Death and Taxis

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by NerosDad

Chapter 1: The Premis

Chapter Summary

This is a story I wrote in 2024 - one of my first attempts at Fanfiction.

It is a Reaper28 challenge story - a Time Travel fixit with Harry sent back to sort his life out.

"Don’t Fear the Reaper" challenge, by fanfiction.net user Reptilia28

"STORYLINE:

1. Harry is killed at 17 during the fight with Voldemort. He's sent to his Death's office (explained later) and finds out that this isn't the first time that this has happened.

2. Harry's Death (who can have a human name) is mad at his arrival. Apparently, people dying before their time is a black mark on the various Deaths' records, and Harry is getting perilously close to getting this particular one fired.

3. When Harry asks what was supposed to have happened, Death goes off on a rant saying how he was supposed to have killed Voldemort, found his soulmate ("Some Granger girl…") and lived to be a centennial age. But since Harry keeps getting into life-threatening situations for one reason or another, he keeps dying before that happens. Harry is surprised about the soul mate part.

4. Death gives Harry a paper to sign that allows him to retain his memories (the previous times, he wasn't given this option for some reason). Harry is deposited to a previous time of the writer's choosing.

5. Eventually, Harry gets it right. He kills Voldemort, gets the girl, and lives to a ripe old age of whatever. And Death doesn't get fired.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Harry must have died at least three times before this one
2. The memory keeping contract must be included
3. Death must refer to Hermione as "some Granger girl" when Harry's soul mate turns up in his rant
4. Obviously, must be H/Hr
5. Have fun

OPTIONAL:

Dumbledore's manipulations can be a factor in Harry's premature demises.

------oooOOOooo------

This is the closest I can find to the original challenge, It’s long gone as far as I know. I am not going to stick rigidly to it but I am using it a *guidelines* more than perhaps *rules.*

So my adopted version of the challenge is more like this:

- Harry has died on many previous occasions.
- DEATH* is fed up with this, the *Auditors of Reality** are complaining about the redo’s’
- DEATH* doesn’t do rants. He is DEATH*. He is final.
- Harry is returned, with memories and skills, and so is Hermione.
- Harry and Hermione spend some time learning and training in DEATH’s* domain, prior to returning. This occurs ‘off-camera’ and may get described in flashbacks.

*My version of DEATH comes from Terry Pratchet’s Discworld and he delegates looking after Harry and Hermione to his Granddaughter Susan Sto-Helit. Apologies if I don’t get the character of Susan bang on, my Discworld books went to charity shops a long time ago, and I am working from memory. This allows me to take some huge liberties in Potter canon, and hopefully write something fun.

I haven’t classified this as a crossover, as I think I am too far off the mark with the Discworld Stuff.

Chapter 2: Prologue

Harry died for the first time when Sirius's enchanted motorcycle failed over the Peak District as Hagrid ferried him to the Dursley's and the pair plummeted to their deaths into the ruins of Peveril Castle, ironically the seat of one of Harry's distant ancestors.

He died for the second time when Dudley pushed him down the family stairs aged three and he broke his neck tripping over his oversized shoes and jeans.

His third death came aged four, he dropped the eggs he was frying for Vernon's breakfast, and Petunia hit him with the frying pan, his head crashing back onto the hob and his untreated brain bleed killed him during the night as he laid unconscious in the cupboard under the stairs.

He died for a fourth time in the chamber of secrets, Dumbledore was using Fawkes to collect his order of lemon drops and Harry and Ginny were both lunch for the Basilisk. Followed by Ron and Gilderoy Lockhart, the creature then rampaged through the school killing almost everyone on the grounds.

His fifth death came from misfortune. Having been kissed by Hermione following their rescue of Sirius, and getting a spectacularly long goodbye snog from his now girlfriend as they separated in the drop off zone at King's Cross Station, he was walking towards the Dursleys on cloud nine oblivious to the worries of the world around him, directly into the path of a London Transport Bus.

His Sixth death was during the Triwizard Tournament, he was facing off against the horntail, he grabbed his Firebolt and leapt into the air and straight into a plume of fire followed by the dragon's jaws closing around his head and chest.

His Seventh death was at the hands of Bellatrix Lestrange, he attacked as she tortured Hermione, she slit Hermione's throat from ear to ear and as Harry collapsed to his knees in grief, she hit him with an organ dissolving curse and he died in agony a few minutes later

Eight times was the charm, tired, defeated and convinced his death was required to end Voldemort, he walked into the forest and stood passively and accepted his fate as Voldemort fired an Avada Kedavra at him, Voldemort then decided to cut his head off to display to the world making the death rather more permanent.

Chapter 3: Death and Taxis

Chapter Notes

Death's voice is in Capitals because that's how Sir Terry Pratchett wrote it.

Imagine James Earl Jones reading the words....

Harry sat up, his head no longer hurt, and the bruises and cuts were no longer bothering him. He stood and looked around the clearing. Tommy boy and his Death Munchers were all gone. There was a body, missing a head; he didn't recognize it. There was a slight mist enveloping the trees around the clearing and as he looked around, a shadow formed into a horse and rider entering the clearing.

"HARRY POTTER, WHY HAVE YOU DIED AGAIN, THIS IS BECOMING RATHER DREARY." The rider dismounted from the large white horse, and pulling a nosebag from one of its saddle bags set the horse to eat. "LUNCHTIME BINKY, I SHALL NOT BE LONG HERE."

Harry regarded the figure with some puzzlement. It was tall, perhaps eight feet, and wore an all-encompassing black cloak; its face was completely in shadow, and try as he might he could not fix any of its features in his mind. "Excuse me, but who are you?" he asked, although he had a pretty solid idea.

"I AM DEATH, I DON'T USUALLY COVER THIS AREA BUT MY ASSISTANT MORT IS TAKING HIS DRIVING TEST TODAY, SO I AM COVERING THIS PATCH. YOU KEEP DYING LORD POTTER, YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DIE YET, IT IS IRRITATING HOW MUCH PAPERWORK YOU CAUSE, CAN YOU NOT SIMPLY FULFIL YOUR PROFECY AND LIVE THE LIFE THE FATES HAD IN STORE FOR YOU. THE NUMBER OF RESETS YOU HAVE HAD IS AN EMBARASSMENT."

"Oh, excuse me! I am *SO* sorry for getting killed. I *must* try harder. Perhaps if I wasn't a fucking teenager trying to fight the world's scariest fucking dark warlock without a fucking clue, I might do a bit fucking better!" Harry was more than a trifle pissed off at the figure. He also assumed he was dead, so what was the worst that could happen.

"Language, Harry James Potter; there is no need for that sort of profanity, no matter what has occurred." Harry spun around to see Hermione behind him. He threw his arms around her and hugged his best friend as if his life depended upon it.

"Hermione. I am so glad to see you. I thought I was dead for a minute there." He smiled at her.

“YOU ARE DEAD, YOU BOTH ARE. LADY POTTER DIED SHORTLY BEFORE YOURSELF. SHE WAS KILLED BY YOUR FALSE FRIEND. I THINK PERHAPS THIS TIME I SHALL SEND YOU BOTH BACK AS A TEAM, PERHAPS YOU WILL REACH YOUR DESTINIES TOGETHER, SINCE YOU APPEAR INCAPABLE OF ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE ON YOUR OWN.” Death turned back to Binky and removed the nose bag, placing a bucket of water that appeared from somewhere on the floor in front of the horse and putting the nose bag back into the saddlebag.

Harry had turned to face Death once more *(how many times had his life story held that phrase?)*, his arm around Hermione’s waist, “What do you mean we are both dead? False friend? I don’t understand,” his voice tailed off.

“I BELIEVE THIS CONVERSTATION REQUIRES A BISCUIT OR TWO AND A CUP OF TEA. WE SHALL RECONVENE IN MY GARDEN. BINKY, IF YOU ARE READY?” The horse whinnied the affirmative, and Death whirled on the spot, his scythe reaping both of the teenagers in a moment.

The clearing disappeared and Harry found himself standing in a pretty cottage garden. The sky, however, was wrong in so many ways. It was pitch black and a huge ringed planet with swirling clouds of orange and red over its surface dominated a third of the sky. Hermione’s arms closed around his waist. He squeezed hers and looked at her, “Are we dead?”

“I don’t know. I don’t understand this. I was in the Chamber of Secrets, with Ron, we were collecting Basilisk fangs, and he kissed me. I pushed him away and told him to behave, that I didn’t have feelings like that for him anymore, that I thought I loved you, and he stabbed me with one of the fangs. He called me a mudblood whore. He said if he couldn’t have me, then he would make damned sure you never did. I thought he was our friend.”

“HE WAS A FALSE FRIEND. YOU HAVE MUCH TO UNDERSTAND. PLEASE TAKE A SEAT, HAVE SOME TEA, ENJOY A BISCUIT. PERSONALLY, I LIKE A HOBNOB, BUT I WILL UNDERSTAND IF YOU PREFER A LESSER BISCUIT.” He motioned towards a cast iron table and chair set for four people and covered with a blue and white gingham tablecloth, with a tea pot, cups and saucers and a plate of selected biscuits. “SUSAN, COULD YOU TAKE OVER AND EXPLAIN TO OUR GUESTS WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM, I HAVE TO RETURN TO WORK. DEATH AND TAXIS WAIT FOR NO MAN.” The figure picked up a biscuit and with a nod to the teenagers walked away and faded from view.

“Isn’t it taxes?”

“I don’t know, have you ever tried to get a black cab to wait?”

“Hello, Harry and Hermione Potter, isn’t it?” A tall, slim, young yet stern looking woman—she had white hair with a black stripe down the centre, walked over and sat herself at the table. “Please join me, we shall be a while, and time does not matter here, especially to ones such as you.”

“Why did you call me Hermione Potter?”

“I am sorry, Lady Potter, if you prefer.”

“I am Hermione Granger, I think if I had married Harry I might remember.”

“No, almost certainly you would not, I think you have married him at least twice, I am fairly sure you were carrying his child in your death before last.”

Hermione gave the woman a particularly hard stare. For some reason Harry thought of marmalade sandwiches. They sat at the table. “Excuse me, but who are you, where are we, what in the name of all things holy is going on?” Hermione was very close to swearing. Almost a blue-letter day, Harry thought.

“All in good time. Drink some tea, have a biscuit, relax. We really do have all the time in eternity to discuss this, better to be calm and rational, and GRANDFATHER is not usually generous with the Hobnobs.”

Harry picked up a biscuit, “Without being rude, who are you?”

“I am Susan Sto-Helit. I am also DEATH’s granddaughter. I look after the office admin side of reaping for the old boy. Make sure Binky gets fed, and of course sort out the mess my father MORT makes—busy but never dull.” She dunked a hobnob, and gleefully bit the biscuit. “Truly the Spartan Warrior of biscuits: no measly digestive. You can dunk them and they are steadfast.” She dunked it again, “Lord and Lady Potter, you have been killed once more, and since you Lord Potter are a subject of both destiny and a prophecy, we shall have to send you back, *again*, to attempt to fulfill the prophecy, and perhaps this time live to your full lifespan, somewhere in the one hundred and seventies, with your soul mate at your side, given your rather haphazard results so far, I think sending you both back would be in order.”

“Excuse me, ‘soul mate’?” Hermione asked.

“Yes, Lady Potter, you are soul mates, your lives and destinies have been diverted and blocked by Albus Dumbledore. He was once a champion of justice and light. However, age and hubris, his belief that only he knows the correct answer, and if he does not know the answer, then there is no solution, have turned him away from the path destiny requires. He believes that you must follow the path he has laid out in order for Riddle to be defeated; sadly, his meddling has complicated this task beyond measure.”

“But wouldn’t we know if we were soul mates, wouldn’t we feel more for each other, wouldn’t we?” Susan held a finger up to Hermione, and with a wiggle of her fingers at the two of them, an icy flush dropped though them, leaving them dizzy for a few seconds.

“Tea, biscuits. Drink. Eat.” Susan instructed. They drank a cup of tea and ate another biscuit as instructed. “Lord Potter, Harry if I may. What do you feel about Ginevra Weasley?”

“She’s OK, I like her, she looks a lot like my mum, and she used to be a bit of a fan-girl for the whole boy-who-lived stuff.”

“So, not wife material then?”

“Oh, heavens no; that would be all sorts of wrong, she is Ron’s sister, she is more like a sister to me than anything.”

“What about Ronald Weasley?”

“He is a jealous, bitter, petty minded git. I honestly was glad to see the back of the whining, farting snore factory when he left the tent. I think he missed mummy cooking for him.”

“Lady Potter, Hermione, how do you feel about Ronald?”

“He disgusts me. I only tolerate him because he is Harry’s friend. He has no table manners; it is like sitting in front of a blender, and his breath is appalling. I thought we were friends, but he murdered me.”

“What do you think of Harry?”

She smiled, “I love him, I have loved him for as long as I can remember, he saved my life from a troll. He read to me every night while I was petrified. I dream about marrying him and having his babies, we flew on the Hippogriff to save Sirius and we kissed and my heart exploded, I was so happy….” Her voice drifted away. “We kissed on the platform, what happened?”

Harry was sat staring at Hermione, “Harry, tell Hermione what you feel about her.”

“Hermione, you are my anchor, my compass. You are the only reason life is bearable for me. Every summer I could survive Durskaban because I knew in September, I would get a Hermi-hug at Kings Cross and everything would be better. I love you more than life itself. When Bellatrix killed you in front of me, I did not want to live; I gave up. I would rather die with you than live without you. Why have I never told you this before? I can summon the courage to tackle a Basilisk with a sword, but not to ask the girl I love, who I have always loved, to be my girlfriend?” Harry turned to Susan. “What is happening?”

She pointed to the cups, “Drink. I removed the compulsion spells from you and flushed any remaining potions. Dumbledore has potioned you both with loyalty potions to him, Ronald and Molly Weasley. Hermione was given a low level of love potion towards Ronald, and some repulsion potions to you Harry, to prevent you forming a relationship. Harry, you were originally being potioned towards Ginevra, she decided that she wanted a real relationship, and intercepted them on your behalf, she may not have known about Ronald’s efforts. He engineered the argument and left the tent to pick up fresh potion stocks, he did not expect you to have moved.” She ate another biscuit. “Please indulge me, give Hermione a kiss, it will spark off your bond and clear out anything the flushing missed.” Harry turned to Hermione, and they leaned into each other, hesitating, and then Hermione pulled Harry’s head in and they kissed. It was clumsy at first, tentative, and awkward, but as they kissed it became softer, gentle, sensual. Harry could feel his body reacting to the feel of Hermione’s lips, to the essence of her magic as it wrapped around him. “Aaaaand break. You can finish what you have just started later, you have long lives in front of you, and we have plans to make.”

The couple broke their kiss and sat staring into each other’s eyes. Hermione was flushed and her breathing fast. Harry looked like a rabbit caught in headlights, his goofy grin made

Hermione smile. “Wow. Hermione. Just wow.” She beamed, and kissed him again, just for a few seconds. They turned back to face Susan. Hermione slipped her arms around Harry and pulled him tight to her.

“So how is that attraction going now, Hermione?” Susan asked over her teacup, raising her eyebrows as her hair swapped from the bun it had been in to a French plait.

“I think I agree with Harry, wow. That is how love should feel. I can feel his magic around me, it loves me, I feel loved. This is what we should have had for years. I think I hate Albus Dumbledore.”

“That is a good starting point, Hermione. Harry, since you are sitting looking as if you have had a minor stroke, I can assume you are happy as well?”

Harry blinked and a smile spread across his face. “Very happy. If Hermione is with me, I don’t need or want anything else. I don’t know if I really want to go back; perhaps eternity with Hermione is a better option.”

Susan cocked her head slightly, “Sorry, Hero; you have a destiny, and your children are also important to the future, I can clearly remember the impact your eldest made on the magical world. I can’t tell you what, of course—no spoilers.” She stood and addressed the pair, “We have plans to make and I need you to sign some release forms, indemnities and such, we do not wish to upset the *Auditors of Reality* after all, please follow me inside and we shall make use of grandfather’s office.” She walked past them and into the cottage behind them. They followed and as Susan turned and walked through a door they felt a shift in reality. They walked into a surprisingly modern looking office, spacious with a pair of sofas facing each other across a low table, a meeting table with eight seats around it, and a large black desk, behind which hung a spare (they assumed) scythe and cloak. There was a bank of filing cabinets, in black. Harry looked around the room, the furniture was all black and chrome, the carpet blood red, and the three walls starkly white. The remaining wall was one large window, showing a spiral galaxy filling the entire view. Susan turned to them and motioned them to sit at the table, Hermione noticed that her hair had reverted to a bun.

“Could you teach me that trick with your hair? Mine is unmanageable, it has a mind of its own sometimes.”

“Sorry, my hair also has a mind of its own, perhaps you need to befriend your hair so it adopts a style helpful to your circumstances?” She replied.

She walked to the desk and extracted a thick folder from the drawers, before returning to the table and sitting opposite the pair. The folder had eight coloured tags, one for each of Harry’s lives. She extracted a pair of documents from the rear of the folder and passed them a copy each, then passed them pens she conjured in her hands. “These are the contracts and indemnities, please read them and sign once you are happy, these are required to re-insert you two into the world of the living with your memories so you can avoid the mistakes of your past lives. Perhaps Harry,” she added with heavy irony, “If you listen to Hermione when she urges caution in future, you might not get everyone killed.”

They sat and read through the documents. After a few minutes Hermione started to ask questions, to no-one's surprise.

"It says here that I will have my magical core unbound. What does that mean, how is it bound?"

"It is a bit of a misnomer, magicals believe that magic comes from the user; it does not. It is in everything and it is everywhere. Science calls it dark energy. Magicals believe that they have a core that contains their magic; it does not. It channels magic, like the heart pumps blood, what is called your core channels and controls the flow of magic. Like a heart it can become overloaded, and you call this magical exhaustion. Someone," She mimed a long beard, "put a restriction on yours and Harry's to limit the amount of magical power available to you. This shall be removed when you return, and we shall show you how to develop your ability to channel more magic."

"Occlumens?"

"Dumbledore and his pet snake, Snape, love peeking at student's thoughts, we shall show you how to erect defences within your minds so that they see only what you wish them to see, and if needs be you can expel them from your minds."

Harry asked the next question, "I learned about the Horcrux in me just before I was killed, that's why I allowed him to kill me, to rid him of his last soul anchor, you will remove this from me on my return?"

"Yes, you shall be sent back without the leech. It is these phylacteries, Horcruxes you call them, that must be destroyed before Riddle is finally killed. They date back to ancient Egyptian priests of Anubis, and one of their most secret rites, an attempt to allow the Pharaohs and High Priests to achieve immortality. They were killed for this egregious blasphemy by the priests of the God Ra, as abominations against creation, and the rites required were believed lost. Osiris was worshipped in place of Anubis as the god of death from this time. This Warlock Riddle has created a number, and you shall find them so I may destroy them before sending him on to meet grandfather. You are the Master of Death, you are the last Peverill, you have the three hallows, the gifts from grandfather to your ancestors, we will show you how to use them wisely. Being the Master of Death means you work FOR GRANDFATHER, not that you are his Master, a rather confusing title as I told him earlier."

"It says we shall be immune to potions and magics of compulsion, what are they specifically?"

"Confundus and compulsion charms, such as Dumbledore has been layering the pair of you with since your third year and the time he caught you kissing, Potions, love, lust, fertility, loyalty, repulsion, and revulsion, and a few others. Potions that will impact how you think and feel about others. Harry, do you remember the first task in that ridiculous tournament you were manoeuvred into?" Harry nodded, "How did you feel about Ronald Weasley and Hermione after you had completed the task and retrieved your egg?"

"I pretty much despised Ron; he was a completely jealous arse, I had realised that I loved Hermione; she was supporting me when almost the whole school opposed me. I was going to

ask her to be my girlfriend."

"Do you remember Ronald's apology? Let me remind you." She made a gesture with her left hand and a small three-dimensional image appeared over the table, showing the pair of them and Ronald Weasley.

'Harry,' he said, very seriously, 'whoever put your name in that Goblet – I – I reckon they're trying to do you in!' It was as though the last few weeks had never happened – as though Harry was meeting Ron for the first time, right after he'd been made champion. 'Caught on, have you?' said Harry coldly. 'Took you long enough.' Hermione stood nervously between them, looking from one to the other. Ron opened his mouth uncertainly. Harry knew Ron was about to apologise and, suddenly, he found he didn't need to hear it. 'It's OK,' he said, before Ron could get the words out. 'Forget it.' 'No,' said Ron, 'I shouldn't've –' 'Forget it,' Harry said. Ron grinned nervously at him, and Harry grinned back. Hermione burst into tears. 'There's nothing to cry about!' Harry told her, bewildered. 'You two are so stupid!' she shouted, stamping her foot on the ground, tears splashing down her front.

"Can you see the point at which you were hit with a confundus charm and made to accept Ronald as a friend, and how you broke Hermione's heart. She forgave you. Again."

Harry looked at the frozen image, crestfallen, "Hermione I am so…" She silenced him with a kiss and when she released him, "Nothing to apologise for Harry, it was all Dumbledore, again. I should have seen it, but I assume I got confounded shortly after as well."

Susan nodded in agreement, "Correct, Hermione; the meddler was determined that Harry would not feel any self-worth. He even engineered it so that you attended the ball with Krum, rather than Harry. I believe you asked each other and agreed multiple times before he got the mind magic to stick, your love for each other is very strong."

Hermione nodded. "It says here we are animagus?"

"You will be before you return, as I stated earlier, we are outside of time, you shall train before you return, and you shall be animagus by the time you return. It was considered to make you both shape shifters in the truest sense of the word, but that would also make all of your children shape shifters and we thought that this was a recipe for disaster for the future."

Hermione nodded thoughtfully, and resumed biting her bottom lip. "Harry, we need to decide when to go back. We could go back really early and I could rescue you from the Dursleys. You could come and live with my parents, but that would mean reliving our lives from the age of three or four all over again, with our adult minds, and maybe forgetting some details. Or we could go back later, after rescuing Sirius, maybe. We have older bodies and we could spend summer Horcrux hunting, what do you think?"

"Much as I like the thought of not living in Durskaban, the thought of having to wait for ten or more years before I can kiss you again isn't great. I think we need to plot out a strategy, and work back from the end game to decide when to go back in. Can we get some help in planning?" he looked across at Susan as he asked the last question.

“Yes, of course. You will need help in your training, and planning is part and parcel of this. Do you have anyone in particular in mind?”

Harry looked at Hermione, his eyes moist, “My mother and father? Maybe Sirius? Remus, Tonks? What about Moody?”

Hermione looked at him and smiled softly, “Of course your parents, what about the Founders? It’s their school we were fighting for when we died.”

“How many are we allowed?”

Susan looked up from her notes. “At any given time, let’s limit it to six, but you can have different tutors, you need to learn close combat skills as well as magic. You need to get some help with your mental state, your relationship with Hermione will help. But you need to let go the abuse you suffered, unless we send you back early enough to avoid it in your next life?”

“I will start a list. Susan, can I have some paper or a notebook,” Hermione asked, a spiral bound notebook in blue with ‘Harry’s Training Plan’ on the front in silver materialised on the table next to her elbow. Hermione squeaked and grabbed the book, flipping it open and immediately started making notes in the pages.

“Would you two like some time to figure out what to start with, what to do?”

“Could you let my parents visit?”

Susan stood. “Of course.” She walked around the table and opened the door that had just appeared, “Lily, James, please come in,” Susan stepped to the side to allow Harry’s parents to enter and left through the same door as they passed.

Lily ran over to Harry, who had stood to face them, “Harry, my lovely boy.” She grabbed him into a Hermione style hug, and they both broke down in tears. James walked over more sedately and smiled at Hermione, “They will be a moment, it is really nice to meet you, Hermione; you are so good to my son. He might learn to understand love with your help. Welcome to our family.”

“Everyone keeps calling me Lady Potter, I don’t really understand.”

“Harry is Lord Potter, more things we need to tell you about, we have time, we can help you both understand what has been withheld from you. You might like to know that Dumbledore is suffering in his own personal hell for what he did to your lives, and Lily attacked him like the lioness she is for harming her cub. She will tell you herself in time.” He looked at his wife and son, still sobbing in each other’s arms, “Thank you Hermione, for supporting Harry, without you I don’t think he would have carried on. I want to rescue him from the Dursley’s somehow, it ruins his life, it ruins his character, he doesn’t understand love, his love for you is obvious to everyone except him.” She nodded in agreement.

Chapter 4: The Grangers

Major Daniel Oliver Granger, Dog to his squad mates, was walking with the rest of the members of the Royal Marines Commandos that were accompanying his SBS unit into the African jungle. Their Assault ship sat offshore in the Atlantic. They had been flown in by Helicopter and dropped a few miles from their objective, and were now tabbing in silently to hit the guerilla encampment from both sides at once to rescue the French medical team that had been taken hostage from the Medicine sans Frontiers hospital in the nearby city. Their vessel had been in the right place at the time, and the French government had asked for their help in this old colony of theirs. Their scout, one of the local tribesmen, was a man whose sister was amongst the captives, carrying his nephew or niece, hence their trust he was not about to lead them to a trap, he hoped. The Scout held his hand up for them to stop, they could here sounds of revelry, the guerrillas were drunk. He smiled, this would be easy, his heart had no compassion for these men, they would kill the male medic's if they had not already, the women would be repeatedly raped until they either died, or became too pregnant to use, these were not freedom fighters, they were scum that discovered a Kalashnikov would get you what you wanted.

