

The Voice

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Pairing: Draco/Harry

Rating: PG

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Summary: Harry has been sleeping for a long time, one voice pulls him back.

Author's Notes: Thanks to my sister who gave this the once over for me as usual. I don't really know where this one came from, but I was lying in bed last night and it would not leave me alone until I wrote it down.

The voice had been almost a constant source of stimulation for what seemed like forever, but only as he drifted just below proper consciousness did he recognise it. It was Draco's voice and his lover was reading to him. Once he realised this he began to fight to wake up, but it was like he was pushing against a great weight that would not let him rise. He began having flashes of feeling, hands touching him, spells running over his body and gentle kisses, but it was the voice that kept him battling against the darkness. What Draco was saying was not usually clear; only odd words came through most of the time, but the sounds pulled him on, closer and closer to the real world.

Sometimes he was afraid, alone in the half world that kept him trapped, but Draco's voice always broke through his fear and drew him on. There was a way out, there had to be and he had never been one to give up. Draco was calling for him, waiting for him, and he could not leave his lover alone forever. When he was too tired to fight and the world faded completely it was the memory of Draco's voice which held him safe, and it was always there when he was ready for the battle again.

When he finally managed to hear it properly it was the sweetest sound and it was almost more than he could bear. The words flowed over him, their meaning unimportant as every syllable was clear and bright and he knew he had finally broken out of his grey prison. The bed beneath him felt soft and warm and he thought he could feel the sun on his face, but Draco's calm tones were what eventually drew him to open his eyes.

At first it hurt as light stabbed at his retinas, and he knew that it had been a long time since he had really seen anything, but opening his eyes for just a few moments and then squeezing them tight shut again, over and over, slowly allowed him to see. He was in a bright sunny room that he did not recognise, in a large ornate bed that was also unfamiliar, and the voice was still speaking. Turning his head slowly he looked to the side and there was a book sitting there with a book mark slowly moving across the open page. As the marker moved Draco's voice read the words and with a growing sense of loss he realised he was alone.

His body felt lethargic, but his muscles were not stiff or out of condition which is what he had expected. As he slowly sat up he felt the traces of spells running through his body as they released the hold they had had, keeping him supple even though he knew he had been lying still for a long time. He was covered only

by a light sheet that pooled around his waste, revealing the traces of written charms on his chest and arms. He did not recognise the magic employed on his body, but as he watched, the runes faded as if they knew they were no longer required.

The table that held the book also held a beautiful potted rose, his wand and his glasses, almost as if he had just been asleep for a night. This was Draco's doing; he knew it without a doubt, and feeling the sudden need to find his lover he reached out for both his personal items. With the glasses on his nose the room came into sharp focus and he had to blink several times as the change in perception caused some disorientation.

His muscles may not have been atrophied, but they did not like moving as much as they once had and his arms shook as he manoeuvred himself to the side of the bed. He felt weak and had to sit with his feet on the floor for a few moments before he decided he could stand. Absently he noticed that his nails were neatly manicured as he used the bed post to pull himself to his feet. He almost sat down again straight away as the room span and his legs trembled.

Taking long deep breaths he clung to the post as if his life depended on it and eventually the nausea and weakness passed. He felt like he had never walked in his life before, but at least he could stand. The next problem was that he was naked and there had to have been a warming spell on the bed because the air in the room was quite cold. There was a robe on the back of the closed door, and as he looked around he could see that the room appeared almost like a normal bedroom. With a start of surprise he realised that this was not a sick room; someone else lived here as well and if the taste of the robe was anything to go by it was Draco.

Not quite sure what this meant he pushed himself off the post and half walked, half stumbled to the door. How long had he been asleep? The room appeared well lived in and he had the distinct impression that he had been looked after by his lover for a long time.

Standing still while pulling the robe around his shoulders was not easy as his legs complained, but the longer he stood, the more compliant his muscles seemed to be and he held firm. He would not be running anywhere in the near future, but with a warm, silky robe covering his nakedness and warmth flowing back into his limbs (it was just like Draco to have a robe with a warming spell built in), his confidence improved. The book had stopped reading as soon as he moved from the bed, but the way so much of the room spoke to him of his lover, the loss he had felt at being alone began to melt away.

