought Grayson was his first name," she told him. "Wait a second. His name is Dick Grayson?"

"Yeah, what about it?" Draco was confused.

"Dick Grayson?" she repeated. "As in like, Robin?"

"Who the hell is Robin?" he asked with a bit of jealousy in voice.

"You know - Robin. Batman's sidekick," she explained. "You know, from the Muggle comic books. Batman is this dark superhero and Robin is - Never mind, Draco." She shoved him away.

"Hey, don't get angry at me over some stupid Muggle comic book." He quickly turned over and started tickling Angelina.

She giggled and fought his hands away. "Stop!" she yelled lightheartedly.

He continued to tickle her. "Not until you tell me who loves you," he demanded.

She finally managed to grab his hands and panting heavily said, "You, my dragon."

"Damn right," he looked at her seriously before smiling and kissing her on the forehead. Angelina then saw him look down at his arm. "I really have to go. I'll be home as soon as I can." He got up out of bed and was out the door.

Please be careful, was Angelina's final thought before she went to check on Rosalina who was already

fast asleep.

4 - Part Four

Chapter Sixteen: To Keep - To Break

Lord Voldemort sat on his throne with one leg tucked under himself, leaning on his left armrest with his chin in his hand looking down at one of his Death Eaters. "So you're telling me, that thirteen of you couldn't bring me one man?"

"Like you said yourself my Lord, he's the best," Draco explained.

"Yet he kept you alive?" Voldemort's young face looked at him suspiciously.

Draco shrugged. "What can I say; my father is more sentimental than I once thought."

Ginny, who was sitting in her throne next to Voldemort spoke up. "And yourself, Malfoy, you just watched him escape?"

"I'm afraid I did. Like I said before my Lady, he stupefied me first before killing the others." Draco avoided making eye contact with Ginny. "I thought he was just saving me for last, but after killing the others, he just looked at me like I betrayed him."

Ginny noticed Draco's lack of eye contact, but he had never made a lot of eye contact with her before, even in school. It was his way of denying his attraction to her. But after he had stopped dating Pansy in the beginning of his last year of school, he no longer saw the need in avoiding his desires for her.

Then during that holiday break, Ginny learned of his engagement to Angelina Johnson, and when he came back to school he had started avoiding her again. But their separation didn't last long, because after school ended he came back to her, even though by that time she was with Voldemort again. But denying Draco, after she had already had him, was something she couldn't seem to stop herself for doing, even though she loved Voldemort and couldn't care less about Draco.

"You're dismissed, Malfoy," Voldemort told him. Draco lowered his head in a bow and exited from the throne room. "What do you think, love?"

"I think he's lying," she told him. "To protect his father."

"As do I," he agreed. "Should we have him killed?"

"No," Ginny said a little too quickly for Voldemort's comfort. "I mean not yet anyway. I want Lucius first. So I think we should have someone keep an eye on Draco. If we wait long enough he'll lead us to Lucius. Then as you promised me, I want to watch him die."

Voldemort reached out and took Ginny's hand; he then brought it to his lips and kissed it. "Whatever

you wish, love.”

Ginny smiled. “You spoil me, Tom.”

“As a Queen should be.”

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Rosalina cried as she flared her plump arms splashing water, from the sink she was sitting in, all over her mother as she tried to bathe her. “I’m guessing she doesn’t like baths,” Percy commented from a safe distance at the kitchen table.

“No, that’s not it.” Angelina washed the soap off of Rosalina. “She’s just missing her father. She’s never gone this long without seeing him before.”

“How about you?” Percy asked, just trying to make conversation. “What’s the longest you’ve ever been away from Malfoy?”

“Since we’ve been married?” Angelina let out the water in the sink. “I would say, a little over five months, but that was only because of school.” She lifted her daughter out of the sink and headed towards the guest bedroom she had settled into over the last two weeks. “Calm down, Rose.” Who was still fussing as she got her dressed.

“Quite a handful isn’t she?” Percy asked, leaning on the door frame.

“Would you expect anything less from a Malfoy?” Angelina asked with a smile. She dressed Rosalina in a cute red and green outfit. She was planning on taking some pictures and sending them to Draco, knowing that he was missing them as much as they were missing him.

“Do you know your daughter’s wardrobe is more expensive than this house?”

Angelina laughed. “Yeah, I did.” Knowing that the clothes packed were only a small faction of the ones that were left at home. “Draco has very expensive taste. He’s buys most of Rose’s clothes.” She then added, “And the majority of mine.”

“He doesn’t even let you pick out your own clothes?” Percy asked in disbelief.

Angelina turned her focus to him. “You make it sound like a bad thing.”

“Come on now, Lina, doesn’t that sound a bit controlling to you?”

She shrugged. “I just always thought of it as cute.”

“Malfoy? Doing something cute?” Percy shuddered. “Scary.” He smiled as he left before Angelina could throw something at him.

“Come on, babe,” she tied a bib around Rosalina’s neck, “let’s go get you something to eat.” Then as Angelina walked back to the kitchen she started to wonder about Percy’s words. Was Draco

controlling? Was she giving in to him slowly as the years went on? Was she really becoming one of those wives who husbands said, 'Jump' and she answered with, 'How high?' and if so, why did it take her so long to notice?

"Percy." She joined him in the living room, he was watching TV. Angelina had spoken to Draco about getting a TV once, because she often got bored in the house, but he told her it was stupid Muggle invention that only existed to rot the brain. A week after that, Draco had found her job application for Gringotts. He tore it up in front of her and told her that her only job was to raise his child and be an obedient wife. "Were you playing or do you really think that Draco may-" There came a knock at the door.

"Hold that thought," he told her as he went to answer it and found a postman waiting there. "That's strange," he said after he had closed the door. "It's for you."

"I got mail, through the Muggle post?" Angelina watched as Percy put her package on the table. Then handed Rosalina over to him so she could see what it was.

"Yes, sometimes it's faster than sending an owl." Percy watched as Angelina's face lit up when she realized who it was from. *As if anyone else knows she's here*, he thought shaking his head.

"It's from Draco." She tore open the post box to find the present she had been shaking under the tree just a few weeks ago. She put it close to her ear and shook it once more. "What do you think? Should I wait till Christmas?" she asked Percy.

He shrugged. "I would, but that's me."

Angelina smiled at him. She then tore the wrapping off the box and next the tape that sealed it. She giggled as she took out a teddy bear dressed like an angel. "He got me the bear." She held it tightly as she thought about the first time she had seen it.

She and Draco had gone Christmas shopping for Rosalina when they discovered this new toy store. As they passed the window to enter through the doors Angelina noticed this amazing arrangement of teddy bears. So as they were looking for something for their daughter, Angelina's eyes kept wandering back to the display of bears, especially the one dressed like an angel with a golden halo around its head.

"See something you like for yourself?" Draco had asked after a few moments. She shook her head no. "Good," he walked away from her to look at something that had caught his eye, "proper grown women don't need toys." The comment had hurt her, but she smiled and went on about her business.

Angelina then reached for the card, that was still inside the box, it read: *For a marriage that has never been described as "Proper", but always full of love.*

She looked at her bear once more and realized that it didn't have the golden halo she had seen it with in the store. Instead the halo was green and hand-painted on it were tulips that spelled out the words, 'Little Angel' which was the meaning of her name.

"Lina?" Percy called. "You were saying something before. What was it?"

approved of her drinking, she had a tendency to go overboard with it and he often had to stop her before she did.

And then he noticed something odd as her hand was on her forehead. There was a slight discoloration on her wrist. "Tulip?" Angelina's face was full of surprise as her eyes now focused on her husband.

"Draco!" she said excitedly and wrapped her arms around him. "I've missed you so much. Is it safe to come home yet?"

"Tulip," Draco pushed her away slightly. "Why did you think I was Weasley?" Draco watched as Angelina's eyes looked towards the bedroom door and then shook her head. "Did something happen?" Draco asked with concern. "Something I should know about?"

"No," she said calmly, but a bit too quickly.

Draco could sense something wasn't right as he thought, *Why did she yell out like that? She couldn't possibly be afraid of. . .* "Did Weasley touch you?" He asked angrily and started to rise out of bed. "If he has, I swear I'll kill him this day."

"No. Heavens no!" Angelina shook her head feverishly. "It was just a bad dream, love, honest." She pulled him back to her. "Percy has been a perfect host."

"Are you sure?" he asked looking at her wrist. Angelina nodded her head. Draco forced a believable smile; something told him this went beyond a bad dream, but he would give his wife the benefit of the doubt. "Look at me, jumping to conclusions. See how crazy I go without you?" he asked as he and his wife embraced. "Besides, Weasley wouldn't know what to do with a woman even if he had an instruction manual."

"Yeah," Angelina said too softly to hear as she reveled being in Draco's arms. She then closed her eyes as she remembered the night before, wishing it would all just fade away.

"Just one kiss," Percy had said to her as they sat like they did every night in front of the fire. "To celebrate the new year." His smile was sweet. "What harm could come from one kiss?" he had asked.

So Angelina shrugged and agreed, *Yeah, what harm?* And the kiss was harmless. It was sweet, shy, and childlike, just like the first kiss they had ever shared. And maybe it would have stopped at one kiss, if they hadn't spent the last few hours drinking a couple bottles of champagne and firewhiskey in celebration.

So maybe it was the high level of alcohol or the soft music playing in the background or maybe, more than likely, the fact that they were both still very attracted to each other, because the moment their lips touched a flash of past delight resurfaced in their heads.

And Percy realized he wanted more than a memory, he wanted to feel the way he did back when they were together and so he kissed her again, but this time with more purpose. Angelina soon found herself kissing him back, until she realized what she was doing, so rather slowly she pulled away from his inviting mouth. "Stop Percy," she shook her head. "No."

Percy was flushed with embarrassment as he nodded in understanding, but it appeared that his hands had a mind of their own as they reached for Angelina once more and pulled her to him. He fell back onto the floor as he firmly held Angelina pressed against his body.

Angelina struggled to get out of his bear like grip. Percy only chuckled softly. "You're not even trying, Lina," he teased.

"Percy, let go," she demanded.

And he did what was requested of him, but Angelina stayed right where she was. In fact, a smile threaten her features as she stared into his blue eyes, licking her lips, wanting more. And so she closed her eyes and once again her lips found Percy's which were as firm as his grip had been, but as gentle as anything she could imagine.

Her hands soon found his soft red hair as she felt his hands once again find her body. She moaned in pleasure as he stroked her back and gradually work his way down to her butt which he eagerly began to squeeze. "Lina," he panted as she broke the kiss and straddled him. His hands then began moving up her smooth thighs, lifting her green nightgown.

Angelina could now feel the bulge in his pants as it was pressed up between her legs. "Well, hello there big boy. Are you ready to come out and play?" She reached down and snapped the band of his pajamas.

Percy brought her back down to him and they rolled over on the floor, placing him on top. "Come on, Lina, you know I'm always up for a good time." Angelina giggled as Percy sat on his knees and reached under her gown where he pulled off, or more like tore off, her blue cotton panties. He then threw them over his shoulder with a wicked smile on his face. A smile that Angelina knew only appeared when he was having fun, so it was quite rare to see.

Being a little tipsy, he was a little clumsy with his pajama bottoms before successfully taking them off. He then mounted Angelina and she took a hold of either side of his face as they began kissing again. "This isn't how you like it and this isn't how I want it," she told him huskily into his ear after a moment.

Angelina was referring to their position. Percy always liked to be on the bottom; he liked being dominated over, which Angelina never quite understood. Percy was the kind of person who liked to be in control in everything that he did, but in bed it was different, he liked to be ordered around, taking the submissive role.

Percy chuckled and that smile reappeared on his face. "Then tell me what you want," he said between kisses. "Tell me what you need." He then sat up pulling Angelina with him. "Tell me if you want it on the floor or if you want to take this to the bedroom." He began kissing several parts of her face and neck. Angelina closed her eyes and tilted her head back.

Then suddenly she thought, *You're actually thinking about it, aren't you?*

She then proceeded to answer herself, *I've already gone this far. Why not?*

Why not! How about Draco?

Angelina rolled her eyes. *What about him?*

You promised him no more affairs!

Do you forget he made me that same promise? Angelina was tired of lying to herself. But I know he was with someone else. I could sense it. Damn that, I could smell it!

You're overreacting.

Bull-

Draco loves you! Besides, what if he didn't do anything wrong and he finds out about you and Percy? You know very well he won't forgive another betrayal. Angelina wasn't as drunk as she thought she was, because this conversation in her head was very clear. He may not stop at Percy.

And you call that love? If you do, then I don't understand. Am I just suppose to spend the rest of my life. . . afraid. . . of my husband?

No, you're just suppose to live the life you've chosen.

I didn't choose this life!

Yes, you did, when you made the choice to stay. Not because you were afraid of him or even his father, but because you love him. Now come on! Are you really ready to throw that away?

Angelina sighed. "Percy," she said slowly. "I need - oh, hmm. . ." she moaned with the touch of his hand moving up and then beyond her thigh. "I need you to. . ." she gasped loudly as she felt Percy's finger and then another slip inside of her.

Percy then brought his face close to hers, his breath seductive on her lips as he purred, "Go on, Lina, tell me."

"Percy," she murmured, closing her eyes before letting the gap between their lips disappear. Angelina savored his taste as their tongues dance a dance once thought forgotten. *Why did I leave this man?* she thought as she ran one hand up his chest while the other combed through his hair.

Still kissing, Percy brought up his free hand to meet Angelina's. At his movement, Angelina opened her eyes and caught sight of Percy's wedding band. She closed her eyes again, trying to imagine that they were still teenagers back at Hogwarts, but couldn't as she finally, but slowly, broke the kiss. She then saw her own wedding ring, the one Draco had given her. "Percy," she whispered.

With a playful smirk coming back to his face he looked to her. "Have you made up your mind?" he asked her.

"Yes," she swallowed hard, reaching down for his hand and removing it from her body. "I need you to stop."

Percy slightly pulled away a bit confused as he looked at her. "Stop?"

She shook her head. "I can't do this," she simply stated. "Besides, we've both had way too much to drink. We'll only regret it in the morning, so let's just stop." She took a moment to pull down her nightgown and cover herself. She then started to get up, but as soon as she did, she was roughly pulled back down to the floor. "Hey!"

"Why do you always toy with me?" Percy asked in a sudden burst of anger, his eyes becoming ice cold.

"Let me go." He was holding her wrists tightly, pinning her to the floor.

"Why was I never good enough for you!" he yelled. "What made Fred better than me! Why did you kill my child!" he then breathed heavily as he stared at Angelina, waiting for her response. He then leaned down, placing himself in between her legs before nestling his face against her neck before whispering in her ear. "Why won't you answer me Lina? Hmm? Why?" he asked in agony before roughly crushing his lips against hers.

Angelina fought underneath him as she struggled to get up. "Percy, stop!" she yelled when his mouth left hers.

"You used to ask for me to give to you rough. Don't you remember, Lina? Don't you remember how good we used to make each other feel?" Angelina began to breath heavily, not believing this was happening. There was no way he could be capable of this. "Dammit, Lina!" he yelled when she once again gave him no response, pulling her from the ground and pushing her back down. "Answer me!"

"Stop it, Percy!" she cried loudly, refusing the urge to tell him he was hurting her. "Get off!" She struggled once again.

"Just calm down!" he shouted. "I'm not going to hurt you," he said calmly.

"Then get off." Her eyes began to water. "Because I swear to God, if you don't . . ."

Percy straightened himself back up and looked at Angelina's distraught face beneath him. He sulked as he backed away from her, mentally cursing himself for his uncharacteristic behavior as she sat up. He then said gently, "Lina, I didn't mean to-"

"Don't," she interrupted him as she closed her eyes tightly and held herself. "Percy. . ." she said slowly. "I'm sorry."

"What?" If Percy thought he was confused before. "Lina, no. You're not the one that-"

"Percy, please," she cut him off again, but this time looked at him. "I know back then, that I hurt you and badly. It's just, it got to a point where I couldn't handle being runner up to Clearwater anymore." She shook her head. "Then when I got pregnant, it was just too much for me. You don't know how ashamed

I felt about myself and how ashamed I still feel. It was just easier to pretend it didn't happen, which meant pretending we never happened and for that I am sorry."

She wiped away her tears. "And then when I arrived back at school the next year, I just clinged on to Fred and George for dear life. I fancied George because he never judged me, never took anything too seriously, and always had my back, even if it went against the grain. But then I fell for Fred, and he was everything you weren't and I loved him for it. He was this open book who was willing and ready for me to read. And being with him, made me realize just how messed up we were."

"I loved you, Lina," was Percy's only response.

"Yes, but not enough." She rose from the floor and walked passed Percy.

"And Malfoy?" he called after her. "You're telling me that you would rather be with someone him than me?"

She turned around. "Yes."

"Why? I bet he hasn't even told you he loves you."

"You're right, he hasn't, but he shows me through what he does. And that's more than you ever did." She turned back around.

Percy picked himself up off the floor. And gently grabbed Angelina's arm and turned her to him. "Then let me show you tonight." He put his hand on her hip, gradually guiding her towards the wall. "I was only a boy then, but let me show you the man I've become." He caressed her face.

Angelina stared into his eyes, she so tempted. She then sighed taking his hand in her own and kissing his palm. She then lowered his hand as she shook her head. "I'm sorry, but no." She explained, "I just can't break another promise to my husband." Draco and Angelina had made a lot of rules and promises when it came to each other and together they had broken a lot of them. But Angelina was determined to keep one, this one. She then slipped away from her former lover's touch. "Happy New Year, Percival."

Percy was dumbfounded as he let her slip away, for the second time in his life. "Happy New Year, Angelina," he replied bitterly and then watched her walk down the hallway towards her room. He then heard the click of the lock.

And now Angelina was back in Draco's arms and she was glad that she had had enough restraint to stop herself from doing something she knew she would have surely regretted. "I've missed you, Draco."

"I've missed you, too."

And then a horrifying thought crossed Angelina's mind which made her hang on even tighter to Draco. *You were able to resist temptation of the one you considered your first love, but what if it had been the one you still find yourself secretly thinking about, the one you **still** consider the love of your life? What if it had been the Weasley you know you couldn't resist? What if it had been Fred?*

"Tulip, what's wrong? You're shaking."