They moved forward, carefully, everyone's nerves taught and ready for action. The infra red scope showed which of the huts had the hostages, they might be lucky and get them all out he thought. He knew the commandos were in comms with the group approaching from the east, they were waiting for them to be in position. He was hot and itchy, his balaclava was far too thick for this jungle, but better than a pale coloured face to target. The soft pops of the grenade launchers told him it was time, the grenades, both fragmentation and flash bangs exploded the noise rippling into a long crackle. He was running, just behind his squad, his job, Tail End Charlie, was to cover everyone's backs and flank, as they concentrated on getting the hostages. He was also the squad medic. The Marines were hitting the guerrilla's and it was slaughter. In front of him they breached the hut, the guards dropped before they even realised they were targeted, the suppressed HK MP5 lethal in close quarter combat. They had ripped the side out of the hut and Dan entered, a young black girl was holding a newborn to her chest her eyes wide, the whites showing in the light of the flames licking around the camp now.

The gunfire stopped. It was over. Dan stepped out to the door and looked across to the main compound, Marines were dragging bodies to one side. The occasional single shot answered the question about prisoners or medical aid to the guerilla force members. He saw the medic in the Marines unit, they exchanged a look, "All good Dog. Couple of minor cuts, nothing needing your skills mate. How are the hostages."

"All good I think, We can give them a proper check when we get back to the ship." He turned back inside and watched as torches were used to check and release those that were identified as hostages, hiding among hostages was an old trick and they were being cautious. Their scout ran into the tent, and in rapid African called to his sister, their reunion was emotional. Whilst they siblings were celebrating life, a petite black woman in scrubs stood from beside the girl, she patted the girl on the shoulder and approached Dan, she saw the red cross on his shoulder. "Medic?"

“I am, just in case, is anyone here in need of attention?”

“English,” She spoke in heavily French accented English, Dan was entranced, she was small to him, the top of her thick mane of hair only just reached his shoulder, but in the dim light he saw her pretty face, her skin a tone lighter than the locals, she would have been a target for the scum they had just eliminated. He felt a flash of protective anger wash over him. “Thank you for coming for us, I do not think we would have seen another sunset without you. I know what they planned for me and I would have fought them until they killed me before I let them use me like that.” She reached up around his neck and pulled his head down and kissed him. “Merci, mon sauveur. Merci mon brave.” She kissed him again. He smiled, the kiss felt wonderful, something left a glow in his chest and he realised he was going to have to get this young lady, his first thought was to want to bed her, but something of her called to him. He wanted to give her children. He wanted a life with her.

He could hear the sound of the Chinooks, the green and red flares lit the space cleared in the middle of the camp. His team guided the hostages to the chopper that had just landed and working in a relay bundled everyone into the rear of the Helicopter with a load of marines. He found himself half carrying the cute doctor that had kissed him, the chopper lifting off even as its rear door started to close, the second one swinging in to land and pick up the rest of the force. Moments later as they sat in the dark hold of the noisy machine, they saw the actinic white light of the phosphorus set off to dispose of the bodies. He took the young woman’s head in his hand and pulled her into his shoulder to prevent her staring at the light and losing her night sight, prior to landing back on their ship.

A week later they walked off the boat into Cape Town, hand in hand. Emma Deurre was a surgeon. A Dental Surgeon, but had learned to deliver babies and do what was needed in civil war torn Africa. Daniel Granger had originally been through Dental College and had learned Orthodontics, but had signed up with the Navy as his sponsor, and served following graduation. Being a six foot three rugby player, the Marines had interested him. He had flown through the training, the commando course, and had taken a year’s officer placement with the oh so secretive SBS. They sometimes trained with the more famous SAS regiment, but they were almost unheard of. They liked it that way.

Dan had three weeks leave due. He and Emma went on safari together, and then flew back to meet her parents in Paris. He proposed to her outside a street café in Montmartre, in the shadow of Sacre Coeur before he left. His tour was almost done, and his drive and ambition had turned to creating a family. He left the Forces later that year, and they married at the church, in her parents home village in the Massif Central. Daniel’s friend from his squad, Christopher Andrew Thompson, Cat to his Dog, was his best man. Emma’s sister Charlotte was bridesmaid. The two of them hit it off and Dan wondered if they would be back for another wedding later.

Within a year Emma was pregnant, she gave birth to Hermione Jean Granger on the 19th of September 1979. Dan was over the moon with pride. His mate Chris was crying along side him as they looked at the little cinnamon coloured baby, her huge brown eyes captured them both.

The birth had taken it's toll on Emma, Hermione would be their only child. They swallowed the sadness at this news with the thought of their precious daughter, She was going to be remarkable.

Chris didn't make a go of it with Charlotte, he wasn't ready to leave his squad, and one dark night doing a job that no-one would ever admit happened his luck ran out and he was killed on operations. Dan drove to the quiet memorial service organised in Hereford. His daughter was not settling and fretted constantly, so Emma told him to go alone, Charlotte was visiting, but didn't feel she should go either. It was the beginning of November 1981, a cold frosty night. Dan said goodbye to his old mate, but could not stay to drink with the others, he was worrying about his girls, and felt compelled to leave.

The world appeared to conspire against him, an accident closed the motorway, sending him off into some random town. He stopped for fuel and bought a local map. As he walked back to his car he heard an old fashioned motorcycle, he saw it fly over his head and land behind some houses. His curiosity was peaked and he jumped back into his Range Rover and drove along the street, into the estate mentally tracking where he needed to be. He saw the bike at the end of a road, the rider was huge. An absolute unit. He killed the ignition and lights. The street lights were all out and he sat in silence, reaching under his seat for the lockbox that contained his personal protection weapon. A Browning Hi-Power. He mentally snorted at that, they were anything but high powered. Their short comings being the very reason he had been taught the double tap style of shooting.

As his eyes adjusted he saw three figures, two were dressed like Disney characters out of a story about Merlin or something. The Unit handed them a bundle and then walked back to the bike and set off into the air passing over his head. The Merlin character placed the bundle on the doorstep of a house and then did something to put the street lights back on. He then disappeared, followed almost immediately by the one dressed like a witch. Dan blinked. He had to check, it *looked* like a baby, surely it wasn't. No-one would leave a baby on a doorstep like they were delivering milk.

He climbed out of his car and walked to the house, gun tucked into his waistband at his back. He was livid when he saw it was indeed a baby, who in their right mind would do such a thing. There was a letter. He opened it and read it. This was the child's aunt and uncle's house and its parents had died. His temper rose, but ice ran in his veins. Someone was going to be in trouble. He pressed the doorbell and held it for a full minute. The Hall light came on and a shrewish woman appeared. He towered over her, "Some idiot left this child on your doorstep. He is your nephew, and according to this letter, it is my sad duty to inform you that your sister is dead. If this letter is to be believed." Whatever he expected her reaction, it was not the one he got.

"Good. That little freak, and her freak husband are gone. Good riddance. Keep the little freak if you want him, he has no home here." She shut the door, locking it, the hall light went out. Dan stood for a moment, his first thought was to kick the door in and….. His thoughts trailed off. Force the child into a house he wasn't wanted in. They would dump him in an orphanage. He looked at the child in his arms. His eyes were open. Bright green and regarding him, he had an ugly scar on his head, angry and red. It looked infected. Dan was at his car. When did he walk back to his car? He opened the rear and pulled out his go bag, unzipping it he set it

on the back seat and threaded the seatbelts through the handles, He unwrapped the child, checking that he was still clean, his blanket fell to the floor forgotten. Dan wrapped him in the navy-blue woollen service jumper in the bag and settled Harry into the makeshift crib. “Hello Harry, welcome to the Granger family, I am sorry about your parents, but you have a new family and a sister now. Let’s get you home shall we.”

He replaced the gun under the seat, made safe and unloaded. He drove the rest of the way into their recently acquired house near the golf course being built in Crawley. His parents had passed last year, and he had sold their house. The money had allowed him and Emma to buy their own practice, with enough left over as a deposit on the house. As he drove he told Harry about Emma, Hermione, Charlotte, his best mate Cat Thompson. The drive didn’t seem to take as long as he expected, but it was still almost two am when he arrived home. He lifted the new addition to their family out of the back and walked to the front door. It opened as he approached, to Emma, looking tired and holding a sleepy Hermione on her hip. “She won’t sleep. Just keeps saying Daddy, and *Harry?* Over and over……..” Emma saw the bag, and the baby, “Daniel, why have you got a baby?”

“Let me in and I will tell you.” He followed her into the kitchen, where Charlotte was making tea.

“Harry.” Hermione called, she was reaching out to the baby, in the bag. Emma looked at her husband.

“He is called Harry. Let’s put them in her cot, see if they settle. Then I will tell you how this has happened.” They carried the pair to Hermione’s bedroom and settled them into the cot, the second Harry was laid next to her, she wrapped the boy in a hug and they drifted off to sleep in seconds.

“Now Daniel Oliver Granger, you can explain to me why you appear to have kidnapped a child?” He knew she would be happy, but the full name was a warning, his wife’s temper was up, and she looked exhausted. He reached around her and took her into his arms.

”I will tell you everything, I didn’t kidnap him, I think I rescued him. Let’s go get that tea Charlie is making and I will tell you what’s going on.”

Emma listened, and read the letter. Then she quizzed Dan over every detail. Finally they slept. The following morning, they put Harry in Hermione’s old high chair, the one she had just outgrown, and had breakfast, to Emma’s amazement her daughter fussed over Harry making sure he had enough to eat, passing him his cup, Hermione had never bothered with dolls, but she was doting over the new addition to the household.

Albus Dumbledore walked back into his office following breakfast, it was Monday morning, and the school was in full swing. He sat at his desk and picked up a lemon drop, and he unwrapped the confectionary, he realised the suite of devices monitoring Privet Drive were all silent. He looked around them once more, to be absolutely sure. He was in equal measures afraid, and angry. His carefully crafted plan needed Harry to be at the Dursley’s if they had harmed him, he would,…….. give them another chance.

He apparated from his office directly into the driveway at number 4. He didn't knock simply unlocking the door and walking straight in to find Petunia feeding a child, a glance told him it was not Harry. "Where is Harry Potter?" he demanded putting some compulsion into the request.

She turned to him, "I sent him back with the man you sent to bring him here, we do not want him, we want nothing to do with your kind, we do not want freaks in this house. Now get out before I call the police."

"I sent no-one, I left him on your doorstep." Dumbledore replied.

"You left him on a doorstep, well, the chances are a fox took him then, there are plenty of them about. HE is not here. We do not want him. If you bring him back we will take him to an orphanage. Now leave."

Dumbledore reached for his wand, but the very wards he had created to protect Harry from ill intent, protected Petunia and Dudley because of their blood and he was expelled from the house. He was angry, this was not good, he had cast a tracking charm on the blanket when he had placed the boy on the step, he sent a search spell, it revealed the blanket in the gutter at the end of the road.

He had lost Harry Potter.

If the wizarding public discovered his mistake, he would be lynched, or worse he would lose his headmaster position. He returned to his office. Minerva would crucify him.

Emma Granger was looking at the little boy they had adopted. It had taken over six months for all the paperwork and all the approvals, but the Dursleys utter refusal to take the child, and the foster parents both being medical professionals, one a decorated serviceman who wanted to adopt the boy made it an easy if tedious and drawn-out process. Here they were, almost Harry's second birthday, and she was holding the adoption papers, signed and authorised. Harry was their boy. She had nothing but love for the little tyke, her daughter Hermione adored him, and he loved her right back. His scar was finally healing, they had tried various treatments, anti-biotics and antiseptics had not worked, it had remained angry and red. Eventually they had consulted with a colleague at the hospital where she and her husband held an Orthodontic clinic once a week about it, and he had taken some samples. He had found necrotic tissue in the wound, and they had allowed him to carry out a minor procedure on him, he had carefully removed all the affected tissue and then carefully closed the wound and put Harry on a cocktail of high strength anti-biotics. The scar had healed and was fading.

The pair of them started school together, Hermione one of the oldest in her year, Harry one of the youngest. They didn't care, Harry was much the same size as Hermione, and fiercely protective of his sister. Harry tempered Hermione's tendency to try to answer every question before anyone else could, he counselled her to let the others answer the easy ones, and only answer if no-one else could, to count to three before putting her hand up, and not to annoy the other children. Even so there were some children who tried to bully Hermione about her wild hair or her large front teeth. Having dentists for parents she knew they would be fixed, but she also knew it would not be until she reached her teens. With Harry at her side, she did not

become upset at the taunting, but rolled her eyes and challenged them to think up more original insults. “Really, Bushy haired beaver, or bookworm is the best you can manage. My teeth can be fixed, you are stupid and you smell of wee, can you be fixed?” The girl in question looked at Hermione with murder in her eyes, and it wasn’t long before she tried to get one of the boys to hit Hermione. Harry simply stepped in front of the boy and faced him down. They were mostly ignored through school after that, they didn’t have many friends, but they didn’t really care.

Hermione’s letter arrived five days before her eleventh Birthday, and was followed up the next day when Professor McGonagall arrived at the Granger’s door. Emma invited her in, and made tea, she was sat with Hermione as she carried out the transformations, and Hermione’s face was alight with wonder as she described Hogwarts and learning all about magic. Dan and Harry arrived back from his football game with the junior team he played on.

Harry ran straight into the room to tell Hermione he had scored a goal, and stopped in his tracks at the sight of the stern woman sat in the chair. She looked at the messy haired boy, with Lily Evan’s bright green eyes staring straight at her, a faint but just visible scar over his right eye, and Minerva could feel the powerhouse of magic from the boy, and she could sense the bond between him and the girl. She kept her composure, just. “Good morning young man, I am Professor McGonagall, I was just telling Hermione and her mother about the school for witches and wizards. I can sense that you are magical as well, what is your name young man, perhaps we shall see you soon as well?

Harry stood up straight and in a clear voice as he had been taught, “I am Harry, erm Professor. Harry Potter. I was abandoned as a baby and my mum and dad adopted me. I don’t know if you will have me on any list, my family didn’t want me. I am glad, because I love my adopted family.”

Minerva was having to double down on her occulemency, standing in front of her, healthy, happy and loved, was Harry Potter. His legend was larger than life, credited with defeating Voldemort as a baby, Minerva knew that was Lily’s work, not a baby’s. He had then been taken to ‘safety’ by Albus Dumbledore and lost the same night. Dumbledore had survived, at the cost of a lot of his status and credibility, the eventual discovery that he had no idea where Harry was, but Minerva had checked with the Goblins at Gringotts, and they still had a vault in his name, magic would close the vault if he died.

Minerva had realised Albus was not acting in the best interests of the boy, and had become suspicious about the events leading up to his parent’s deaths. Dumbledore was a revered wizard, accusing him of anything was difficult, too many took his word as gospel truth, and were convinced that whatever he decided was for the best.

“Harry Potter. I knew your parents James and Lily. You get your eyes from your mother, and your unkempt hair from your father. They were two of my favourite pupils, Lily was fiercely intelligent, brightest witch of her generation many called her. Your parents loved you Harry, and they would be delighted to see your new family is so loving. They did not abandon you.” She stopped and looked at Emma, “Does Harry know why he was not brought up by his parents?”

Emma smiled, “He knows they were killed when he was a baby, his Aunt and Uncle are the ones that refused him a home. Fate guided Dan to the street where he was dumped like a milk bottle, and after talking to his Aunt, brought him home. My daughter decided we were adopting him within the first day, and we have never regretted a moment of it, he is a wonderful boy and we are proud to call him our son.”

The words stung Minerva, but she could not deny the truth of them. Her initial instinct to roast Albus about the fact she had found Potter, no thanks to his care, became tempered with the urge to protect the son of her favourite students. She would visit Gringotts and make some enquiries, who was his magical guardian, she could perhaps organise some wards to prevent meddlers doing anything, his location would only be secret until next September, then people would be able to find him.

She realised, he was not receiving mail. Where was it all going? “I am glad to hear he is settled in to such a loving and happy family, Harry is a little famous in our world, so his disappearance was big news, newspapers still print stuff about him on his birthday and on Halloween, the day it happened. I will not reveal his location to the world, but when he starts school, it will become known. Would you permit me to organise some magical protections for your home? for Harry, and Hermione, and both of you. His fame will attract some attention once people know he is still alive.”

Minerva left the Granger’s and apparated into Daigon Alley, she walked down the street and up the steps to Gringotts, where she requested her account manager Kobold. After some formalities were observed, she asked the questions she had come to Gringotts to attempt to resolve.

“Do you know who is the Magical Guardian of Harry James Potter, I recently discovered him alive and well and I wish to do my best to ensure that he remains that way, I fear if Albus Dumbledore gains this knowledge he will use his influence to attempt to gain control over the boy, and I do not believe he has the child’s best interests at heart.”

“I can make enquiries, I can ask the Potter Account Manager, will you be bringing Mr Potter to the bank on his eleventh Birthday?”

“Yes, but I would like to get some warding organised on the house he lives in with the family that has adopted him, he is safe at the moment as no-one else in the magical world knows where he is, or even if he is alive. Once he starts at Hogwarts all of this will be no longer secret. This raises another question, where is his mail going. I cannot believe that he has never been sent a single letter, I would expect the sky to be full of owls on his birthday, or Halloween. He does not know of his ancestry, or his fame at this moment. It is delicate, I do not wish anyone on the Ministry to find Harry until we have his guardianship sorted with someone who will act in his best interests. Can we discover what the wills of his parents say about his guardianship?

“Wait here please Mistress McGonagall, I will speak with the Potter Account Manager and see if he is willing to assist.” The Goblin left the office and returned sometime later with another goblin he introduced as Gnarlak, the Potter account manager.

“Mistress McGonagall, would you be able to bring young Master Potter to the bank so that I may meet with him, we should then be able to open his parents wills and potentially address the issues you have brought before my colleague Kobold, I have sent several letters but it is apparent that he is not receiving them, we are concerned that he may not gain access to his trust vault on his birthday, and worry that others may have possession of his vault key.”

“I will speak once more with his adoptive family, and seek their leave to bring him to the bank, would it be permissible to bring his new family, they are muggles, but they appear to be good people. My avenues of enquiry are limited for fear of alerting the wrong people to his whereabouts before we can make it safe, if you can answer some of these questions, it will go some way to allaying my fears for Harry and his Sister.”

Gnarlak smiled, showing altogether too many teeth in Minerva’s opinion, “Bring his family, his adoptive sister should do an inheritance test, she may have access to a dormant vault. In any event, his family should know his history as far as it is permitted.”

Minerva stood and with a short bow took her leave of the Goblins and made her way back into the Alley, where once clear of the bank she apparated back to the Grangers. Knocking at the door, she was once more invited back inside. “Mr and Mrs Granger, sorry, that should be Doctor’s Granger?

“Actually Mr and Mrs, as we are surgeons, and as such revert to Mr or Mrs, from Doctor. Makes no sense but that’s how it goes, many people call us Doctor as a courtesy it isn’t important really.

“Ah, interesting, I popped to the Bank, to see if they had any information on who was Harry’s magical guardian, I think he may not have one as he has been regarded as missing for all these years, but I want to ensure that whomever is appointed will act in Harry’s best interests, as I do not fully trust Albus Dumbledore with Harry. It was he who left Harry on the doorstep, where you found him, to my eternal shame I was there and despite arguing that it was not right, I allowed it to happen. That was a terrible mistake, and I shall not stand by and let others abuse a position of trust over Lily’s son, I loved that girl. She was Head Girl in her last year at the school and should have gone on to do great things, if not for the tragedy that befell her and James. I owe it to her and Harry to make good for my error in allowing Albus to leave the child, I hope one day Harry will forgive me, but until then I will ensure that he and Hermione are safe at Hogwarts.” Minerva relaxed a little having cleared what she wanted to say. “I would like to organise a trip for you all to go to the Goblin Bank, Gringotts, where you will meet the account manager for Harry’s birth family. He will have a legacy vault, and an inheritance, his family were quite wealthy, and it would allow you to open a vault for Hermione, for the future. The Goblins appear fierce, but honour is held in great regard by them, and they are scrupulously proper in their banking. Is any particular day of the week better for you?”

“We work at our practice alternate weekends, but we both have Mondays off, however the kids are in school. We will both be off in two weeks’ time, the weekend after next, is that soon enough?

“I think that will be fine, I will sort a time with the bank, and send you a letter. If an owl taps at your window, let it in and give it a treat, a bit of bacon, chicken or raw meat. It will have a

letter for you. I can ask it to wait for a reply. For safety I will only refer to Hermione, but Harry is most definitely included."

"Owl Post," Dan shook his head, "whatever next. Until next time Professor," he shook her hand and walked her to the door, where she promptly disappeared from view.

Minerva arrived to collect them on the Saturday morning as arranged, and the five of them held onto the ribbon she held as the portkey activated and carried them into a reception room within the bank. A goblin guard motioned them to follow and guided them to a room, where Gnarlak waited for them. "Please sit everyone, I am Gnarlak, the account manager for the Potter family, and as such would be young Heir Potter's first point of contact in the bank. Normally he would be introduced by his parent on his eleventh birthday, but this is not possible in Harry's circumstances, so we have arranged for today's meeting. He bowed to each in turn, "Harry I assume, Miss Hermione, Mr Granger, Mrs Granger, Professor McGonagall." He placed some parchments on the desk, "first things first. We can do a simple test with a few drops of blood, to establish identities and ancestries. If you will agree to these tests, each of you should place a few drops of your blood in the circle on the parchment, magic will take care of the rest." He produced a small athame from the desk and the blade glowed red for a second, "the blade is sterile, who will go first. Dan smiled and held his hand forward, "Our warrior as always Major. Well met Sir," he cut Dan's thumb and let the blood drip onto the sheet before healing the cut and once more sterilising the blade. Harry went next, then Hermione and last Emma. Whilst they watched lines of text appeared on each sheet, Gnarlak smiled, "Hier Potter, son of James Charlus Potter and Lily Rose Potter nee Evans. Your identity is confirmed. I have your parents wills here, do you wish to hear them now, and in private, or are you happy for your companions to stay?"

"They can stay, and I would like to hear them please."

"Very well, please place your thumb on this box here," he held Harry's hand, Harry felt a slight prick into his thumb and the box clicked as the lock released. Gnarlak opened the box and retrieved the documents within. There was an envelope, addressed to Harry. It said to be handed to Harry on his coming of age, Gnarlak placed it back into the box. "One for later in life I am afraid Master Potter."

He laid the will out, it was a combined will, from both parents giving each other control and in the event of both being dead, everything left to Harry except for three bequests;

200,000 Galleons to Sirius Black, to look after Harry in our absence,

100,000 for Remus Lupin for the same, and to support Sirius, and

30 silver Sickles to Peter Pettigrew for his betrayal.

In the event of their death before Harry was an adult his guardians, in order of preference dependant upon their availability were;

Alice and Frank Longbottom, oathswarn Godmother and Husband

Sirius Black and Remus Lupin, oathsworn Godfather and honorary uncle

Pandora and Xeno Lovegood, close personal friends

Andromeda and Theodore Tonks, close personal friends

Minerva McGonagall, favourite Professor of both parents, if none of the others are possible, please find Harry a good family

Under no circumstances is Harry to be left with Petunia Dursley or her family. He will not be safe.

Gnarlak folded the papers, “Mistress McGonagall, it would appear that you are the Magical guardian for Harry James Potter, the Longbottoms are not available due to their injuries, Sirius Black is imprisoned, it would appear unjustly. Pandora Lovegood passed away two years ago, the Tonks are banished form the Black family, it would be dangerous to send Harry to them, for both Harry and the Tonks family, which leaves yourself charged with finding Harry a good family. I suspect fate has sorted this already, but you have the final decision within the magical world.”

“I believe you are correct and fate guided the Grangers to Harry, I could not wish for a better home for him, in his circumstances, I would not wish to change anything. It will help me sleep knowing that I am his guardian in the magical world for now, it prevents any others making a play for control of Harry and his family vaults.”

“You said my godfather was unjustly imprisoned, what did you mean?”

“He is recorded as your oathsworn godfather. The will is a magical document, and can only contain true statements. This means that Sirius Orion Black swore on oath to protect you and your family at the cost of his life if he deceived or betrayed you. The oaths are not common, they can be troublesome, but the Potters and Blacks are old families. If Sirius Black had betrayed you as he is accused, he would have died on the spot, ergo he is innocent of the charges for which he is imprisoned.”

“Who is Peter Pettigrew?” Harry asked.

“He was the fourth member of a group of Hogwarts students,” Minerva answered, “They called themselves the Marauders, and where your Father, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew. Your mother was eventually the fifth member. Pettigrew was a little out of his depth in their company, they were the stars in their year, popular with the witches, always having fun, Peter was their pity project perhaps. If he betrayed them, it is a bitter pill, they treated him better than he deserved.

“What about my mother?”

“Your father pursued her romantically for their entire time at school, she only relented and dated him in their last year, when he settled down and became more responsible. She was close to Remus throughout most of her school years, they formed the core of a study group, which included Alice Longbottom, then a Brody, Pandora Lovegood, then a Johnson, and Amelia Bones, who has become the head of the DMLE. It was a slight surprise when she finally agreed to date your father, he was self-confident to the verge of arrogance, and

together with Sirius they brought out the worst of each other. Sirius and He were quite brilliant, they easily achieved the results to become Aurors, and were outstanding. Responsible, not so much. Lily was a good influence on them all, they knuckled down and worked in their last year."

Gnarlak cleared his throat, "Emma Michelle Granger, nee Deurre, your parchment Shows no magical lineage, Daniel Oliver Granger, you are also a muggle, apologies for the term. Hermione Jean Granger, you are the descendant of the Deurre and Granger lines, the two lines joining has awoken the magical ability in you. Interestingly you are also the wife to be of one Harry James Potter. Your marriage is recorded as magical, you are soul mates, and when you are of age, or when certain physical acts take place, your bond will form, and eventually become sealed. This would explain why fate drew your father to rescue the infant Harry. You appear to have destiny."