He needed to find him, and he needed to find him now.

Slipping his wand into his pocket he reached for the door handle and virtually fell into the corridor. His legs were no longer about to give out, but tripping over his own feet still seemed to be a problem. The first thing he caught sight of as he righted himself was a portrait of a tall blond woman he did not recognise, but the bone structure and white blond hair were unmistakable. He had no doubt he was in Malfoy manor, a place he had never managed to visit with the war going on. The woman looked at him in surprise and then smiled at him.

"You woke up," she said brightly, "ooh, I have to be the first to tell Lucius, he'll spontaneously combust."

Then she was gone in a furl of robes before he could ask her anything. For a moment he panicked at the idea of Lucius Malfoy charging down the corridor towards him and then he remembered that Lucius was dead; the woman must have been talking about his family portrait. That made him smile; he had no doubt that Draco's father would not relish his sentient presence in his ancestral home.

Pulling himself into an upright stance he took another steadying breath and began to walk in what he hoped was the right direction. He didn't remember Draco ever mentioning that the manor changed shape in the same way Hogwarts did, but as he stumbled along he began to feel that maybe the building was conspiring against him. It seemed to take forever before he heard the familiar tones he had been searching for. Draco's voice was dim thanks to bouncing off walls and round corners, but it was definitely his lover and he quickened his pace, desperate to find the reality of his link to the real world.

Stumbling onto a landing he realised he was at the head of the main stairs and he could hear Draco somewhere at the bottom. The need to reach his lover was suddenly all he understood and he grabbed quickly for the banister rail, hoping desperately that he would not kill himself on the way down. The fact that he could hear other people below as well did not matter; what Draco was saying did not matter; all he could think about was the sounds that had drawn him from his prison and he wanted to touch the source of those sweet syllables.

He almost fell about halfway down, but he caught himself using the banister and he managed to control himself enough to slow down. Falling in a heap with a broken neck at the bottom of the stairs was not going to help him reach his lover. He could see into the main reception room from here and there were people standing all around looking to the corner furthest away from him. None of them mattered as his eyes settled on the one person he needed to see; the owner of the voice that had saved him from oblivion.

Draco was speaking to the gathering, a glass of champagne in one elegant hand, and the expression on his lover's face was a mixture of joy and sadness. He could not really hear the words; didn't need to understand what Draco was saying; all he wanted was to touch, but as he reached the bottom of the staircase he knew his legs would not hold him without the support of the banister. Walking down steps had been far more difficult than stumbling along corridors and his knees needed time to adjust, so he stood and looked across those gathered to the man he loved.

He remembered Draco being eighteen, barely out of school, but the man on the other side of the room was no longer boyish. Draco did not appear more than twenty two or twenty three, but that was still a long time to have slept, such a long time to have wasted. He wanted to go to his lover, wanted to hold him, but as he tried his knees shook, forcing him back to the banister rail.

Calling out seemed so wrong; to interrupt the flow of that beautiful voice would have been criminal, but the decision was taken out of his hands. As grey eyes scanned the room they looked beyond the gathered guests and fixed firmly on him. Draco's mouth stopped moving in mid word and the fine crystal champagne flute slipped from his fingers, smashing with the sound of a hundred tiny bells as it hit the floor.

People were turning to see what had caused their host's sudden silence, but they were not important. Almost before the murmuring could begin Draco spoke again, one whispered word that cut across the whole room: "Harry."

It was the one thing he had always understood, the one thing that had never been distant even when he drifted so deep that he could barely tell that the voice was speaking to him at all; his name on the lips of the man he loved and it reached for him now. As he tried to move towards the source Draco pushed past those between them, running for him, and then there were strong arms around him, holding him up.

"Harry," his lover said quietly as he pulled him close, "Harry."

There were tears in the words and he reached out to brush them away. Nothing mattered, nothing at all, not now that he had found the source of his salvation.

"I heard you," he whispered.

The End