Chapter Seventeen: Come What May

Percy, Angelina, and Draco sat around the kitchen table to eat the breakfast that Percy had prepared. Draco noticed how Angelina and Percy purposely sat as far as they could from each other and avoided speaking with one another, other than the 'good morning' they had greeted each other with.

Angelina had told him that nothing had happened and he believed her, though the scene in front of him was making him think otherwise. "Ow!" Angelina dropped her fork and reached under the table. "Draco, move your hand," she demanded.

Draco had been resting his hand on Angelina's leg and without realizing it, he had started squeezing it. He let go and rose from the table, he knew needed to calm down. "Excuse me a moment." He walked towards the kitchen door, pushed it opened and walked out.

"Lina, about last night, I truly am sorry," Percy stated as soon as Draco was out of sight.

Angelina rubbed her leg. "It's okay. We were both a little out of it."

"Yeah, I know." He picked at his food. "It's just I don't want things to be weird between us," Percy confessed. "It's been nice having you here."

Angelina smiled. "I've enjoyed being here myself."

"So, are you going to tell him about last night?" Percy asked referring to Draco.

Angelina shook her head. "No. There's no need in talking about something that didn't happen, right?"

"Right," he agreed. He then stared at her for a moment. "I want to be honest with you, Lina."

Angelina looked back at him. "About what?"

He sighed. "I want you to know, that the offer I made last night, is still on the table. So if you ever change your mind."

"I won't," she said immediately.

"But if you do," he continued, as he reached across the table and took her hand. "Know that I'm always here." Angelina stared down at their hands for a moment and then looked at the man before her. He was right; he was certainly not the boy he had once been and before she even realized, she was nodding her head.

Percy smiled and feeling good about their conversation he relaxed and started to enjoy his breakfast. But that state of relaxation didn't last long as the kitchen door abruptly swung open and something swift

and silver went flying through the air. "Ahhh!" A familiar looking dagger struck Percy in the shoulder and he fell out of his seat.

"Draco!" Angelina rose from her seat, but got up too quickly and fell back down into her chair.

Draco went over and pushed the raising Percy back down onto the floor. Taking the handle of the dagger he began to twist it and Percy once again yelled out.

"Draco! What in Merlin's name are you doing?" Angelina rose from her seat again and went to pull Draco off of Percy.

Draco removed the hand holding down Percy and replaced it with a knee. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a balled up piece of blue fabric. Percy stared at it for a moment and then a dawning look slowly appeared on his face. They were Angelina's cotton panties. "Yeah, I found these in the living room under the chair. Care to explain?"

"Draco," Angelina spoke up, trying to think quickly. "I- I um- I was folding laundry in the living room, I must have dropped them. Now get off of him!"

"Why are you protecting him?" Draco looked up at her.

"Huh?" Angelina was confused.

Draco looked back down at Percy. "What did you do? Threaten her not to tell me?" He twisted the dagger again. "Thought I was too stupid to figure it out? Huh?"

"Draco, what the hell are you talking about?" Angelina asked as she looked at Percy gritting his teeth trying to hold in his shouts of pain.

"Your hangover and bruised wrist, Tulip? Then there was the double-charmed lock door, the bad dream where you're yelling out, 'Stop Percy, no,' and your *torn* underwear in the living room." He yanked out the dagger and blood spurted all over the kitchen floor. "You bastard, you took advantage of my wife and now I'm going to cut off your little dick," he growled. "You said I could trust you!"

"That's not what happened, Draco!" Angelina got on her knees and applied pressure to Percy's wound. All the shouting had woken Rosalina up and they could hear faint crying coming from the guest room.

"I didn't betray your goddamn trust, Malfoy!" Percy finally spoke out.

"Shut up!" Draco jabbed the dagger once again into Percy.

"Stop!" Angelina yelled. She then slowly reached for Draco's hand holding the dagger and said softly, "Love, please let him go. He didn't hurt me. We were a little drunk, yes, and things got a bit out of hand-

"So you fracked him?" She was cut off as she felt Draco's hand tighten around the dagger as he stared

down Percy.

"No! That's what I'm trying to say. Nothing happened," she replied. "Now let him go!" But he would not move. "Draco, baby, believe me. . . please."

Draco looked into his pleading wife's eyes. He then slowly pulled out his dagger, wiped it on Percy's shirt and placed it back into his holster. "Go see about Rose."

"No." She didn't trust him alone with Percy. "I'll see to Percy, you go check on Rosalina."

It took a moment before he spoke. "Fine." He stood. "See to him, but then we're leaving, you're not staying here anymore." Draco then left the kitchen.

Angelina said nothing as she pulled out her wand and addressed Percy's wounds. She was no Madam Pomfrey, but after having to deal with Draco that night he had come home after the Final Battle, she thought it was best to learn a few new skills.

"Thank you," Angelina finally said.

"For what?" Percy asked as he sat up.

"For not killing him," she stated. "I don't think Draco noticed in his anger, but I saw your hand, it was on your wand the whole time."

Percy shrugged. "How could I have attacked a man, who thought he was doing nothing more, than coming to the defense of his wife?" He sighed. "Besides, I was kind of a jerk last night."

"No, you're a good man, Percy."

He shook his head. "Now we both know that isn't true." He lifted himself off the floor and Angelina followed suit. "If I were, I wouldn't have the uncanny ability to drive everyone that I know or care about away."

"You're too hard on yourself." She put a comforting hand on his shoulder.

"You may want to check on Malfoy before he starts to think we're doing something else in here."

At the mention of Draco, Angelina's ears perked up. "Do you hear that?" she asked.

There was a moment of silence before Percy shook his head. "I don't hear anything."

"Exactly. We should at least be able to hear Draco. He likes to sing to Rose to keep her calm."

Percy arched an eyebrow. "Malfoy sings?"

"I'm serious. Something's not right." Angelina's hand went to her stomach. "I'll be back."

Angelina left the kitchen; everything seemed fine in the living room, so she went down the hall to the guest bedroom. She stood in the doorway and saw Draco leaning on the crib stroking his daughter's head, as she fell back to sleep. "You lied to me," he said sensing her. "You said you would never lie to me and I believed you."

"I just didn't want you to harm him."

"I thought he had hurt you." He then turned his head to her. "So tell me, what else have you lied to me about?"

Angelina crossed her arms and shifted her weight to one side. "What secrets are you hiding from me? Because trust is a two way street, if you didn't know."

Draco weighed his options, he knew if he forced Angelina to play her hand, he would be forced to play his own and he wasn't ready to fold just yet. "Fine," his voice was dark as his focus went back to Rosalina. "You just better hope I don't find out on my own, because I will not be forgiving."

Angelina walked up to him and pulled him away from the crib until he was looking down at her. "Is that a threat, Draco?"

Draco narrowed his eyes and bared his teeth. His expression then turned into one of concern as he shook his head and took a step back. "No, of course not. I didn't mean for it to come out that way."

Angelina sighed in relief. "I don't want to fight with you," she admitted.

"I don't want to fight either, but-" he groaned in frustration. "Dammit, Tulip." He stepped around her and began pacing the room. "I don't know what you want from me. Haven't I given you everything, haven't I. . ."

He went on, but Angelina was no longer paying attention as she recalled a conversation she had earlier that month. *He has given you everything right down to his very soul and that has left him vulnerable.*

She then thought, *He didn't see the wand in Percy's hand because he was too worried thinking about me. If it had been anyone other than Percy they would have attacked. If I don't do something, Draco is going to get himself killed over me.*

". . . so we'll pack and when Rose wakes up we'll go home." She caught the end of Draco's speech.

"No." Angelina looked to the floor. "I'm staying here."

Draco arched an eyebrow as he lowered his head and looked to his wife. "Excuse me?"

"We're trying too hard Draco." She shook her head slowly. "Love isn't supposed to be this hard or have this many trials." Draco looked at her in disbelief. "Maybe we should just finally stop lying to ourselves and admit that we were never a good match."

"Tulip, what are you doing?" he asked as he watched her take off her rings.

"I'm taking you up on your offer. Like I should have done the first time," she explained. "I want out, Draco." She reached for his hand and turned it palm up. She then gently gave him back the rings and closed his fingers around them. "I want out." The words were as painful to say as they were to hear.

Draco opened his hand and stared at the rings sitting there. He then squeezed them tightly in his hand as he put them in his pocket. "I'm not just going to allow you to leave me, you know that."

"You said you wouldn't stop me."

"That was then." His face showed no sign of the pain and fear Angelina knew he was going through, but refused to show.

"Did you cheat on me?" Angelina suddenly asked.

"What?" His stoic expression was now gone as he heard the question.

"I didn't stutter," she replied. "I want to know."

"Angelina." He reached out for her, but she maneuvered herself out his reach.

"For once Draco, tell me the truth about something. Did you cheat on me?" she asked again.

Draco sighed and swallowed hard before saying. "Yes, and I regret it." He held his head high. Angelina wrapped her arms around herself and closed her eyes tightly. "Don't do that. Don't act like you're hurt," he said cruelly. "Because you're no better than I am; getting piss arse drunk and fooling around with Weasley."

"Maybe, but I didn't sleep with Percy."

"Yeah, that really gives me comfort. Because I'm sure if anything, Weasley was just too damn drunk to get it up."

"Oh, believe me," she smirked. "Unlike some people, Percy had no trouble in that department," she then gasped as the last syllable escaped her mouth. Draco's hand had snapped up and tightened itself around her small neck.

He then hissed, "Don't you dare-"

"What?" she cut him off. "Did I say something you didn't like? Did I offend the Great Draco Malfoy?" Her hands came up and she tried to loosen Draco's grip. "Huh? Are you going to beat me now?" Her face was impassive, but Draco could feel her tremble over his touch. "In front of our daughter no less?"

Draco turned his attention towards the crib, to see Rosalina had not fallen back to sleep, but was watching silently at the actions taking place between him and Angelina. He then yanked Angelina closer to him and said with his mouth close to her ear. "You want to leave me?" he thought a moment. "Fine. But don't you come crawling back when you realize you need me."

"Need you? Don't you get it Draco?" she asked. He could feel her warm breath on his neck. "I never needed," she hesitated, "or loved you. And it's funny that you think you were the reason I was sticking around. Come on now, I live the life of a fracking princess. A big house on a large estate with all the money I could ever spend. Plus the name 'Malfoy' that demands respect wherever I go," she chuckled.

"Being your wife was only a mild irritation that I simply put up with. Because who could ever love a controlling, possessive, cold-hearted, sadistic murderer, void of any real emotions?" She felt Draco's hand quickly drop from her neck and watched him step back. With her last words ringing in her ear, Angelina realized she couldn't do this to him. "Draco, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it," she said immediately and reached out to hug him, but Draco just stood there.

"Sad thing is, Tulip, somewhere deep inside of you, I think you did. Now take your filthy hands off me, before I make you," he snarled.

Angelina pulled away and as she did Draco turned and walked over to the crib. "What are you doing?" she asked in a panic.

"Taking what's mine," he said over his shoulder as he went to gather Rosalina in his arms.

"Stop!" She went and yanked him away from the crib. "She's my daughter too."

"As far as you should be concerned, you no longer have a daughter," he thought over his words. "Or a husband. You got what you want okay? So I hope you're very happy with Weasley."

"Draco, don't take her." She gently rested her hand upon his arm.

"Woman, you do not want to get in my way."

"Please, don't do this. Please, don't take her. I'm sorry, okay? I take it back, I take it all back," she grew upset. "Draco, I'm begging you, please-" Then without thinking she blurted out. "I can't lose another child!" Her body shook.

Draco's forehead creased as he swiftly turned to her. "Another?"

"You want to know the truth? Fine, I'll give you the truth; just don't take her from me!" She suddenly crumbled to her knees. "Please!" She was desperate.

"Tulip, what do you mean *another*?" He dropped to his knees in front of her and grabbed her arms. "Tell me now."

"Draco," she shook her head.

"Now woman," he demanded.

Angelina licked her lips and leaned her forehead against Draco's chest. She then began slowly. "I became pregnant at the end of my fifth year," she said in a small voice. "And I had convinced myself

that the father of the child didn't want it, but it was me, I didn't want it. That summer I had already planned to go to South America to visit my aunt, so while I was there I found a clinic and I- I uh- had an um. . ." her voice trailed off.

Draco whispered something she couldn't hear as he securely wrapped his arms around her.

"I killed my baby and I wanted nothing more than to pushed it out of my mind and forget about it, like it never happened, but then. . ." She lifted her head and looked into husband's eye. "The real reason, I didn't tell you I was pregnant with Rose was because I didn't think I was going to be able to carry her to term. You see, something had gone wrong doing the procedure in South America and. . ."

She shook her head. "Draco, I can't give you anymore children. I can't give you an heir. Rosalina was a miracle within herself," she explained. "Your father knows, but I don't think he found out till after we were married. He tried to blackmail me with it, saying if you found out, you wouldn't want me."

Angelina then thought about Fred and what he had said to her that night he had found out about her and Draco's engagement.

But I always thought eventually we would be together. That you would one day take my name and be my wife. That one day you would have my children and we would grow old together. And if we can't have that, if we can't have it all, then there's no point in being together.

Before then Angelina had feared what would happen, if Fred had ever found out the truth, but they had never gotten that far in their relationship. That night when she broke down after he left, it wasn't only because he had left her because of Draco, but because he would have eventually left her anyway.

As she thought this she continued on with her conversation with Draco. "When I didn't give in to that, he told me, if I didn't leave you, I would be the reason you died. I didn't believe him before, but then this very morning. . . Draco, I don't want to leave you, but I will if it means you'll live. I need you to live."

"Tulip," he said gently as he took either side of her face. "Don't let my father manipulate you. Don't let him tear us apart."

"Did you see his wand?" she asked. "Did you see it?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't you get it?" she asked angrily. "When it comes to me, you don't think straight and you're blind to everything around you, missing the obvious."

"Baby, now you're just talking nonsense. Nothing is going to happen to me, okay? Everything is under control. My father was doing nothing more than putting crazy ideas into your head. You just have to have faith in us."

"How? When we don't have faith in each other."

"You're wrong," he pulled her rings out of his pocket and slipped them back onto her finger. "Because I

have faith in you. And as long as you love me, that will never change. So know, no matter what I do or what I say or how angry we get at each other; know that you are my heart- No," he changed his mind quickly. "You're more than that. You are my soul. The reason I wake, the very reason I breathe." Angelina inwardly smiled, it was the most he had ever said about how he felt for her.

Angelina squeezed his hands. "I'm sorry, Draco, about what I said before."

"Don't be. You were only trying to protect me, I see that now. And if anyone should be apologizing it's me." He put his hand on her cheek. "I should know you better, I should have seen through it." He shook his head. "I never meant to hurt you. . . I never mean to hurt you." He lightly kissed her forehead, her nose, and her lips. "You know that right?" She nodded her head. "It's just you caught me off guard and instinct kicked in. The thought of you being with someone else, the thought of you leaving me. . ." he paused and then said firmly, almost angrily. "Don't ever leave me, you understand?" She nodded again. "Say it," he demanded.

"I promise. I'll never leave you."

"Good," he said, beginning again with his butterfly kisses.

"I love you," Angelina said knowing Draco would never say it back to her, it just wasn't in his nature, but she realized that his warming eyes and relieved smile was all she ever needed as he pulled her close, but then all of sudden, there came a loud boom and a crashing sound from the front of the house. "What the hell was that?" Angelina asked as she lifted her head away from Draco.

"I don't know." He stood and pulled out his wand. "Stay here."

"No." She reached for her own wand on the nightstand.

"Angelina."

"Draco," she said sternly.

His shoulders drop, her tone was one he would not argue with. "Fine, but you will stay behind me." He then lifted his wand above his head and made a circle, putting up a ward to protect his daughter.

He then left the room with Angelina only a few steps behind. He immediately felt the cold winter air rush through the hall. He stepped into the living room to find the front door on the other side of the room. "Draco, watch out!" he suddenly heard Angelina yell, but before he could respond he saw a burst of bright light and then everything faded to black.

Chapter Eighteen: The Other Brother

Draco's head was pounding as his heavy eyelids began to open. He groaned slightly as he began to make the motion of lifting his hand to his head, but found only that his hand was heavier than usual. His eyes then snapped open as he realized he was no longer in Percy's home, but back in England. . . in the Dark Lord's castle.

He was sitting on the floor with his wrists in chains, attached to the wall. The chains were spell proof, not even his wandless abilities could help him now. He was in the dungeon, but his own fate was not what he was concerned about at the moment. "Tulip, Rose," he whispered weakly.

The dungeon was dark, cold, and damp as he looked around, thinking about how he had gotten himself into this situation, and how the hell he was going to get himself out. Just then a light started to shine in the distance above his head, a door was being opened. A person stepped through, but all Draco could make out was the silhouette. He could hear the sound of the person's shoes as they descended the stairs towards him.

"Well, well, well, look what we've got here," said the man as he approached.

"Where is my family? I demand to know." Draco looked up at the face of his childhood rival, through half opened eyes, still fighting back the sleep.

Voldemort stepped closer. "You are in no position to demand anything, now are you?" He smirked as he squatted down in front of Draco. "But I'll tell you what, tell me where your father is, and I'll tell you all you need to know."

"I don't know where he is," Draco spoke the truth as he cast his gaze downward. His father had left his house before Angelina went to Percy's and he had not heard from him since.

"That's a shame," Voldemort began. "You have a beautiful child, you know. My Queen has become quite fond of her. She's kind of taken her under her wing, as if she were her own," he explained. "And I'm only happy when my Queen is happy, so we've decided to keep her as our own. Of course, we will have to change that ridiculous name of hers." Draco held in his anger, this was neither the time nor the place to have Voldemort riled up. "And your wife. . ." Draco's eyes immediately shoot towards him. The reaction made Voldemort grin. "Are you sure you don't know where your father is? Because you know I could always have it tortured out of you."

"And I still wouldn't know," Draco explained.

"Well, if you don't know, maybe Mrs. Malfoy does. I should go and pay her a visit. From what I've been told, I understand she has a very nice set of. . ." he made a small gesture towards his chest. "Lungs," he laughed. "And me, well, I'm always up for a screamer."

Draco then furiously lunged at him, completely forgetting he was chained to the wall. "I'll kill you! Mark my words *Riddle*, I'll kill you!" he yelled though clenched teeth.

Voldemort rose from his squatted position. He then drew back his hand as he balled it into a fist and struck Draco across the face. Draco's head went flying back at the speed of which Voldemort used. "Don't make me lose my patience," Voldemort warned.