Gnarlak smiled, "Mr Granger, before you give Harry the talk all fathers give the suitors of daughters you should know. The bond is not formed, they have not so much as kissed, but you are almost certainly looking at the future father to your grandchildren. Soul mates such as these find each other so incredibly rarely, and when they do their love is like no other. Their lives will always be intertwined, they will do everything together and be the greater because of it. I hope this piece of information does not cause any trouble for our youngsters, they appear as surprised as their parents."

Gnarlak reached into a drawer, and opened a box, he handed Harry a ring from within the box, "Your Heir's ring, it offers some magical protections and guidance about family magics. Hermione, please select a ring from this row, one that calls to you." Hermione picked a silver ring with a pale blue stone and diamonds either side. Harry place it onto her ring finger," Harry did as he was asked and the ring resized into her finger with a small flash. "It is a magical betrothal ring, nothing more than a friendship ring at this stage, but it too offers protections, and shows that House Potter protects you, as you are due to start Hogwarts this year, this will help keep you safe."

"Lastly Harry, this is your vault key, to your trust vault. It refills on your birthday to top it up to 5,000 Galleons, a Galleon is currently worth £51, similar to the Krugerrand, so that is £255,000 in mundane currency. Do not allow anyone else to use your key. No-one."

"Hermione, this is your vault key, as Heir Potter's betrothed, it will top up to 1000 Galleons annually, like wise do not allow anyone else to use the key."

"You have probably all surmised that Harry is in line to inherit quite a fortune, his total worth will be over fifty million Galleons when he comes of age. I shall require someone to review the family investments with me in due course, but they are in good shape at the moment, there is no hurry. I shall write to the various parties and inform them of the bequests, given the nature of Pettigrew's relationship, he is allegedly deceased, if we find him, I shall inform you of our results. Sirius Black is in Azkaban, but Remus Lupin should at least be in touch with you in the near future, I assume he believed you lost.

"Lastly, warding your residence magically, Mistress McGonagall had mentioned this, I would recommend that it is carried out in the next few weeks and the costs can be borne by your main vault, if Regent McGonagall agrees?"

“Excellent, that is the best solution to what I was hoping for. If you can advise me when the warders will carry out their survey, we can discuss what is possible. I can advise Mr Granger on what the various wards will do and what safety measures should be in place. Can you get everyone an emergency portkey. We can decide upon a sanctuary to transport them to later. I think we are done for now, today has been more successful than I had hoped.”

She turned to the group, “lets get to the exit hall and we can portkey you all home,”

They stood, Harry last to stand, he looked up at Dan nervously. “Don’t worry sprout, I have seen you step up and protect our pumpkin so many times, I think I knew you two would be together eventually. I am not angry, as long as you keep treating Hermione as you have, I can’t ever see that changing. Just no kids for at least fifteen years, I am way too young for grandchildren any time soon.”

“Daaaaad, No.” Hermione whined, “I am waaaaay too young to even think about that, I am still blushing because Gnarlak said I hadn’t even kissed Harry. I do love you Harry, but you are going to have to wait for the romance stuff, I am not ready.”

Harry was tomato coloured, “Waiting sounds really good, really good.” He hurried out of the room. Emma laughed, she patted Dan on the arm, “I think this is so adorable, I will have a gentle talk to our girl, just to be sure, but she is so sensible I am not worried. Honestly I cannot imagine a nicer boy for my little girl, they can marry in fifteen years did you say? Maybe ten.” She laughed, “we are going to get so much fun teasing them, I almost feel guilty.”

Chapter 5: Hogwarts

They visited Diagon Alley another five or six times before the following September, buying their books, then more books. Then books about books. Hermione likes books, they bought more books. Harry bought himself an owl, and Hermione picked up a straggly looking ginger half kneezle kitten called Crookshanks. They also got their wands, and Ollivander was seriously creepy in Harry's opinion, his wand however, did not match anyone's from history, and he left the shop with a cherry and unicorn hair wand, 12 inches long. In late August the whole family visited Charlotte in Paris and they visited the Quartier Magique, where Harry bought himself and Hermione another wand each, his was elder and thestral tail hair, Hermione's was maple and unicorn hair, the wands were custom made for them after they were offered different cores and having selected the core that reacted to them best, they searched for a wood whilst holding the chosen core. These wands would be registered in France, but if the registration was even passed on to the UK, they doubted anything would ever be done with them. Both Harry and Hermione spoke fluent French with Emma's Central region accent, so the shopkeeper didn't even suspect they weren't heading for Beauxbatons.

Harry had discovered some space expanded trunks in the family vault on visit with his Aunty Minnie as he cheekily called her, Hermione called them pocket dimensions and tried to explain the physics, but Harry's brain started to melt. Minerva visited the Grangers on the last day of August, to ensure they were all ready to catch the train, she had become very attached to the two children, and even quietly enjoyed the Aunt Minnie name they used, having promised to stick to Professor McGonagall, or Deputy Headmistress when they were in school. She advised them to keep the knowledge of their bond to themselves, and instructed them in the formalities of greeting other children of old Houses for the first time, once done, informality was then normal. She explained the Houses, refused to reveal how the sorting was done, saying it was a surprise, but nothing to fear. She left them late in the afternoon, convinced she had the Head boy and Head girl posts covered for that NEWT year in the future. She would run interference on the Headmaster. They were both told to immediately send for her if he wanted to see them, for anything.

------oooOOOooo------

The morning of July Thirty-first arrived, Harry's eleventh birthday, it was Wednesday and both parents were due into work later, a neighbour's daughter was going to look after the pair today as she had been doing most of the holidays. Hermione was first down to breakfast and was eating some cereal with fruit and yoghurt when Harry entered the room, freshly showered, he sat opposite Hermione and their eyes met. He jumped as if electrocuted, and for a few moments felt dizzy, memories of past lives and skills flooded his brain, hastily packed away and ordered as his new skill set settled in. Panting a little he looked up to see Hermione almost glowing her eyes ablaze with energy.

"Harry, are you back, are you *my Harry*?" She looked at him imploringly.

“Yes, I think fate helped us out, I think this was supposed to happen when we met for the first time on the train, but it’s me. We are back.”

“Sorry mum,” Hermione said then stood and pulled Harry across the table into a fierce kiss, magic curling around them as their parents watched open mouthed.” They released each other and sheepishly looked at their common parents.

“Emma, Dan. Sorry Mum, Dad. We have to tell you something very important, and very weird. We have lived our lives before, that’s why we are bonded, we died, multiple times fighting an evil wizard trying to take over. He hates me, he hates Hermione, because she is smart and powerful, and good. We have been sent back to defeat him, this time we have all the toys and the tricks, and Dog, your mate Cat trained us in close quarter combat, he said I had to tell you both that he was stupid to walk away from Charlotte, she was the best thing that ever happened to him, and he hopes she is happy.”

Dan looked at Harry, “Where did you hear Dog and Cat?”

Harry looked at him, “Christopher Andrew Thompson, your best friend from the SBS, died in Oman on a mission that will never exist, you were on the way home from his memorial service and he influenced you to find me dad. He loves you like a brother. He is sorry he isn’t here for you. We were dead, Hermione and I, we got killed. I can explain it all, and I will. But we don’t have time this morning, we can tell you all the stuff when you get home, but Cat was one of our trainers in the afterlife, before we dropped back into our bodies. He is awesome, and you trained us both as well, the unarmed combat you taught us is going to be so good, our bodies are so fit.

Thank you for rescuing me, I cannot begin to thank you both enough for the life you have given me, I can remember my childhood before, thankfully it no longer hurts me, abused, starved, beaten,” tears were rolling down Harry’s face. “Thank you, Dad,” he grabbed Dan around the waist and sobbed into his shirt. “Thank you.” Dan rubbed the boys back, his eyes wet with tears.

Hermione was crying in her mother’s arms, “I saw his memories mum, they were pigs, they treated him like a slave, they beat him, they didn’t let him eat enough, they never bought him his own clothes, they kept him in the cupboard under their stairs. Thank you Daddy, you saved my Harry, from a living Hell. Thank you.” She sniffed and wiped her eyes. She sat back at the table, “sorry, rather emotional, we just got a few lifetimes memories dumped in our heads, and I just got my love for Harry turned up to eleven, I am glad this didn’t happen on the train, we would have been wrecked.”

“Oh God. Ron Weasley. We are not making friends with him this time around.” Harry added as he munched on a bit of toast. We really should go into Gryffindor though, do you think we could get the hat to put Ron somewhere else?”

“It would be funny to put him in the snake pit,” Hermione giggled, “Daphne and Tracey would kill me though, how about the puffs, payback for all the rubbish you went through in the Fourth year?”

“Yeah, Susan Bones was pretty two faced really, she was always nice to my face, but she was pretty quick to wear one of those badges.”

Their parents let the neighbour’s girl in and after a brief conversation shouted their goodbyes and headed off to their practice. The two kids were sat looking at Harry’s birthday presents, mostly stuff for their forthcoming trip to Hogwarts, Dan had bought him a really nice pen set and some drawing equipment, “Why do we have to use quills again?” Hermione laughed, we should use notebooks unless we have to hand it in, parchment and quill is just ridiculous.”

“Hey you two, I asked your dad if it was OK for my friend to come around as well today, she will be here in a minute or two, she is a bit strange, so please don’t freak out.”

“Stranger than Harry?” Hermione laughed.

“No one is stranger than Harry.” They both laughed. Harry humpfed and grinned. The front door bell rang and Nikki their sitter went to let her friend in, they heard a muffled conversation, and after a few moments a face they both knew walked into the room.

“Hi kids, I am Tonks. I hope you don’t mind me……. Harry? Is that you? Harry Potter?”

“Hi cousin Nym. Long time eh?”

Nikki looked baffled, “You know Harry?”

“I babysat for him when he was still in nappies, remember my Aunt Lily and Uncle James that got killed all those years ago. Harry here is the little boy that disappeared. Harry, How? What is. I can’t. Where, no. How. I am sorry. Where were you, where you here? Have you been safe?”

“My father rescued him from where Dumbledore dumped him on a doorstep like a bottle of milk. That was the day after his parents. You know.” Hermione looked at Nikki. “Are you a witch Nikki? I can feel a little magic.”

“I am, pretty weak though, Tonks here is a lot stronger.”

“Mmmm, metamorphmagus will be, Tonks. Nice to meet you, again.”

“Have we met before?”

“We are the godparents to your son,” She smiled a wicked smile and looked at her face.

“Whoa. You can’t unload that and then stop. Who. No rewind. When.”

“Future, can’t say sweetie, spoilers. Harry and I have been sent back to sort out Moldypants once and for all. We are from the future, we used to be adults. If we were I would be giving Harry a completely different present for his birthday, but since this is his eleventh and not his eighteenth birthday, he will have to put up with cake.” She smiled. “I will need an oath of secrecy from you both, or I can obliviate the last five minutes, your call.”

The two girls produced wands and swore oaths. Tonks you are still at school?

“Yes, final year. I want to go to Auror training next so I need good grades.”

“I am sure you will be fine. We will need your help from time to time in school. You must not trust Albus Dumbledore. He meddles. He kidnapped Harry, was going to leave him with his magic hating relatives and basically leave him to be abused for ten years. Then use him like a sacrificial lamb to the slaughter, feed him to Voldemort to die and then swan in and save the world again. Do not join his barbecue chicken club. Do not swear an oath of loyalty to him. He is not on the side of the good guys.”

Tonks looked a bit sceptical, “can you prove any of this?”

“I can’t show you the future, or tell you about it, it will already have changed. I can demonstrate my magical level.” She produced her patronus, not her otter, but a snow leopard, solid and corporeal. Silent and wandless. She then transformed into the same creature and the two stood together. Harry shifted into his Panther form, the scar visible in white over his right eye. The three cats rubbed cheeks and Harry pounced on Tonks knocking her over and licking her face with the rough tongue of his animagus form. They shifted back to children, and Tonks gave Harry a long look.

“That was straight out of Sirius Black’s playbook, Harry.”

“Seriously?” Hermione groaned, “Sirius is innocent, we need to get your father on board to act on our behalf, and his, He had no trial. It was Pettigrew that betrayed my parents not Sirius.”

“How do you know all this?”

“Future me killed Pettigrew, he confessed it all as he died. We know who the betrayers are, we know what we need to do. We need help keeping Dumbledore off our cases, Minnie is on our side, we shall have to ask her to talk to your dad, I don’t have control of my House yet, so she is effectively Regent for the Potter estate.”

“Bloody buggery bollocks. That is insane. So, no birthday BJ for you then shrimp.”

Hermione snorted, “I forgot how much you like being completely inappropriate. This year, he gets cake.”

“Next year,”

“More cake.”

“Sorry shrimp, I tried,”

“S’OK Tonks, I helped deliver your son, think on that.”

Hermione gave him a quizzical look, he winked in return.

“What is he called?”

“Teddy, after your dad.”

“Just Teddy?”

“Spoilers sweetie.”

“I need something, this is too big, just to take on trust. You must be able to tell me something.”

“OK, when we start back at school, start for us, Dumbles will say ‘Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! as his opening speech. He will later tell you the third floor corridor is off limits to anyone not wishing a painful death. Hagrid has a Cerberus called Fluffy up there. The new DADA teacher will be Quirrell. When all that happens, come and find us, we will need your help.”

The Granger parents re-appeared at a little after six, bundled the kids into the car and they headed off for pizza, getting home around eight. The pair of them were sleepy so it was PJ’s teeth brushed and beds for them both. It wasn’t until the Saturday evening that they sat and the subject of Harry and Hermione’s odd actions on his birthday were brought up.

The pair of them sat and described their previous lives. Harry told them about his treatment at the Dursleys, reducing everyone except Dan to tears, his face was set to stone. Hermione described being bullied and ostracised at her school, her sixth birthday party, when no-one came. Meeting Harry on the train to Hogwarts, and Ron. They told them about the Traps they expected to find this year, the Basilisk. Rescuing Sirius in their third year, realising they loved each other. The tri-wizard cup and only Hermione having Harry’s back. Winning, the graveyard and the resurrection. It all going pear-shaped in the fifth year, and Sirius being killed. Dumbledore being killed, and discovering about the Horcruxes, the hunt. The tent. Australia. Ron’s betrayal. The battle at Hogwarts, and their deaths. As they described holding onto each other standing in a strange garden in the stars, a figure materialised into the room.

Susan looked at the parents. “I have a friend with me, he want’s to say a few words to you both.”

Dan’s friend Chris, Cat, appeared, “Hi guys, say hi to Charlie for me. I should have done the same as you Dog, I had the years in, but what is done is done.” Dan wrapped his old friend in his arms. A lot of manly back slapping ensued. A little later when they had settled.

“I trained these two, in older bodies, in close quarter combat. We were planning on sending them back to that stupid tournament, when they were a bit older and more able to handle themselves. Then I made a faint connection with you at my memorial, and guided you to Harry, now they lived in the same house, we needed to give them the memories before school. Can you imagine that snog between two kids everyone thought of as brother and sister? We will need to be sneaky rather than aggressive with them, but we can do what’s needed.”

------oooOOOooo------

On the first of September, they planned an early breakfast and then a steady drive to the Station. The four of them chatted away and eventually it was time to head out. Harry stood and carried his plate to the dish washer, helping Hermione load it up with her bowl and the

rest of the breakfast things. “All good,” She nodded and pulled him into a big hug, “one last kiss before we go”, and snogged him hard. Harry stood looking a little spaced out, “I am going to miss those.”

“Me too. Me too. It will pass quickly enough, I want to enjoy a normal school life, as far as we can.”

They arrived at Kings Cross at a little after nine, the lack of parking meant they had to say their goodbyes at the car and then the two new starters walked into the station building hand in hand wearing their back packs with their trunks shrunk down inside them. Hedwig had set off to fly up on her own at some point in the night, Harry knew better than to tell his clever familiar how to do her job. Crookshanks was sat across Hermione’s shoulders. They walked in through the entrance hall and turned to the second Hall and platforms 9 and 10, they slipped through the barrier and onto Platform 9¾ the familiar red Steam Engine sat at the platform, hissing and jetting the occasional cloud of steam at random intervals. They wandered along the platform and climbed into the second carriage, walking down the train until they found a compartment near the back, they went in and sat down, sitting silently for a few minutes.

“if we get Ron into another house, will it change things too much?” Harry mused out loud.

“Stuff is going to change, we already agreed trying to rely on future knowledge would be a disaster, just from our previous lives, we know things play out differently without us knowing anything. We just live our lives, but this time we know who our allies are, and who to take off the board at the first opportunity. Shame we are both in young bodies, in our last years I used to fantasize about you shagging me on the train on the way to school,”

“Really? I still get surprised that you had a crush on me all that time and I had absolutely no idea, I was convinced you liked Ron.”

“Harry, I thought you were cute, I mended your glasses so I could see your dreamy green eyes more clearly, and the only hesitation I was having about leaving Hogwarts leading up to Halloween was that I would have to give up magic, and I would never see you again, then you crashed into the toilet jumped on a troll and saved my life. I thought you were cute before that point, but after that moment I swore to myself that I would be with you until the end of time, even if you never noticed me, I knew that at least one person in the castle would have my back. I wrote to my mum about you and what I could figure out about your home life, she told me you would be emotionally repressed, you would need to learn love, to recognise it in yourself. I made a vow to hug you at least once every day. A couple of times in our third year, I felt you getting hard, when I was holding you, I so nearly snogged your face off, I remember Sirius telling me to go for it, and the feeling in my heart when you relaxed and kissed me back. Dumbledore obliviated us ten minutes later. He stole so much from our lives. I am not sure who the prophecy refers to when it says Dark Lord, because Riddle killed you, Dumbledore destroyed our lives. I hate that bearded bloviator.”

Harry pulled her into a hug, “I love you,” he whispered into her hair. “I have been loved in this life, always. I can’t remember my birth parents, or Sirius in this life, but mum and dad have always been there, they are really awesome people and I can never repay what their love means to me. To have a loving family is so precious, it is almost worth the shitty lives I lived,

just to appreciate how fantastic a loving family is, and never take it for granted. Your mum and dad, my mum and dad are really amazing people. Once this is sorted we, all four of us, need to go on an epic holiday, take a year and travel the whole world. Take Luna with us and find a Snorkack." He laughed, we need to look out for Luna next year, I love that girl, she is precious. We should befriend Neville this time around."

"You know we had this conversation with your mum and dad at Susan's place on nowhen land about twenty times don't you?"

"Yeah, sorry, it's a bit confusing I am not entirely sure which bits happened in which timeline, I need to sit and sort my memories, once the train gets moving I will pretend to sleep and tidy up my memories, otherwise I will send you crazy."

The door opened and a slightly chubby looking Daphne Greengrass looked into the compartment, Harry looked up, "Daphne Greengrass isn't it?"

"She looked at Harry quizzically, "Yes, and who do I have the pleasure of meeting?"

Harry stood and gave a slight bow, kissing the back of her hand as dead Sirius had taught him, "Harry Potter, at your disposal, may I introduce Hermione Granger, of the New House Granger." Hermione stood and gave a slight bob of a curtsey to Daphne.

"Daphne returned the curtsey, "I am Daphne Greengrass, please call me Daphne, this is my Cousin Tracey Davis of House Davis. May we join you?"

"Please, come in, call me Harry, and under no circumstances mention anything ending in lived."

"Call me Hermione, sorry my mum likes Shakespeare, she is French so why is beyond me, but parents."

"Hi please call me Tracey, nice to meet you both, Hermione, Harry." She nodded at each in turn.

Harry helped them with their trunks and stashed them on the rack over their heads.

Daphne sat down and looked at the two, "I am sorry if this is intrusive, but where have you been Harry? You disappeared from our world as a baby and no-one knew where you were living. Have you been safe?"

"I have Daphne, it's a very private story, if we become really good friends I might tell you one day, but I was adopted by Hermione's parents, and they are fantastic people. I have had a really happy life, especially since I spend every day with Hermione, we are super close, and one day I am going to ask her to marry me, if she doesn't kill me in the meantime for being stupid. We live in the mundane world away from all the nonsense that surrounds my name, it's allowed me to have a happy time, and I would not change a moment of it. I lost my birth parents one night I have no memory of, one of my earliest memories is my third birthday and being on a trampoline with a giggling Hermione who laughed so much she got hiccups. I am

not some superhero, I am an eleven year old kid going to a boarding school, and I am worried about missing my mum, just like everyone else on the train."

Tracey smiled at him, "You are really cute Harry, if Hermione gets fed up with you come and see me." She giggled, "only messing, but I read all the story books about you, and I sort of expected an entitled jerk, not a sweet kid who loves his mum and his, stepsister? You two aren't related are you?"

"No." Hermione replied, fiddling with her jumper, "We are not blood relatives, I did the test at Gringotts, back fifteen generations, Harry is Evans, Peverill and Potter, I am Deurre from France and Granger." She smiled at the girls surprised faces She laughed.

Daphne asked, "What Houses do you think you will be in?"

"Gryffindor we think, Headmistress McGonagall is my magical guardian, she was close to my mother, and since I live with Hermione and her folks, she is Hermione's as well, her folks aren't magical, muggles I guess, but I hate that word, it sounds so offensive. Hermione's dad, my dad, he has no magic, but he would kick anyone's ass, he is super cool. He was in the sneaky beaky bit of the armed forces, we only know a little bit, but he rescued Hermione's mum Emma from the middle of the African jungle after she was taken hostage by a load of guerilla's and they fell in love, she is awesome as well. But to answer, I would feel really guilty if we weren't in Aunty Minnie's house, and don't ever admit I called her that." He blushed, "I am dead, I didn't even get to the school and I slipped up."

Hermione giggled, "she doesn't mind, if you call her it in class you will be cleaning the castle with a toothbrush,"

"I will go wherever Hermione is, we don't like being separated. We have been together as long as we can remember." Harry added. "What about you?"

Daphne and Tracey exchanged glances, "probably Slytherin, our families have all been in the snake pit." Daphne said, "Draco Malfoy will be there this year, so I really don't want to be in the same house, he makes my flesh crawl."

"I know it's supposed to be a secret, but I do know if you ask, the sorting, thingy, takes account. They do it alphabetically, so Tracey will be first of all of us, if you ask to go to one of the other houses it will take note, if you are clever, try for Ravenclaw, if you want good friends try for Hufflepuff, one of my distant cousins is a seventh year in the puffs, and she is awesome."

Hermione looked across at Harry, "Tonks?"

"Yeah she is in her NEWT year, I am going to walk up and jump in her lap, she used to baby sit me when I was with my birth parents, before Riddle screwed that up. How hard do you think she will hex me?" He started to laugh. Once she realises who I am I might survive, but she is one of the few bits I remember, she used to make me laugh so much.

"What do you think Daph, try for the puffs, you could do Ravenclaw, but I would struggle in Nerdvana, I quite like the sound of a friendly House, because we know that the snake pit is

all about control.

“The House system should be scrapped, it just creates division, we four are getting on, but how often do the Snakes and the Lions hang out in the school.

The train whistle announced that it was preparing to leave and they heard the announcement telling anyone not travelling to the school to leave the train. They were off, the train was leaving the station.

Neville Longbottom appeared in the doorway, “Has anyone seen my toad?”

Daphne laughed out loud, “Is that what you say to all the girls Neville Longbottom?”

Tracey and Hermione burst into fits of giggles and Neville turned scarlet.

“No, erm, I. erm, my. Erm, no, he is.” Daphne stood and wrapped Neville in a hug. “Calm down Nev, come in and sit down. We will go find that damned toad in a minute. You need to meet these guys.”

Harry stood as Daphne let Neville go. He had never seen this side of Daphne, she had been the ‘ice queen’ in his past lives. “Neville Longbottom, may I introduce myself, I am Harry Potter. Please call me Harry, I believe we are godbrothers, and if our parents were still with us, we would have been raised as such. It has been too long, and I would like to become your friend Neville. May I call you Neville or Nev?” Harry took Neville’s had and shook it as he stood mouth agape and his brain caught up.

“Harry. Harry Potter. My mum and your mum were close friends, but I never thought we would meet after, well you know what, I. Yes please call me Nev. I would like to be your friend Harry. Very much. I am not much of a wizard, but I will be a true friend. Thank you.”

Harry pushed Neville towards a seat, “May I introduce my very close friend Hermione Granger, of new house Granger, she is very clever, her and Daphne will be top of the class I bet.”

Neville gathered himself and stood giving Hermione a well practiced bow, he kissed her hand. ”Miss Granger, Neville Longbottom, please call me Nev.”

Hermione stood and bobbed a quick curtsey, “Nev, please call me Hermione, and I too would be honoured to call you a friend. She smiled into his face, and pulled him into a hug, “I guess if Daphne gives you hugs, I should as well.” She let him go and sat. He was glowing a little. Tracey stood and spun him around before giving him a squeeze, “What am I Nev? Chopped fish? Where’s my hug?”

He finally cracked and laughed, sorry Tracey, I am just so scared of everything on this train. Thank you everyone for making me welcome. It means a lot, I won’t hold it against you if you don’t bother with me around the cool kids, I am a bit of a wet lettuce.”

Harry put his hand on Neville’s shoulder, “Nev, I want good friends, I saw Malfoy in what’s-her-faces Robe shop, and he is a poisonous self-centred little pustule, I know who is worth

befriending. You need a bit of confidence, there is nothing wrong with you. What wand have you got, they can impact your magic."

"It's my Dad's, my Gran want's me to use it."

"Sorry Nev, it doesn't work that way, Ollivander is adamant that the wand chooses the wizard. I don't really think they do, but I do believe that every wizard or witch is different, and need their own particular wand to get the best results. Once we are sorted, we can talk to the head of house and see if Garrick will pop over to the school and sort you a new wand."

"Err, thanks Harry, I don't know what house I will be in, but I will ask."

"Good man."

Ron Weasley appeared, "Have you seen Harry Potter anywhere? I heard he is on the train,"

"*Non merci, nous avons plein d'idiots roux*," Hermione replied.