As Draco turned his head back towards Voldemort with narrowed eye, blood streamed down from the corner of his mouth and slid down the length of his chin and jaw. And then, for some reason Voldemort could not explain, he gradually reached out his hand and gently wiped away the blood with his finger.

slowly. "You look different." He reached out with tears in his eyes and ran his fingers through her flamed colored hair. "You're real?"

"I am," she beamed. "I'm real."

"My God." He pulled his sister close and hugged her. He began laughing with joy as he realized that this was not a dream or a hallucination and that his sister was actually here with him. And then it hit him and he slowly pulled away from her with wide eyes. "Am I dead? Are we in hell?"

Ginny snorted back a laugh. "Of course not. We're in my home," she clarified.

"Your home?" he said a little confused and looked around again. "Ginny, where exactly are we?"

"England," she replied.

"What!" He nearly jumped out of his skin. "We're not supposed to be here!"

"Percy calm down." She put a hand on his shoulder. "We're perfectly safe."

"How is that possible?" he asked, but before she could answer, the door reopened and another person came stepping through.

"Love, is he awake?"

"Yes, beloved."

"Harry?" Percy said confused beginning to think he was dreaming.

"No, brother." Ginny got out of bed and walked over to Voldemort. She took his hand and led him to her brother. "Percy, this Lord Voldemort, this is my husband." The only thing Percy could manage to do was blink. "Brother?" He just stared in disbelief. "Brother, speak to me."

"Sister, what have you done?"

"I did nothing, but fall in love," she declared. "He's my family now. . . and you can still be too. And all you have to do," she stretched out her arm and extended her hand, "is reach."

Percy looked upon his sister's face. He had never seen her look so frightened, not since her first year at Hogwarts. Her whole expression wordlessly pleaded with him to take her hand.

If he does not accept, Voldemort mentally spoke with Ginny. I'm sorry my Queen, but he will be killed. . . immediately.

No, he'll accept. I know he will. I know it, she told him. I will not watch another one of my brothers die. She then cut off her link with him and thought, Not like George, please not like George.

Ginny thought back to the last moments she shared with George. It had been about several months

since the Final Battle, where Harry was killed, and only a couple of weeks since Hermione had found Ron's dead body in the apartment they shared, and so the Weasley family was in a period of mourning.

Ginny had woken up early that day. She liked the quietness of it before the rest of the family woke, but this morning she was surprised to see that she was not alone. "George?" she called as she rubbed the sleep from her eye as she entered the kitchen.

"Morning, sleepy head. Care to join me?" He held up a skillet of bacon.

"Um. . .no." Ginny had learned long ago to be weary of her brothers' cooking.

"Come on now, trust me. It's just bacon."

"Fine," she gave in. "I'll make toast."

The two siblings sat and enjoyed their breakfast together as they spoke. "I miss him, George," Ginny confessed into her plate.

"We all do, Ginny."

"I just. . . I should have done something," she whispered to herself.

"There was nothing any of us could do."

Ginny looked up, not realizing he had heard her. "You're right," she sighed then looked around. "Did we cook the last of the bacon?"

"Yeah, but no big deal. There's still sausage for everyone else."

"Well, I'm going to go get dress anyway and head into town to buy some more, before everyone else wakes up."

"I'll go with."

"No," Ginny said quickly. "That's okay. I'll go on my own."

"Nonsense. No one should be venturing out on their own, not after everything." He rose from his seat and took his and Ginny's plates over to the sink.

"Brother, please it's a small trip into town. I'll be fine on my own. I'll be gone two, three hours tops." Ginny at that time was not old enough to Apparate so she would have to walk.

"You're a big girl, I know that, but it would put my mind at ease, if I came with you. Okay?" he explained.

Ginny only nodded before heading upstairs. About half an hour later, George wrote a note telling the rest of the family where they had gone and then the two were out the door. The Muggle village they were

headed to was about a three mile walk, but everyone in the Weasley family was quite used to the journey.

They started their journey by heading into the woods and following the well beaten path that led to the village. Ginny hung on to her older brother's arm as they spoke. "I don't know what the future holds, now that You-Know-Who has won and will now be rapidly gaining strength with Harry being gone, but I want to think positive. A lot of his people were killed during the battle, but of course, along with a lot of ours."

"Losing Dumbledore was a great lost. He will be missed."

"Yes, he will be."

They walked in silence for a little while. "Are you thinking about Fred?" Ginny asked.

George smiled. "Of course, it's kind of a twin default thing."

"How is he and Faith?" she asked about the girl Fred had been seeing recently.

"He pretends to be happy with her, but she's no Angie, far from it."

"You went to her wedding with Malfoy, didn't you?"

George stopped. "How did you know?"

"Because you'd do anything for her."

"Okay, don't go there." He shook his head. "I know very well the rumors that went around about me and Angie. They were just rumors, okay?" He then laughed. "There was even that *crazy* one, where people thought she was pregnant our fifth year and that it was mine. Come on now please, it was never like that between us. Besides, you know very well how I feel about Alicia." He smiled at the thought of her.

"Really now?" They began walking again. "That didn't stop you from going against your own brother's wishes when it came to Angie."

"Look, I have my own mind, okay? And Angie is already going through enough and all Fred wants to do is punish her more for something she can't control." He shook his head. "I just couldn't turn my back on her, not when everyone else had."

"I'm glad to hear that." She let go of her brother's arm as there came a rustle in the trees around them. Unknown to George, Ginny had picked his pocket and tucked his wand safely next to her own.

"You hear that? It sounds like it's coming closer." And then from the greenery a group of Death Eaters materialized. "Ginny! Stay close." George ordered.

"You were supposed to come alone," spoke one of the Death Eaters.

"I know, but he would not let me leave his sight."

"Sister?" George looked at her confused, but she paid him no mind.

"Lower your masks, I wish to know whom I am speaking to." George watched as his sister's demeanor change before his eyes. She no longer appeared to be the little fragile girl he had always known. She held her head high and carried herself with a refined dignity as she watched the Death Eaters lower their masks. "Ah, Montague, good to see you lived."

"Thank you, your highness." Montague bowed followed by the others.

"Ginny, what's going on?" George asked.

She turned to him, her hair whipping wildly in the wind. "I'm going home, to my soon-to-be husband."

George looked at the Death Eaters surrounding them. "Sister, you can't possibly mean. . ." he looked at her face. "Ginny, no."

"Yes. The facts are I will be Queen and the world in which you know it will crumble and fall, only to be replaced by me and my love's vision." She smiled at the thought. "And I have decided I want you to come with me. The three of us can be a family."

"We already have a family," George stated angry.

"Brother, please. . . just come with me." She stretched out her hand for her brother to take. "I can keep you safe, and all you have to do, is reach."

George smacked her hand down. "Are you crazy!" The Death Eaters started to advance towards him, but Ginny put her hand in the air and signaled for them to stop. "That man - No, that monster had our brother killed! And you love him!"

"I know." She lowered her head in shame. "There was nothing I could do about Ron." She looked at him again. "And there is nothing I can do about who my heart loves. But I need you, brother, to help keep me sane. So please, just reach." She extended her hand once again.

George looked at his little sister who once again looked fragile and his instincts yelled at him to take her hand and to save her somehow, but doing that meant betraying the rest of the family and that, he could not do. "No, sister, I can not."

Ginny lowered her arm as Montague put his hand on her shoulder and whispered. "I have my orders. They are to think you are dead, until the Dark Lord has seized full power. He can not be left alive," he explained.

Ginny sighed as she looked to George. Her lip quivered as she spoke. "So be it."

Montague smirked evilly as he spoke again. "You may not prefer to watch."

“Just do what needs to be done and leave me alone.” She turned around and began to walk off.

After a few moments, the only sound that could be heard were George’s screams. Ginny dropped to her knees and held herself as she heard the horrifying sound. But then she heard the most alarming thing her ears had ever heard in her sixteen years of life. She heard laughter and it was filled with a joy that went beyond words. Despite herself, Ginny slowly turned her torso towards the amused sound.

She gasped at the image of George, on the ground, crawling away from Montague, who was still laughing as he spoke. “Where do you think you’re going, *Fred*, can’t take a little joke? Hmm?” He kicked George in the ribs and knocked him to his side before rolling him over on his back. “Settle down now, because I’ve only just begun.”

“Montague,” spoke another Death Eater. “There’s no reason for this. Let’s just kill him quickly and go.”

“Nonsense, Moon. I’ve waited a long time for his day. And I plan on enjoying every, single, moment.” He viciously stomped down on George’s chest making him spit up blood. “Isn’t that right, Weasley? Not so tough without your brother and your little bag of tricks.” Montague squatted down with his wand now in hand. “*Inferno*,” he whispered and the tip of his wand glowed in a bright reddish color. “You two,” he directed at a couple of Death Eaters, “hold down his arms,” he told them and they obeyed because he was of higher rank.

Montague then traced the tip of his wand from the rim of George’s shirt down to right below his navel. He pushed the shirt out the way. “So tell me, can you feel the burn?” Montague then lowered the point of his wand onto George’s skin. George immediately jumped at the sudden sensation, but was being held down.

He clenched his teeth together trying to hold in his pain. “Come on now, Weasley, you know you want to scream for me.” Montague laughed as the smell of hair and flesh polluted the air. “I said scream!” Montague yelled, getting impatient he dug the ignited tip further into George’s skin piercing through it.

George’s whole body felt as if it were on fire. He opened his mouth to scream, but no sound came out. “Montague, stop!” Ginny yelled from where she sat, her eyes full of tears. “Stop right now!”

Montague didn’t even look at her. “Come, your highness,” Moon helped her to her feet, “I’ll take you to the Dark Lord.”

The moment before they Apparated, Ginny saw George looking at her gasping for air. “Ginny,” he barely got out, “no,” they were the last words she ever heard him say.

And now Ginny stood before Percy, with her outstretched hand, hoping he would make the choice that George did not. “Please, Percy, just reach and take my hand. We can be a family.” A tear slid down her face.

“A family?” Percy whispered as he stared at her hand.

“Yes,” she smiled and nodded. “A family.” Percy’s arm slowly rose from his side and reached for his sister. *That’s it Percy, that’s it*, she thought excitedly.

Percy then gently took his sister’s hand and said, “I’ve missed being part of a family.”

“Well then, you should want no more, because a family is now what you have,” Voldemort spoke.

“Thank you,” Percy slowly replied.

Ginny giggled joyfully and jumped into her brother’s arms. “I told you, Tom. I told you he would accept.”

Voldemort smiled as he watched his wife and brother-in-law. His Queen was happy, but better yet, she had someone from her past to keep her sane and endure the bearings of T.A.S.

When Ginny entered the diary in her first year, she became a part of Voldemort’s past, a key to keeping him sane. She was someone who would be there to remind him what he was and what he wanted, but he could not do the same for her, so they needed someone else. She wanted George because she thought he was the best bet, but it did not work out well and there were moments where her mind would slip and *she* actually frightened *him*.

That would not do from a queen, so they were actually very lucky that they had had Malfoy followed in hopes of finding where his father was hidden, only to find him with the Weasley member who was the most likely to accept Ginny’s offer of being in a new family, the Voldemort family.

“Come, my Queen, let him rest,” he told her as he headed towards the door. “We now know where the ones who had fled are located. I must make plans and I may want your opinion.”

“Of course, Tom,” she smiled and followed him out. Before closing the door behind her she turned to her brother. “You made the right choice, Percy. So sleep well.”

“I will, sister, no doubt about it,” Percy said as he returned her smile. When she was gone he curled up into his bed, inside of the room of his new home and as he drifted back to sleep he thought happily, *a family*.

Chapter Nineteen: Having Faith

The sun was starting to set as Frederick Weasley stifled a laugh as he gathered a good amount of snow in his hands. When he was satisfied with the creation of his new snowball he tossed it in the air towards his target.

“Hey!” the woman yelled as she wiped the snow off her face. “Alright you asked for it.” She smiled evilly as she made her own snowball and threw it at Fred, but it went flying passed his head.

“Ha! You missed!” He ran up to her and picked her off the ground. “Got you,” she laughed as Fred spun her around. The two then fell into the soft snow.

“Freddy?” The woman shivered.

“Yeah, Faith?” He held her tighter to keep her warm.

“Let’s get married.”

Fred exhaled loudly. “Couldn’t just enjoy the moment could you?” He sat up which forced Faith to abandon her place in his arms.

She watched as he stood up and dusted the snow off his coat. She then stood up and did the same. “Come on, Freddy, we’ve been together for almost six years, engaged for two. What’s wrong with taking the next step?”

Fred started walking back towards their home as Faith followed. “Faith, I’m just not ready and you know this.”

“I know it’s just. . .” she said sadly as she lowered her head.

Fred turned to her as he reached the door. “I know you put up with a lot, but just be patient with me, okay?” he asked gently.

She smiled as she took his hand. “Aren’t I always?” Fred returned her smile before the two went inside.

“So,” Fred let go of her hand and headed towards the kitchen. “What do you want for dinner tonight?”

“Let’s see?” She pretended to think it over. “You, naked, on the kitchen counter,” was her reply.

Fred laughed as he said loudly from the kitchen, “You had that last night.”

“And it was good.” She came into the kitchen as Fred was putting on an apron.

“You want to give me a hand?” he asked and she started applauding. “Funny.” He tossed her a matching apron and the two prepared dinner together.

When dinner was completed and the table was set, Fred and Faith sat down and ate their dinner by candlelight. Fred rubbed Faith’s leg tenderly as she fed him. “Here comes the choo-choo,” she said in her sing-song way that Fred adored.

Fred had met Faith Himsworth about a month after he found out about Angelina’s engagement to Malfoy. She had been coming into the shop about every other day, but had never bought anything. It wasn’t until three weeks later that she had finally gathered up her courage and started a conversation with him.

They hit it off right away, which was not to Fred’s surprise; she had a childlike demeanor that was much like his own. At first it had been hard for Fred to start seeing Faith on a regular basis because it always felt like he was cheating on Angelina. He had to remind himself that he was no longer with her and that

he had to move on, even if at that time he didn't want to.

But Fred had grown to love Faith, more than he thought he ever could after being with someone like Angelina. But something inside of him prevented him from completely moving on with her. He wanted to marry her, he truly did, but every time he even thought about setting a date, this sinking feeling would overcome him and something would tell him to just wait. His mother had always told him to follow his gut, so Fred figured in was his gut telling him to wait and so he complied.

"All done," Faith said as she wiped a bit of sauce off of Fred's chin. She then looked at the clock on the wall. "I should be getting ready for work." And she stood from the table and gathered their plates.

Fred looked out the window. "It's looking bad out there, maybe you should just call in sick or something."

"I'll be fine." She emerged from the kitchen. "Besides, you're exaggerating, it's only a little snow."

"I wish you would quit," he told her as she prepared herself in the bedroom.

"We've discussed this Fred. I like my job." She zipped up her coat. "And the money isn't half bad either." She kissed him. "I'll be back in the morning okay? Love you." She then grabbed her purse and was out the door.

Fred walked over to the dresser to find something to sleep in. He opened one of his drawers and found a small blue box. He pulled it out and opened it, inside was a necklace he had received long ago. The pendant was odd shaped and it reminded Fred of a teardrop. On the back was inscribed 'AP' which stood for 'Angelina's Property'. Fred smiled as he remembered the Christmas that his angel had given it to him.

"So how long do I have to compete?" Fred immediately put the necklace back into the box and back into the drawer.

"What?" he said as he closed it and turned around to see Faith.

"I said, 'so how long do I have to compete?' It's a simple question really," Faith said as she went to retrieve her forgotten car keys, which she thought had been in her purse.

"Compete with what?" he asked her bewildered.

"Not with what Fred, who," she stated. "How long do I have to compete with a memory?"

"Faith," he shook his head, "you're not in competition with anyone, let alone a memory."

"Really?" She looked at him skeptically. "What about Angelina Malfoy?" Fred looked away from her. "When will you get it through you're head that she is a happily married woman?"

"How do you know they're happy?" Fred asked her.

“Because when Malfoy talks about her, his eyes light up and it’s like he talking about his entire world.” She then looked down and pretended to play with her keys. “Just like yours does, whenever I catch you thinking about her.” Fred didn’t know how to respond to that. “I’m going to be late for work.” She turned and walked out of the bedroom.

“Faith,” she heard him call after her. “Faith, wait.” He caught up with her and took her hand and turned her around to look at him. He could see her eyes brimming with tears that were threatening to fall. “Let’s set a date,” he said with a small smile. “Right now.”

“No,” she told him. “I want you to marry me because you want to and not because you feel like you have something to prove to me. I love you, Freddy, and just you. I just wish you felt the same when it came to me,” she made clear. “Now if you don’t mind, I really have to get to work.” And she pulled her hand away from Fred’s.

Fred nodded knowing that the argument was a lost cause. “Fine. I’ll see you in the morning.” He then headed back to the bedroom.

Faith then walked towards the front door. As the door opened a large dark figure appeared in the doorway, which made Faith gasp loudly before realizing who it was. “My goodness you scared me.”

“I’m sorry,” said the figure. “May I come in?”

“Of course.” Faith let the man in and as he stepped inside he shook the snow from his hay colored hair.

“Is Weasley here?” he asked quietly and reached out for Faith.

She took a step back and nervously pushed a bit of her brown hair behind her ear. “Yes,” she said just as quietly. “Now we’ve talked about this, you’re not supposed to be here this often, you could be caught.”

“I’ll risk it to be able to see you,” he told her.

Faith shook her head. “Don’t say things like that. For crying out loud, I’m engaged.”

“Please,” he said a little too loudly. “Weasley wouldn’t know a good woman if she fell out the sky. I mean, can’t you tell he’s still caught up on Malfoy’s wife? Whom he also took for granted back when he was dating her. Don’t you see he’s never going to marry you, as long as he thinks he still has the slightest chance with her?” he asked and then said gently. “But me on the other hand, I would gladly make you Faith Eleanora-”

“Crabbe?” Fred emerged for the bedroom.

Crabbe looked in Fred’s direction as he took a discreet step back from Faith. “Weasley,” he greeted.

“I didn’t hear you knock.” Fred walked over to them not realizing how uncomfortable Faith looked.

“I should really head out now.”

“No, wait,” Crabbe said quickly. “This affects you too.”

Fred's forehead furrowed. “You're not here for an update are you?”

“I'm afraid not,” he confirmed.

Faith began to peel off her coat. “You boys sit. I'll make tea and call in sick.” And she disappeared into the kitchen.

Fred and Crabbe sat down in the living room. Fred sat with his back to the kitchen door. “So what's happening?”

“I just got out of meeting; the Dark Lord knows where you are. He's planning a full on attack in a matter of weeks.”

“No, that can't be right. How the hell did that happen?”

“One of our own was captured.”

“But that's happened before. No one has ever given anything up.”

“He didn't give us up on purpose. He had his family in hiding, for reasons I don't know, and when he went to visit them, he didn't know the Dark Lord was having him followed. He and his family were captured along with their host.”

“His family was here? How come I didn't know about this? I'm supposed to know everything that goes on in my sector.”

“I don't think he wanted to come to you, most likely because it would have affected his family in a different way. Besides I didn't even learn about it until later.”

“Wait, something's not right, no one has been reported missing.”

“No one you would care about going missing.”

Fred looked at him funny. “What the hell does that mean?”

Crabbe scoffed at Fred in disbelief. “It was your own brother, Weasley.”

Fred thought a moment. Charlie was in Egypt and Bill was living in Canada with his wife and three kids. “Percy?” he asked quietly. Crabbe only nodded. “shoot!” Fred stood up. “shoot!” he yelled again.

“That's not all, Weasley,” Crabbe stated.

“What else could there possibly be? They know where we are and they have my brother. Sure I still can't stand the git, but that is my blood nevertheless,” Fred said angrily.

came a man's voice.

"Goyle?" Angelina said softly. Goyle stepped inside and closed the door. He was surprised at how quickly Angelina rushed to him and threw her arms around him. She was just so happy to see a friendly face. "Goyle where are they? Where are Draco and Rose?"

Goyle pulled away from Angelina, he wasn't comfortable being that close to her, especially after knowing what Draco had done to Montague. "Rosalina is fine. Lady Dark Lord is taking very good care of her."

"Lady Dark Lord? Who's she?"

"Just know Rosalina is well."

"I want to know who has my daughter!" Angelina grew upset.

"Malfoy, please," Goyle said in a hush tone as he looked at the door. "I can't be caught in here."

Angelina took a deep breath. "I'm sorry," she told him. "Do you think we could sit down? I haven't been feeling well lately," she confessed. The two sat down on the bed before Angelina said calmly, "Now tell me of Draco."

As Goyle shook his head, Angelina immediately thought the worst. "I don't have access to see him, but he's alive, that I know."

"Thank God," she whispered. She then reached and took Goyle's hand. He flinched at the gesture. "Can you get us out?"

Goyle thought a moment. "I can get you out, but Lady Dark Lord hasn't let Rosalina out of her sight. Draco is in the dungeon, but the exact location, I don't know."

"Can you find out?"

"I'm his best friend, if I go around and I end up asking the wrong person where he is, then when he comes up missing, they'll know it was me. It won't work," he explained. "Now like I said I can get you out, because they don't know that I know where you are. So if you escape, I can't be blamed." He looked to the door. "But that's only if I don't get caught visiting you."

"Goyle-" she was cut off.

"Call me Gregory. There is no reason to be formal."

She smiled softly. "Gregory, I don't think I can leave knowing that my family is still here."

"But Angelina," he said cautiously. "There may not be another opportunity to get you out. I'll find out where Draco is. There are other ways believe me, I'm not going to leave him here either. I love that man as if he were my brother and Rosalina as if she were my own child. You guys and Vincent are my family

and I would do anything for you all.”

“As we would for you,” Angelina told him. She then took a deep breath. “Alright, when can you get me out?”

“Tomorrow night,” he told her.

“Okay, but where will I go?”

“I’ll take you to my place, where you’ll only stay for a few days tops. My station is in-house, so I have to be here when they realize you’re gone, that way they won’t look to me as an accomplice. When I’m sure I’m not a suspect, I’ll tell Vincent what’s going on and he’ll take it from there and he’ll come to see you.”

“But what if something happens? What if they find out it was you? What if they suspect Crabbe?”

Goyle shook his head as he took his free hand and rested on Angelina’s shoulder. “They won’t,” he told her. “You just have to stay positive. You just have to have faith. Can you do that?”

Angelina shook her head. “I don’t-” Goyle then squeezed her hand as reassurance. She sighed and then smiled softly, “Okay, I can have faith.”

Chapter Twenty: More Than Blood

It was approaching one in the morning, as far as Angelina could tell, as she laid awake in her bed waiting for Goyle. She coughed softly as she pulled the blanket tighter around her body. The damp atmosphere was finally starting to get to her as her eyelids grew heavy with sleep.

“Angelina,” Goyle said quietly as he shook her. “Angelina.” Angelina opened her eyes to see Goyle standing over her. “Get up. We have to hurry before the patrol comes back around.”

She wordlessly stood up and followed Goyle out of the cell and down the hall to a door. The door opened to a spiral staircase. As they stepped inside and closed the door all light disappeared; Angelina couldn’t even see her hand in front of her face. “Gregory, I can’t see.”

“Hold on to the rail,” he instructed her.

“I don’t know where it is.” She felt around in the dark as she continued down the stairs. “Ow.” Goyle had stopped and she ran into him.

“Here.” She felt Goyle’s hand on her elbow and he slid it down to her wrist. He then guided her hand to the rail. “Do you have it?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Good, now come on. We have to move to the bottom floor where we can apparate.” They then

continued down the stairs for what seemed like hours, but it was actually no more than thirty-five minutes. As they came upon the last of their journey, Angelina could see a sparkle of light. From behind she could faintly make out the back of Goyle's head. "Stop," he whispered suddenly and Angelina complied. "Back up, now," he told her.

Angelina hastily ascended the stairs and back into the darkness. She then heard the creaking of a door and light filled the bottom of the stairs where she was once standing. "Goyle?" she heard a man say. "What are you doing here? Your patrol doesn't start for another several hours, if I'm not mistaken."

"No, you're not mistaken at all," Goyle began. "But if you must know, I switched times with Lawson."

"Ah," said the man. "Yes, I did hear he and his wife just had another child," he concluded. "Carry on then." Angelina then heard what she thought were footsteps walking away. The man was so light on his feet that she was astonished that Goyle had even heard him.

"Come on," she heard Goyle and went back to him. "Stay close to the wall, if I tell you to go, duck into the nearest room. We'll be able to Apparate at the end of the hall." She nodded and after taking a final look they exited from the staircase and walked quickly down the lit hall, which seemed especially bright after being in the dark for so long.

Then abruptly Goyle reached behind him and grabbed Angelina, before she could even react to the sudden movement, she found herself in a different surrounding. "Sorry about that," Goyle said as he released her. "Someone was coming." He turned on a light that revealed the makings of his home. "Kitchen is this way; bathroom is down the hall, and you can sleep in the room to the left."

"Thank you, Gregory," was all Angelina could manage to say.

Goyle then did something that Angelina had only seen him do on rare occasions, usually when there was food around, he smiled. "You're welcome. I should be heading back now. Everything you need should be here," he explained. "I live deep in the woods, so if you go outside it's okay, but I wouldn't risk it."

"I understand."

"Alright." He then pulled back his cloak and reached into his pocket. "Here. Hopefully next time I see you, we'll all be out of danger. Until then." Goyle handed her back her wand and then Apparated, leaving Angelina once again all alone.

Angelina tucked away her wand and ventured into the kitchen. She looked in the upper cabinets and found a small drinking glass. She squatted and checked the lower cabinets; finding what she was looking for she reached for the small glass and wrapped her fingers around it, but taking another moment she released it and slid to the floor.

Her fingers then pulled at a cork, making a popping sound as it came loose. She gulped down the clear liquid and felt it prick and burn as it slid down her throat. As the contents of her item quickly disappeared Angelina couldn't help the trace of tears that streamed down her cheeks.

around him as she giggled contently. Fred closed his eyes as he whispered, "And they all lived happily ever after."

Just then there came a knock at the door. Faith got up off Fred and went to answer it. "Crabbe? What are you doing back here so soon? Did something else happen?"

"Something like that." He stood outside the door. "Someone needs your help and I hoping she could stay here until we've worked a few things out."

"Of course. Come in. Where is she?" Faith's question was answered as Crabbe came in followed by a tall, beautiful, black woman.

"Angelina?" Fred stood up from the couch and rushed over to the three. "Thank Merlin, you're safe. I had thought the worst."

Faith observed silently as Fred and Angelina embraced as if they had never left each other. Crabbe noticed Faith's reaction as she watched her fiancé and his former love. "No!" Faith found her voice. "Hell no!" Fred pulled away from Angelina and looked at Faith. "I will not have this woman in my home."

"Faith, it's okay," Fred told her.

"No, it's not," she explained. "I have been fighting her memory since the day I met you. I mean, I've forgiven you, when you've called out her name. I've forgiven you, when I caught you thinking about her. I've waited patiently, for *you* to set a date, so we could get married and start a family, only to. . . to," she became flustered and tried to calm herself down. "I'm tired of it, Freddy, but I love you." She slowly shook her head. "Yet, if you allow her to stay here and disrespect me like that," she thought over her words carefully. "Then it's over."

Fred was taken back, he had never seen her so upset and she had never given him an ultimatum before. "Faith is it?" Angelina spoke up calmly. "I didn't realize me coming here would upset you, but believe me, I'm not here to take Fred away for you."

"Shut up. I'm not talking to you," Faith said rudely, not even looking at her. "Thinking you can come in here and take what's mine."

"What? Uh-uh," Angelina said angrily. Crabbe had heard stories about Angelina's temper before, but had never actually witnessed it, so he sat down and smiled as he was about to enjoy the show. "Now look here little Miss Please-don't-take-my-man, if I was here for Fred, believe me," she said dangerously, "you would know. So whatever issues you have with me, work them out on your own time, okay? Because right now I have more important things on my mind, like my husband and my child who I need to make sure stay alive," she paused only to take a breath. "Because I don't know what planet you've been living on, but war is coming and lives will be lost, so you can take your petty insecurities and shove them up your-

"Whoa! Whoa!" Fred cut in. "There is no need for that Angel."

"I didn't start it," she said childishly.

"Faith, your attitude towards Angelina, was uncalled for," Fred told her.

Faith's mouth fell open. "Are you defending her? After what she said to me?" She took a moment as if waiting for an answer. "Fine, defend her all you like." She turned to Angelina. "I apologize, but I'm sorry, you can't stay here."

"Faith, don't be ridiculous."

"I wasn't kidding before Freddy. If she stays here, I'm gone." Her face was full of determination. "So make your choice."

"Faith, no I-"

"Make it," she told him.

"Fred it's okay," Angelina told him, and then looked to Crabbe. "This was a bad idea, let's go okay?" Crabbe stood up and began to walk towards the door. Angelina turned to Faith. "If it means anything at all, I apologize too, for everything I never knew I was putting you through." And with that she and Crabbe were out the door.

"Angel wait!" Fred followed her out so quickly that he failed to see the look on Faith's face. "Don't go."

Angelina turned to him and smiled. "It does my eyes good to see you, even if only for a little while."

"I've missed you too, Angel," he told her. "I'm sorry about Faith. We're still working out some issues."

"That's okay," she told him. "But it did make me realize. . . ever mind."

"No, what? What did you realize?" he asked as he stepped closer looking into her eyes and taking in her scent.

"Well, I guess it made me realize, that I needed to see you, to answer a question that I have been asking myself since the last time I saw you," she explained. "Because today I've realized where my heart truly lies," she spoke softly.

Fred smiled and whispered. "Oh Angel, I've waited so long." He lifted his hand to cup her face.

"What?" She stepped back. "Wait Fred, I don't think you understand," she explained gently with a concerned look on her face. "I meant my heart is with Draco, my husband." She shook her head. "I didn't mean. . . Oh, Fred."

Fred felt his stomach drop as his forehead furrowed and he shook his head. "No. We were supposed to come back together, through anything, remember?"

"I know, but a lot of time has gone by and a lot has changed. Faith loves you, I can tell. And she

5 - Part Five

Chapter Twenty-one: Long Before Peace

As the sun was setting Goyle stepped into his home for the first time in days. “What are you doing here?” were the first words out his mouth as he saw Angelina lying on his couch. “What happened to Vincent?” he asked as he discarded his robe.

“I couldn’t stay where he took me,” she said honestly.

He lowered his head and scratched the back of it. “Yeah, I’m sorry about that. That was my call and it seems it was the wrong one.” He moved closer.

“It’s okay.” She sat up to make room. “I’ll admit it was good to see Fred again, but he only made me realize that I can’t do without my husband.” Goyle sat down next to her. “We needed to get Draco and my baby out.”

Goyle shook his head as he rested it in his hands. “I’ve been racking my brain for days. I don’t know what to do and I don’t know how long Draco can last.”

Angelina sat closer as she leaned on him, resting her head on his shoulder and rubbing her hand up and down his back. She realized that Goyle needed more comfort than she did at the moment. Because she had only been in love with Draco for a short time, whereas Goyle and Crabbe, had a connection with him that she couldn’t even begin to imagine. “Why can’t we just storm the castle?” she suggested.

Goyle didn’t even look up. “Because then we would be giving the Dark Lord the advantage.”

“Yes, but we have to do something, Gregory,” she found herself whispering very softly. “You’re an in-house, you know that castle,” she told him. “And so do others who stand with Draco. Gather them. Together you can make a blueprint of the castle, figure out the schedules of the ones who stand against us, and know when the best time will be to strike.”

Goyle turned his head towards her, now just realizing how close they were. “What makes you think it’ll work?” he found himself whispering too.

“I don’t, but we have to do something, because if we wait and do nothing, I fear I’ll never see my husband again,” she confessed.

“I won’t let that happen,” he told her as he slipped his arm around her back. And the two sat on the couch as they simply comforted one another. Goyle found it strange how they had developed a bond in such a short period of time. Sure they had known each other for years, but neither had ever had the opportunity to get to know the other before now.

Goyle had always thought that Pansy Parkinson would have been a better choice for his friend, but he

home and he had done it anyway, but why, Fred wasn't quite sure.

"Look at this." Crabbe shoved the book into Fred's arms. "We need to know what it says before we attack the castle, it may be the key in bringing down the Dark Lord and his Queen," he explained.

"Fine," Fred tried to keep the sound of loathing from his voice that he was feeling towards Crabbe at the moment. Fred sat down on the couch and placed the book in front of him on the coffee table.

"So," Crabbe's smile grew wider as he took a seat and grew comfortable. "Where's the missus?"

Fred's head snapped towards him. "Let's just stick to business today, okay?" Crabbe only looked at him and nodded when there came a knock at the door. "It's open!" Fred yelled.

The person slowly opened the door and stepped through. "I've come for the rest of my things." Fred looked at Faith sadly and simply dipped his head towards her and turned back towards the book, which he finally flipped through. Faith walked to the bedroom and closed the door behind her to pack in peace.

Crabbe looked to Fred. "You won't even fight for her will you?"

"What the hell does it matter to you?" Fred asked angrily.

"You'll run after another man's wife, but you can't go after the woman who supposedly still loves you?" Crabbe asked as he shook his head. "You are exactly the person, I always knew you were, Weasley." He stood up and walked out of Fred's line of sight. Fred, pushing Crabbe's comment aside went back to the matter at hand, so he didn't see Crabbe walk towards the bedroom and knock on the door before going inside.

As soon as the door closed behind him, Crabbe felt the force of a hand belt across his face. "Why did you bring her here? Didn't you think I had it bad enough with just the mere memory of her? But to have her in my home and have him chose her over me?" she asked heatedly before turning away from Crabbe and crossing her arms. She then questioned softly. "Did you really think I deserved that?"

"No, of course not," he told her. "I'll admit that I went about it the wrong way, but I was only trying to make you see, that he will always treat you like some runner-up, like some consolation prize."

"That's not what it was like," she said.

"Why are you lying to me or more importantly to yourself?" he inquired. "Faith, if you deserve anything, it's someone better than Weasley." He reached out for her, but she stepped away.

"And let me guess, you think that someone is you?"

"I would like to be," he responded. "Faith, you deserve someone who will love you as if you are his everything and not just because he's afraid of being alone like Weasley." Faith cast her eyes downward. "Why do you allow him your heart when all he does it break it?"

"I don't-" she stopped and then after a moment asked in a whisper. "Would you ever break it?"

“Never,” he said hastily. “And if I did, it would be the day I died.”

Faith shook her head and turned around so she could continue to gather her things. “But I still love Freddy.”

Crabbe frowned at the sound of his name. “Then I’ll wait,” he began. “I’ll wait for all of time, if that’s what you want.” His head then gradually dropped down towards the floor. “But if you don’t, then I’ll never bother you again.” His eyes then rose to look at Faith. “Do you want me to wait?” His whole expression pleaded with her. “Because I will.”

Faith looked up at the man that was standing across from her. She knew if she allowed herself to be with him, that he would never be the reason tears fell from her eyes. She knew she would never have to share his heart or his thoughts.

So why was she denying herself something she knew could be great? Because no man, including Fred, had ever shown her such unquestioning devotion before. But then she thought, how could she give up on Fred so quickly? She knew that their separation was only a temporary thing and that eventually they would find their way back to each other; sure they both had their faults, but they were only human, right?

Making her decision Faith leisurely made her way towards Crabbe and stood facing him. She slowly shook her head. “I don’t want you to wait Vincent.”

“Oh,” he closed his eyes as he felt a sharp pain in his chest and he nodded his head. “Alright. I understand.”

“No, you don’t.” Crabbe opened his eyes with shock as he felt Faith’s hands on his chest. She then slid them up and locked her fingers behind his neck. She smiled softly, a little embarrassed by her actions, as Crabbe’s aching heart eased and he once again closed his eyes and wrapped his arms around *his* Faith.

“What the hell?” Fred yelled as he opened the bedroom door.

Faith gasped with wide eyes and quickly pulled away. “Freddy, I-”

“You owe him no explanation,” Crabbe cut her off and then looked to Fred. “Her business is no longer of your concern, Weasley.” He then whispered to Faith, “Finish with your things love. We should be ready to go soon.” Crabbe then walked pass Fred and went out the door. “Come Weasley,” he ordered. “We don’t have time to waste.”