Daphne caught her eye and added, " *D'accord, je ne suis pas intéressé par un bouffon roux*,"

Ron looked at them and left the compartment muttering about foreign students.

Harry walked to the open door, and cast a silent wandless summons for Trevor the frog, a few seconds later he glided into Harry's hand, "Here you go Neville, your Toad."

Daphne looked at Harry thoughtfully, she had seen the summoning charm, Wandless, silent. He was powerful and noble. She was going to be writing to her father. The Heir Potter was back, he was nice and rather cute, if she was honest with herself. Their house had been partners and allies of the Potters in the past, their deaths had thrown it into disarray, Harry was too young now, but in a few short years, he would be a powerful ally, and if Hermione decided she didn't want the cute little lad, then she might just have to make him an offer. Whatever happened down the road, her world would be better in the Potter camp than trying to manage the Malfoy ego, without letting him take advantage.

A few hours into the journey, Malfoy and the bookends arrived, "Potter"

Harry sat and looked at him, he remained silent. Waiting for Draco to say something that required an answer."

Draco pulled himself upright, he held out his hand, then lowered it, turned and left the compartment.

Daphne laughed, "Brilliant Harry, Ickle Draco had no idea what to do. He expects everyone to bow to the Malfoy name, because daddy is loaded, or in Draco's head he is anyway."

Harry laughed, "can Draco speak French?"

"Not that I have ever heard, his mother Narcissa can't and Lucius his father is a moron. They epitomise everything wrong with the whole blood purity hippogriff dung that his sort hide behind. Harry's mother was muggleborn, and she was the smartest pupil to pass through

Hogwarts for years. Harry's family is known for marrying outside of the great houses, and judging by the power I can sense in Harry, it hasn't done them any harm. Do you know Harry, your unruly hair comes from your great great grandmother, she was a Chinese magical that your great great grandfather met on a trade trip, you have a tiny bit of Chinese blood in your heritage, and I think your family is stronger because of it. When we are older, we need to get rid of the pureblood rhetoric, it is dragging our nation into the past."

Harry looked across to Hermione, she returned his look in agreement. Daphne was a revelation, she had revealed more in this train trip than in three lifetimes before. "Next time Malfoy turns up, Hermione and I will talk in French, you can translate for us Daphne, although it can be any old nonsense, I think I am going to mock Draco Malfoy at every opportunity, it's difficult to have minions if you are a laughing stock.

Malfoy returned about a half hour later, "I am Heir Malfoy, please call me Draco. He held out his hand.

Harry took his hand and shook it, he was tempted to kiss it, but thought better of it at the last minute, "*Salutations Héritier Malfoy, je suis l'Héritier Potter, vous pouvez m'appeler Maître. Je n'ai jamais vu autant de gel capillaire sur un garçon auparavant. Avez-vous essayé d'insérer votre tête dans le cul de votre serviteur ?*"

("Greetings Heir Malfoy, I am Heir Potter, you may call me Master. I have never seen so much hair gel on a boy before. Have you been trying to insert your head in your minion's arse?)

Daphne stood and bobbed a very slight curtsy, "My Lord Potter thanks you for your greeting, he has grown up in France with the family of his close friend Hermione, and extends his greetings in return, he speaks English infrequently, and sometimes confuses his words, so prefers to speak in his own language. He mistakenly assumed that you could speak French given your French family name"

"Eh bien, oui, je n'avais pas réalisé que tu étais un bigot d'esprit et le fils d'un meurtrier, peut-être devrions-nous faire en sorte qu'un mouton soit attaché à ton lit pour ton plaisir à notre arrivée à l'école."

(Why, Yes, I did not realise that you were a small minded bigot and the son of a murderer, perhaps we should arrange for a sheep to be tied to your bed for your pleasure when we arrive at the school)

Daphne's eyes flicked across to Harry and narrowed for a moment, "My Lord Potter extends the hand of friendship to you and hopes that your relationship can continue in a similar vein after we arrive at the school. On his behalf, I must apologise for his lack of English, I will tutor him at length to correct this omission." She bobbed and Malfoy realised he had been dismissed. He smiled weakly and left the compartment.

Eventually the train announcer declared that they would be arriving in thirty minutes, and Hermione and Harry unshipped and enlarged their trunks, "Nev, if you have your uniform you can change in here with me, the ladies can go with Hermione."

Daphne was impressed, “magically expanded trunks, these are brilliant. You can’t buy them anymore. Where did you get this one Hermione?”

“It’s one of Harry’s family trunks, this one was used by Sirius Black when he was at school with Harry’s father. Sirius lived with Harry’s parents like Harry does with mine, Sirius and James were closer than brothers.

Tracey asked, “Didn’t he betray them to you-know-Who.”

Hermione. “Call him Tommy Boy or something, don’t use a title or a name that makes him sound cool, he is just a murdering psychopath. Sirius is innocent, we know this now, it was their other friend that betrayed them and he framed Sirius. My folks are going to talk to the DMLE about getting Sirius a trial, or rather, they will hire a lawyer to do that.” The girls were changed, and paying a quick visit to the bathroom in the trunk, they rejoined the others in the train compartment.

They locked and warded their trunks against others but left them unshrunk as the train was slowing as it approached Hogsmead Station. Once on the platform they hear the familiar voice of Hagrid calling the first years to him, they followed him down the path to the boats, and once more admired the view of the castle across the lake. Harry and Hermione climbed into a boat and were joined by Daphne and Tracey, Neville climbed into the boat behind, joining Susan Bones, Hannah Abbot, and Sally-Anne Perks.

The boats bobbed across the lake, and into the cave where the jetty sat, ducking under the foliage at the entrance. Once everyone was safely out of their boats, Hagrid walked them up to the castle doors before theatrically banging on them, and announcing their arrival. Professor McGonagall opened the door and ushered them inside. The group of four stood lost in thought, which houses would they be selected for, the school ghosts went by almost unnoticed, Draco Malfoy and Ronald Weasley almost got into a fight, Harry and Hermione stood quietly and observed. The were called into the main hall and filed down to the front where a three-legged stool sat with a battered old hat. The Hat sang its song, Harry wasn’t really listening, he was looking around at the room, he saw Snape glaring at everyone, and Quirellmort with his ridiculous turban. Harry didn’t wear glasses in this timeline, and his scar was no longer vivid, nor was it the lightning bolt shape everyone expected, his surgeon had opened it up to remove the infection, and whilst it had healed as well as could be expected, the resulting scar was not the one everyone thought of, accordingly he wasn’t attracting attention as he had in previous attempts.

“Abbot, Hannah. – **Hufflepuff**”
“Bones, Susan, - **Hufflepuff**”
“Brown, Lavender – **Hufflepuff**” *That was different* Hermione thought

The sorting went on, “Davis, Tracey – **Gryffindor**” Tracey stood looking shocked and headed over to the Lion’s table.

“Granger, Hermione,” She sat on the stool and the hat was dropped onto her head. “Hello again, another time traveller. It’s been a while since I have seen one of you. Fierce intelligence, you would do well in Ravenclaw.” *No, please put me in Gryffindor, I am here*

with my husband and soul mate, we shall be together and I have friends in Gryffindor. "Well, if you insist, - **Gryffindor**."

"Greengrass Daphne, - **Gryffindor**."

Malfoy went to Slytherin to join his bookends, as did Pansy Parkinson.

"Potter, Harry," the hall fell silent, "Did she say Harry Potter?" He sat on the stool, The Hat was lowered over his head, "Are here you are, your wife insisted upon Gryffindor, I can see why, Lord Potter." *Hello again Gryff, before you announce me, can you place Weasley in a different house, he is a betrayer and we want nothing to do with him this time.* "I think I can help you out My Lord, - **Gryffindor**." As McGonagall lifted the hat clear of Harry's head he felt something hard and cold on his head, he reached up and as the hat was pulled clear found himself holding the Sword of Gryffindor in his hand. He stood looking at the beautiful sword, it spoke softly to him, "*Greetings Champion, I will come to your hand whenever you call, use me as a blade or a wand, as you see fit,"* It slowly faded from view. There were some cheers at the Gryffindor table, "We got Potter!" it died away as he stood holding the sword for a few moments.

"Weasley, Ronald," - the hat was silent for a few minutes, - "**Hufflepuff**." Ron jumped from the chair, "No, I refuse. No. No. I want Gryffindor. All my family go to Gryffindor. I am not going to the puffs."

Pomona Sprout spoke over the hub-bub, "Weasley, if you don't want detention tomorrow night, sit at your HOUSE table, before you make any more enemies of your new housemates." Red faced and head slumped he walked over to the table and sat at the end, no one offered to talk to him.

Harry was sat alongside Hermione, with Neville on his other side, Daphne, Tracey and Parva were sat opposite them, "I wasn't expecting to see you two in the Lion's Den, Daphne, Tracey. How did that work out?"

Tracey smiled, "I asked the hat to put me into a house where Daphne and I would be safe, and He shouted Gryffindor, and then whispered that Daphne would follow." Daphne gave her friend some significant side eye, "I didn't get a choice, I shall make the best of it, hopefully my father is not too upset. Being away from Malfoy, is an unexpected bonus."

Harry listened to Dumbledore's ridiculous comments before the meal, and surreptitiously checking the food for potions put some food on his plate, choosing some lean chicken, and green vegetables, with a few carrots and some mashed potatoes. He avoided looking in the direction of Snape or Quirellmort, and decided to keep it simple until he could slip into the room of requirements with Hermione.

After the meal, Dumbledore once again made the speech about death on the third floor corridor, he had a plan for the philosopher's stone, but they had plenty of time, he hoped.

They were led to their dorm room, chatting with Tracey, Daphne and Hermione, made for a change of pace, they went their separate ways and he dropped into his bed, Neville in the next bed rather than Ron, he was asleep in minutes.

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The friends met in the common room early and went to breakfast. They were handed their schedules by Professor McGonagall, “welcome to Gryffindor, I am sure you will make me proud.”

They had Potions Friday morning, with Snape. Harry sat with Hermione, Daphne with Neville, and Tracey with Parva. Harry sat whilst the dungeon bat billowed in and gave his speech about brewing fame. Shame he couldn’t brew some shampoo, Harry mused. Inevitably, Snape started,

“Potter, our new celebrity. What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?”

“A sleeping draught, possible the draught of living death, Sir.”

“Let’s try again. Potter, where would you look if I told you to find me a bezoar?”

“Bezoars are created in a goats stomach Sir, if I wanted to find one I would look in either the potions store, or the hospital wing, they are a universal antidote to many common poisons, Sir.”

“What is the difference, Potter, between monkshood and wolfsbane?”

“It’s a trick question Sir, they are the same, also known as Aconite.”

Snape stared at him, and he felt the familiar tickle of a mental probe, he showed Snape a memory of Severus calling his mother Lily a mudblood, from her perspective, so he felt the last scraps of friendship die. *‘find anything interesting yet Professor?’* To his credit Snape did not visibly react. Harry turned to Hermione, “I am not sure I can do this. The rules allow us to hire a private tutor, shall we walk out and do potions independently?”

“Lets try this lesson and see how it goes, we should stay back after and perhaps ask Susan for a bit of help?” Harry nodded. The lesson went to the usual disaster that was potions. Harry and Hermione created a perfect potion, and Daphne kept Neville’s nerves under control, to produce another acceptable batch. Crabbe melted his cauldron.

Snape awarded Hermione and Harry a Troll and vanished their effort, Hermione had already kept back two phials with samples in them. The class was over and the students left, Harry sat on the stool, with Hermione at his side. “What are you two waiting for, the lesson is over.”

“Oh no, Severus, it is just about to begin”, Susan Sto-Helit walked in, hair in a bob, accompanied by Lily Potter. “Just what games do you think you are playing with my son, Sev. I know you sold your soul to that piece of Dragon fertilizer you worship, but if you try to punish my son, for your short comings with regard to his father, you will never get a minute’s rest for the remainder of your very short life.” She walked right up to his face.

“Lily? How, you were killed.”

“Ding! Give the man a prize. Let me introduce my good friend and Harry’s adopted Aunt, Susan. Granddaughter of DEATH. You are correct I was killed; I am in fact dead. If you don’t stop behaving like a petulant toddler, you will be as well, only your accommodation will not be as nice as ours, it might be a little warmer. Do you understand Sev?”

Snape’s mouth opened and closed, he said nothing.

“Lost for words.” Lily turned to Harry and Hermione, “You two get off and get your dinner, Susan and I are going to educate Severus on the importance of treating children in education fairly, Susan used to be a Headmistress, she has strong views about these things.”

Harry and Hermione filed out of the room. “Is it wrong that I wanted to watch them do something evil to Snape.”

“No Harry, I was thinking about a bone dissolving hex, myself, I had forgotten, just how truly awful he was, both as a teacher, and as a person. If he isn’t reformed in the next lesson, we’ll walk out and organise our own tutor.” Harry nodded and they entered the great Hall ready for some lunch.

As they sat down, Percy Weasley passed them a note, “The Headmaster wants to see you after lunch, Potter.”

“Do you know what it is about, Weasley?” He asked.

“That is not my concern, you have your instructions. Do not be late.”

“No. Unless it is directly related to a matter of my schooling, I am not obliged to attend. If I attend it will be with my guardian in attendance. These are stipulated in the school charter, and not negotiable at the whim of a fifth form prefect. Good day Weasley.” Harry turned back to his food.

Hermione looked up at Percy, “Is there something else?” He strutted off muttering to himself.

Harry looked over to the top table, Dumbledore was not in attendance, but McGonagall was, he walked along to the table and passed her the note, “Should we attend, or can we ignore this?” He asked.

“Leave it with me, I will speak to him first, and if there is a legitimate reason, we shall attend together.” She smiled and nodded at Harry.

“You might remind him that he still has my father’s cloak, it is a family heirloom, and should have been returned years ago.”

McGonagall gave him a look and left without speaking.

They took the opportunity of their free afternoon to slip up to the seventh floor, and after a few minutes stepped into the room of lost things. “Shame Dobby isn’t our elf in this timeline.” Harry muttered. “See if we can find a couple of brooms we can cover more ground. It is sat on top of a bust.”

They found a few brooms, but only one was serviceable, so Harry got on and Hermione climbed up behind him. Flying slowly above the stacks of old furniture they looked left and right until after what felt like an age, Hermione pointed to a white marble bust. “That’s it, have you got a magic proof bag?”

Harry landed them a few yards away and levitated the diadem with his wand. Hermione stood alongside him with the bag held open. Harry dropped the jewelled headpiece into the bag, and Hermione closed it with the draw string.

They flew back to the door and slipped out to the corridor. “Astronomy Tower, or walk in the grounds?”

“Lets go down to the tree at the lake, we can sit and relax for an hour, and see if Susan is free to collect the Horcrux?”

“Good plan,” the pair set off through the castle, “can we get hold of the map do you think? I really don’t need to bump into Dumbles whilst carrying a you-know-what.” They didn’t encounter anyone and slipped out of the doors and across to the lake unbothered. Once at the tree they sat in one of their favourite spots, and Hermione called for Susan.

“Hello little ones, you are so sweet at this age, you are adorably cute Hermione, sorry, I should be more professional with you two munchkins. What have you got for me?” Her hair tied itself up out of the way as she spoke.

“Diadem of Ravenclaw, one of the Horcruxes,” Harry said as Hermione fished the bag out of her Robes pocket.

A fireplace poker appeared in Susan’s hand, “tip it onto the grass, I can reap the shard from the Diadem.” Hermione did as she was asked and as soon as the headpiece landed on the earth, Susan stuck the tip of the poker onto the jewel at the centre, with an almost inaudible shriek the soul shard of Tom Riddle was dispatched to a waiting room, especially for him, in DEATH’s offices.

“Well done my munchkins, take the afternoon off.” Susan smiled and faded from view.

“She was very happy this afternoon,” Harry mused.

Hermione picked up the Diadem and placed it in her bag. “Which one is next?”

Chapter 6: The Godfather

“We should make a move to get Sirius freed from Azkaban.”

“Mmm, do we talk to Susan Bones, get her to send a message to Amelia, or do we contact Ted Tonks directly?”

“Can’t we rescue Dobby, it would be a lot easier if we had elf mail.”

“Don’t let Hedwig hear you say that, she will peck your ears off.”

“Is Owl mail secure, I wouldn’t put it past,” she mimed a long beard, “to intercept pupils’ letters.”

“We should check ourselves for bugs,”

“Or small green water beatles?”

Hermione pulled her wand out and checked over Harry. She found over a dozen tracking charms. Two listening charms, neither active. Harry repeated the act for Hermione and found six tracking charms and two listening charms. Once they were happy they were clear, they cast their ‘teflon’ charm. It was a new charm Hermione had developed in cahoots with Lily, it made charms slide off anything they wore. It would need reapplying once a week, but it would stop them being snooped upon.

“Who were my tracking charms from?”

“Dumbles, Snape and Quirellmort. Mine?”

“Same, listening were all Dumbles though,”

They settled down on a conjured blanket leaning against the tree, Hermione resting her head on Harry’s chest and closed her eyes.

“We should send a test message with Hedwig. Ask your mum or dad something obtuse, that they can answer indirectly and check if the message gets through?”

“Minerva is on our side, should we tell her the truth? We didn’t expect your Dad to rescue me from the Dursley’s when we made all our plans, so we didn’t expect Minerva to break from Dumbles this early.”

“We could get our folks to contact Ted Tonks, we had mentioned it at Gringotts, we just need some secure comms.”

“Should we sneak down to the ward-room and add ourselves to the wards as founders? Rowena and Godric were happy to show us what to do.”

“I know we planned on sorting Quirellmort last, but if we get Susan or DEATH itself to reap him, we could get that out the way and just sort the Horcruxes at our leisure?”

“Mmmm, too many options, is Quirellmort a threat to us, if not let’s scoop up the other items? If he becomes a threat, we can call the BOSS down on him, that’s not a fight he can win.”

“In conclusion then, we need to get Ted Tonks started, to get Amelia Bones investigating, then we can gift her the rat.”

“Professor McGonagall wants to see you in the entry hall.” The voice came from nearby, Harry swivelled his head and saw a familiar face, her hair currently pale blue. “Tonks?”

“Yeah, and you proved your story since the last time I saw you, we need to talk. Come on you two McKitty awaits.”

McGonagall met them in the atrium between the castle doors and the entry to the Great Hall. “Thank you miss Tonks, if you pair would follow me to my office I should like a quick word.” She led them to her office. “Take a seat,” she motioned to a pair of chairs and sat in the third, “cup of tea?”

“Thank you,” The tea appeared and she poured for everyone, reaching over to her desk, she picked up a folded silver cloth. “I believe this is your father’s invisibility cloak, Harry. Please don’t use it to go near the third floor corridor, I am not sure what Albus is up to in there, but he seems eager for you to have this cloak.”

“I think he expects me to use it to probe the stuff hidden in that corridor, I have no intention of going anywhere near it, I have no doubt it is covered in tracking charms so we need to clean it of all of them first.” Harry slipped his wand out from his holster and performed the check. He found three tracking charms and a listening charm, that he removed, he quickly found the thread attached to the cloak and gently removed it, before levitating the thread over to the fire and letting it burn in the flames.

“That is some impressive casting for a first year, Mr Potter.”

Harry smiled, “I’ve been practicing.”

Hermione slapped his arm, “Prat. We agreed, we can tell Aunt Minnie.” She looked at Harry, he nodded fractionally in agreement. Hermione pulled out her French made wand and cast a detection charm over McGonagall. Harry cast detection charms around the office for listening charms, finding four, he disabled them. “Minerva, you have signs of compulsion, loyalty and other charms on you. They all bear the magical signature of the Headmaster. I am going to remove them from you, please close your eyes, you may feel dizzy.” McGonagall sat a little straighter in her chair and pursed her lips, Hermione wasn’t sure if it was the news she had just imparted, or being called Minerva by an almost twelve year old girl.

Hermione cast the cleaning spells and purged McGonagall of the various compulsions she had been under, and checked her for tracking and listening charms, before banishing those into the fireplace. “That should be everything Aunt Minnie, Harry and I need to tell you something that happened to us, as long as your occulemency can withstand Dumbledore, that is?”

McGonagall sat and blinked a few times, her mind sorting through the obviously very advanced level of their magic, and the rather mature bearing and cadence of their speech. She reached for her cup, and took a swallow of tea, before speaking, “Am I still speaking to Hermione Granger?”

“Yes. But you are talking to me on my third or fourth life. Harry is on something like his ninth, if he were a cat this would be it. We can’t tell you about the future, it is probably changed now, but we can tell you that Albus Dumbledore is responsible for so much of the suffering we went through in our previous lives, we need allies we can trust. We cannot trust Albus Dumbledore, he plans to sacrifice Harry against a resurrected Voldermort, Tom Marvolo Riddle, ex head boy, because he believes Harry has a part of his soul trapped in his scar. Do you remember asking about the scar? Dumbles told you some nonsense about his being a map of the London underground, as if he even knows what that is.” Hermione stopped for a drink.

Harry took over, “There is a prophecy about me, fate regards me as a child of destiny, although to channel Sirius, my mum was Lily, not Destiny. Because I have this destiny to fulfil, DEATH has sent me back, numerous times. This time, they are helping us, both of us. We will marry when we are older. We are soul mates, and in at least one previous life we were married, and Hermione was expecting. Dumbles doesn’t want us to be together, that would give me a reason to live, he wants me to walk to my death, to let Riddle kill me, so he can be the hero I guess. It doesn’t work. He gets himself killed, I give up, die, Riddle wins, and the mundane military wipe Hogwarts from the face of the planet. A witch hunt the likes of which hasn’t occurred since the dark ages wipes the magical community from the face of the planet within two years. The cost of Albus’s hubris is annihilation.”

Minerva took a deep breath, “This is a lot to take in, a lot to accept at face value. I had already realised that Albus was scheming something about you, he was not at all pleased when you declined his note to meet with him. When I asked why, he did not have a reason that required a pupil to meet the headmaster, he tried to use the cloak, and when I informed him that as your guardian I would deliver it, he tried to tell me that he was your guardian. I asked him where you lived. He has no idea. I imagine he will find out before long.

I don’t want you to think I am accusing you of lying, but can you prove any of this. These are serious items, Vold, Riddle as you call him. He was Head boy?”

“He released the basilisk from the chamber of secrets in 1943 and killed Myrtle Warren, whose ghost still occupies the girls bathroom on the second floor.”

“Moaning Myrtle was killed by Voldemort?”

“Yes. His name is an anagram of Tom Marvolo Riddle,” Hermione wrote the name in the air and swapped the letters into I am Lord Voldemort. “The big scary dark lord is a teenage

sociopath. He killed Myrtle to create his first Horcrux, his first soul shard. It is in his diary. We know where, but accessing it might be difficult. He made a total of five at this point in time. We need to destroy them all first in order to send his soul to its final destination."

"Do you know where he is?"

Hermione and Harry exchanged a long look, "He is possessing Professor Quirrell. If this timeline is the same, he is on the back of his head, under that stupid turban."

Minerva started, "Quirrell? He who. He is here in the castle. Does the Headmaster know?"

"We think so, that's what the nonsense with all the traps in corridor three is, Dumbles has hidden the philosopher's stone in the mirror of Erised, the rest of it is to entrap Moldyfort when he tries to get it, but we got through them all on at least one of our lives as first years without any issues, the devil's snare is more Neville's bag than ours, but we also think Dumbles was setting me up to be killed so he could end Riddle. He doesn't know about all the other Horcruxes yet. The less he knows the easier our lives will be, our eleven, sorry, Hermione will be *twelve* next week,"

She glared at him, "I could go off you, *soulmate."*

"Nah, you still love me, anyway our cores aren't developed enough for a direct confrontation with Dumbles, and he is not the light wizard his reputation is built on. His manipulation of my previous lives left me an emotional wasteland. He potioned and cast multiple compulsion charms on us, pushed me into a friendship with Ronald Weasley, so I would goof off and not learn magic, the Dursley's kept me underfed and physically, therefore magically' weak.

I never received any affection from them, so I was emotionally stunted. The wildcard that kept throwing his plans was Hermione. I *liked* her from the moment we met on the train, despite Ron trying to get rid of her, we became even closer to each other. In our earlier lives Hermione was the one good thing I know was genuine. I don't know if Molly Weasley's affection was real or just for effect."

Minerva sighed, "What do you need from me. I assume you are not going after Quirrell immediately, nor Albus."

"No, but we want to get Sirius out of Azkaban, we know where Pettigrew is. We need to get Ted Tonks on board representing our interests, and Sirius's. He can talk to Madame Bones, we need to get Sirius's case reviewed, maybe a trial. There are a few ideas that work."

"We need a secure method of communication, one that Dumbles cannot intercept, nor block. Ideally a House Elf, but the Potter elves died defending my Grandparents, and the only Black elf we know of will not recognise Harry as heir, not at this stage."

"Harry is Sirius's Heir?"

"Eventually, I never asked when he did the will, but he needs to take the Head of House Position in order for it to be recognised, his elf is called Kreacher, and is a pretty twisted individual. He has been treated appallingly and is quite vicious as a result.

Minerva put her cup down, “I shall make an appointment with Ted Tonks at this Law firm, for all three of us. Leave the timing with me, I know your schedules and we can use the floo in my office to go to his workplace. I suspect his wife may well appear, she did harangue Albus about your welfare for seven or eight years. I let her know you were fine and happy after I saw you the first time, and she cried. I didn’t tell her your address, but she does live in the same part of the muggle world as you both, you may be near neighbours. I hope you understand me keeping your address quiet as long as I did.” They nodded in agreement.