“You know I liked you a lot better, when you didn’t speak,” Fred retorted before turning to Faith. “You’ve made a ghastly mistake by choosing him.”

Faith looked hurt by his comment, but then said, “Maybe the only ghastly mistake I’ve made, was not yielding to him sooner.” Finding herself tired Faith pulled out her wand and her things soon began to pack themselves.

Angelina took the rectangular box and sat on the bed to open it. She didn't understand what this was about until she saw the gift that Lucius had given her. She looked up at him. "These are mine?" He nodded. Angelina then reached into the box and pulled out her very own silver dagger with initials and all. She held it out and rotated it in her hand. "It's lighter than Draco's."

"For speed," he told her. "Draco's blade is heavier because with his fervor in battle he needs the durability. But if it makes you feel any better, my own blade is the same weight as yours."

"Do all Malfoy women receive blades?" she asked.

Lucius shook his head. "Only the worthiest, a true Malfoy."

Angelina took in the significance of his words. She smiled as she realized she finally had Lucius' approval. In his eyes she was now equal and deserving of the name Malfoy. "Thank you," she said softly.

"I pray you know how to use it," he asked.

"Actually no," she began as she lifted her leg and rolled up her pants to strap the holster below her calf. "But I'll know by tomorrow." Lucius smirked at her fortitude.

"There's something else," he told her as he reached into his pocket and pulled something out of it.

He then tossed it in Angelina's direction and she caught it. She looked at the small clear vial, which was not labeled and only half-full. "What is this?" She looked to Lucius curiously.

"There's a good chance that not all of us are going to see the end of tomorrow. And if I am one of them, I need you to follow my instructions," he explained. "I need you to take the contents of that vial every six months starting in June. The vial will then refill itself and then in another six months only take half. Understand?"

"Yeah," she said slowly.

"Good." He then started towards the bedroom door to leave.

"Lucius wait." She stood up and he turned back to her. "What is this?" She held up the vial.

Lucius smiled. "Come now girl, do you honestly think the child was a fluke? I've been slipping that to you for the passed three years," he explained. "Wasn't hard really, you always seemed to have a glass nearby." He then added as an afterthought, "You should really watch that."

"You sound like, Draco," she told him. "He always makes it sound like I have a problem." She then frowned as she looked back at the vial, not really sure what to think about Lucius slipping it to her and her never noticing. "So. . . what exactly is it?"

"It fixes the damage that was done to your reproductive organs when you went to South America."

Angelina shivered; it was still something she didn't want to think about. "But its results are temporary, that's why you must take it twice a year. You must also keep it hidden. As you know, what you had done is greatly frowned upon in the Wizarding World. So of course, the vial contents are illegal, even in the Dark Lord's eyes," he made clear. "I took great lengths and pulled many favors for it," he added.

Angelina nodded as the wheels in her head began to spin and then it clicked. "You bastard," she seethed slowly. "This is what has been making me sick."

"I'll admit, you seem to have grown a slight allergic reaction to it," he stated casually.

"Slight allergic reaction!" She looked at him in incredulity. "There have been days on end, where I can't keep down my food, there were fevers I couldn't break, and twice I almost fell down the stairs from fatigue." She threw the bottle back at him and he caught it with both hands at his waist. "And for what? To produce a male heir?" She shook her head from side to side. "Does my health mean nothing?"

"Girl, you are overreacting," he stated calmly. "You're not going to die for it or anything."

"Bloody hell! You could have fooled me." She then stormed passed him to leave the room.

But before she reached the door, Lucius' arm shot out and grabbed her forcefully. His face came very close to hers as he growled with impatience, "You may not like my methods, but you will obey them." He then shoved the bottle back into her hand. "And you will give my boy a son."

"Father-in-law or not," Angelina ripped herself from his grip. "Touch me again and you just may be the first to taste the steel of my new gift," she threatened before leaving the room, vial still in hand. Lucius smiled to himself. She was definitely a Malfoy.

Chapter Twenty-two: The Bonds that Break

Draco laid, breathing shallowly, on the dirty cold stone floor of the dungeon. He was awake, but his eyes remained closed, for he was too tired to open them. His mind had become detached from the world and he had lost track of time. He didn't know whether he had been here for weeks, months, or just mere days. He just didn't know anymore as his broken body laid still on the floor.

Voldemort had come in numerous times and had beaten the chained Draco, not for information, but just for the amusement of it. Draco had become his toy, his instrument of sadistic pleasure, and there was nothing he could do. It seemed that Voldemort didn't prefer using his wand when torturing his victims, Draco realized as he recalled when Voldemort had, on more than one occasion, grabbed a handful of Draco's hair and slammed him up against the wall, far too many times to count, before letting him fall to the floor like some ragged doll. He would then proceed to kick Draco around; his shouts of pain and groans of suffering only edged Voldemort on, rekindling his need for play with his toy.

Draco would fall in and out of consciousness during the time consuming ordeal. There was even once, not that long ago, when a warmth fell over his body and all the pain melted away. He found himself standing, freed of his chains, but immersed in darkness. Then all of sudden, out of nowhere, there appeared a sky-bluish light that beckoned him. And as he approached, he heard the sweetest sound his

ears had ever heard, it was a chorus singing the most beautiful song and it, for some reason, made him feel safe.

But as he got closer, some invisible force tugged at him, slowing down his pace. There then came a buzzing in his ears that wouldn't go away as he continued to walk. But soon the buzzing sound faded away and it was replaced with a soft, sweet voice. *I need you to live.* Draco cocked an eyebrow curiously; he knew those words, he knew that voice, but from where, he couldn't remember. So he decided just to shake it off and continue towards the light.

Will you live for me, Draco? There it was again, that strange voice, but the tone was different than the last, this one held a hint of desperation. *Will you live for me?* Draco then took a staggering step back from the light and then another. What was he doing? Escape from his torment was right in front of him, yet he was going in the opposite direction. *I love you, Draco Lucius Malfoy.* And all of sudden he knew, it all came back like a flash of lightning in the night sky.

"Angelina," he said breathlessly to himself. Draco then turned around and started running into the darkness, away for the warmth, away from the comforting light that beckoned him. He headed back at full speed towards the engulfing coldness, towards a world he knew would cause him pain, but he knew he would endure it, if only to see her face. . . one more time.

How long ago had that experience been, Draco could no longer recall, he couldn't even remember if it was real, or just a really cruel dream, because as he laid on the floor he began to doubt if he would make it out of this room.

Ginny had come in on a few occasions with her husband. At first she looked absolutely mortified at the lashing he was receiving from Voldemort, but soon clapped her hands and laughed along with her husband. "Sick dog," Draco said to himself as he remembered her joy filled face.

But then after one excruciating thrashing Ginny had witnessed, she did something strange. Later on in the day she came back down to the dungeons and rested silently next to Draco on her knees. Draco, involuntarily, jumped when he felt the touch of her hand on his face. She recoiled a bit at the suddenness of movement of someone who had been lying so still. She then swept his matted, blood stained hair from his face.

The next thing Draco knew was the sensation of a warm wet towel on his forehead. Ginny was tenderly cleaning the dirt and dried blood from his wounds. His cross like scar on his left cheek, which had been long healed, had violently been ripped open during his trial with Voldemort. Ginny had even been able to get passed Voldemort a morsel of food for him.

But Ginny's rare lapse of kindness did not go unpunished. When Voldemort came back down to play with his toy he noticed Draco's clean face. He marched right back up the dungeon stairs. He returned yelling and dragging an unwilling Ginny with him. If Draco had been more than halfway conscious, he would have noticed that Voldemort's usually emerald green eyes had been red and brighter than fire. But Voldemort's eyes were not a concern to Draco who had received another beating more vicious and frantic than the last. But the beating had not been fun for Voldemort, for it was a punishment for Ginny to watch.

Draco also noticed a third person coming down to visit him, but the person always came when it was too dark to make out anything. The person would say and do nothing most of the time as they kept their distance. It was as if the person came in just to witness Draco's fallen state, as if satisfied with his harmless position.

Only once did this mysterious person come close to Draco and only close enough so that they could spit in his face before leaving. Draco was then left alone with his own unforgiving thoughts. All he wanted to know was if his wife and child were all right and every unbearable moment he didn't know just tore through him worse than any thrashing he could receive. But he knew he had to stay strong, because he would be damned if he let Voldemort break him.

All of sudden, Draco thought he heard a faint explosion as the ground underneath him seemed to shake. He soon heard the rustling of feet and mumbled voices from outside the dungeon door. There was then a loud thud and Draco being curious opened one eye to see what was going on. It was still dark and all he could see were garbled black shadows coming down the stairs and approaching him.

"Malfoy!" someone said loudly. Draco opened his other eye and tried to concentrate on the person saying his name, but couldn't.

"I got you," Draco felt someone pick him up. "I got you." The person had strong hands, but they were gentle as they lifted him off the floor and he could hear the rattling of keys in the background.

He then felt cool air on his wrists as he became free from his chains. "Vince?" he said weakly as his eyes finally focused upon Crabbe's face.

"Yeah," he answered as he had Draco put his arm around his neck. "Can you stand?"

"Barely," he confessed as he staggered to his feet, hanging on tightly to Crabbe. He then looked around and realized that it was more than him and Crabbe in the room. He looked at Lawson, who was putting a ring of keys back into his pocket before he came up on Draco's other side to help him up the stairs. "Let go of me," Draco demanded. "I can do it on my own."

"Now is not the time for pride Malfoy," Crabbe stated.

"I can walk myself," he told him.

"You just admitted yourself that you can barely stand," Crabbe tried to reassure him. "No one will look upon you differently, so let us help you."

"I will not appear weak," Draco said stubbornly.

"No one will think you weak, Malfoy," Lawson spoke up. "Many would not have lasted as long as you did down here."

Draco turned his head towards Lawson. "Let me go." Lawson looked to Crabbe, who merely nodded his head for there was no reasoning with Draco.

Draco felt light-headed, but shook it off as he and his group made their way out of the dungeons. "Lawson, go west and take the others with you, I want to know the status of our forces outside," he demanded.

"Yes, sir." Lawson nodded his head and started towards his new destination with the others.

"Crabbe," he called quickly. "You're with me, we're going east." And so the two traveled along the corridors of the great castle heading east. Fortunately they ran into not one soul, because all of a sudden Draco's wand clattered to the ground and he grabbed the wall before falling to his knees. That dizzy feeling had returned and his vision was once again blurred.

"Draco," Crabbe called as he went to him. "You are not up to this," he told him. "You've been in confinement, without food or water, for over a week. You can not afford to push your body beyond its limits," Crabbe explained worriedly to his pale and weakened friend.

"What I can't afford," Draco began angrily as he unsuccessfully tried to push Crabbe away. "Is to not to be able to protect my family."

"You can not protect them if you are dead," Crabbe told him callously. "Your stubbornness and your pride, if not controlled, is what's going to do you in. Now please, put them aside and let me get you out of here."

"Do not lecture me, Vincent." Draco picked up his wand and finally rose back to his feet with no assistance for Crabbe. "If you want to be of help to me then tell me how to destroy the Dark Lord and his Queen."

"Fine," Crabbe spat. "To destroy the Dark Lord, he must have broken the only thing which is his own and it must come from the very one that ties him to this world."

Draco, still leaning on the wall, clutching his side, looked to his friend curiously. "What?"

Crabbe sighed. "As you know The Attachment of Solum, binds two souls who love each other. And its destruction must occur within a moment, but because the charm was lost long ago, we had mistaken this 'moment' to be an actual time period, but it is not," he explained. "It is an instant."

"Vincent, English please."

"Right," Crabbe said and then thought, *And they thought I was the stupid one.* "The thing which is his own, is his heart. The one that ties him to this world, is his Queen," he clarified. "The only way to destroy them is if one betrays the other and kills them, thus severing their bond which destroys them both."

"That can't be right." Draco shook his head. "I've been with Ginny plenty of times during the last few years. I'm not sure if he knew, but I always had the feeling he did," he said as he recalled his beatings were always more brutal when the Dark Lord had her watching, it was almost as if he was trying to prove something.

"No," Crabbe stated as he shook his head. "As in, 'hell no'. If we do that you'll only end up getting yourself killed. It won't work. We'll think of something else. We'll work around it," he voiced his opinion about Draco's newly devised plan.

"You know very well we can't work around it and we don't have the time to think of something else." Draco pointed ahead, indicating the east wing was fast approaching.

"Draco-" Crabbe began to protest again, but was cut off.

"Were you stationed in-house tonight?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then I know it'll work, he doesn't know. So go don your robes," he told Crabbe, but he still looked doubtful as there was another explosion. "I'll be okay," he reassured him with a tired smile.

Crabbe looked at him for a moment longer nodding his head as he hide his overcoming concern. "Fine," he finally told him. "Will an hour suffice?"

"Yes," Draco confirmed. "Keep out of sight until then." Crabbe once again nodded and then began going down the north corridor. Draco watched him enter into the blackness of the hall and then turned around to begin his journey south.

This was not the first time Draco had walked down the south corridor of the east wing. He had made this trip many times before in the past, but little did he know then, that doing so would help him now. All of a sudden Draco heard a familiar sound and it made his heart soar. They were the cries of his only child and despite the soreness that burned his body he picked up his step.

He was headed towards Ginny's bedchamber, he had a mission, and it had to be completed. "Ginny!" he said hoarsely, out of breath, collapsing outside her open door. The long journey from the dungeon to here, fighting off Death Eaters at every other turn, was finally taking its toll.

Ginny gasped as she turned her head quickly towards the voice, holding the squirming child in her arms even tighter. "Malfoy! How did you escape?"

"Ginny, please." Draco reached for her from the floor. "Please."

Ginny looked at Draco seemingly helpless on the floor. "If you wish to harm me," she began. "You can not pass these wards. They are strong and as old as time." Draco didn't wish to harm Ginny, not physically anyway, so he put one arm passed the threshold of her door, showing her he meant her no harm. Ginny's eyes held tight on Draco as she rocked his child, debating her course of action. *Tom?* She mentally linked with him, her thoughts shaky.

Make it quick my Queen, he told her hurriedly, for outside the castle walls he was on a killing spree and was very much enjoying himself. But Ginny didn't answer him right away; instead she was still staring at the defeated looking Draco. *Beloved?* Voldemort called worriedly before snapping the neck of a blonde traitor to him and letting him fall ungracefully into the snow. *Beloved, is it the child?* he asked.

No, Desamona is fine, she said referring to the renamed Rosalina. It's just that-

Ginny! he called loudly when their connection broke. *Ginny what's wrong?*

Nothing. Never mind. I can handle this on my own. . . for now.

Are you sure?

Yes, my love. Now have your fun. She ended their link before resting the now calm Rosalina into her crib. She then rushed over to Draco and helped pull him to his feet. "If Tom finds you here, he'll kill you for sure."

"Your heart is still kind, Ginny," he told her as she placed him gently onto her bed.

"An amusing thought, but no," she said sadly. "I turned over my heart a long time ago."

"It doesn't stop you from being who you are. You are a kind soul, Ginny." He reached out for her face. "No matter who your husband may be."

"Why did you come here, Draco?" she asked. "You're in a weaken state. I could easily kill you right now, you know."

"Yes," he dipped his head, "but you won't."

"How do you know?" she asked.

Draco smiled as he brought her face closer to his and then whispered. "Because you never could resist me."

She chuckled softly. "Nor you I." She then slipped away from his touch and lifted herself from the edge of the bed. "You're safe here for now." She looked over him. "I'm going to run you some water. It seems you're due for a long bath."

Draco merely nodded. When she entered the adjacent bathroom Draco, as swiftly as he could, rose from the bed and walked over to the crib, which he couldn't see from the bed, where his daughter rested peaceful. "Thank you," he said particularly to no one as he rested his eyes on his child whom he had not seen since he left Percy's. *Where is Percy?* Draco thought for the first time, but then realized he didn't care, for he only wanted to concentrate on Rosalina.

He stroked her soft curls dotingly as she stirred and looked up at him. She smiled and cooed at the friendly face she had not seen in a long time. She reached out her chubby arms for him, longing to be picked up by the man she once used to see everyday and Draco complied. "My precious flower," he spoke as he held her. "Daddy has missed you so much." He smiled down at her. "Now don't worry, we're going to get out of here and we're going to see mommy very soon. She's with your godfather, so I know she's safe, for Greg has never failed me." Draco then softly began to sing to her and soon she closed her eyes and happily went back to sleep.

“Your bath is ready, Draco,” he heard Ginny say as he was putting Rosalina back into her crib. “Come let me help you.” She smiled as she took Draco’s hand and led him to the bathroom.

Inside the bathroom Ginny stripped Draco of his dirty and tattered clothing. She gently touched the dark black and blue bruises that littered his body. Draco lowered his head in shame, feeling vulnerable under her scrutinizing hazel eyes. “Ow!” he yelled out, before he could stop himself, when she pressed a little too hard on a bruise.

“Sorry,” she whispered before helping him down into the bath that was built into the floor. Ginny then took off her own clothes and lowered herself beside Draco in the bubble filled water. She picked up a clean wash towel and lathered it with soap before she then, for second time since his arrival in the castle, cleaned his face. When she finished with his hair, face, and neck she moved on to his shoulders and the rest of his body above and below the water. “How’s that feel?” she asked.

Draco’s eyes had been closed as he felt the steaming water engulf him and ease the aching wounds of his body. He smiled in response to Ginny’s question, her gentle touch sending a pleasurable chill throughout him. He then opened his eyes, she had not noticed as she was once again cleaning his chest. Draco then lifted his hand out the water and stopped her hand.

At this she stopped and allowed her hand to rest gingerly, so not to hurt him, upon his chest. She returned his smile before he pushed himself forward off the bath wall and without hesitation claimed her lips with his own, as if he didn’t do so that very second, he would no longer be able to breathe.

She smiled against his mouth and giggled before pulling away. “Come, let’s get you dry,” she told him and rose from the bath allowing the water to rush down her small frame. She summoned a large blue bath towel as Draco rose from the water. She then helped him out of the bath and proceeded to dry him off. When she was finished she summoned a couple of housecoats before drying herself off and getting into one.

Silently, hand and hand, they made their way back to the bedroom. While resting in the bed, Ginny heard Draco’s stomach and knowing Draco would never admit he truly needed anything, she ordered a few House Elves to bring them some food.

With a full stomach and with the leisure of a hot bath, Draco was feeling better than he had in days. “So,” Ginny ventured. “Is there anything else you need?” She smiled knowingly, licking her lips. “Anything else you want?”

Draco’s eyes sparkled as he gave off a low chuckle as he eased Ginny onto her back and untied her housecoat and then his own before positioning himself between her legs. She wrapped her arms tenderly around his back as she explored the concave of his mouth with her tongue. “Tighter,” he ordered her when they parted for air and she did as she was told. She noticed his body tensed in pain, but he said not one word, for there was pleasure in it.

Draco then continued to kiss Ginny’s delicate soft skin, in all the places he knew she liked. She moaned under the touch of his lips on her neck and at the cool palm of his hand as it fondled the supple flesh of her breast, making her nipple hard in reaction. She then felt his long fingers glide down the side of her

body and over the curve of her hip. It was followed by the feel of his nails digging into her thigh as he dragged them down her fair skin, leaving red burning marks in their wake.

Ginny gasped at the speed he used as his hand cupped under her knee and forced it up the side of his body. Draco grinned at the expression on her face as he entered her just as suddenly causing the same one to appear. She then giggled contently as she pulled him closer, wanting to feel the heat of his body on top of her.

They made love quietly, lost in the escape of the other's essence when Draco heard the loud, sharp intake of air from a man. A smug expression appeared on his face as he thought, *Right on time*. But then he heard something strange. "No. Wait." That wasn't Voldemort's voice.

Draco quickly rose off of Ginny and turned his torso around. His eyes grew wide as he saw Goyle on the other side of the open doorway. . . which only meant one thing. "What do you mean 'wait'?" Angelina pushed passed Goyle and froze where she stood as the sight of Draco and Ginny came into her view.

Draco felt his stomach drop as he saw his wife's inconsolable face. "Angelina-" he said quickly wanting to explain, but was cut off.

"Well, hello Angie. Long time no see," Ginny said in her sickly sweet voice as she sat up and wrapped her arms back around Draco's neck. "We've been expecting you."

"Yes, we have," came the deep voice of Voldemort, whom Draco couldn't see because he was out in the hall with Angelina and Goyle.

Angelina took an impulsive step back, as if seeing the dead walk when she looked upon Harry's face, and ran into Goyle, who quickly shove her protectively behind him. "Run!" he yelled at her, but she hesitated, griping her wand, ready to fight, but Goyle shoved her again. "Run!" And so she did.

"Not so fast, dearest." Voldemort pulled out his wand and pointed it towards Angelina's retreating form. "*Avada Kedavra!*" he yelled and a gust of green light went shooting out of the end of his wand, but it never reached its intended target.

"*GOYLE!*" Draco yelled out as he watched his best friend drop to his knees, his eyes roll into the back of his head, and then the rest of his body collapse to the floor. Draco fought like a wild animal to get out of bed, but found that he couldn't.

"See Malfoy," Ginny whispered harshly as she held on, unnaturally strong, to a struggling Draco. "I told you, I turned over my heart a long time ago."

Chapter Twenty-three: The Malfoy Curse Part II

Once upon a time, at the very dawn of time, there was a omnipotent being. It was a being of the brightest light surrounded by a mist of clouds with blue glittering specks that flowed around it.

It was a happy being, but alone within it's infinite black space. So it decided that it would build a world and occupy it with ones it could play with. After constructing a ball of blue waters and green lands, it decided it needed someone who could look over this world alongside it. So it made a friend with a spark

of its own light and so it was named, Lior the Spark of Light.

Lior was a solid form unlike his creator, he had long golden hair and eyes sprinkled with his creator's glitter. And Lior walked the world that his creator made and having the same powers of his creator he put them to good use.

On the blue and green ball that he named Earth, he created the sky and within it the moon, the sun, and the stars. He created the wind and the rain, and all that the Earth would ever need.

Lior made the Earth beautiful and luscious hoping to please his creator. And he had, his creator was very please with what he had done. His creator then proceeded to create other beings designed from that of Lior and Lior was pleased for such an honor.

The omnipotent being made two sets of other beings. It made those like Lior, but with less and different powers and then those who had none at all. And the omnipotent being created animals, two of each kind, to roam the Earth freely, it then turned to Lior and asked if he would like to make a new creature to fill the Earth.

Lior nodded and with his long fingers created a small creature, graceful within its movement as it slide across the grass like water, he then made it a mate, and Lior named the creatures Serpent and his creator was pleased.

Much time had passed by and the creator thought it would be best to change its form to look like those it had created. Lior smiled as his creator changed before him and asked Lior, its most prized creation, to name its solid form. "I will name you after *my* most prized creation," Lior said as he bent down and picked up a beautiful flower and brought it to his creator's newly form hand. She took it within her grasp. "I shall call you Blossom my Flower. Does that please you, Creator?"

"Yes, it pleases me so," she smiled as she reached out her hand, which was the color of cinnamon, to touch his cheek, "my Spark of Light."

Lior closed his eyes and tilted his faced into her touch. "I hope that I always please you. . . my flower."

And for a time to follow, Blossom and Lior were happy with one another as they watched what they had created inhabit and populate the earth. But one bright sunny day, Lior found himself alone as he traveled and soon wondered where Blossom had gone.

"Do not search for her," came the sound of a small voice.

"Who are you?" asked Lior as he turned and spotted a small child.

"I am Time," said the small child. "My name is Past." Then next to her appeared a middle-aged woman and then an elderly woman. "And if you search for her now, you will curse your past. . ."

"You will curse your present. . ." said the middle-age woman.

"And you will curse your future," said the elderly woman.

Lior looked at them strangely. Who were they to tell him what to do? "Nonsense, you know not what you speak. Blossom wants me with her, I am her prized creation." He pushed the three out of his way and continued on his journey through the woods. Soon he heard the soft laughing of his creator and he smiled as he pushed tree branches out of his way to be near her. As he reached the clearing, he stopped and a frown occupied his features.

His creator was in the arms of another she had created. He had hair the color of fire and eyes as blue as the deepest oceans. "Flower," Lior said harshly as he approached the two.

"Hello, Light," she said calmly as she rested her head on the other man's shoulder. "This is Ignatius of Burning Fire." She smiled. "Is he not beautiful?"

Lior looked him over. "Yes, that he is, but certainly you do not mean he is more pleasing to you than I?" he asked worriedly.

"Fire is a fine creation." She pulled away from him and looked into his blue eyes. "A very fine creation."

"My flower, please." Lior levitated from the Earth and reached his hand out to his creator. "Join me in the skies I have created for you, join me in the heavens. Let's leave this Earth behind for the following."

"No, today I wish to stay," she told him. "Be off with you now."

Lior was a little taken back by her comment, he had never been pushed aside for another. "But- but Flower," he shuddered and then said angrily, "I was created before him, I am your prized creation, and I demand your presence." Clouds began to appear in the once cloudless sky.

She looked to him curiously. "You demand of me? Your creator?" she asked. "Then you are more of a fool than I thought, for I am the omnipotent being and *you* obey me. Now off with you!"

"Yes, you created me, but gave me just as much power," he warned her. "And if you chose him over me, I will destroy him, and then I will destroy you."

The creator looked at her creation; she looked at her Light and she saw a hate radiating so fiercely within him that it paled his blue eyes and they shone silver. It was a hate and jealousy so strong that his long golden hair lost its color and looked as white as fresh fallen snow.

"You can not destroy me," she explained to him. "For I live in your heart and to destroy me, means to destroy yourself, because to create you, I used the most of me. So you are a part of me, we are one as we share the same soul."

"If we share so much, come with me now." He reached his hand out again before taking a deep breath and saying calmly, "Please."

"Go Light, I promise I will come to you tonight."

"And if you do not?" he asked impatiently.

The creator looked surprised. "Is your faith so bad in me you think I lie?"

"Yes," he said in a low voice as the white clouds in the sky began to turn a gray, matching the emotion he tried to hide behind a passive face.

She shook her head. "If you have no trust in me, then I have no need for you. . . Lior of Bad Faith." She waved her hand and the levitating Lior came crashing to the ground. The clouds disappeared and the blue sky once again revealed itself. "You have been striped of your importance and the bulk of your power. You shall regain them, when you are the Light I created and not a tempered pride fool. That shall be your curse."

Lior looked up from the ground and crawled to the feet of his creator. "Will you abandon me, your prized creation?" he asked.

The creator looked to Ignatius. "Leave us be." And he walked off. The creator then got to her knees and rested in front of Lior. "I will not truly abandon you. If you call me and you ask, I will be there, but you must be punished for lack of faith. You must know your place. You will know obedience."

"My place is by your side."

"No," she told him. "Your place is at my feet and if you choose to stand, it will be forever alone."

Anger rose back up into his eyes. "I will not be treated like those who came after me! I refuse to be treated like those I created." He stood and left his creator on her knees.

"You are being foolish," she told him as anger, for the first time, came into her voice.

"Will you see me not as your equal?"

"No!" She rose to her full height and the two stared each other down.

"Then it is I that abandon you," he finally spoke.

The creator lowered her eyes, not in submission, but in her lost. "Your punishment should be greater than the one I give you," she looked back at him, "but I'm going to give you the chance to return to me someday."

"Don't bother, because I will teach those who come after me to hate you, to not believe. No one will ask for you, no matter how desperate the situation."

"Then we have a long journey. . . Lior *Malfoy*." She took a step back and returned to her original mist of cloud form and shot into the sky instantaneously and as it did Lior heard the words of the song that would follow his bloodline till the time it came to regain their rightful place:

-

Rich and powerful, that is what a Malfoy shall be,
But generation upon generation, they will not be a comfort to thee.

You shall have your male heir to carry on your name,
To rise to influence that shall be your aim.
But raise your only child, your heir, to be an independent boy,
For he too now carries the curse of the Malfoy.
You shall have your lust of women, knocking at your door,
But their body is all you can have and nothing more.
But if there is anything in this world, there is hope,
But it will be a feeling so strong; his heart may not be able to cope.
And all that once used to taste so sour,
Will be made sweet, with the gift of a flower's flower.
It may sound easy, but that's far from the truth,
Because this must occur within the boy's youth.
It cannot be forced and it cannot be arranged,
For if it is the curse will go unchanged.
The indescribable power of a God, will be at the boy's finger tips,
And the love of one woman will be at his opening lips.
The boy can do his best, but will more likely to his worst,
She will threaten to leave, but no, for she too now is tied to the Malfoy curse.
Remember trust no one, for the boy is always in the eye of the storm,
Even the most trusted ally, may take an ominous form.
So heed my warning, for they are words one should not destroy,
Because the fate of the curse that lies in my hands, in generation, will rest with one boy.

-

Twenty-four: In the End

"After her!" Voldemort yelled to the Death Eaters behind him as he watched Angelina run around a corner. Voldemort then held his hand out not allowing one Death Eater to leave as the others dashed passed them in pursuit of their target. "Beloved," Voldemort called from down the hall as Draco continued to struggle against Ginny's vise like grip. "I have a present for you."

Ginny whipped Draco off of her, like he nothing at all, and magically pinned him to the floor. Ginny then scrambled off the bed as she ran her hand through her hair before closing her robe. "A present?" She smiled brightly as Voldemort came through the door. His hand was wrapped in long white hair; he was dragging a motionless Lucius behind him. Ginny pouted as she watched the body slide across the floor. "Tom." She whined and then looked into his green eyes. "You promised."

"No fear, love," Voldemort told her. "He's merely unconscious. As you have wished you will watch him be tortured." His eyes then narrowed as they flickered over to Draco. "Hopefully, you will enjoy the matter this time." He then loosen his hand from Lucius' hair and let his head fall onto the ground.

Draco remained silent as he watched his father's head bounce off the stone floor. Ginny cooed softly as she walked over to Voldemort and rubbed his chest. "Don't be jealous, love," she calmed him. "I was just having my fun with him, nothing more."

Voldemort looked down at her and the side of his mouth curled up as he leered at her. "Jealous? Don't

but then very unexpectedly there was a hand on her wrist and she was flipped around and pressed up against the door, slamming it loudly. Before she could even react she felt a pair of warm firm lips on her own.

She wanted to pull away, but the kiss was alluring if not intoxicating. A warming calmness washed over her body and she realized she knew these lips, she knew this taste. "Percival," she said breathlessly when he broke the kiss.

"Angelina," Percy said just as breathless.

"Percy," she said slowly. "what's going on?" She asked as the candles in the room slowly began to light themselves. Angelina could now make out the surrounding of a very posh room. She then started deducting the facts. *I was in a cell in the upper tower, Draco was a mile below ground in the dungeons and Percy, he's. . .* her eyes went wide, *he turned.* "Get off me!" she yelled as she flung her arms wildly, trying to push him away from her.

"Lina! Lina stop!" He grabbed her arms and shoved her back up against the door before covering her mouth with his hand. "Are you trying to get us both killed! Huh?" he asked angrily. "Now settle down. . . please." Angelina was breathing heavily from the running, the crying, and trying to get free from Percy. "I would never hurt you. You know this right?" They only stared into each other's eyes. "Right?" he whispered and she nodded. He then removed his hands. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"Yes," she told him. "What happened to you when we were captured?"

"I woke up here. Ginny wanted me to join her and the Dark Lord. And I said yes," Angelina looked fearful and he explained quickly. "But only because I knew if I refused I would be killed. You got to believe me, Ginny is no longer the sister I knew." He cast his eyes downward. "The Ginny I loved."

Though she wanted to comfort him, there were other things that had to be done. "Come on," he spoke as if he realizing the same thing. "I've done a lot of exploring around this place in the last few days." He grabbed Angelina's hand and led her away from the door towards the fireplace. He slipped his hand around the side of the mantle and pressed in a piece of wood that turned out to be a hidden button.

To Angelina's knowledge nothing seem to happened. Then Percy led her to the other side of the room towards a large tapestry that hung on the wall. He bent over and took a hold on the corner of it and lifted it up. Behind the tapestry a door appeared. "I've learned there are a lot ways to slip out of this place unnoticed. This is an underground passage and within a day's walk we'll come up in a nearby village, we can escape this country and it's chaos."

"What? No." Angelina pulled her hand away from Percy's. "Draco needs me, Rose needs me." She started back towards the door leading out into the hallway.

"You can't possibly be seriously." He seemed upset as he followed her and blocked her way. "Has that man completely addled your brain?"

"That man is my husband," she told him simply. "I have to protect him."

pressed securely to her neck, he regretted not killing him when he had the chance. "Look what I found," Percy said with a smile.

Ginny stepped out of bed and wrapped her arms around Voldemort as if she was trying to reassure him through her actions. "And hello again, Angie. Didn't get very far now did we?"

Voldemort then slipped out of Ginny's arms and approached Percy and Angelina as they entered the room. Voldemort brought his hand up and lowered Percy's wand a bit. He then caressed the soft skin of Angelina's neck with his rough fingers. Angelina took in a shot of air through her nose. He gave a short chuckle at her reaction. "Tom?" Ginny said warily.

Voldemort looked over his shoulder, his eyes on Draco. "Tell me love, will she be fun for you?" He turned fully to face Ginny. "Or do you have some complaint or excuse, to once again try to get out of something, that once gave you great delight?"

"Tom don't start this. It is not the time." Her eyes narrowed at him and the two stared defiantly at each other. Unknown to them at that moment, Percy pointed his wand at Draco and whispered the spell that released the invisible binds that held him.

Draco immediately felt the pressure that once surrounded his body lift. He then took an unrestricted breath. "Don't give me that," Voldemort told Ginny, "when you know we have all eternity. Time is on our side, love," he sounded agitated. "Now answer me."

Ginny then responded just as agitated. "If I have been acting strangely it's only because you have. I haven't been breaking my links with you, you have. Almost as if were a child still learning and can't keep the connection." Ginny then said softly, "And I think you know why?"

"No!" he yelled, making the silent Angelina jump within Percy's hold. "I am the one in control."

"Yes, love, I know." She took a few tender steps towards him. "But there have been moments. . ." she lowered her voice for only him to hear, "when it's *the other*, I know I'm looking at. And he shows himself more frequently than before." She shook her head. "And Tom he is not pleased with me." She then looked around the room. "But this is something we should discuss later, in private."

He looked at her for a moment more before shaking his head and saying. "Of course."

Ginny then reached out and took a hold of Voldemort's arm. "Come," satisfied with his answer, her concern look faded and was once again replaced with her doll-like smile, "I will prove to you how fun I can be." She turned in the direction of Draco, her hands at her sides started to be surrounded by a yellow glowing light.

"Stop her," Angelina whispered in a panic to Percy as Ginny slowly walked towards Draco.

"What would you have me do?" Percy asked with a sparkle in his eye that Angelina couldn't see. At his words, Angelina started to lift her hand ready to grab Percy's wand, determined to stop Ginny herself when. . .

“STOP!” came the roaring voice from in front of Percy and Angelina. Voldemort had a distressful look on his face as the bottom of his palms pressed up tightly against his temples.

Ginny hands went back to normal as she turned back to Voldemort. “Tom!” She rushed back over to him as he fell on his knees screaming in pain. “Tom, fight it!” she yelled at him. “Fight him!” Ginny dropped to her knees too as she put her arms around him tightly as his body convulse violently.

Angelina pulled away from Percy’s arms and ran over to Draco, who was starting to sit up as he watched in disbelief at the scene before him. Then as suddenly as it began it stopped, both Ginny and Voldemort were breathing heavily. “Tom?” she said gently as she stroked his disheveled black hair. “It’s okay, love. It’s okay.”

“Why didn’t you just let me die?” came the words, but they were not Voldemort’s.

With wide eyes Ginny jumped to her feet as if acid had been poured before them. “Harry!”

During the last of the Final Battle Harry Potter was not killed as everyone had come to believe when the side of Voldemort won. Before the battle began Ginny had not been pleased with the form Voldemort had taken during her third year. His pale gray scale like skin and his burning red eyes, literally made Ginny sick to her stomach, but she refused to tell him. Thinking if she did voice her concern, that he would become angry at her and think that she didn’t actually love him.

When Voldemort did learn that his current state made his future queen uneasy, he asked what would please her. She told him that she wished he looked the way he used to when he was sixteen years old. She wanted him to look like the Tom Riddle she met back during her first year at Hogwarts through the diary. He told her that was impossible, but if she was disappointed, she didn’t show it.