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Hermione’s twelfth birthday party was celebrated in the Gryffindor common room, and mostly enjoyed by all. The Weasley twins were offering cakes and neither Harry nor Hermione dared to try one. No one became a canary, and they were trying to remember which year those appeared. They all had a slice of cake and some fizzy drinks and Hermione received presents from all her friends as well as her parents. Tucked in one of the books from her parents was a book on cyphers and coded messages from her father. Hermione passed it to Harry with a nod. She whispered into his ear, “We can use a book code. I know my mum’s favourite books and I have some of the same copies here. That means we can use Hedwig.” Harry smiled back. Muggle codes, wizards probably didn’t know they existed. Brilliant.

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The following afternoon they slipped out of the Castle via the floo in Minnie’s office and into the reception of Ted Tonks law firm, Tonks & Ibbotson. Harry stumbled in, managing to remain upright, to his relief, he hated floo travel. Hermione stepped in with nonchalant grace and gave him a smug smirk, McGonagall stepped through last and with a wand wave cleaned the soot away from everyone.

The young lady in reception clearly recognised Minerva, and standing spoke to the group. “Professor McGonagall, and party, please follow me. We are set up in our meeting room for you all.” Pushing the door open to the room. “Take a seat, I will fetch some refreshments and let Mr Tonks know you are all here.” They filed in and sat along one side of the table

“Whilst we await, do either of you have issues with Ronald Weasley?”

“He murdered me, potioned both of us from our fifth years onwards we think. He betrayed us on a number of occasions. What brings him up?” Hermione asked.

“The Headmaster wants to put him in Gryffindor with his brothers, I imagine their mother is complaining quite loudly to Albus.”

“Molly Weasley Howlers,” Harry laughed. “I would prefer to keep him distant, but even if he is put into Gryffindor, we will never be friends in this life. We discussed Hermione getting revenge, but eleven year old Ron is guilty of nothing, eighteen year old Ron was Dumbledore’s man and we would kill him in a heartbeat. I would prefer not to share a dorm with him.”

“Likewise, the fact we only share charms and DADA with the Puffs make him easy to avoid.”

“I will continue to maintain that the sorting hat decides, although I expect we shall not win this one. Are all the Wesley’s bad? I thought them a light family.”

“Ron is the bad apple. He is lazy, jealous and entitled. He want’s Harry’s fame, fortune and popularity, but sees no reason to do anything to earn it. We think Dumbles engineered it so the Weasleys met Harry at the Station first time around and friendless Harry was scooped up by Ron. Looking back he wasn’t a good friend and caused a lot of problems. The Twins are chaos, but we loved them both, Bill is honourable, and so is Arthur. Charlie we barely knew, and Percy is a twenty-four-carat prat. He becomes head boy, blech.”

“Ginny is eventually OK, but she has been brought up on those books on the Boy-who-lived, she is a total fan girl in the beginning. I saved her life from the Basilisk, eventually. I died on the first attempt. It made the fan girling worse, that and she really needed some psychological help after being possessed by a Horcrux for most of the year.”

“We don’t know if Molly is complicit with the potions, or not. She was good to Harry in earlier lives, but we can’t have Molly without Ron, and we do not want Ron in our lives. If he tries to push his way in, he will get hurt. I owe him. If he attacks me I will respond with prejudice as my father would say.”

The Door to the meeting room opened and Ted Tonks walked in accompanied by his wife Andromeda. She looked at Harry and her face broke into a wide smile.

“Harry, you look healthy and happy, you have no idea how much that means to me. I am Andromeda Tonks, your mother and I were good friends, before that night. You disappeared and Dumbeldore would never admit to anything. I hope you had a good childhood.” She wrapped Harry in a brief hug. Her eyes were a little moist and she smiled at Hermione. “Minerva tells me he lives with your family now. Thank you for looking after my friend’s little boy.”

Hermione smiled, “He is mostly worth it.”

Andromeda stood, “I wanted to check Harry’s health, to make sure he was OK, I am a lot happier, but I would like you to let me give you a check up at some point, you haven’t had one since your first birthday, and you are a little bit overdue.” She smiled at the group. “I will sort out an appointment with Minerva and be in touch.” She left the room.

Ted took a seat, “Good afternoon everyone, Minerva has informed me of the overall goals of the meeting, so can we just confirm some administration details?” He looked at Harry.

“Harry James Potter, Heir to the House Potter, will become Head of house on reaching your maturity, so called Lord Potter. Minerva arranged for Gringotts to forward a certified copy of your parents will and we have it here. My understanding is that based upon the status of Sirius Orion Black as your *oathsworn* Godfather you believe him to be innocent and had he betrayed you he would have died on the day of the betrayal, is this correct.”

“There is a little more. We know Peter Pettigrew is still alive, and we know where he is. He is an unregistered animagus, a rat. He is hiding in this form as the familiar of a pupil at Hogwarts, and we can hand him over to the DMLE, as long as we are convinced that

Cornelious Fudge will not immediately feed him to a dementor. Fudge is heavily, shall we say funded, by Lucius Malfoy, and if Sirius is released then Draco Malfoy's claim on the House of Black is no longer valid. Before we act, we need to be sure that justice will actually be served." Harry sat back

Hermione leaned forward. "Sirius was imprisoned without trial. His incarceration is illegal. He should have either been charged or released within two days I believe. We cannot act, we need you to request the trial transcripts, they do not exist, review the evidence. His wand was never checked and it is mis-filed in amongst evidence from 1961, not 1981. We want to see your wife's cousin, my betrothed's godfather released as quickly as possible. He is however currently defenceless, so discretion is paramount, lest one of Malfoy's cronies act to prevent it."

"We trust Amelia Bones, we know she is not corrupt, also Moody, Shacklebolt, and Scrimgeour are not in Malfoy's pocket. There are a number of marked Death Eaters in the Ministry, they need to be avoided at this time. Care is needed."

Ted nodded slowly. "I can talk to Madame Bones discretely, she is a friend of ours, and her ward Susan is actually at school with you." The kids nodded non-commitally, Susan had worn the Potter Stinks badges, and sided against Harry in their past. She wasn't an enemy, but she wasn't a friend either.

------oooOOOooo------

The following week they were sat at breakfast and Neville was worrying to himself about something.
"We have broom flying lessons today, I don't like flying."

"Me neither," Hermione piped up, "I am scared of heights."

"How about you Harry?" Neville asked.

"Not worried about it Nev, I like that sort of thing." He sat and wondered, *was becoming seeker in his first year a good idea?* They had discussed it endlessly in Neverwhen, and hadn't really made a decision. Sat in breakfast on the day, he wasn't sure he could be bothered. The early morning training with the obsessive Oliver Wood, Quirrell trying to kill him, he would rather spend the time in the library with Hermione.

Later in the day they met outside with Madame Hooch and saw the rows of ratty old school brooms laid out for people to use, he quickly spotted the worst and guided his friends away from them. Leaving Malfoy and his bookends to argue over them. Ron was standing at the other end of the group, glowering at everyone. Harry was resigned to the fact that he would get into the Gryffindor dorm, at least he would be at the other end, and not in the next bed this time around. Harry positioned himself near Neville, he didn't want a broken wrist this time.

On the instruction they all commanded their brooms to rise, Harry's snapped into his hand and he was happy to see the girls were equally in control. Neville's broom wobbled on the floor but did not jump. "Nev, get mad with it. Be the boss."

“UP.” The broom jumped to his hand. Madame hooch told them all to hover a few feet up, Harry realised she didn’t tell anyone, HOW to achieve that. He kicked off and settled as asked, Nev wobbled a bit and then joined him, as the lesson progressed he stuck with Neville, he saw Daphne, Tracey and Hermione making low level low speed circuits around the area, He was guiding Nev and helping him build confidence, Ron and Draco were getting into some sort of shouting match, Harry smiled, perhaps they would take each other out. As they were making a turn in one corner Harry saw Draco and Ron collide, sending them both semi out of control into a group of girls, Lavender Brown was knocked from her broom and without stopping to think Harry covered the distance to intercept her before she hit the ground sweeping around with her pinned over his lap and dropping her onto the grass. He set her down and she dropped to her knees to get her breath. She looked at Harry, “Thank you, that would have been bad.”

Harry shrugged it off, “I am pretty sure they can fix breaks, but they still hurt don’t they.”

“They do, and I am glad you caught me Harry.” Madame Hooch landed next to them,

“Well caught Potter, 10 points for Gryffindor. You saved Miss Brown a night with Madame Pomfrey, perhaps more. Are you OK Miss Brown?”

“Yes thank you Madame Hooch, just a bit shaken.”

“Good. Take a rest, and I will see you next week.” She turned and shouted. “Malfoy, Weasley. Come here now.”

Harry flew over to where his friends were gathered, and they returned the brooms and headed back into the castle. “Survived, and didn’t get press ganged into the team.” He whispered to Hermione.

------oooOOOooo------

Snape glowered at Harry as he sat at the bench with Hermione, they both turned to him and smiled sweetly. “Good Morning Professor Snape.” They said in unison. Harry felt Snape probe his mind and showed him a memory of Susan Sto-Helit beating a badly behaved troll to a pulp with her fire poker, and watched the Professors face form a scowl. Snape turned to the rest of the class and they concentrated on the brew for that particular day’s lesson. They labelled their potion and turned it in, Snape begrudgingly gave them an ‘O’ and they left smiling. “Looks like a word from your mum had the right effect.”

------oooOOOooo------

Professor McGonagall held them back after their transfiguration lesson later the same week, “Harry, Hermione. Two things, Amelia Bones wishes to meet with you regards Sirius and his lack of trial, it appears that she is in agreement with everything, she wishes to coordinate with you to capture Mr Pettigrew, and was going to visit her niece under the pretext of the Samhain celebrations after Halloween, perhaps something could be sorted to capture the rat on or before that day.”

Harry nodded, “should be easy enough.” He murmured, “What’s the other thing?”

“The Headmaster is relocating Ronald Weasley to Gryffindor House at the weekend. I am sorry, there is nothing I can do, at least he is not swapping one of the boys out.”

Harry and Hermione exchanged a long look, before Hermione spoke, “In every lifetime, Ronald Weasley has poor manners, a short temper, a jealous and mean streak. I am Harry’s betrothed, I know the old ‘noble house’ etiquette is no more, but if he attacks me, he attacks our House and our name. We will defend ourselves by the old ways.”

Harry was sat in the stands on the Saturday morning watching the Gryffindor Quidditch team try-outs, it was obvious to Harry that the team he remembered was the one that would be selected, the seeker however was not so obvious. There were a couple of people trying out, Cormac McLaggan, and a girl Harry didn’t recognise. He could hear Alicia, Angelina and Katie arguing nearby. They didn’t want McLaggan on the team, they didn’t like him, and he was too lecherous, flirting they found funny, being groped was not. Hermione leaned in on his shoulder and whispered, “why don’t you go borrow a broom, you used to enjoy playing.”

“I did, but I didn’t enjoy all the time on the hospital.”

“Then don’t be a prat. Go on. Go save your team,”

“Are you sure?”

“Go on already.”

“Thanks,” without thinking he kissed Hermione and walked down the stands, his kiss was noted by one of the foxes as he approached them. “Katie?”

“That’s right, Harry isn’t it?”

“Yes. Could I borrow your broom, I think you need a better seeker.”

She looked at him head cocked. “Go on then short stuff, if you can live up to that claim, I am sure we can get McKitty to approve a firstie on the team.” She held out the broom she was using.

He gave her a grin, and hopped on the broom, flying straight up and having already spotted the snitch rolled over in the air and power dived down to take it whilst flying upside down, slowly rolling out upright as he arrived at Oliver Wood and held the snitch to him. “Looking for this?”

“You are a first year?”

“Well observed, MCGonagall will sign up to it. Especially after we win the first match.”

“Confident. I’ll give you that.”

“McLaggan is too big, he can’t turn, the girl is too hesitant. Katie would be your best seeker, but the chasers work brilliantly together, shame to split the team.”

Oliver took the snitch as the other two arrived, McLaggan eying him up. “Best of three, first one to Potter.” He released the snitch, “and three, two, one, go.”

Harry went vertical and mostly to make sure he wasn’t being followed made some fairly violent spiral diving turns. Pulling out he scanned around the field for the snitch, and made a wide weeping turn, there. A flash of light near the lower hoop. He leaned forward and spurred the school broom to its maximum, the other two were heading the opposite direction, and he caught the snitch as he passed it without slowing. He pulled a loop and rolled out level to return to where Oliver waited.

The others returned, Oliver released the snitch one last time, Harry thought it was a little pointless, but he supposed it was fair. One the three count he watched the other two fly away, McLaggan flying down the pitch centreline at about fifty feet, the girl flew down to the floor and dismounted, she obviously had decided she was going nowhere. Harry took a steady glide up to about a hundred feet and sat in the centre, taking a good look around. He kept turning and looking, and then he saw it. Hovering just above where Hermione sat, now joined by Daphne and Tracey in the stands. McLaggan was flying towards him. Harry smiled to himself and pulled straight up perhaps another hundred feet, before stall turning and dropping into a textbook Wronski, peeling away with his toes brushing the grass and shooting straight over the girls, rolling upside down to grab the snitch as it rose from above them. He laughed as he heard Hermione scolding him in the distance. He made a lazy turn towards the pitch and holding his had up to show Oliver the snitch, he spiralled down to where Katie stood with the rest of the foxes and the Twins. He landed, dismounted and handed Katie the broom, “Thank you Katie. That was fun. He handed Oliver the snitch. “Do I need to talk to Professor McGonagall and get her to sign off on me joining the team?” He smiled at Olivers face.

“Harrikins, that was some awesome flying.”

“Welcome to the team” He looked, he was sure it was Fred, it raised a lump in his throat. Dead Fred.

“Harry James,” a voice sounded form behind

“Ooh,” the twins started singing, “There may be trouble ahead,” and everyone laughed.

“What happened to ‘I promise I won’t take any risks Hermione’, that lasted about ten seconds didn’t it.” She stood a few feet away, hands on hips, hair bushed up and crackling with energy. He looked over and grinned sheepishly.

Daphne walked up to her, “You tell him girl, he can’t go flying around looking amazing without your permission. It’s just not on.” Hermione huffed but her hair settled, and a small smile crossed her face.

Harry just grinned, saying anything was likely to get him in trouble, McLaggan removed his worries.

“What does a stupid muggleborn bitch like you know about Quidditch, go back to the dorm, the grown-ups are talking.” Harry spun in his direction to see the first of Hermione’s hexes hit him. He flew backwards landing on his back, his quidditch robes transformed into a blue

and white clown suit with size twenty five shoes in bright red, a massive orange afro style hairstyle, and a painted clown face with a big red ball of a nose. Harry glanced at Hermione as she caught McLaggan's wand.

Daphne, Tracey and the foxes squealed, "way to go girl", Hermione was mobbed by the chasers and was up on their shoulders before she realised what was happening. They carried her off the pitch towards the changing rooms laughing and shrieking.

Cormac stood up, he spoke, but his voice sounded like Mr Punch. Every time he spoke the Twins started to laugh, and Harry and then Oliver lost it in turn. He stomped off towards the Castle and the Hospital wing, his big clown feet making it look utterly ridiculous.

The Twins led Harry slowly over to the changing room, "Welcome to the team Harrikins. Your girlfriend is awesome."

George? Leant in and added, "She did all of that with silent casting. That is epic magic. Please tell her she is officially on our never mess with list."

Fred? Added, "That was marauder level, where did you learn it from."

Harry paused, "My mum Lily, well her notebooks, she was the fifth Marauder. My Dad was Prongs. My Godfather was Padfoot. Mooney was their friend Remus Lupin. Wormtail betrayed them all and my parents were killed by moldyfart." He hoped the little lie about the notebook was enough to cover Hermione's flash of her true abilities.

The twins exchanged a look, "We have something that is rightfully yours, Harry. We have a map of the castle they made, it says it is Prong's copy, so it's yours now. We'll hand it over when we get back to the dorm. Will McKitty really be OK with having you on the team?"

"She's my Aunt Minnie, she is my magical guardian, and she is a Quidditch nut, what do you think. I reckon she might even buy me a Nimbus 2000 to use." He grinned. "We need to spoil Hermione a bit though, she is really scary when she is angry."

"Agreed, Bambi, agreed."

"Prongslet?"

"Bambi."

------oooOOOooo------

Harry's new broom appeared at breakfast two days later. McLaggan's hair was still orange and his nose whilst smaller was still red. Hermione was now sat surrounded by the chasers and was struggling to cope with being popular. Daphne, Neville and Tracey were sat opposite and trying not to giggle at Hermione's discomfort. Ron was sat at the end of their table. He had made no effort to befriend Harry so far, he had appeared in their dorm when they had returned from the try-outs, and had tried to swap bunks with Neville, who had pointed out that He and Harry were godbrothers, and no he wasn't swapping.

Dumbledore had appeared with McGonagall and had blathered about the need for family unity. Everyone had sat and listened patiently, McLaggan did not get back from Madame Pomfrey until the evening meal, so nothing came of Hermione's actions.

He demanded his wand back, so Hermione looked him in his face and told him to apologise or she would shrink his testicles to the size of raisins, permanently. He sneered, so she put him in a full body bind with a finger snap.

"Hermione is part elf." Someone commented.

"If it keeps McLaggan inline she can be part vampire for all I care," Katie replied from the corner.

"Apologise." Hermione demanded, McLaggan's jaw took on a set, he said nothing. "Tippy." She called. A House elf appeared, "Tippy, please take Mr McLaggan to Myrtle's bathroom, and leave him there until he learns some manners.

The House elf bowed, "Mistress." And they popped away.

The common room erupted into laughter. The Twins were on their knees bowing up and down, chanting "We're not worthy, we're not worthy." Harry checked out Ron, who was sitting staring at Hermione, wide eyed.

Harry walked over to her and wrapped his arms around her from behind, "OK there?"

"Mmm,mm" she muttered, she smiled and turned to give him a hug. "I am not anyone's bitch." She whispered into his ear. Daphne and Tracey joined in and wrapped Hermione into a group hug. "That was absolutely brilliant Hermione, absolutely brilliant." Daphne said softly to her friend. "He just might learn."

Charms was Monday's second lesson, after history, or as Harry called it, nap time. Hermione sat doing some homework and largely ignored Binns. This was *that* lesson, *Wingardium Leviosa*, which had led to the whole Troll-in-a-Toilet episode of their past life. Ronald was once again sat alongside Hermione on the other side to Harry, who had Seamus on his left.

Ron was true to form murdering the pronunciation, and intonation of the spell, and waving his wand fit to have someone's eye out. Hermione looked across at Harry, and Daphne who was sat up behind Harry, she rolled her eyes hard enough to make a noise. This time Hermione kept her council and made no attempt to correct Ron, Seamus set his feather on fire, Tracey giggled out loud at this. Ron finally stopped waving his arm like a demented orchestra conductor and Hermione quietly levitated her feather, Harry lifted his and set it chasing after Hermione's. She elbowed him and hissed, "show off." But ruined the effect by pulling her feather into a Wronski feint onto the desk and giggling to herself.

"Well done, Miss Granger, and Mr Potter, five points each to Gryffindor, lovely control. Lovely. Now Mr Weasley, your movement is incorrect and it is Wing-gar-dium Levi-o-sa, make the "gar" nice and long, and Levi-*O*-Sa, not Levi-o-*sarr*. Try again." He stood in front of Ron, smiling and rocking back and forth on his feet. Ron's ears were glowing, but he took a breath and did as instructed, his feather lifted erratically from the bench. Harry remembered

that Ron had an old wand, the core was showing at its tip. For a brief moment he missed his friend, they had some adventures together, but somewhere he strayed from being their friend to Dumbledork's man on the inside. This was the boy that grew up to stab his Hermione with a Basilisk fang, his jealous rages got worse as he got older. Harry wondered if they could get Ron in the toilet ready for the Troll, without getting caught.

Harry tapped Hermione's elbow, "McLaggan apologised yet?" he whispered.

"Last night, you were showering."

"Not Troll bait anymore then?"

"No, I did consider sending my murderer there, but he's just a daft kid at the minute, I can't bring myself to do it to him at this age." Harry nodded, he figured it was probably for the best.

As they walked into the feast for Halloween, Harry slipped over to the Hufflepuff table, and put his hands over Tonk's eyes from behind, "Guess who?" he asked.

"A dead firstie if I catch him." she replied, "Wotcha Harry." He removed his hands and sat backwards on the bench next to her.

"If Quirell runs in and shouts 'Troll in the Dungeon', two things, you owe me a favour to prank a house mate, and secondly, do not allow the pupils to leave the Hall when Bumblefork sends everyone back to their dorms, since the Puff's and Snake's dorms are in the dungeons where the Troll is supposed to be. Mostly the second thing."

Tonks dropped her head to the table for a minute, she whispered, "They are muppets, the lot of them."

"Oh, you have a TV at home then?"

"Yeah, Dad's muggleborn, can't miss my shows." She morphed her face to Miss Piggy and batted her eyelashes. Harry sniggered, "Brilliant. Catch you later Tonks." He got up and headed over to his friends.

"Who was the firstie?" Tonk's friend Arabella asked.

"Harry Potter, I used to babysit him when he was a toddler, before you-know-what happened. His parents were absolutely lovely. He is a second cousin I think, whatever, he is a nice kid, and I promised myself I would keep an eye out for him and his girlfriend this year."

"Firstie with a girlfriend?"

"Soul-bonded when they were toddlers. Can't tell you the story, I swore an oath."

"Wow, cool."

The food arrived a few minutes later, this time Harry was sat alongside Hermione, and he did a quick scout around the faces he knew, everyone was there that he could see, Ron was talking with Dean and Seamus near the end of their table, Harry and Hermione were now surrounded by a mix of their friends and the Quidditch team that had adopted them. He glanced up, Snape sneered at him, he smiled his best fake smile back, Quirrell was missing.

Hermione leaned across to Harry, “Try these pasties Harry,” and whispered, “I am connected with the castle wards now, I just felt the Troll pass into the perimeter.” Louder, “They are delicious.”

Harry bit the offered pasty, “Mmmm,” he nodded, they exchanged a glance. The doors to the Hall slammed open and Quirrell minced in, “I just thought you ought to know, there is a Troll in the Dungeons.” And did a pantomime style faint onto the floor. Harry looked at Hermione and they exchanged an eyeroll.

The Hall descended into chaos, Dumbledore sent a few fireworks from his wand to gain everyone’s attention. “Prefects, escort the pupils back to their dorms,” He announced.

“HOLD THAT,” Tonks was stood up on top the end of her table. “Close the doors, the Slytherin and Hufflepuff Dorms are IN the DUNGEONS. PREFECTS to me, we can hold it off if it comes to the Hall.”

She jumped down. Harry watched Dumbledore, his grandfather face had slipped for a moment. Professor Sprout stood, “WELL DONE MISS TONKS, 20 Points to Hufflepuff, for quick thinking.” She turned to the staff table, Fillius and I will hold the doors, if the rest of you wish to sort out the Troll?”

Dumbledore recovered his composure, “Yes of course, good thinking Miss Tonks. Very Good.” Harry sat watching Quirrell. His plan was to slip out in the chaos, now what was he going to do. Harry could not do anything to Quirrellmort, not with four of the Horcruxes still in play, and he didn’t think Susan or the BOSS was going to make an appearance. He picked up a small pie and munched on it watching the total shambles unfolding. The Slytherin table had now worked out that they were nearly sent to meet the troll and their prefects were having some heated words with Snape.

George spoke, Harry had got them identified now, Hermione told him their teeth were slightly different, only she talked about it in dental terminology, bless. “The Bat is getting some stick from the Snake prefects, good job Bean backed up Tonks, it would have been carnage if they had walked into a Troll. Do you reckon it’s a big one?”

“Don’t know,….. Bean?”

“Sprout.”

“OK.”

Harry looked at Hermione who was picking the icing off a bun that she had in her hand, although the desserts were not on the table yet. She looked at him, the picture of innocence, and smiled serenely. The food on the table swapped over to desserts, and Harry picked up a

small bat shaped bun, that squeaked when he bit it, causing him to giggle and get icing sugar up his nose.

Later, back in the common room, Hermione and Harry sat with Nev, Tracey and Daphne in their preferred corner, “How long did Squirrel pretend to be out for? I didn’t notice him get up.” Hermione asked the group.

“He got up just after McKitty, Brook and Dumbles walked past.”

“Did he follow them out.”

“Yeah, what good he would be?”

“He could kill the troll, dead easy. It would choke to death on him.” Hermione groaned, and slapped Neville’s arm.

“Your Jokes get worse every week Nev. It’s a good job we like you.” He smiled, *they liked him.*

George and Fred appeared at the table, and passed Harry a folded piece of parchment. He looked up at them and said, “Mischief Managed.” Smiling. The pair laughed and patting him on the shoulders went back to their own group.

The following Morning at breakfast one of the Patil sisters, Harry hadn’t figured which was which one yet this time around, stopped off and gave Tracey the low down on the School rumour mill;

The Troll had been cornered in a first floor corridor, and taken away. No-one had been hurt.

OR

It had been cornered in a second floor toilet block, which had been demolished and a First year girl had been badly injured.

OR

It had been stopped in the dungeons and had injured D.Bat in the struggle.

The aforementioned Dungeon Bat walked to the head table, he was limping slightly Harry thought, had Fluffy had a nip last hight he wondered.

Professor McGonagall passed Harry a note as she walked to her table. As Harry unrolled it and was reading it Hedwig landed and offered her leg to Hermione. It was a letter from her parents. She passed Hedwig a piece of bacon and stroked the birds feathers.

“You bird is beautiful Harry.” Tracey said.

“Mm’mm, Hedwig is nice as well,” he replied.

Hermione slapped him, “Prat,”

Harry laughed to himself, “Yeah, but your prat,” She smacked him again and huffed.

As they headed off to lessons, Harry dropped back to talk to Hermione, “Madame Bones is coming to collect Susan for their Samhain ceremony tonight, she wants half an hour with us before dinner, six o’clock, Minnie suggests we bring a *guest.”*

“Do we know where he is?”