When the battle was over, Voldemort took over the castle that he now occupied and bought with him an unconscious and dying Harry Potter. When he had everything to his liking, he sent word to Ginny and told her to prepare for the day she had been longing for, the day to permanently be by his side.

She was bought to him mere moments after giving the order to have George, her own brother killed. An order she would regret for the rest of her life and swore she would never make again. Moon, the Death Eater who had took her to the castle, left her within her new bedchamber. After he left she broke down, sobbing loudly with her face in her hands. A moment later she felt arms around her and she rested her fragile form within its comforts. It was only a moment later that she realized that this hold around her was foreign to her.

She pulled away slightly and immediately her hazel eyes locked with a pair of green one. She was bit surprised at first until the person spoke. “So tell me, love, will this form do?” Ginny then gave him a pure, genuine smile as she nodded her head.

Later on that day, they preformed The Ritual of Solum, which was the act of binding their souls, but something went wrong, because it was not two souls, but three. Harry’s soul had not complete left his body and because of his weaken state during the battle, Voldemort became the dominant personality.

It was only recently though, that strange things started to happen to Voldemort. There were moments he

couldn't recall and times he couldn't control what he was doing. At first he thought he was starting to go crazy because of T.A.S, but somehow he knew it was more. In the dead of night, while he tried to sleep in his bed, he could feel the battle going on within him and it was in that moment he realized, that the Final Battle had never truly ended, but still raged on a battleground only known to two.

"You!" Harry growled at Ginny as he got to his feet, completely ignoring everyone else in the room. "You just couldn't let me have my peace, could you?" Harry had once been so close to death that he could taste it. It was a relief he had secretly longed for. To escape the hand that the universe had dealt him; to not have people rely on him, to not see him as their only hope in a dying world.

He had been fighting for so long; fighting for the love of the only family he knew, fighting for his life year after year since he learned he was a wizard, fighting for the friends he desperately tried to keep so close, but no matter how close he pulled them, he still felt so alone, and then one day, after fighting for so long and so hard, he just broke.

He broke during the most crucial moment, during the day that would be the last day of the Final Battle. All of sudden something within Harry snapped and he asked himself, *Why?* Because he had no one to live for. The only people who had ever truly loved him, were gone. Sure there were Ron and Hermione, but they had each other. And though Harry was in his own relationship, if you could call it that, it was with someone he knew he could never have in the long run.

So making his decision, Harry lowered his wand and walked in the direction of Voldemort, who was coming towards him, and as they came into full view of each other, Harry purposely dropped his wand, his face read of defeat. Because in the end, he had just given up, he just couldn't live this life anymore.

But his peace was short lived after being attacked by Voldemort, because as his soul was leaving his body and a feeling of warmth surround him in the darkness, everything all of sudden went a blinding white. Harry could hear the words of an ancient chant as he was pulled back into his body, but his soul was no longer alone within it.

It had taken him years, to climb out of the whiteness, to climb back into the dominant soul within the body, but each time it was short lived. But now he had been able to do it more often, for longer periods of time. At first it didn't seem that Voldemort had notice, but soon he had learned and started trying to hold Harry at bay. Ginny had immediately noticed the change and what Harry wanted.

Harry wanted to let go of this world and he knew the only way to do it was to kill Ginny, which would in turn, kill him and Voldemort. And so Harry lunged at her, bring her down to the cold, hard floor, trying to chock the life out of her.

"Ginny!" Percy yelled as Harry attacked his sister. His instant reaction was to grab Harry and pull him off his sister. Draco made the action to jump in and help, but Angelina forcefully held him down with her on the floor.

When Percy couldn't pull Harry off of Ginny, he frantically reached back for his wand and pointed it towards Harry. "*Crucio!*" he yelled out and the curse struck Harry in the back. Harry fell over and once again started shaking wildly as he screamed, but he was not the only one screaming, for the pain was so intense that Ginny felt it to.

he always thought he would. But he told himself, there was no reason for people to fear him, not when he had love. The kind of love that kept him calm, the kind of love that made him human.

Angelina and Draco were walking hand in hand, swing them wildly back and forth, in their formal wear as they walked down the hall of their new home towards the ballroom, behind the huge wooden doors, to celebrate their long overdue victory.

All of a sudden Draco stopped before they reached the doors, making Angelina too come to an abrupt stop. She turned to Draco. "My Lord," she smiled as she asked, "what's the matter?" There was an intense look in Draco's eyes that worried his wife. Her smile soon faded and she took her husband's face with her free hand. "Draco?" she said softly.

"There's something I've been putting off for a long time," he began slowly and sadly. "Something I've had plenty of opportunity to say, but never have." He went silent as his eyes became distant and he looked towards the floor.

"Draco, what have you not told me?" Angelina's heart began to beat rapidly, not knowing, after everything, if she would be able to handle what Draco was about to tell her.

"Angelina. . ." he whispered.

"Yes?" she responded.

"Tulip. . ." he was barely audible.

"Draco, what is it?" She was starting to get scared.

Draco then looked back up into her brown eyes. He then lifted her hand he was holding and placed it over his chest, above his heart and said gently, for the first time. "I love you." A smile slowly spread across Angelina's face and she did the last thing Draco thought she would ever do, she laughed at him. "What?" he said a bit angrily.

Angelina's laugh lightened into a giggle. "Oh, Draco really," she shook her head, "there's no need in stating the obvious."

Draco smiled at her words. "Woman, just shut up and kiss me," he told her as he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her closer as she happily complied. After a moment they broke the kiss. "So what do you think about skipping the celebration and going to have a private one of our own?" He suggested as he waggled his eyebrows.

"Oh, Draco, you're terrible," she said as she rolled her eyes and she pulled away taking his hand and leading him down the hall. "Besides, we have a very important announcement to make tonight. And you been bugging me about it for days, so we're going to make it."

"Well, okay, I guess you're right," he gave in easily, but then stopped again, after a moment, and gently yanked Angelina back towards him. She gasped a bit loudly in surprise. "But no drinking tonight, you understand?" he said all joking aside.

“Do you think I’m a fool, Draco?” she asked a bit angry, still not believing Draco thought she had drinking problem as she put her hand on her stomach. “You know I wouldn’t do anything to harm our child.”

“No, not child,” he shook his head as he placed his hand on top of hers and corrected her. “*Son*. That’s Damien Uriah Malfoy you’re carrying. That’s my boy,” he said proudly. “My heir.”

“Uh-huh,” she said unaffected. “That’s what you said about the last one,” she teased.

“Well, if we have another girl, we can always try again.” He smiled. “I have no problem with that.”

Angelina shook her head. “You’re impossible. How many children do you want to have?”

“Hmm,” he pretended to think it over. “We’ll stop when you start getting fat.” She smacked him across the arm. “Ow!”

“You’re a moron!” she spat lovingly.

“Yet, you still love me. It’s incredible really.”

“Yeah, that’s what you think,” she said as she started walking down the hall again, leaving Draco where he stood.

“Alright,” he said taking a harsh tone. “You know I don’t like it when you joke like that.”

“I’m sorry,” she said sincerely, turning around, walking backwards as a smile came to her face. “I forget how sensitive you are.”

Draco cocked an eyebrow. “Sensitive?” He ran over to her and picked her up in his arms and spun her around. “You drive me mad woman,” he said looking up at her. “But by Merlin, I love you.”

“I love you too, Draco,” she said as he gently put her down.

“Always?” he asked.

“Till the end of time,” she said as she kissed his lips tenderly. “Now come on, we have a victory to celebrate.”

And so the couple walked through the huge wooden doors and were announced as Lord and Lady Malfoy as they walked down the stairs. At the bottom they greeted a few people and then made their way to the head table to sit with a few distinguish people, such as Crabbe and his fiancée, Faith Himsworth.

“Faith,” Angelina said indifferently.

“Angelina,” Faith said in the same tone. The two women still didn’t like each other much, but they

figure they had to at least pretend to tolerate the other.

“Oi,” Crabbe said as he dropped his head. He then looked back up at Draco. “We’ll catch up later okay, Dray?” Draco nodded his head and Crabbe lead Faith to the dance floor as he jokingly stated, “I can’t take you anywhere.” Faith lovingly smiled at him as she took his arm and he kissed her forehead.

“I’ll admit I don’t like her,” Angelina began. “But she’s good for him.”

“Yes, that’s all good and well,” Draco told her, “but I rather be talking about something else.”

“Oh,” she looked to him curiously, “like what?”

“Like what it’s going to take to get you out on that dance floor?”

She shook her head. “Nothing much, just tell me you love me.”

“Now?” he asked seriously.

Angelina then realized that saying it in public, where he could be heard, was completely different than saying it in private. “No, not now, but later.”

“Then you’ve got yourself a deal.” And the couple headed towards the dance floor, where they swayed to the music of the instruments playing on their own accord. The ballroom was lit with a warm glowing light; there was a cool breeze sweeping in from the opened stained-glass doors, and the night sky was so clear and crisp that you could make out every star in the sky.

The night passed by as Draco knew it would; the dinner was superb, the music enchanting, and his wife a vision of loveliness as they announced the coming of their second child.

It was down to the last hour of the celebration and Angelina and Draco were back on the dance floor entangled in each other’s arm. “Mind if I cut in?” Draco felt a tap on his shoulder and turned his head to see Percy.

Draco smiled at him, he had grown to tolerate Percy since the downfall of the Dark Lord. “Only if Tulip doesn’t mind.” He turned to her to get her response.

“I’d be happy to dance with you, Percival,” she told him as she put her hand to her stomach and then said to Draco. “You should go look for Vincent. You haven’t spoken to him since we greeted him earlier.”

“You’re right,” he said as he released her.

“Love you,” Angelina told him and she kissed him on the cheek. Draco noticed the look in her eyes that half hope that he would say it in return, but they both knew he wouldn’t and so she turned back to Percy before Draco went to go look for Crabbe.

Before Draco reached Crabbe he looked over his shoulder and saw Percy and Angelina discussing

something quite intensely as they danced with Angelina shaking her head back and forth. Draco found Crabbe back at the head table sitting as he was eating a slice of cake. "Where's Faith?" he asked him as he sat down.

"She just left for the ladies' room," he informed him and then said as he put down his fork and turned towards Draco. "Congratulation," he told him with a huge smile on his face. "It appears that are children will be growing up together."

Draco smiled at his friend. "You and Faith are expecting? How come you didn't tell me sooner?"

"I only just found out myself." Crabbe leaned back in seat and sighed contently. "We have all gone through so much, it's nice to have things going in our direction for once." He then said sadly, "Even if it is without Greg." The two then took a silent moment as they remembered a friend who would always be with them in spirit.

"Vincent?" Faith called as she approached and wrapped her arms around his neck. "Is everything alright?"

Crabbe tilted his head back and looked up at her as he rested his hand on top of hers. "Now that you're back love, everything's fine." He smiled and Faith smiled too.

She then looked up from Crabbe and had an expression on her face as if just now noticing Draco's presence. She smiled at him. "Has Angelina retired for the night?"

"No, not at all. She's still on the floor with-" he cut himself off as he looked over the dance floor. His forehead creased as he had a hard time picking her out among the people. He thought it should have been easy since she was dancing with someone who had hair that was noticeable where ever he went.

He then stood up casually, but his eyes frantically searched the ballroom. Angelina was no where to be seen and neither was Percy. *Even the most trusted ally, may take an ominous form.* "No," Draco whispered to himself.

"Dray, what is it?" Crabbe asked as he saw the expression on his friend's face.

"I don't see Angelina," he told him.

"Well then, she probably just sitting on the other side or headed towards the lady's room," Crabbe rationalized.

"No, I don't think so. I would have seen her on my way back," Faith commented.

"I'll be back." Draco walked around the table and walked across the dance floor to the other side of the room, hoping to find Angelina sitting down. He scanned the area once again, but still saw no trace of her or Percy.

"Crabbe!" He practically shouted once he stood before him. "Around up Lough and Lawson and few others. I want my wife found, *tonight*," he ordered.

Crabbe got to his feet as he realized this situation had turned serious. "Of course." He then turned to Faith. "I'll meet you at home," he told her and she nodded her head before picking up her purse and heading out.

As Crabbe did as he was told, something flashed into Draco's mind and to Crabbe surprise, he saw Draco break into a run and go up the stairs skipping two at a time. Draco ran out of the ballroom and down the hall. He then traveled up another set of stairs before busting into an unlock room. The candles gradually started to light as Draco slowly approached Rosalina's crib holding his breath.

As he stood before the crib he lowered his head and silently let out the breath he was holding. His daughter was still fast asleep. Draco then picked up his sleeping child and held her tight, so tightly that Rosalina woke up and started crying, upset at being disturbed.

It took Draco over half an hour before he was able to settle Rosalina back down. During that time, he heard several footsteps outside the door. He knew someone peeked their head in, but said nothing when they saw Draco with his daughter.

After Rosalina fell back to sleep, Draco lowered her back into her crib. He then went to the windows and locked them. He also locked the door before he left and made his way back to the ballroom, to get a status report from Crabbe.

When Draco arrived back at the ballroom. It was almost bare except for those who stayed to look for Angelina. He then saw Crabbe approach him. "Draco," he said slowly. "We should go back out into the hall."

Draco just looked at him. "Why?" But Crabbe said nothing as he had Draco follow him back up the stairs into the long hallway outside the ballroom. "Vincent, what did you find?" he asked as the two of them were now alone.

"We were able to search the entire castle. I also had the grounds outside of them searched as well." Crabbe then pursed his lips together.

"Vincent, what is it?" he asked solemnly and it was the first time, in all the years Crabbe had known Draco, that he saw fear in his eyes.

"This is all that was found." Something very familiar appeared on the side of Crabbe. Draco took the floating object within his hands. It was Angelina's holster, she had worn it everyday, even tonight, since she had received it from Lucius, who was still recovering for his wounds. Draco put his hand around the handle of the light blade. "Draco, don't," Crabbe warned.

But Draco didn't listen as he pulled out the blade and let the holster fall to the floor. He didn't drop it on purpose, but out of surprise, as the blade, Angelina had yet to use, was covered in blood.

Draco felt light headed, for the first time in over a month. He turned away from Crabbe as he braced his hand on the nearby wall and clung the dagger close to his chest and lowered his head. There then came the sound of shattering glass. Crabbe noticeably jumped at the sound. He turned away for Draco and

headed towards the sound which came from behind the huge wooden doors.

The doors opened and Crabbe was immediately hit with gust of strong wind. The once beautiful night sky had grown ugly as the winds picked up and dark rain clouds filled the sky. Lightning struck and hit a tree and it was set on fire.

Crabbe then heard the most horrifying, heart wrenching sound he had ever heard. It sounded like some wounded animal fighting for its life. He then turned around when he realized it was no animal, but Draco as he slowly slid to his knees, crying so loudly, Crabbe would have sworn it could be heard for miles around.

“ANGELINA!” Uncontrollable tears ran down Draco’s face as he felt his whole body ache as he screamed her name. It was as if someone had reached inside of his chest and wrapped their fingers around his still beating heart and ripped it out with no mercy. For she was his heart and she was now gone; he could feel it in the air he breathed, he could feel it in the tears he shed, he could feel it in the depths of his soul which were once complete.

How could he go back? He wondered. How could he go back to a life in the cold? How could he go back to being the mirror image of his father? How could he go back to a life without her love? But he knew he had to, at least for his daughter’s sake.

Draco told himself once he stood up, that would be it, he would not let her or the child they would of had plague his thoughts. If he was ever going to get through this, he had to put it out of his mind, because he knew if he didn’t. . . he didn’t want to think about what he would do.

If there was anything that Angelina was never able to get through it was Draco’s pride. He refused to let anyone know how much his wife’s sudden and strange disappearance hurt him. And so he slowly began to rise back to his feet, but he stopped midway through and opened his mouth to let out a silent cry as he fell back to his knees. How could he. . . how could he go back?

Draco still had his back to Crabbe as he cautiously drew near him. “Draco?” he said as he saw Draco gradually start to rise again. “Are you going to be alright?”

Draco then slowly turned towards Crabbe. His face was surprisingly dry and inexpressive. “Of course, I am. Why wouldn’t I be?” he asked calmly. Crabbe shivered at the unrecognizable dark empty eyes that looked through him. “Now if you’ll excuse me. I must make sure that the house elves know of the mess in the ballroom. And please inform the others that their presence is no longer required.” He turned on his heels and as he walked down the hall the lit troches extinguished themselves, covering Draco in darkness. Crabbe watched as his friend disappeared down the hall and sighed heavily as he realized that not one, but two souls died this night.

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But he knew she had, the tone of her voice had given her away. But he gave into her lies because of his need for her. But had they all been lies? Every loving glance? Every sweet word? Every tender kiss?

By Merlin, Draco didn't want to believe it so, but then came the news that the blood that covered the dagger the night Angelina "disappeared" was not her own, but Percy's. But if she was not the one wounded, why had she not returned to him. Maybe she couldn't, but then again. . .

"I'm taking you up on your offer. Like I should have done the first time."

. . . maybe she just didn't want to.

"Tell me Vincent, if she did leave me, do you think she returned to him. Weasley I mean, Fred?"

"No," Crabbe simply stated.

"Why not? I know she loved him," Draco said sadly. "More than me anyway."

Crabbe turned to his friend. He was the only one left privileged enough to see the real Draco. The sad, lonely, broken Draco, who had become a hollow man of his former self. Yet he met everyone else with a cold, hard, and sharp tongue demeanor, as if nothing effected him, as if nothing had changed. "No, I was with her the last time she saw Weasley. She loved you, that I know for sure. Besides, how can you return to a dead man?" Draco only looked at him curiously. "Weasley was the first to attack us when we were heading towards the east wing," Crabbe explained as he remembered how Draco's vision was that day.

"Then why would she leave me?" Draco asked himself as he stepped out onto the balcony outside of his study. "Why would she leave Rosalina?" They were questions he seem to ask himself everyday. He shook his head. "She wouldn't. Not on her own accord," He answered himself. "She promised she would never leave me. She promised."

"Draco, I don't want to leave you, but I will if it means you'll live. I need you to live."

Had he been in some kind of danger? Some danger he didn't know about? Some danger he was still in? That had to have been it; there was no other reason for her to leave him.

Because no matter how much Draco tired to convince himself that her I love you's were lies, he knew they weren't. Because there was no way, she could look at him the way she used to and not love him. So Draco knew she didn't come back because she was trying to protect him somehow, but from what or from whom he didn't know.