“I checked the map before breakfast, he was with Ron, we can scoop him up at some point today. We need a cage, do we check the room of hidden things, or can your army of minions provide us with one?

“You love the fact that Rowena made me her spiritual heir within the castle, and the Elves all answer my call don’t you?”

“I must admit it does amuse me, but we do understand elves a lot better than you did first time around. Will they be able to rustle up an unbreakable rat sized cage, do you think?”

“I can ask, they might even fetch the rat.”

“Maybe, maybe. Anything in your letter?”

“One in code from Dad, usual from mum, checking we are OK, and not bonking yet.”

“She did not say that?”

“No but she does ask ‘how our relationship is’ quite regularly. I am tempted to pull a Tonks and tell her something really naughty.”

“Like eating in the library?”

“Prat.” Harry laughed.

Harry was sat with Hermione in the common room at around a quarter to six, checking on the map, they could see Ronald Weasley and Peter Pettigrew’s names overlapping on it and coming down the stairs from the dorm. They exchanged glances and pocketed their notebooks. Hermione had the cage shrunken in her robes pocket. They stood and casually followed Ron out of the common room. He predictably was heading for dinner. This would take them past McGonagall’s office, Harry sent his patronus on ahead to ask her to stop Ron and invite him in for a word. Ron jumped as the ghostly panther bounded past him, but didn’t slow down.

Professor McGonagall stepped out into the corridor on cue, “Mr Weasley, could I have a moment of your time, and you two as well, Mr Potter, Miss Granger.” Harry had a moment of

déjà vu as he heard those words. Scabbers/Pettigrew, was having none of it and exploded out of Ron's pocket and made a run for it.

Hermione reacted as quickly flowing into her animagus form and bounded down the corridor catching the rat within thirty feet. Madame Bones had appeared at the door attracted by the rather girly squeals from Ron as he panicked being passed by Hermione's leopard form. Harry was sat in his Panther form watching carefully. A loud shrill squeak announced Hermione's capture of the Rat and Harry switched back to his human form.

McGonagall gave him a long appraising look and Hermione arrived and padded past Amy Bones and entered the office. Harry put his hand on Ron's shoulder. "You need to see this Ron. That's no more a Rat, than I am a Panther." He looked at Ron, he was visibly scared. They went into the office. Hermione was sat in front of the desk with a paw holding the rat in place. The rat struggled, attempting to escape, her claws extended and it went very still. Harry pulled his wand out and sent a low powered *stupefy* into the rat, whispering the word, so as not to arouse suspicions too highly.

Hermione Leopard looked at the rat, and transformed back to herself, pulling the cage out of her pocket and returning it to its previous size. Harry dropped Wormtail into the cage, and closed the top, snapping the catch over to lock it. "*Enervate"* Wormtail-Pettigrew bounced around the small cage.

"Peter, Wormtail. Don't transform in the cage, it's a goblin made animagus cage. It will not break." Harry looked up at the people in the office. "Sorry Ron, your rat Scabbers is an animagus, known as Wormtail to my parents. Peter Pettigrew in human form. He betrayed my parents and my Godfather, he caused the death of my mother and father, and framed Sirius Black for everything, including murdering him, Peter Pettigrew." Ron was red faced and looking fit to burst. "How old is Scabbers Ron?"

"What, erm about twelve maybe, Percy found him. Years ago."

"November 1981 Ron. After he showed Voldemort where my parents were. Rats live two to three years. You have had a man hiding in your house for years Ron, has he touched Ginny in her sleep Ron? or did he touch you in your sleep when you were little?" Ron's eyes rolled back in his head and he fainted. Harry turned to Madame Bones, "Do you need him in human form, or can you take the rat?"

"We can take the rat. Since we are talking about animagi, I see you are both animagus as well. Are you by any chance registered?" her eyebrows raised at this question.

"We are. In France, our mother is French. We mastered the transformation there, so we registered with their Ministry, they will have sent a notification, I am sure you have a copy. Somewhere." Hermione said innocently.

Amelia laughed, "Well played, yes you will be on our system *somewhere*. Sirius Black is your godfather isn't he young man? That is straight out of his playbook." Harry smiled, *it was Sirius's idea.* "I will take Mr Pettigrew into the DMLE, I can transform him, if he remains a rat, we shall be having a very different conversation, but I already noted the missing finger, he has a date with some veratiserum, and we shall get to the bottom of all of this."

Ron had recovered, “Mr Weasley, I suggest you pop to see Madame Pomfrey after you have eaten, by then I will have confirmation from Madame Bones about your rat. If it is indeed Pettigrew, we shall be visiting your home, I will have to tell Molly and Arthur this news face to face.” She turned to Harry and Hermione, “You two should go get some dinner, this is a big step for you Harry.” Harry nodded his thanks and left the office with Hermione.

“What does Rat taste like then Hermione?” She slapped him and huffed.

“Unbreakable goblin made animagus cage?” she asked eyebrows raised.

“Pettigrew believed it, I think it was a mundane cat carrier.” They entered the Great Hall.

As they finished dinner, McGonagall walked to their table, she leaned over to Harry and Hermione, “you will be pleased to hear that Pettigrew is singing like a canary, and that he has confirmed your version of events. Madame Bones asked me to tell you she will be transferring Sirius back to the DMLE from Azkaban, and his release is now a formality, she will be in touch with you about this later.” She walked down the table and spoke quietly to Ron, who finished his drink quickly and then followed her out of the room, followed by his brothers.

Harry turned to Hermione, “did you ever read your Dad’s note?”

“Yes, it’s some ideas for secure communications, to allow us to write to Ted or Gringotts or Madame Bones securely. He also asked a few questions about how the castle security systems worked, if there are any blind spots in the coverage, and if we could hack into it.”

“You have the equivalent of Rowena’s passwords for the wards in the castle, we should have a look at adding us to the wards so we can apparate in and out, and so that we aren’t tracked in our animal forms?

“Sounds like a job when we know jingles is out of the castle.”

“Jingles?”

“Twinspeak, Dum-bell-door, jingles. They have decided all professors now have to have nicknames.”

“I worry what they will call Prof. Flitwick.”

“Tease”

Harry’s eyebrows furrowed, “Nope, don’t get it.”

“Half Goblin. After a muggle item their dad has in his workshop, a Goblin Teasmaid”

“I think they might need something else, we live in that world and I have never heard of that.”

“Their other thoughts were mostly offensive.”

“I don’t think that one will catch on,”

“You are probably right.”

“Thinking of Jingles, how long before he tries to assert himself as my magical guardian, for my safety and the ‘Greater Good’ and try to send me back to the Dursley’s.”

“Next Wizangamot is after Christmas now, I don’t think he will try to call an emergency session?”

“If he does Minnie and Ted should be able to deal with it.”

“Unless he tries something at Pettigrew’s Trial, that will be sooner rather than later?”

“Ted will be there representing Sirius’s interests, I am sure he can at least stall Dumbles.”

“Not Jingles?”

“I prefer Dumbles.”

“Me too.”

Chapter 7: Goblins and Gold Beakers

At lunchtime the day after Pettigrew was handed over, Draco and the bookends arrived at the table near Harry. “Potter. It has come to my attention that you were deliberately mocking me, that you are no more French than I am.”

“Mon ami, non.” Harry started.

“Save it Pottah! I challenge you to a wizards’ duel. Midnight, the trophy room. Bring a second.”

“A second what?”

“A second, a dueling second.”

“Isn’t dual two anyway? A second second, is that a fourth?”

“Duel, not Dual.”

“No.”

“Are you a coward.”

“No. But if you issue the challenge, you do not pick the venue, or the time, or the style. So No. I will not go to the Trophy Room so you can send someone to find me out of bounds after curfew.”

“So you are a coward, refusing to fight.”

“OK, Malfoi, this is what you will accept, the fight will be a boxing match, Queensbury rules, it will take place in the transfiguration courtyard at six pm tonight. No magic permitted.”

“I said wizarding duel.”

“Not, your, choice, you challenged me. I will quite happily punch your stupid face raw, or maybe let Hermione do it for all the times you mutter mudblood, and let the whole castle see what a wet twerp you are. So Boxing, or default?”

“You haven’t heard the last of this, wait until my father hears about this.”

“What? that you challenged the future head of a House to a duel over a joke. You will be lucky if he doesn’t banish you.” Draco stormed off with his minions following, Greg Goyle actually laughed and nodded at Harry as they walked away.

Harry looked at Hermione who was trying not to laugh, “We can do our homework in the classroom near the courtyard doors, I doubt he will turn up.”

She shook her head, “Is kickboxing allowed?”

“No just boxing, boxing.”

“Shame my high spin kick is my favourite, I think I could get most of his teeth with the first one.”

“Well, he isn’t going to be stood up to receive a second kick if you do, is he?.”

------oooOOOooo------

Albus Dumbledore was sitting at his desk rolling a lemon drop around his mouth and pondering the developments of the term so far. Harry Potter had arrived on the train to attend the school, and had been sorted into Gryffindor, this was all in line with his grand understanding of how the future needed to unfold to allow him to be able to finally defeat Lord Voldemort. But many things were not as Albus would like them to be. Young Harry was not a needy attention starved weakling, he was a strapping, confident young man. He had made friends with a large group of children, not just in Gryffindor. He was patient and slow to anger, Young Malfoy’s attempts so far were met with laughter and ridicule when he tried to provoke him into a duel.

Young Harry had shown no inclination to explore, the tracking charms he had carefully layered both on Young Harry, and his father’s remarkable cloak had not triggered anything, the wards near the Third Floor Corridor keyed to the cloak, were silent. Only the Weasley Twins had explored so far.

He had expected the Weasley boy, Donald or Robert, or something, to have befriended him on the train on the way to Hogwarts. The Weasley girl wanted to be the future wife of Young Harry, a shame that he would almost certainly be dead before that would come to pass. Harry had a small piece of Voldemort’s soul trapped in the scar the attack had left behind, undoubtably Lily had done something exceptional he thought. Having the Boy-who-lived suited the narrative Albus wanted, not the Mother-who-died. Albus knew of no way of removing the shard from a living being without killing the carrier. It was a sad fact, in order to ensure the future for the greater good, Harry Potter would have to die.

The prophecy might be nonsense, but it would be safer if Harry died at the hands of Voldemort, so that he could then in turn be killed, by Albus. He did not want to kill, but it was necessary in this case. He needed to gain control over the upbringing of Young Harry, if he was allowed to have a happy and loving home, he would not take risks and chances to sacrifice himself to protect those few friends he had. The Granger girl was his constant companion, they were close. He had considered making her a victim to the Troll, but she was a bright and outstanding pupil, the future would need witches like her to have sons that would be great wizards.

Young Harry’s mother had been such a witch, it was regrettable that Pettigrew had betrayed them, he had hoped that the Longbottom boy would be chosen, but he had made his plans accordingly after Voldemort had ended the Potters, placing Harry where he would have a

necessarily miserable childhood, preparing him for when he, Albus Dumbledore would offer Young Harry a chance of happiness, always just out of reach, but he would be pliable, and easily led. Where had Young Harry been living? the Ministry had no record, Minerva told him he had no business knowing, he didn't think she knew either. He decided that he was going to be Young Harry's magical guardian, he would make this official at the next Wizengamot, and then he would place Harry back with the Dursley's for his own safety. He would convince the Wizengamot that only he could offer Harry the mentorship he required, he was after all the Leader of the Light. There was nothing to challenge his assertion that Young Harry would be better in his care, better for the Greater Good of course.

------oooOOOooo------

Minerva had told Arthur and Molly the truth about Percy and latterly Ron's pet Rat, and as the implications of having a marked death eater hiding in their house settled in, they had become initially angry, and then distraught. Had he done anything to their children? Minerva told Arthur to make discrete enquiries with Madame Bones when he was at work the following day but had to work quite hard to prevent Molly demanding that Albus intercede on their behalf. Explaining to Molly that she had probably used enough favours to get Ron re-sorted, and to let Arthur talk in the morning had been, she hoped, enough to stay the overbearing nature of an enraged Molly Weasley. She loved her children, perhaps a little too much, Ron would certainly benefit from a little more discipline, his work ethic was woeful.

The following morning Arthur knocked on Amelia Bones office door, she looked up and invited him in, "close the door Arthur, take a seat. I have been expecting you. I assume you want to know what Pettigrew was doing in your house, all this time?"

Arthur nodded, "We are rather worried that he did anything to our children."

"I can put your mind at rest, he did nothing. We interviewed him under veritaserum, and we asked very specific questions so he couldn't dissemble, although I don't think he had any fight left in him. He did not touch anyone in the house. He watched people, which is uncomfortable, but I would suggest you tell your family he did nothing. There is nothing to gain by telling anyone, and it will unsettle your children, especially your daughter, if she thought she was being spied on. He says he only watched you as a family, because he was alone. He is not really sane, too long spent as a rat has impacted his mind. To be clear, he did not in any way molest your children Arthur."

Arthur took a deep breath, "Thank you Madame Bones, that is a huge weight off my mind, I will send Molly an owl, as you say, I will tell the family that there was nothing untoward going on."

------oooOOOooo------

At the end of the week the trial of Peter Pettigrew was held before a court tribunal, as he had made a full confession under veritaserum it was not the full Wizengamot. He was placed in the witness chair in front of the panel of selected Wizards and Witches. These included Augusta Longbottom, who was presiding over today's hearing.

“Madame Bones, we have read the defendant’s confession, do you have any statements to add to the prosecution case?”

“Madame Longbottom, I would like you to hear Mr Pettigrew confirm his guilt and verify his statements as the truth.”

“Mr Pettigrew, how do you plead?” Augusta asked.

Peter was a broken man, his only hope was clemency, “Guilty my lady, the statement you have is the truth, I swear on my magic.”

“Very good, is there anything else Madame Bones.”

“Just to confirm that all the charges Mr Pettigrew is pleading guilty to, were previously attributed to Sirius Orion Black, Head apparent of House Black, who has been incarcerated without trial in Azkaban for ten years. All the charges against him are dismissed, indeed have never been made officially. He is therefore a free man.”

“Agreed, he shall no doubt be the recipient of a substantial compensation package. See to it that he is released into care, and medical expenses shall be covered by the courts.” Augusta turned to her panel members, they discussed quietly amongst themselves for a few minutes.

“Peter Pettigrew, it is the decision of this Tribunal that you are guilty on all charges, Murder, aiding and abetting the murder of James and Lily Potter, the murder of no less than twelve members of non-magical society, framing Sirius Black, for the above crimes. Aiding and abetting the Attempted murder of Harry James Potter. We sentence you to death by execution, to be carried out immediately, you are to be taken to the Department of Mysteries and passed through the veil forthwith.”

Peter broke down in the dock, and was stunned prior to being levitated down to the veil room and his fate.

Amelia Sent her patronus across to Andromeda Tonks at St Mungo’s as she returned to her own office within the Ministry. As she entered her own office her floo lit up with a call from Andi.

“Amy, it’s Andi. When can I pick him up?”

“As soon as you want, I need to give him his wand back, but other than that, he is washed and in clean clothes, but he needs to get healthy and he needs some help mentally, what are you thinking?”

“We will look after him at home, I can monitor his health and he can have a slow introduction to freedom, he will need a little time to adjust. He has been away a long time. If we can keep his release on the down low for now that would be good.”

“I will do what I can, Fudge will certainly not want it published, once Malfoy realises, Fudge will try to hush it up.”

The following morning’s Daily Prophet reported the trial of Peter Pettigrew.

Merlin Award Winner a Fraud

Previous recipient of a posthumous Merlin Award for gallantry was recently captured alive masquerading as a boy's familiar. Peter Pettigrew, believed killed by reputed serial killer and Death Eater Sirius Black was today found guilty of the murders of twelve muggles, and of complicity in the murders of the Potter family on the fateful Halloween night in 1981, and of the framing of Sirius Black for the crimes. Only minimal information was released by the Department of Magical Law Enforcement today. This reporter was led to believe by an unnamed source that Sirius Black would be released as all charges were proven to be unfounded. His release date is not known at this time. Pettigrew's Merlin Award has been revoked. The sole survivor of that fateful evening, Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived was unavailable for comment.

The notice was published on page four, as the Ministry did not want to be embarrassed.

------oooOOOooo------

Back at Hogwarts Harry and Hermione were having lunch sat with Neville and Daphne, Harry had made himself a chip butty out of some fries and a bread bun, Neville and Daphne were staring at him in confusion as he poured tomato sauce on it and closing it took a large bite and smiled as he enjoyed the taste. "Harry, where did you get the idea of putting potato in bread from? Daphne asked.

"One of Dad's guilty pleasures, not as good as a fish finger sandwich, but close."

"Fish fingers? Do fish have hands?" Daphne was struggling with the concept of muggle foods.

Hermione laughed, "It's a muggle food Daphne, they cut white fish, like Cod or Haddock into long blocks like fingers, and cover them in breadcrumbs. Once they are cooked the fish is soft and succulent, and the coating is really crispy. My Dad gets Harry to eat all sorts of weird stuff from his days in the Royal Marines. Fish Finger Sandwich sounds terrible, but it is really nice actually, especially with tartar sauce. I wonder if the elves could figure that out?"

Harry shrugged and nodded, his mouth full of food.

Hermione tapped Harry's elbow, "Elvis has left the building." Harry nodded.

"Hacking time!"

"Sometimes Harry, I have to remind myself you were shot in the head as a child, it's the only explanation." Neville looked at him face scrunched up in bafflement.

"You wound me Nev. Oh hang on that was Moldypants. Yeah, shot in the head by a nutter. Good excuse for a lot of things."

Hermione rolled her eyes, "Now you've started something."

Harry washed the last of his lunch down with a glass of juice, and they made their way out of the Great Hall, “Have you got the map with you, *Bambi.*”

Harry stopped in his tracks, and let out a long sigh, “You are spending way too much time with the Twins, should I be worried?”

“Not as long as you behave, and it’s funnier than Prongslet, I mean, one look at James’s animagus as a child, he would have been Rudolph.” Hermione swept her hair out of her face, and started walking.

“You have turned to the Dark Side, Hermi-one,” he said in his best Darth Vader impression.

“Perhaps, map. Focus.”

Harry opened the parchment, “I solemnly swear that I am up to no good.” He murmured and the map began to appear showing the corridors ahead. “Filch, and Mrs Morris around the corner, stop and let them pass.”

Hermione turned and started to rummage through her satchel for a book, she opened one and her and Harry stood looking at the pages as the caretaker walked past muttering under his breath. Once they were clear, Harry asked Hermione, “would we be better under the cloak?”

Hermione chewed her lip for a moment. “Good idea.” He whipped the cloak out and opened it up as Hermione slipped the book back into her bag. She snuggled into his side and they walked carefully down to the dungeon level and past the Hufflepuff Common room entrance and the kitchens to where they knew the entrance to the ward stone room for the castle was.

“OK Rowena Granger, or is it Hermione Ravenclaw? Do your stuff.”

“Prat.”

“You love me.”

“Do I? are you sure?”

“Yes, it’s our density?”

“Is that one of Neville’s gags?”

“might be.”

“Let him keep it.”

Hermione walked up to the door and placed her right hand on the school crest in the centre of the panel. The door clicked and she pushed it open. “Come on in, I will need a bit of time.”

“Right behind you,” he patted Hermione’s bum as he got close.

“Harry James, behave yourself.”

“Just letting you know I am here.”

Hermione pushed the door closed and flames sat in sconces all around the room lit up in turn casting a flickering orange light onto the ward stone in the centre of the room. A pair of circles were drawn on the floor with runes between the two circles, the ward stone sat in the centre of the room.

“Harry, stay outside the outer rune circle. I will have a look and see if I can sort the wards. She carefully stepped into inner circle, making sure she did not tread on the runes or the circles. The Ward runes appeared all around the inner circle in a cylinder of runic text. Hermione let out a small sigh and started mumbling to herself. Harry found himself a piece of empty floor and sat, keeping an eye on the map. After a while he nodded off.

Something tapped his foot. He jumped awake to see Hermione and Rowena Ravenclaw standing in the rune circle discussing something, Susan Sto-Helit was looking at Harry with folded arms, “Asleep on the job Harry. Check the map, they are about to amend the wards.”

Harry rubbed his eyes, and looked at the map, he pulled his wand, “show me Albus Dumbledore,” some text flowed across the top, “*The Bearded Bloviator is not in the Castle at this time Bambi*” Harry made a small grunt at the Bambi comment, “Show me Minerva McGonagall” The map panned and zoomed to her office, she was sitting with Fillius Flitwick in her private room. “Dumbles is out, Minnie is in her room. I don’t think anyone else is attached to the wards are they.”

“No, just those two and Hermione.” Susan replied.

Harry watched as Hermione marked a few sections of runes red and with a swipe of her (French) wand waved them out of existence, she then added three lines of runes to the same panel. Mumbling the rune names as she pointed in turn with her wand tip, the new lines sat glowing blue as Rowena worked her way across them, pointing one rune to Hermione, who made the change. They exchanged nods and the new text flashed white and then settled to the yellow colour of the rest. Hermione slid her wand away and Rowena hugged the girl. Her and Susan faded from view and with a hand gesture the rune panels disappeared, looking as if they slid down into the floor. Hermione yawned, What time is it?

Harry cast a swift tempus, “Six thirty, grab some dinner and slip back to the common room?”

Hermione nodded, “Early night for me I am bushed, some of us missed our naps.”

Harry stood stretching and slapping his own backside trying to restore some circulation. “It wasn’t restful. Let me check the coast is clear to open the door, we can use the cloak. To get back to the crush hall.” They slipped out of the room and back upstairs, slipping the cloak off in the cover of one of the statues in the ‘crush’ hall outside the doors for the Great Hall. They walked into dinner, and sat at the table in the space Daphne and Neville had kept for them. Harry helped Hermione fill their plates, roast lamb and roast potatoes, with fresh vegetables and mint sauce, Harry wasn’t too hungry, but Hermione devoured hers and went back for seconds. As they waited for dessert, she stifled a long yawn. Harry gave her a side hug, “early night, and a lay in. I am at practice at stupid o’clock with the team, so I will be at breakfast late.”

Hermione nodded, and leant on his shoulder. She was asleep before the desserts arrived. Tracey sat opposite made a little heart shape with her hands and did a silent oooh, batting her eyes at the pair. Then snorted and giggled.

Harry got her back to the Dorm room, he would have to ask what she had achieved with the wards in the morning. Daphne and Tracey slipped upstairs with Hermione and Harry wandered up to his own bed. Ron was sat in the corner on his bed, he looked up at Harry, he looked awful. Harry asked before he thought, “You OK there Ron? you look terrible.”

“I can’t sleep, I spent years sleeping with a pet that was a man, and a criminal?”

“Did he do anything to anyone in the house? I mean in your home, not here.”

“They say no. They asked him and he just slept and hid. But Fred and George said that’s what they would tell us regardless. If he had been touching me, or Ginny, or anyone, would they actually tell us?”

Harry thought , *No especially not Ginny, he would try to find out, but how could he reassure Ron.* “I am sure that they would have told your parents the truth, and if he had done anything they would be examining you at St. Mungo’s or something.”

“Yeah. They would, wouldn’t they. Thanks, and thanks for catching him. McGonagall told us you can tell other animagus because you and Granger, sorry, Hermione are both animagus. It’s pretty amazing really, you and Hermione, she’s really scary. McLaggan is such an arse. I was worried about Gin next year. I told her to make friends with Hermione, everyone’s scared of getting on her wrong side. Thanks, again, I’ll let you turn in, you have practice early tomorrow, yeah?”

“I do. Oliver is obsessed. What does he expect me to practice – sitting and watching extra hard.” Harry smiled and picked his toilet bag up and wandered into the bathroom. Ron was snoring softly when he walked back out. He closed his curtains for him and cast a silencing charm around his bed.

Eleven year old Ron was OK, why did he become such a toxic arse. Harry still had a hard time believing that he killed Hermione in cold blood. More likely out of jealousy in a fit of his temper. He had seen her memory of the event, whatever he thought of Ron, they had to deal with him, he was Dumbledore’s puppet, and could not be trusted around them. Had Dumbles screwed Ron’s mind up? Harry changed into a pair of sleeping shorts and a long sleeved teeshirt and climbed into bed, another silencing charm and an alarm set for four thirty, this was the last of these early practices he would attend. He would get the rest of the team together, being exhausted was no way to practice Quidditch. He drifted off to sleep with a memory of a girl curled into his side under a cloak, and the smell of her shampoo.

It was still dark when Harry’s alarm woke him, the time in the tent had conditioned him to be able to roll straight out of bed and sort himself out. He used the bathroom quickly and dived into his trunk to get changed. He didn’t have Gryffindor Quidditch robes yet, so he dressed in warm muggle clothing and dived out of the dorm room, grabbing the broom on his way out of the trunk and quietly closing and locking it before slipping out of the room. The chasers

were sat in the common room, Alicia looked up as he came down the stairs from the boys dorm.

“Brilliant, even Harry is here before Oliver ‘make an early start’ Woods, we are all up and where is our great captain, sleeping.” She did not look happy.

“Missing your early morning Wood?” Harry asked innocently

A guffaw and a snort from the sofa showed that Katie and Angelina were awake. “Oliver Early Morning Wood?”

“Isn’t that a Morning Glory?”

“Gloria?”

“Works for me Fred.” Harry was reasonably sure it was George really. Hermione had told him not to reveal how he could tell them apart.

Oliver finally made an appearance, “Everyone here, good, let’s get down to the pitch, it should just be light when we get started.” He led them off through the castle and they traipsed across to the Quidditch pitch, Harry hopped on his new broom and flew over to the Team hut and opened it up getting it ready for the rest to arrive. When they did arrive, Oliver was looking a little puzzled, but he said nothing. The next hour dragged by with Oliver obsessing over tactics and teams manoeuvres, Harry internally groaned, this was the bit he had forgotten. Last time around they had eventually banded together and refused to get up so early, just to discuss tactics, that could be done on any evening in the castle.

At long last they went out and Harry took to the air, he flew initially with the chasers, allowing them to practice blocking moves and passing. Harry was happy, this had been almost the dream team, Gryffindor had dominated the Quidditch in his school years, and the Foxes were a solid and well balanced team, the Twins were brilliant beaters, Oliver was an excellent goal keeper. He wasn’t worried about Quirrellmort trying to hex his broom this time around, they could deal with that, and he knew the other teams were not on this team’s level. He was flying a circuit of the pitch lost in his thoughts when a bludger flew past his ear and brought him back to reality, and almost down to earth. He shook himself off and went to retrieve the quaffle for the girls. He might as well do something useful.

He showered and changed Picking up a bundle of Quidditch gear for the next match. He would need to order supplies from Diagon Alley, he needed gloves, greaves, bracers. Hedwig would be busy he thought. It was only just turning nine o’clock when he dropped his stuff off in the dorm, and headed off down to breakfast.

Hermione joined him a little later, she looked rested. They ate in silence. Harry surreptitiously checked them for tracking and listening charms. Finding none, he bent his head towards Hermione’s, “Did it go OK last night, I never got the chance to ask?”

“Yes, We have reset the wards to what they should be, and removed a lot of Dumbles hatchet work. He is surprisingly bad at warding. He had made the whole matrix unstable, that’s why Rowena and Susan joined me. Our magical signatures are now allocated to Rowena and

Goderic's privileges within the ward scheme. It means we can apparate from anywhere, and once in our animagus forms we don't trigger the wards, so we can leave the castle undetected as long as we are not seen."

A mail owl dropped a copy of the Daily Prophet in front of her, Harry caught it before it landed in her breakfast. Hermione looked up, "How was training?" she opened the paper.

"Worse than I remember, I was out of bed at four thirty and we sat and listened to Olliver go on and on about tactics for over and hour before we even got on our brooms. We need to get him trained."

"Who is that Harry?" Katie had appeared alongside Hermione opposite Harry, her hair still wet from the shower.

"Oliver."

"That's Gloria now."

Hermione looked at them. "Ok, why Gloria?"

"I'll let Harry explain, it's his fault."

Hermione gave Harry *that* look. He smiled, "I will tell you later, lame joke, about early mornings"

"Ah, Morning Wood?" she nodded to herself and went back to the paper. "I miss yours she whispered."

Harry almost choked looking to see if Katie had heard. She didn't look up, but her shaking shoulders gave away the silent laughter.

------oooOOOooo------

Albus Dumbledore walked into the Atrium of the Ministry of Magic and walked over to the reception desk, "Wand on the scale." The man on the desk said without looking up.

"I don't think that is necessary, I am Albus Dumbledore." He gave his best twinkle, and his number 2 smile.

"I don't care if you are Merlin himself with Morgana and Hecate in attendance, your wand goes on the scale, or your boney ass goes back out the door. Mr Dumbledore." The wizard stood and towered over Albus. "If you need help leaving, that can be arranged. He had the badge of 'Wizecurity-4-all' on his robes. Outsourcing had reached the depths of the Ministry. Albus looked at the man, he was possibly half giant like Hagrid, or maybe part Troll. Albus could not decide. He placed his wand on the scales as directed. "Business?"

Albus blinked a moment. "Magical Child Services."

"Visiting?"

“Enquiry desk.”

The part Troll grunted and returned his wand. “Have a nice day.”

Albus walked over to the lifts, this was not the level of service he expected to be extended to him, he was the ‘Leader of the Light’ and should be feted accordingly. The lift eventually arrived at the floor he needed and he walked into the department of Magical Child Services. He walked to the enquiry desk, where a small woman with brown hair and large square glasses wearing an orange roll neck knitted jumper was sitting behind her desk head bent over her work.

“Take a ticket, Wait for your number.” She said, glancing up.

Albus cleared his throat, he did not need to wait, he was Albus Dumbledore.

The young woman looked up. “Hmm, Mr Dumbledore. Why are you here? This is child services, we deal with pre-school age witches and wizards, you have no reason to be on this floor. I am overworked and understaffed. I do not need a visit from a self-important has-been who should have retired at least thirty years ago. Leave my department and go bother someone who cares.” She stood, all five feet of her, and called out , “Rogers, where is my coffee? Do I have to do everything in here myself?” She stormed away from her desk towards the rear of the room, “Norville, are you sleeping on the job again.”

Albus stood for a few moments, he cast a silent *accio* for Harry Potter’s file. He waited. He tried ‘Harry James Potter’ still nothing. The young lady returned, she sat at her desk and placed her coffee mug on the side. “Summoning charms do not work in here *Mister* Dumbledore. What or who are you trying to interfere with this time?” She folded her arms and looked at him sternly though her glasses.

Albus tried a light probe of her mind. *If you attempt any more of that I will contact Madame Bones, now LEAVE!* Albus stepped back, her defences were impeccable.

“I was enquiring after the home address of one of my pupils, Harry James Potter.” He relented and asked the lady.

“His address is on a need-to-know basis for his protection, all you need to know is that he has a safe and loving home with his new family. Unlike you we took care to ensure his new family was appropriate, rather than leave him on the doorstep in the dead of night and steal away like a thief in the dark. Is there anything else?”

“Aha, but in that you are very much mistaken miss, who would we notify in case of an emergency, as his magical guardian, I should know his family.”

“You are NOT his magical guardian. His parents will was very specific about who should look after Master Potter, and you appear nowhere on that list. He has a guardian, listed in the will and registered with the appropriate departments, none of which answer to you in any of the many roles you claim. Now once more, please leave my department.”

Albus considered his options, these meddling kids would be the death of him, he decided to withdraw for today, he would use his influence in the Wizengamot to gain control of Young Harry, it was after all for the Greater Good.

------oooOOOooo------

Saturday afternoon swung around and Hermione and Harry took a stroll along the path that circumnavigated the Black Lake, they both had their back packs on and walked along holding hands and checking their surroundings. Once they were confident that they were unobserved they apparated out of the school into their home garden, where they slipped into the hose and changed into mufti. Once they were changed they apparated across to Diagon Alley, near to the junction with Occasion Alley, and walked down to Gringotts, and up the steps into the goblin Bank.

Harry approached a teller and asked if he could see Account Manager Gnarlak about his account, or if it was inconvenient, could he make an appointment. The teller looked at Harry for a long moment. Please wait here Mr Potter, I will see if Account Manager Gnarlak can see you. Harry looked at Hermione, I forgot, we should have Minnie with us, she is Regent. Hopefully this can be covered with our trust vaults."

"Harry, you lovable daft boy, our trust vaults have over £300,000 between them, we could buy a house. You really don't understand just how rich you are. It's adorable. Can we get some aging potion and a hotel room for the day do you think?"

"Is that a real thing?"

"I *think* so, I have read about them."

"Are they reversable?"

"Hmmm. *Maybe?*"

"It will have to wait until Quirrellmort is toast then. Mum would go mental if she came home and found us as adults in bed together overnight, I think we are stuck doing this the long way."

Hermione sighed, "I know, my cycles started, and it's kicked off all sorts of urges. Adult mind, child body. *Frustrating!"* she sang the last word.

Harry kissed the top of her head and whispered, "I know, after the trip to the ward room, I was so wanting to sleep with you in my arms, but anything else, I haven't got the bits to do it yet. It's a bit embarrassing to be honest." Hermione looked up at him and smiled, "It's quite cute really." Harry huffed.

"Master Potter, Mistress Granger, would you follow me please?" the Teller addressed the pair, they walked with him down to the door into the depths of the bank and were shown into their Account Manager's Office.

Harry gave the goblin a short bow, “Account Manager Gnarlak. Good Afternoon, I hope you are well.” Hermione bobbed a quick curtsey, which felt odd to her as she was wearing jeans and not a skirt.

“Please take a seat. You offer respect, it is accepted and appreciated, in return, may you wealth grow as your foes wither.”

Hermione’s brows knitted, “Account Manager Gnarlak, is there a book that would teach us Goblin customs and greetings? we do not wish to accidentally offend anyone for lack of a simple courtesy.”

“Miss Granger, you never cease to impress me, I will have a copy sent to you, as a personal gift. It would give an old Goblin a great deal of pleasure to assist you both in your endeavours. Now what brings you to our bank, without your Regent?”

Hermione sat up straighter in her chair, she took a moment to gather her thoughts. “Account manager Gnarlak, Harry and I have become aware that the Dark Lord Tom Riddle, who styles himself as Lord Voldemort created soul containers, Phylacteries, or Horcruxes to attempt to remain immortal. We Identified one of these items a few weeks ago and retrieved it and exorcised the soul fragment with a little help. We believe that one of his followers, Bellatrix Lestrange, was entrusted with keeping another of these items. We believe she has placed it in her vault at Gringotts. We hoped that you would be able to retrieve this item and either exorcise it or allow us to call in our friend to carry out the removal.” Hermione sat back and wondered how the news would be received.

Gnarlak remained still for a few moments. “Do you know what this item is?”

“It will be the Cup of Helga Hufflepuff, Riddle has a thing about the Hogwarts Founders”.

“I will speak with Bank Manager Ragnok. Can you offer any proof of your suspicions?”

Hermione’s head dropped. “Not really.”

Harry sat forward, “What if we could show you another one of these Horcruxes, would that give our story some credibility.”

“That would lend a certain amount of value to your story. Can you fetch this item to us, or do you require assistance?”

Harry looked at Hermione for a moment, “Some assistance would be welcome, we can pay for it if required. I know the location of another, but the location is heavily warded and there are likely to be a great number of traps. Is this something you can offer us assistance with?”

“We could allocate you a team of curse breakers, we are well versed in ridding tombs of curses, usually in the Egyptian desert, items such as the ones you describe are occasionally encountered, and the protective curses and wards that surround them can be both complex and very dark in nature.

“It our first match on Saturday, perhaps next weekend? Is that possible?” Harry asked.

“We shall make it so, I shall confirm our arrangements during the week. Watch for our owl.”

The pair thanked Gnarlak and were escorted into the main chamber of the bank, “Back home to change then?” Hermione nodded and they slipped out of the bank and walked up the Alley to a convenient spot to apparate away. They apparated into the rear garden of their home, and walked towards the rear of the house, a large owl was sitting on the back of a garden chair, there was a box on the garden table and a letter in a black envelope attached to one of it’s legs.

“That’s quick, even for Gringotts,” Harry scoffed.

“I bet it’s the emergency portkeys we wanted for Mum and Dad so they have some protection,” Hermione walked to the table and reached to the owl, it offered her the leg to take the letter. “Fetch the owl a treat from the kitchen, Harry.”

“On it.” He unlocked the back door with a gesture and slipped inside, returning a few minutes later with some cold chicken from the fridge, which he fed to the owl, “Sorry, no one was home, I hope you haven’t had to wait too long?” He talked to the owl as he fed it the chicken, With the last piece consumed the owl gave a head bob and took to the air, disappearing from sight in moments.

Hermione picked up the box and carried it into the house. They dropped it on the counter and opened the package, it contained six bracelets, three of a more feminine design than the others, Hermione moved her hand over the bracelets allowing the magic in them to call to her. “Nothing feels off, what does the letter say.”

Harry opened it and read through the text. “The bracelets are emergency portkeys, the activation word is ‘sanctuary’ and the safe location is Minnie’s home in Scotland, this can be changed if we have a better location. They will port the wearer away if they are rendered unconscious. They will vibrate if they detect potions, and shield the wearer from passive legilimency. To activate the bracelet you have to put it on and say ‘activate’ no prizes for originality on that then?”

Hermione picked the bracelet with the pale blue gemstones and held it out to Harry, “Can you put this on for me.” Harry fastened it around her left wrist. “Activate.” Hermione said quietly, “Oh. I just felt it attach to my magic, that’s quite odd.”

Harry placed one of the plain silver coloured metal bracelets on his wrist, and muttered, “activate.” He felt a hitch on his magic as it activated. “Will these work for our parents, don’t they need magic?”

“I don’t know, I assumed the goblins would sort that, they know they aren’t magicals. Is there anything in the letter about it.”

“No, and they won’t be home for ages and we need to get back.”

“Can we apparate out of the castle after dinner?”

“As long as there is somewhere we can return to without being seen, we should be OK.”

“Perhaps I can help a little with those?” Susan said from the corner of the kitchen. She walked over and took hold of each bracelet in turn, including those in the box, “They have a little more protection against mind magic’s now, and will take the wearer to our cottage if triggered. I suggest you take a pair for your friends at school.” Susan picked up two of the bracelets and changed their appearance to look similar to Hermione’s, one with dark blue stones, and the other with orange. “Daphne and Tracey will be targets, more so than the others, tell them to wear them at ALL times, they are only visible to the wearer and others with these bracelets on.” Hermione took the bracelets and put them in her bag.

“I’ll nip and change back into my uniform,” she left Harry and Susan in the kitchen and disappeared into the house.

“How are you settling back into school Harry? I assume being an adult in a child’s body is difficult?”

Harry nodded, “Hermione is feeling it to, she was wondering about using an aging potion for a day, as a holiday.”

“Use the bracelet. When you return to the cottage, you will be the ages you departed. You can have a little adult time, and return the moment after you left. It may help keep you both sane.”

Hermione returned, “ready when you are Harry.” He went upstairs and changed into his uniform, as he changed he pondered, he had his first Quidditch match tomorrow, he wondered if Hermione fancied a night in Susan’s cottage, to help them relax? He would probably get told to behave himself. He was still grinning as he walked back into the kitchen. “What are you grinning about?” Hermione asked.

“Something Susan suggested, I’ll tell you about it over dinner. We should go.”

------oooOOOooo------

Harry waited for Hermione in the common room, and as she appeared the foxes followed her into the room, and the twins appeared from their dorm. “Breakfast everyone,” Katie said with a grin. She looked at Harry head cocked to one side, “someone’s happy this morning?”

“I had a really, really, brilliant night’s sleep last night. Best *sleep* I have had in months, I feel especially relaxed and ready for anything.” Hermione’s cheeks were slightly pink and she was avoiding eye contact with anyone. They all left the common room via the portrait and Harry walked alongside Hermione, taking her hand, “Everything OK?” She looked at him and smiled, “prat,” she said softly. He bumped her shoulder and winked.

They sat as a group eating their breakfast, Harry thought back to the time in his past when he had been too nervous to eat and Hermione had made up a plate for him, starting a habit that had followed them through school in their previous lives. He picked some fruit and ate a light meal, he didn’t want a heavy stomach for what was about to take place.

Today the Gryffindor team would play Slytherin, the team under Marcus Flint was not skilful, but a brutal and dirty team, relying on intimidation far more than ability. Harry wasn't fazed, he could fly rings around the Slytherins, and even with the anticipated fouls, he assumed he could grab the snitch and win the game for Gryffindor. Hermione was sitting at his side and deep in conversation with Katie, the Twins were sat opposite Harry and were chatting with the other chasers, Harry found himself momentarily in a bubble, and looked over to Snape and the Squirell, as pupils referred to Quirrellmort, neither was paying him any attention. Daphne and Tracey walked past the back of the twins and smiled and waggled their wrists, Hermione must have passed the bracelets over in their dorm.

Changed into his kit and standing with the rest of the team, the adrenaline started to spike in Harry's system, he mentally blocked out Oliver's nonsense about catching the snitch or dying, and settled himself into the zone he wanted. He pulled his goggles into place, and took a couple of calming breaths. Someone slapped his shoulder and they flew out of their changing room to the pitch. He saw the 'Potter for President' banner in the stands, and caught sight of the girls sat nearby, Daphne's blonde hair marking them out in the crowd. Madame Hooch released the snitch, the bludgers and finally threw the quaffle into the air. Game on.

Harry flew up fast and started to orbit the pitch looking for the snitch, he watched the match below and kept a working distance from the Slytherin seeker Terry Higgs, he saw the Slytherin beaters attempt to box Katie into one of the towers she timed her pull-up to perfection and the pair almost hit the tower themselves. Harry saw a flick of gold, it was Fred's watch reflecting the sunlight. He made a couple of more orbits, and then caught sight of the snitch, drifting along the edge of the stands in front of the Gryffindor crowd. Harry was on the wrong side of the pitch and the snitch was under Higgs, it was too low to fly straight towards, he would not be able to clear the stand behind. He pushed his broom into a high speed high gee diving U-turn the full width of the pitch, pulling out of the turn close to the broom's maximum speed just clear of the stands and flying sideways along the front of the front barrier, he could see the snitch and Higgs trying to dive down to intercept. Higgs would not make it in time. Harry felt the vibration of his broom as Quirellmort tried to jinx the broom into a crash as he snatched the winged ball out of the air and pulled into the centre of the pitch holding his right hand aloft, he heard Madam Hooch blow the final whistle. Gryffindor had won 170 points to 10. He smiled, Hermione and Daphne had spent three weeks researching and two nights carefully carving a series of runes onto the underside of the broom shaft, to block any such attempt. Daphne had been amazed at Hermione's rune knowledge, but she was close to Hermione's intelligence and highly motivated. He owed them. The party in the Gryffindor common room went on late, Harry and the girls went to their beds long before it finished.

Chapter 8: The Gaunt Ring

Sirius sat in the bed he had occupied for most of the week, he was bored. Andromeda had him on a strict potions regime and was insisting on bed rest for him. He wanted to go out, and have a drink, to meet a pretty witch, he was bored. He picked up the copy of the daily prophet that had been delivered and flipped through the paper. It was full of basically nothing, he kept turning the pages until he saw a picture near the back, the caption read, ***Harry Potter, Youngest Seeker in a Century, wins game for House.*** Sirius sat up straight in the bed and read the short article. James and Lily's boy was at Hogwarts, and he was a Quidditch prodigy, he beamed. Sirius climbed out of bed and found some clothes, he was at the Tonk's place, and they lived in muggle Crawley, so the clothes were muggle jeans, tee shirts and such. He padded downstairs where he could hear his cousin Andi talking to someone. Sirius walked into the kitchen where the voices were coming from and stopped in his tracks.

Andi was sat at her kitchen table, talking to a couple of neighbours he had seen a few times over the last week or so, and their kids. One of the kids was,…….Harry. Harry turned to face him and immediately smiled. "Padfoot, you shouldn't be up yet." Harry crossed the distance and wrapped Sirius in a hug, "Hello again dogfather, I have missed you." Sirius broke. Tears rolled down his eyes and ten years of guilt and fear and grief poured out of him. "Prongslet, is it really you." He wrapped his arms around Harry and sobbed, "I am so sorry Harry, I should never have left you with Hagrid, I should never have gone after Peter. I promised your mum and dad and I let everyone down."

Hermione walked over to Sirius and joined the hug, "He has been safe Sirius. My dad found him the night Dumbledore abandoned him on the Dursley's doorstep and he has lived with us ever since, you will like the fact that I am his soulmate, and we will marry one day, he beat James's record by nearly ten years, but he isn't Prongslet, he is Bambi."

Sirius dropped to his knees, "Oh my, you are so like Lily, thank you, thank all of you. I have despaired for so long. I saw the papers, "where did the boy-who-lived go? what happened?"

"You will probably get a serious rollocking from Lily when you see her, she isn't impressed."

"You are right, I have that to look forward to eventually……..You talk as if you have met her?"

"She has Padfoot. She is correct, what were you thinking leaving our boy and careening off after the rat?"

Sirius was still kneeling on the floor, he stared vacantly at Lily as she stood in the room facing him. "Mum, Sirius will think he is going mad, you promised to let us tell him about this stuff before you laid into him. He has spent ten years in Azkaban, chill woman."

"Do not tell me to chill, Harry James Potter.."

Harry looked at Sirius and winked, "What are you going to do mum, ground me, kill me, again. Really. I am the one who had eight shitty lives, if I can forgive him, you WILL forgive

him, or I will banish you back to the hereafter." Harry flashed a quick grin at Sirius. Lily stood arms folded, clearly fuming. "Mum, you gave Sirius an absolute earbashing last time around, he needs to heal, we need his help, we don't need this. Stop going all Molly Weasley on us." Hermione had her face in her hands and was shaking her head.

"Harry James Potter, you little monster, you are deliberately antagonising me, where do you get this from?"

"He gets it from you Lily." Hermione answered, "this is exactly how you deal with James. Don't worry, Harry James will be punished. Trust me."

Finally Lily stopped, and started to laugh, "You little tyke, you are a nightmare. Hermione, we need to talk. These Potter boys are getting out of hand, Sirius, we will have words. Make it right, Padfoot." She faded from view.

Sirius looked from one to the other, "that was real?"

"Oh yes. Long story dogfather, not for today, but Hermione and I are living our lives over, we have died a few times already, DEATH has sent us back to deal with Moldyfart, and the Death Munchers, everyone in this room is in on it, and when you are well enough we will need your help, but the most important thing for the next few weeks is for you to get well. You can't help us until you regain your strength." Harry leaned in and whispered, "Amelia Bones tried to investigate and open your case but Fudge and Dumbledore were blocking it until we caught Pettigrew and the charges were all proven false. Don't be too *hard* on her when she comes to visit."

Sirius climbed back to his feet and Harry pulled him to the table, "Sirius, I need you to meet Dan and Emma Granger, they are Hermione's birth parents, and they adopted me. They have kept us both safe." Dan stood and held his hand out to Sirius.

------oooOOOooo------

Harry and Hermione were jogging around the lake in the dark, the cold late November morning sharp on their lungs. "We should use the room of requirements and run along a tropical beach tomorrow."

"Good idea, shame we can't use the bracelets and train in Susan's place, we wouldn't have to get up early."

"I don't mind early mornings, compared to the tent this is easy."

"Yeah, that was a truly awful part of our lives. The only good thing was finally bringing us together, once we were potion free."

"What are we going to do about Ron. I was all set to send him to the Troll, and he is just a daft kid so far."

“He stabbed me in the chest with a fang and as the poison reached my heart he looked into my eyes and called me a mudblood whore. I did not know that person, he was so full of hate, he was your friend. I wonder about every nice thought I ever had about him, were they mine or created in a cauldron?”

“Fair comment, I think I am hanging onto my fond memories a bit. I saw him kill you in your memory, did he ever really like you, or was it just more jealousy?”

“I don’t know, perhaps we can introduce him to fluffy?”

“Ooh, poor dog, he would be ill.”

“Acromantulas?”

“Might cause Hagrid a bit too much grief.”

“More than Norberta?”

“When does he get the egg?”

“After Christmas break, not for a while yet.”

“Perhaps not then.”

“Chamber of secrets, feed him to the Basilisk?”

“Then what, if it wakes up it will kill half the castle before it’s finished. I am not going to chance it with a sword again.”

“Is it a cockerels crow that kills them.”

“That is the legend, I wouldn’t want to bet my life on it. I would rather have Dad there with a bazooka or whatever they call them these days. I read up on Basilisks after the whole thing, some reckon the cock-crow defeats a Basilisk thing just refers to the fact they don’t like sunlight, so hunt at night, and withdraw at dawn. It would be a bit of a let down if you produced a cockerel and it just scoffed it first as a starter.

“I don’t know what I am going to do, but his days are numbered, he is wary of me now, because he saw me deal with McLaggan, but the toxic ginger gargoyle will show up at some point. If I thought he was redeemable I might let it go, but he has Molly’s temper, and huge entitlement issues. I wonder if he actually started to hate you once he realised you were the popular one, and he was the sidekick. He was the reason I was in the toilet for the troll to find in the first place.”

“I might have an idea, how we can potentially kill two birds with one stone.”

“Pray tell.”

------oooOOOooo------

Harry was sat eating lunch with Hermione, Daphne and Tracey, they had just finished transfiguration, all of them had managed a teacup from the conjured mouse they had been given and they were discussing if it was a relevant thing to learn, and what if anything could be developed from the spell.

Just down the table Ron was complaining to Seamus about how ‘old McGonagall’ was picking on him, because his cup was furry and still had a tail. His voice drifted across a momentary lull in the background noise level, “of course Potter and his know-it-all muggle bitch were bloody perfect, they make me want to puke the pair of them. I was told to try to make friends with him by my mum, I am bloody glad that never happened, imagine having to listen to that stuck up snooty bint that’s always with him, he get’s everything…..,” the noise rose and drowned out the rest of his rant.

Hermione looked Harry in the eye and bit the end off a carrot stick, holding his gaze for a long minute. “No hesitiation, no tears and no hearts breaking no remorse, his actions require a deadly course.”

“Are they lyrics?”

“Might be, can’t think what to though.”

------oooOOOooo------

Sunday morning came around, with a light frost coating everything outside the castle. Harry and Hermione decided to apparated from an empty classroom on a part of the fourth floor that was no longer in use. Harry checked on the map to ensure no-one was following and they jumped away to their house, to get changed. They sat in the kitchen and had breakfast with their parents, discussing their plans for the day. Dan wanted to accompany them, and even when they told him that they would be going with a team of Goblin curse breakers he still wanted to be there. Hermione tapped Harry’s leg and gave him a look, so they agreed to apparate him to Gringotts with them when they went to join the Goblins after they got ready.

They popped into existence in Diagon Alley and took the walk down to Gringotts, the three of them were kitted out in black clothes, combat style boots and Dan was carrying a black holdall. They walked through the doors and were escorted straight into the back by a pair of the guards.

They were taken to a non-descript room, where a group of goblins were gathered, some wearing armour and carrying long handled axes. “Good Morning, Master Potter and Miss Granger, and Mister Granger, I am Kragnok, I shall be leading this party. We have a portkey set to the location you advised. We are just awaiting our scouting party to return and confirm it is safe for our arrival.