"Father?" Draco was pulled from his thoughts as his daughter's voice reached his ears. He was memorized by the setting sun he was watching from his balcony. This was always Angelina's favorite time of day, as he recalled how she use to stand by the patio door and watch the sunset on the estate of the Manor.

"Yes, child?" His voice was deadpan as his back was still to her. "What is it that you need?"

"Only to wish you a happy birthday, father," Rosalina told him. Draco then slowly turned around and looked upon his daughter. She was a beautiful little girl, of nine years old, with big bright eyes and fair brown skin. Her hair was in a wild, but presentable, array of curls. It was usually kept in a loose afro with a headband that matched her outfit, to keep her hair out of her face. She was dressed in the finest clothes, with elaborate embroidered designs and jewels from the heart of South Africa.

She was starting to look so much like her mother that it actually pained Draco whenever he had to look at her. "Come in, Rosalina," he told her for he knew she was standing by the doorway waiting for permission to enter the study. Draco walked back over to his desk and sat down; there were a few important documents he had to get through before the end of the day. "Well?" he asked as Rosalina stood before his desk, but said nothing. It was then that Draco noticed the box she was carrying.

Rosalina was looking down at it as if she was debating something over in her head. Draco smiled inwardly; it was one of the few moments where she actually looked like him. "I have a present for you," her voice was almost frightened. Draco forehead furrowed at the sound of her shaky voice.

Rosalina stood there with her hands close to her chest as she held the rectangle box she had wrapped herself. Finally she tilted her head up and just looked at her father. Her father was a King, a good King at that, most would even considered him a God because he was the most powerful of their kind. But being a good King didn't automatically mean he was good father. He was always busy and barely ever at home, leaving her in the hands of her Godfather, or a caretaker, or even a tutor on a few accounts.

But he tried, that she knew, but for some reason, for the longest time, she got the eerie feeling that he didn't like having her around. Like there was something about her that bothered him, but she knew better now. "Here," she said as she put the box on the table.

Draco took the box curiously and unwrapped it so gracefully that he didn't even tear the paper. As he opened the box and saw what was inside a frown marked his lips and his forehead creased once again. He turned to Rosalina and asked angrily. "Where did you get these?"

Frightened by her father's reaction, she took a stepped back. Rosalina had only been spanked once by her father, for disobeying him, and although she didn't mean to, it was still an experience she didn't want to repeat anytime soon. Though on that day she did learn something very valuable.

She had been seven years old and her father had actually taken her with him on one of his business trips. They had entered a banquet hall, which had a handful of people, and as they did Draco took her small hand. As they walked through he spoke without looking at her. "You are to be on your best behavior, which means seen and not heard. Understood?"

"Yes, father," she replied half paying attention as she took in her surroundings.

"Sit here." He escorted her to a table and sat her down. "Stay where I can see you." She nodded before he walked off saying something that that sounded a lot like. "Filthy Muggles. Damn Treaty."

Rosalina sat quietly with her hands folded in her lap as she watched her father discuss terms of a Treaty. She had recognized a few people, like Lough and Lawson, but the rest of the people where

strangers to her.

She jumped when she heard her father's voice boom at a word she had never heard before. She arched an eyebrow as she wondered what the word *Mutant* meant and why it had upset her father, who was trying to explain the difference between what they were, witches and wizards and this term mutant.

"Hello, little girl," said a man as he sat down next to Rosalina. Rosalina looked at him and politely nodded. "What's your name?" he asked with a smile.

"I'm not supposed to talk to strangers," she informed him.

"Well then, I must say that's a very wise choice," he told her. "So how about I introduce myself then?" he asked. "My name is Percy."

Rosalina glanced up to look at her father to ask for guidance, but he was still vividly auguring with a Muggle, so she looked back at the stranger. "I'm Rosalina, daughter of Lord Malfoy," she said proudly.

Percy laughed lightly. "Yes, I know." His blue eyes sparkled as he sighed. "I can't believe how much you look like your mother."

"My mother?" Rosalina's full attention was now on the man who sat beside her. "What do you know of my mother?" she asked with hopeful eyes. She had asked Draco once before how come she didn't have a mother like other children, but he said nothing as he retreated into himself. He then sent her to spend the week with her Godfather Crabbe, so she never brought it up again.

"I know a lot about your mother." Percy looked up at Draco to make sure he was still well distracted, but even if he did glance over by chance from his argument, the odds of him recognizing him were small. Percy had gotten rid of his trademark Weasley hair, it was now a dark rich shade of brown. He also no longer wore glasses and his face which had barely ever donned a smile when he was younger, now always carried one. His skin was also a nice golden brown from spending a lot of time in the sun. "Probably more than your dear father will ever know."

"Tell me about her," Rosalina demanded. "All I know is what my Godfather would tell me."

"And what was that?" he asked.

"That she died," she stated sadly. "In the last war." She looked back up at her father. "I think it's why he pushes so hard for peace."

"Tell me Rosalina, what would you say, if I told you your mother wasn't dead? And that you could see her?"

She turned to him suspiciously and said angrily. "I want you to go away. Now."

Percy smiled. "Yes, you are definitely your father's child." When Rosalina realized the stranger wasn't going to leave, she got up to move to a table occupied with other people who were watching the negotiation. So she was unaware of the wand secretly pointed in her direction. "*Imperio.*" Rosalina froze

where she stood and turned back to Percy. "Take my hand," he told her as he stood up and then started to walk her out of the banquet hall.

Rosalina knew what she was doing was wrong, she wasn't supposed to go with strangers, but she couldn't stop herself as she did what she was told. She wanted to scream, she wanted to fight, but found she could do nothing, but obey the stranger.

They were almost out the door when Draco finally calmed down to re-discuss the terms of the Treaty. By chance he glanced at the table where he had sat down Rosalina, only to find it empty. He then noticed the banquet room door being opened and saw the strange man who was holding his daughter's hand and leading her away.

Draco's heart jumped into his throat at the sight and thinking only that he had to get to his daughter, he leapt over table and sprinted clear across the room. He grabbed her roughly, picking her up in his arms. With Rosalina securely in his grasp, he looked up to the man who had tried to kidnap his daughter, but he Apparated before he could get a good look.

Draco's blood boiled as he set Rosalina back on the floor and stayed squatted before her with one hand on each arm. "What the hell were you doing?" he asked in a harsh whisper. Rosalina only blinked rapidly and shook her head. "What did I tell you?" he said through clenched teeth. "Didn't I tell you to stay put?" Rosalina said nothing and he shook her a little. "Huh?"

"Yes," she said in a tiny voice almost on the verge of tears.

Draco rose quickly as Lough came up by his side. "My Lord is everything alright?"

"That is none of your concern," Draco spat before saying calmly. "Now I must tend to my daughter, I pray you and Lawson can handle the rest of the negotiations." Before Lough could even respond Draco had Apparated with Rosalina.

A moment later they were back at home and Draco had a belt in hands. He told her to turn around and she wordlessly complied. She had been spanked before, but it usually came from a certain caregiver, so she was completely unprepared for her father's strength as she felt the hot sting of the belt on her backside. And if that wasn't enough, Draco yelled at her loudly as he whipped her. He had struck her ten times before he let the belt fall lazily from his hand as it turned red and throb from holding the belt so tightly.

Rosalina, with her back still to him, shook uncontrollably in her pain. She wanted to show her father that she was strong and that she would not cry out, so she blinked back her tears as she felt her father rest on his knees before turning her around.

Her eyes widened as she saw tears in her father's eyes and watched them run down his face. "Don't you ever-" his voice broke, "ever do anything like that again. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, father," she continued to shake.

"No, you don't!" he yelled. "I can't lose you like I lost *her* and I won't," he told her as he pulled her tightly

into his arms. "Do you know how badly you scared me today?" Draco asked. "What if I hadn't gotten to you in time? You don't know what he would have done to you."

"Would you even care?" she softly asked, still holding her tears at bay.

"What?" He slightly pushed her away and looked into his daughter's gray eyes. "My Little Rose, don't you know how much I love you?"

Rosalina looked back and forth into his eyes. "You- you love me?" she asked. Rosalina had known what love was, she saw it all the time when she went to visit her Godfather Crabbe and his family. They always looked so happy that it made Rosalina sick with jealousy. Crabbe was always smiling and always playful with his wife Faith and their sons, Greg and Jacob. Sometime Rosalina wished that her father was more like Crabbe instead of always so distant.

"Yes," he stated firmly. "Of course I do. More than you'll ever know." He wiped away the tears that finally raced down her cheeks.

Rosalina threw her arms around him. "I love you too, father." It was the first time they had ever said those words to each other and they would most likely be the last, because there was no reason in stating something that was already known. Her father loved her and that was all she ever really wanted to know.

But right now, as his eyes bore into her, she wasn't quite feeling that love. "Answer me Rosalina. Where did you get these?" Draco asked again. "And do not lie."

Rosalina didn't know why she was so surprised by his actions. She knew she had disobeyed him and that she would have to answer for it. "I found them in that locked room on the fourth floor. The one you told me never to go into."

"Alright," he said calmly. "Now tell me why you violated my rules?"

"I don't know," she said honestly. Something had told her to enter the room; something had pulled her to a certain spot and told her to do this. It was almost like that time with that strange man she had met. She didn't tell her father about the voice that had been in her head. Now then and not now, because she was sure he would have thought her crazy.

Rosalina then watched Draco sigh as he pulled out a packet of photos, that for him seemed like they were taken a lifetime ago. A soft smile then appeared on his face as he flipped through them.

Rosalina continued to look at him curiously. His face looked very foreign to her, because it was rare that he had allowed her to see him smile. She then stepped closer and leaned on his chair and looked on as he continued through the photos. She recognized herself, there were plenty of portraits of her around the castle. But the woman in the matching dress, she couldn't quite place. "Was she one of my caretakers?" Draco stopped immediately at the question and looked at his daughter. "I'm sorry, did I say something wrong?" she asked as she backed away.

"No, of course not," Draco said with a gentleness that was also foreign to her. "Come here." He pulled

her into his lap and then showed her a photo. "This is-" he stopped; it had been years since he had said her name. "This is Angelina, your mother."

"My mother?" Rosalina cautiously took the photo into her small hands and stared at it intensely. The stranger had been right; she did look a lot like her. Maybe he wasn't lying; maybe her mother was still out there somewhere.

"Yes," he nodded as he answered her question.

"What happened to her?" Rosalina asked carefully, hopping this time to get the story from her father and not her Godfather.

"She died, when you were just a baby," he told her slowly, it was a fact he wasn't really sure of himself, but he felt ashamed that he never allowed his own child to be able to recognize her own mother. "Know that she was strong, loving, and very devoted to both of us."

Rosalina looked at her father's sorrow felt face, there was so much emotion in him as he looked upon the photo still in her hands. Her father wouldn't lie to her, Rosalina concluded, so if he said she was dead then it had to be true. The stranger was a liar. "Do you miss her?" she asked.

"Like the desert misses the rain," he answered her sadly and held her closer. "But she left me with a precious child. One who looks more like her with every passing year." He smiled at her.

"Father." Rosalina reached for the box that was still on the table. "Don't forget the other gift. Draco reached back into the box and pulled out a book. "I couldn't open it," she told him. "But something told me it was important." She accidentally let slip.

"It is." Draco smiled before whispering a small chant. "Here, now try." He handed it to Rosalina.

She opened the book warily and looked confused as she saw the book wasn't really a book, but a box disguised to look like one. "I don't understand." She looked at her father. "Why would you keep sand?"

"Have you been practicing your Summoning charm?" he asked as he laid the book on the desk.

She nodded her head with delight. "Yes."

"Then how about a demonstration?" From what Draco had learned from Rosalina's tutors she was very gifted with wandless magic and he doubted if she would even need a wand when she began school. "Go on now," he urged her. "It's only one object."

And so she rolled up her sleeve and stretched out her hand towards the book. She had a serious look on her face, determined to please and impress her father. "*Accio!*" she said strongly and a delicate soft object flew into her hand. "It's a yellow flower," she said as she shook the remaining sand off of it. "I still don't understand."

Draco took the flower from his daughter's hand. "It's a tulip," he explained as he put it to her nose to

“Kick what?” he asked.

The little girl groaned. “The air, stupid.”

“Hey, stop with the name calling,” he demanded. “I’m not stupid.”

“Hey, I call them as I see them.” The little girl then began kicking her legs back and forth and she swung higher into the air. “Now come on, swing with me.” Draco tried imitating her actions, but he couldn’t quite pull it off. She was taller than him and she was able to gain momentum by using the ground. “Stop,” she told him. “Before you hurt yourself.” Her swing slowed to a stop and she got off. She stood behind him and grab each side of his swing. “I’m going to push you up and when I let go, that’s when you start swinging, okay?”

“Yes,” he confirmed before he felt her lift him up into the air and he followed her instructions. She got back on her swing and before long the two were in sync with each other as they swung back and forth. After a few minutes Draco turned his head towards her. “Want to play something else?” he asked.

The girl looked to him, baffled by his question. It wasn’t often that someone *willingly* wanted to play with her. “Sure,” she said happily. “Come on, there are tons of stuff we can do,” she told him as she slowed down her swing enough just to jump off of it. “Try it!” she encouraged him.

“No, I like my skull in one piece, thank you,” he told her as he let his swing stop on its own and then hopped off. “What can we do now?” he asked.

“Come on.” She grabbed his hand and dragged him all around the playground. They played on the monkey bars, the merry-go-round, the titter-tatter, and climbed a few trees before they sat down at the edge of playground in a sandbox.

Draco was making a little sandcastle with some of the toys that had been left in the sandbox, when he looked up to see what his playmate was doing. “What’s your name?” he asked as he realized he didn’t know it.

“I’m Angelina,” she told him, not looking up from her own project.

“I’m Draco,” he said proudly. “Draco Malfoy.”

Angelina looked up and smiled at him. “Thanks for playing with me.”

Draco smiled, thinking maybe he should have been the one thanking her. “What are you doing?” He pointed to what she was holding in her hands.

“This?” She held it up. “Oh nothing, just something I’m going to put on my head. You know, like a halo.”

“Oh.” He then went back to his sandcastle. “What are you making it out of?” He asked, honestly just trying to make conversation.

“Some of the flowers I saw when we were in the wood climbing trees.” She then went back to her creation as she hummed. “There,” she said once she was done and placed her homemade crown on her head. “What do you think?”

Draco looked at her and smiled wide. “You look stupid.”

“Thanks,” she said sarcastically before she walked on her knees over to him. “Here, I had one left over.” She held up a yellow flower and as she lifted her hand to gently place it behind his left ear, she accidentally brushed his cheek. Draco, not used to being touched so softly, recoiled slightly, but it went unnoticed by Angelina. “Now you’re perfect. . . just like me,” she beamed.

“Nonsense,” he lifted his hand and readjusted the flower, “my mother always tells me I’m perfect. The perfect heir.”

“That’s only because she’s your mum.” Angelina then looked around. “I bet that’s her right there.” She pointed to the blonde headed woman. “The one reading the love story. My mum reads them too.”

Draco looked to whom she was pointing towards, suppressing his urge to let her it wasn’t polite to point. “Yes, that’s my mother,” he told her. “But what’s a love story?” he asked.

Angelina looked at him strangely and explained simply. “A story, you know a book, were people are in love.”

“Yes, I know what a story is,” he said annoyed, but then asked curiously, “but what’s love?” Truly not knowing what it was. He really didn’t have an example of it at home and he had never actually heard the word before.

“You know, it’s love,” she said. Only being ten years old, she didn’t really know how to explain it. “You know, love.” She watched as Draco just shook his head. “Okay,” she drawled as she tried to think of a way to explain, not even questioning why, he didn’t know what it was. “Love it like, when you care for someone and you want to see them everyday, like your mum and dad.” Draco arched an eyebrow. He certainly didn’t see his parents everyday and days that he did see them, there wasn’t a lot of interaction between them. . . like today for instance. “Love is like, when you like someone a whole lot.”

“I like you,” Draco blurted out.

Angelina giggled. “I like you too.”

“Does that mean we’re in love?” he asked.

“No, I don’t think so,” she said as she thought hard about it. “I think for two people to love each other, who aren’t in the same family, it needs time to grow into love.” She shrugged. “I guess.”

Draco ran his fingers absentmindedly through the sand. “Then do you think with time-”

“Angelina!” Draco was interrupted as a woman was calling his playmate. “Angelina, it’s time to go home.”

Angelina stood up and dusted the sand off her clothes. "Well, I got to go. Maybe we can play next time we see each other." She stepped out of the sandbox and started walking to the other side of the playground where her mother waited for her.

"Wait!" she heard Draco call after her. She turned around to see what he wanted. He looked a little embarrassed. "Do you think, if we had time, that you could love me?" he asked curiously.

Angelina laughed at him. "What a silly question." Which she regretted saying right away as she saw Draco kind of sink into himself as he lowered his head. "But I guess, if we did have time, that I could." As Draco lifted his head back up she smiled at him. She then heard her mother call for her again and so she turned to leave, but Draco took her hand, stopping her once more.

"Would it be for always?" he whispered softly as his eyes seem to plead with hers.

Angelina looked at the strange boy, who didn't know how to use a swing, who did know what love was, and she smiled softly before saying what she always heard her mother tell her father, "Yes, it would be till the end of time."

Draco looked at her quizzically as she let go of his hand and he watched her walk away. A second later he could hear his own mother calling his name and so he started walking towards her. As he did he pulled the flower that Angelina had given him out of his hair and tossed it to ground, but a moment later he stopped and turned around to go pick it up. He smiled softly as he brought the flower up to his nose and took in its fragrance. He then heard his mother call for him again before putting the flower back behind his ear and heeding to her call thinking to himself that he would never forget this day.

Who knew that on a faithful sunny day, that a chance meeting between two lonely children would take place, and that a little girl would plant a seed of hope into a little boy before his father could take a hold of him and turn his soul into a deserted wasteland to match his own?

Who knew that despite the little boy's upbringing that he would believe in something, that in his family, seemed as farfetched as the fairy tales he used to read to himself? Who knew that a little boy living in a world where all he knew was hate and malice would believe in the sayings of a little girl he met so long ago? And who knew that this little girl would return to him a woman and that the seed she planted once upon a time would grow, and that a flower in the desert, would bloom through the sand?

THE END