A few minutes later a pair of goblins appeared in the room, and after some discussion in their own language, the group all took hold of the proffered length of rope and portkeyed into Little Hangleton, arriving at the junction of two quiet country roads. Harry walked a few yards down the road and then pointed into the hedge. “The shack we are looking for is in here, under concealment charms.”

Two of the goblins walked to him, and after a moment inspecting the hedge walked through it, Harry waited for Dan and Hermione to catch up and they followed the group through the hedge. It was a badly overgrown path, the trees had not been cleared in years, at the front, two of the goblin guards were clearing the path with their axes and one of the curse breakers was following close behind and checking on progress. It took the group about fifteen minutes to reach the shack, the frost covered trees and bushes looking starkly beautiful around the near derelict building.

Kragnok motioned for Harry to join him, “I believe that you need to open this.”

Harry looked at the snake pinned to the door, *§Open§* Harry tried in Parseltongue. Nothing happened.
§Open for the Heir of Slytherin§ The door clicked and one of the goblins hooked the handle with a crook and pulled the door open. He motioned Harry to move back. Harry pulled his wand from his holder and Hermione matched his move, they took up stances watching the surrounding tree and shrubs, waiting and wondering if anything would trigger Riddle.

Dan was kneeling at the bag he had brought with him, with a few muffled clicks he assembled the HK MP5 he had brought along, and cocked it. He stood tall between his children and scanned the surroundings; a slight mist was forming in the trees as the weak sum warmed the cold earth. This place gave Dan the creeps. Strange shapes could be seen in the mist, and it felt colder here than on the road.

Outside the shack a pair of goblins were working their way through the various traps and wards placed on the door, and others on the window. With a nod of agreement, they stepped warily into the shack and cast about. They slowly worked their way into the main room, the furniture had rotted and collapsed, and a thick layer of dust covered everything. They could sense the dark miasma surrounding the ring, and identified its location. Without approaching, one of the pair levitated the floorboard clear of its hiding place and the other lifted the metal box containing it into the air. He summoned the box and keeping it a distance from himself motioned it out through the door.

As the tin, which was an old toffee makers product, passed the threshold, Harry and Hermione felt a scream in their magic. “Kragnok. An alarm just triggered, we know he is possessing a Professor at Hogwarts, he may turn up.”

“How long will it take him to get here, Mr Potter.”

“He will need at least five minutes to clear the ward line of the school, then he can apparate straight here.”

Sadly for Harry’s prediction, Quirrellmort was heading to Hogsmead and was only a few hundred yards from the ward boundaries, when he felt the alarm trigger. He ran to the

boundaries and apparated to the location.

The goblins placed the tin on the floor outside the hovel, “Can you open the tin safely?” Hermione asked, “We can call a reaper to take the soul shard.”

Kragnok nodded and spoke to the two goblins who concentrated on the tin.

Dan spoke quietly to the two, “What does this guy look like?”

“Purple turban, skinny and a bit weedy. If Tommy boy is in charge he will fire off killing curses like confetti. I doubt he is really powerful at the moment, but we should shoot first and go for the kill if he turns up.”

“Roger that.” Dan said half in jest, and flipped the safety off, pulling his weapon into his shoulder and tensing ready to move. He didn’t like standing in the open, waiting to be attacked. He didn’t like waiting. Harry spoke softly, “I am going to make you invisible for now,” Dan felt a sensation like cold water slowly running down his body. He could still see and hear everyone, he shrugged, maybe it worked. Who knew?

Hermione closed her eyes and called Susan, as she opened them the curse breakers finished with the tin it’s top hinging open and they magically unwrapped the cloth to reveal the gaunt ring, with the resurrection stone as its centre piece. Harry and Hermione could feel the wrongness of it, and were aware of the compulsion charms, but unaffected by them.

“I will sort that gentlemen.” Susan walked in form the side and placed the tip of her poker on the ring. Harry felt as much as heard the scream and he grimaced and ducked his head down. The green bolt flashed through the space his head had just vacated, Hermione dropped onto one knee and fired a chain of cutting, blasting and piercing hexes at the figure emerging from the shadows. He batted them away sneering, and cut down two of the goblins with flicks of his wrist.

“You will have to do better than that mudblood.” He pointed his wand towards Hermione, Harry saw his wand swinging around to Hermione and the world slowed down around him. He pulled a conjured wall out of the ground to use for cover as the first curse left the wand and blew several chunks out of the newly constructed barrier even as they ducked behind it. He flicked his wand at Quirrellmort and let fly a chain of curses, Quirrell dismissed them with flicks of his wrist, but fatally, shifted his attention to Harry, “Potter. Time to end this, boy,” he heaped derision on the last word.

Dan had the figure square in his sights, he was only twenty feet away, and as he put the first pressure on the trigger the green laser sight marked the centre of Quirrell’s chest, visible in the slight mist. Quirrell hesitated, seeing a green light, thinking he was dead.

He was not wrong. His brain sent the command to his legs to jump clear, but too slowly.

Three muffled thumps followed a tenth of a second apart and the three 9mm rounds made a respectable grouping in the centre of his chest, his heart exploded and one passed though his spine. Quirrellmort fell to the floor, Quirrell was dead, and Voldemort’s wraith started to form above the body.

“You had better come with me,” Susan said in her strictest voice as she stepped over to where the body lay, and with a sweep reaped the wraith, The shade of Quirrell was standing looking surprised, “Congratulations, you just picked a fight with the agents of DEATH himself, before your arrogant possessor picked the fight, he perhaps should have checked, young Lord Potter over there is the last Peverell, he is also the keeper of the Hallows, the Master of Death. You cannot kill him, your master is gone, and it is time for you to meet your fate, I hope you like being warm, Quirinus. She tapped him with the poker and he was gone. Susan turned to the gathered goblins, flanked by the spirits of their fallen comrades, she spoke in their language, “I am sorry for your loss Kragnok, your warriors have passed over and I shall guide them to their ancestors.” She faded from view, the two guards fading along with her.

“Is that it?” Dan asked.

“For today, thanks dad.” Hermione smiled. “We still have the rest of the horcruxes to sort, and all the Death Eaters, and Dumbledore. We won this battle, but the war still continues. That is a great result though, as long as we can recover all the horcruxes, he can’t come back. We killed two more bits of him today. We have still got the cup, the locket and the diary to clean.”

Harry laughed, “That was awesome, the laser sight stopped him, he thought it was an AK.”

Dan looked puzzled, “Why specifically an AK?”

Hermione smiled, “Avada Kadavra, the killing curse. It’s a green spell, just a flash usually. Harry, dad thought you meant an AK47, a Kalashnikov assault rifle.”

“Harry laughed, “Ah, I see. So what is that?” He nodded to Dan’s gun, the barrel of which was steaming in the cold and damp.

Dan grinned, “this? How did this get here?” He laughed. “This is an HK MP5, Heckler & Koch, currently owned by Royal Ordnance, but originally Mauser. German. Most of the best guns are really. I asked a mate from the old days if I could borrow one.” He grinned, “I was surprised when he dropped it around a couple of days later with a decent supply of ammunition.” He looked from Harry to Hermione who was dusting herself off, “You two are scary calm for just being in a firefight. How many times have you done this?”

“Against Riddle alone, ten or twelve times, I died twice. Against all his cronies, dozens, I have no idea.” Harry stowed his wand as he spoke, “You OK Hermione?”

“Mmm’mm. Just checking myself over, not even a scratch. Who knew, the power he knew not. A gun.” She laughed. “What are we going to do with the body?”

“Should we put him in the shack and torch the place?”

“No, if the mundane fire service turn up there might be a trap or two left. Let’s leave the place, and after the rest are dealt with the Ministry can deal with it.”

“We should remove his ancestors bones from the graves. Just in case someone tries to revive him with one of the horcruxes.”

“Good thinking, we can do that. Kragnok?”

“Yes Mr Potter”

“My condolence’s, and respects for your fallen. We are going to visit the graveyard on the hill and remove some items to prevent a ritual. Can you dispose of this body, or shall we make arrangements?”

“We shall carry our fallen back to the Horde. We have already witnessed them depart to join the ancestors, their families will be proud, they will cherish the memory of the reaper appearing to do battle with us. We shall dispose of the wizards body for you, the dragon’s will be grateful.” The whole group of goblins cackled, those in armour thumped their chests three times.

“Warrior Granger, you are welcome in the Horde, I will tell our king that you defeated the wand waver, I believe he will want to express his gratitude.”

Hermione *accio’d* the ring and handed it to Harry who slipped it into his pocket. She levitated the empty tin back into the shack and closed the door with a gesture.

The Goblins had the bodies slung between them, they took hold of the portkey, “Warriors – HO!” they shouted and disappeared.

Dan had the HK across his chest and the bag in one hand, Hermione took his hand, they three apparated up to the graveyard, and Harry walked them over to an all too familiar gravestone. “Is that the grave? Harry.”

“Yes, I was bound and they transfigured the angel statue to restrain me, they did the ritual over there in a cauldron.” He looked around, and ghosts filled his memories. “Cedric died just there.” Hermione held him close for a moment.

Dan spoke, “Harry, talk about it. The more you talk it through, the less impact it will have. I struggle with you two in these circumstances. My instinct is to pick you both into a hug, but inside you are both veterans, I think you might have seen more action than I have. I can tell you, from personal experience, bottling it up is destructive. You must talk, to each other, to me if you want to. Not your mum, Emma had enough nightmares after Africa.”

“Is that when you rescued mum?” Hermione asked.

“It was, she was captive for nearly twenty four hours, terrified the whole time. She feared, well. Maybe when you are older.”

“She was expecting to be raped and tortured I assume. Harry and I were captured in two previous lives, I was tortured for a while, Harry got killed trying to save me the first time. The second time we had help. The madwoman that was carving me up with a dagger was telling me how the men would use me one after another until I died, I know exactly what she feared. I had those nightmares as well.”

She turned to watch Harry as he was busy extracting the skeletons from any of the Riddle family graves and shrinking them down into a small pile at his feet. “These ‘Death Eaters’ as they call themselves, they are animals. They have to be wiped out, or it will all start again.”

“You should call them something that mocks them, fear of the name. Call them Shit Eaters, or Deaf Eaters, or Bed Wetters, anything that makes them sound stupid. Don’t give them power.”

“Harry will like ‘Shit Eaters’, he used to call them ‘Death Munchers’, I rather like ‘Bed Wetters’ it makes them sound pathetic. We have some friends who like making up nicknames, they might help.”

“How about Meat Beaters?” Harry asked as he walked over. “Basically.” Hermione cut him off.

“Harry James, I know exactly what that means, and it is fine amongst you boys, but I am not using that sort of language around the school, even euphemistically.”

Dan laughed, “Princess, we just fought and could have died. You get a pass on any potty mouth, and calling the assholes trying to kill you, ‘Wankers’, works just fine for me.”

Harry threw his head back and laughed, Hermione stood open mouthed staring at her father. “Well, father, they are fucking wankers, most of them are dickless as well. Just don’t ever tell mum you heard me say that.” She giggled, “Harry, we might need to pop to Susan’s, I need some adult stress relief.”

Dan looked at his daughter, closed his eyes, shook his head and started laughing. “I am going to pretend that I did not understand that.” He looked at Harry, “Don’t worry Harry, your first act on contact was to shield Hermione and me, I could not ask for a better man to take care of my girl. Just let me pretend you are both children for a bit longer.”

“We are Dan, sometimes we just sit and giggle about silly things, our past lives are distant memories, we spent years in neverwhen, I think, it was strange, we had to be fixed to come back. You know what PTSD is about, we would have seriously hurt someone for dropping a plate, or some such nonsense.” He transformed all the bones into a ball with a swirl of his wand and shrank it to the size of a golf ball, before pocketing it. “Shall we go home, get washed up and have some lunch?” The others nodded. “Hermione, pop dad home, I am going to toss this in the ocean, I will see you there in a couple of minutes.” They apparated out with a couple of soft pops.

They had fish and chips for lunch, Harry threw the bone ball into the North Sea at the end of Whitby Harbour and picked up four portions of Haddock and Chips, with peas from the chip shop near the harbour bridge, before bouncing back home. They sat around the table and ate the food with their fingers, Emma passed on the peas, she had grown used to English fish shop chips, rather than fries, and enjoyed the succulent fish, but mushy peas were just wrong on so many levels. Dan and Harry covered theirs in a liberal layer of salt and vinegar and tucked in with gusto. Hermione, ate a few peas, she preferred tartar sauce really.

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Up in ‘Neverwhen,’ as they called the limbo that Susan’s house existed in, adult Harry was laid in bed with his adult wife laid naked across his body, enjoying the after glow of a quite passionate lovemaking session. He stroked her hair. “After today that’s four out of seven I think?”

She propped herself up, Harry deliberately admired her breasts as they were exposed, Hermione smirked, “Glad you like them, Harry,” she kissed him, “but yes, that’s four. Cup, Diary, and locket left. The Goblins should hopefully look for the cup now, Sirius can get us the locket at Christmas, once he takes his Head of House ring, The diary is the difficult one.”

“We never did figure out a way to get Dobby free, did we. He would be such a help in all this. Do House elves come up here after?”

Hermione shrugged, I don’t know, we should ask, but he isn’t dead in this timeline, so he probably isn’t here, Sirius isn’t anymore. She kissed Harry, “I need the loo, then we should really head back, just in case we have been missed.” She rolled out of the bed and Harry enjoyed watching her naked form walk to the bathroom. He sighed, and climbed out of bed, he had been hoping for seconds.

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Harry had packed and locked his trunk, he had no intention of taking it home, but he had locked it to keep untrusted dorm mates out of it over the holidays. This time around he was going home for Christmas, it would be strange, he had always spent his Christmases in the school, except for the times in the tent. He waited in the dorm for Hermione, and when she appeared they walked down to breakfast. The room was filled with noise, most of the school was leaving on the train a little later that morning and everyone was dressed in their home clothes, robes for the purebloods, and many like Harry and Hermione in jeans, trainers and hooded tops. They sat and ate a large breakfast, the food service on the train was sketchy on the trip up to London, and it was better than eating a mountain of sugary snacks and sweets. Healthy food was not a thing in the magical world.

They were sat close together waiting for Nev, Daphne, Tracey and the rest to appear at breakfast when they heard a commotion near the door. They were a little out of hearing range, but Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy were squaring up against one another. Harry grinned and head pointed the fracas to Hermione. She smiled, they exchanged a look.

They left the school with Neville and the others from their house that were heading home for the holidays, grabbing a carriage together down to the station, they found a compartment and settled down for the journey, home.

“Anyone know what’s happened to the Squirrel?” Tracey asked. “We’ve had Snape for the last couple of weeks in DADA and potions is bad enough without D.Bat being a monumental arse about everything. The only plus side is he makes me want to be really good so I can hex his bits off.”

“No haven’t seen him at a meal for the last couple of weeks, Hagrid reckoned he saw him running down to the gate a couple of weekends ago. Last time he was seen apparently.” Neville added from the corner.

“I wonder who we will have for DADA come the new year, it would be nice to have a professor that actually both knew the subject, and wasn’t a complete arse to go with it.” Harry said, “Snape knows his stuff, but he want’s to teach the dark arts, not defence against them.”

“Not everything that is classified as dark magic, is evil Harry.” Daphne spoke quietly. “The so-called light faction has been making any ritual based magic either illegal, or not taught, and blood based magic is banned. That means communing with your ancestors, your Parents Harry, on Samhain, is frowned upon. Blood adopting a child into your family, so you can share your family magic, is banned. When you inevitably marry Hermione, the ritual I would recommend for the wedding night to welcome her into the Potter family magic’s would currently get you arrested. Not everyone from the light side is good, and not all so-called dark wizards are evil.” She shifted in her seat, “Sorry if I sound a bit preachy, Snape is not a good person, but neither is Dumbledore. My mother knew your parents well, she told me that your Godfather Sirius was a good man, and the Black family are as dark as they come. She didn’t believe he was the one to betray them.”

“He didn’t, it was Peter Pettigrew. He went through the veil for his crimes in early November. Sirius is out of Azkaban and recovering at his cousin’s. I will meet him again over the holidays.” Harry told her quietly, “It wasn’t widely published because Fudge doesn’t want to look bad.”

Tracey snorted in derision, “My dad hates Fudge, he reckon’s he is a complete buffoon. Reckon’s his opinion comes from the highest bidder.”

Hermione nodded, “Your father sounds like a sensible man. Fudge is uncompetent, to say incompetent would credit him with some level of competence. Him and his pink toad Umbridge are dragging our world back into the past, but that’s what the old guard purebloods want so I am sure he will survive a little longer.” She huffed, “Umbridge would have someone like me put in prison or kissed, for ‘stealing magic’ from a pureblood family.”

“Really?” Neville was surprised.

“She is the worst sort of blood purist Nev, she isn’t even a pureblood, her father was muggleborn, or a muggle I forget which.” Hermione finished.

The rambling conversation stopped when the compartment door opened and Malfoy stood with his minders, “Potter.”

“Oh Malfoy, and your backing dancers, are you going to sing?”

“What? Are you stupid? What are you talking about?”

“I don’t know Draco, the label has fallen off. Look, just get on with the insult you’ve been working on, we’ll all give you marks for content, originality and delivery, and then we can all

get on with our lives." Harry looked at him expectantly, Crabbe's eyebrows were furrowed, but Harry noticed a slight smirk on Goyle's face.

"You think you're really clever, just because you are the seeker, just you wait, next year I will show you."

"Thanks Draco, I think the insult is weak, say four out of ten, it's not really original, so three, and delivery was a bit lame, you need to work on presentation. For the record I think Hermione is really clever, I think I am just cleverer than you, and I think that because I get better marks. Anything else, or is today's act like a Gryffindor session over?"

"How dare you compare me to that mudblood," Draco spat out.

"That witch would kick your pathetic arse intellectually or in a fight, magical or physical Draco Malfoy. You are nothing without your name, she will make a name for herself, what are you going to be remembered for?" Daphne asked pointedly, "running around with your goons and making a complete arse of yourself. Not very cunning is it?"

Hermione looked at Draco, "If I am supposed to be offended by you calling me names, you have no idea who you are dealing with." She stood and walked up to him, "You are a pathetic excuse of a little boy, you hide behind your fathers legs at anything scary, Ronald Weasley is more of a wizard than you, and that is a low bar. Now leave before I beat you up muggle style and you have to explain how a girl gave you a black eye to your precious daddy."

"You would not dare lay a finger on," the slap stopped him midway through his retort.

"Leave, or these two will be carrying you." Draco's face had a bright red handprint and he was fighting tears,

"Just you wait."

The whole compartment joined in, "until my father hears about this!" He stormed away, his minions followed after.

"No doubt Lucius will try to have me charged with the crime of being a muggle and using oxygen reserved for purebloods or some such nonsense," she said as she sat down.

Daphne looked up, "He will not admit getting schooled by a muggle girl to his father, he would not dare. He might whine to his mother, but I am not sure where Narcissa's allegiances are these days. She is a pureblood snob, but she isn't interested in any of the Death Eater nonsense her husband was wrapped up in. She is a society witch, and enjoys the good life, she will probably scold Draco for being so easily goaded. Slytherin is supposed to be ambition, cunning and subtlety, Draco is as subtle as an Erumpant in a cauldron store."

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The Train arrived in Kings Cross. It was dark and cold in London, and as they stepped from the carriage and walked to the exit they looked around, there were plenty of parents picking up their children, to their surprise they saw Emma standing on the platform, as they got closer

they realised Andromeda was with them, Both ladies smiled and waved, and as they headed towards the pair a stinging hex caught Harry on the backside, he jumped around to see Tonks laughing her head off about ten feet away, “Gotcha Harry,” her hair was bright pink and as she walked up to him, she grabbed him around the neck, “how is my favourite second or third cousin?”

“I was just fine, thanks, I guess I deserved that, a bit.” He was rubbing the spot on his buttock where she had caught him, Tonks linked arms with them both and walked over to their parents.

Andromeda looked them over, “Nymphadora, can you side along Mrs Granger? and I will bring the two youngsters.”

“Ok, back to ours?”

“We can both apparate ourselves, if that’s easier.”

Andromeda looked at them with an air of mild disbelief, as if to say, ‘of course you can.’ Hermione reached out to her mother’s hand and popped away. Harry grinned and side-along apparated Tonks, Andi appeared a moment or two later. “You two are very advanced for your ages, just how old are you really?”

“Well, that is the question, I am not sure to be truthful, early to mid-twenties I think. Do all the previous lives count as well as the time in neverwhen?” Hermione answered matter-of-factly as she followed Andromeda into their house.

“Hi kids, come in, it’s really good to see you both.” Sirius was waiting in the kitchen. He looked a lot healthier, and his skin pallor had improved, “Come here kitten, give an old man a hug,” He wrapped his arms around Hermione. Then pulled Harry into a group hug, “Andi thought it better that I wasn’t on the platform, some people still think I am a mass murderer.”

Back on the Platform 9¾ Albus Dropped the disillusionment charm, he smiled to himself, Harry Potter lived with the Tonks family. He popped away, he would have their address on file at the school, he would be visiting them over the holidays. He had to admire the Tonks girls discretion, he would not have realised it from the few interactions he had witnessed. He arrived back at his office and sent a short note asking Minerva for the Tonks home address. He settled into his chair and popped a lemon drop. He could have things back where they belonged by new year.

Back in the Tonk’s kitchen, everyone was chatting at once, both sets of parents were there, Dan spoke up, “We are ordering in for tonight, so kids, Chinese? Italian? Indian? You choose?”

Hermione and Harry traded a look, “PIZZA!”

Tonks laughed, “are you two telepathic? I swear at times you are linked.” She pulled a face, Severus Snape’s. “Pizza will be acceptable Mr Black.” In a good imitation of his drawl.

Andi looked at Sirius, “Have you ever had Pizza Siri?”

“I have Andi, not for a good number of years though, Lily used to eat them with pineapple on when she was carrying Harry. I can’t say that I agree with fruit on Pizza, but it’s a thing.”

“We should all go to Hawaii for a few weeks next summer. It would be a really good break after this nonsense is finished with.” Harry commented.

“Steady Harry, you just spent a small fortune with that statement.” Dan laughed,

Harry looked around the room. “My treat Dad, I think we will all be ready for it by then. If we have got rid of Mouldypants and the Dead Beaters by then, we will have earned it. I might even ask a few of our friends along and charter a plane.”

Dora appeared with the local Pizza place flyer in her hand, “Who want’s what then?” They ordered a selection of large Pizza’s and they busied themselves sorting the table out for everyone to sit, Harry watched as Andi and Dora used a combination of magic and manual to achieve it. The table was set for eight and the adults had beers or wine, Harry and Hermione had cokes, their bodies not coping with any quantity of alcohol worth consuming.

The food arrived and they sat and helped themselves to slices of the pizza, once they had eaten enough, Andi turned an eye on Harry and Hermione. “Are we allowed an explanation of what you two really are? Sirius had some very weird dreams, he told me a little bit of them, and then clammed up and said it was your story to tell.”

Hermione gave Harry a slight nod and they had a soundless conversation, Hermione sat upright, “How good is your occulemency?” She looked from one to the other.

Andromeda replied first, “I am a healer, I also cover mental health, so mine is as strong as anyone’s. Hermione nodded, and looked to Ted.

“I am a law wizard, and a mundane solicitor at law, I have a very high level as well. Being read in court is not acceptable.” Hermione looked at Nymphadora.

“I think it has something to do with my abilities, I am pretty much naturally immune.” Hermione nodded.

Hermione sat and took a drink of her coke, “Harry and I have lived before, he has died about eight times before, we think, I have died at least three times. On one occasion I was pregnant with our daughter when your sister Bellatrix slit my throat, Harry died a few minutes later. We get sent back into our lives to achieve our destiny, this time we have all our memories, and our abilities from our previous lives, and what we learned training in the afterlife, neverwhen we call it. It exists outside of time. I assume you have regained your memories as well Sirius?”

He nodded. “I have, I will tell you my tale when you have finished yours.”

Hermione went on to recall their previous lives, the abuse Harry suffered, the people they trusted and learned were not friends. The deaths of so many loved ones, and so many innocents. She explained that Harry had united the Hallows and was now one of Death’s

agent's among the living, and that he could allow the dead to communicate, hence Lily had turned up to scold Sirius.

"So do I get any more information about the child you claim I have in the future?" Tonks asked.

Harry looked at her, "It may not happen in this timeline, sorry I am sure he will find his way to you somehow at some point in time, but it would be wrong to tell you who the father is, it would impact your whole life from this point onward. We loved both of you, and we were little Teddy's godparents in that timeline. We both died a month after he was born, the same day that you and his father died, the battle of Hogwarts, the second of May 1998. It is not a date I shall ever celebrate."

"One of the tasks we have to complete is recovering and destroying the soul pieces that Voldypants split himself into. We have successfully got rid of four of the seven so far, the first was removed from my head by a mundane surgeon, Susan reaped the soul from the waste bin in the theatre, it would have perished anyway, without my magic to feed it. Dumbledore convinced me that I had to die to end the Horcrux in my head last time, when in truth a simple mundane procedure would have sufficed. I hate Albus Dumbledore."

Hermione stepped in, "We collected the Diadem of Rowena Ravenclaw during our first week at school, and our honorary aunt Susan reaped the soul from it. A couple of weeks ago, Harry, Dad and I accompanied by a team of goblin curse breakers from Gringotts collected another, this one includes the resurrection stone, one of the Hallows. Whilst we were collecting it, the wraith of Tom Riddle, Modlywarts, was alerted and using the body he had possessed, our Defence Professor, he attacked us. Harry and I were holding him off magically, and Dad finished him off with a bit of borrowed kit from his old Marine pals. That leaves us three to go."

Harry took over, "The cup of Helga Hufflepuff, it is in the vault of Bellatrix Lestrange, at Gringotts. We have told them, perhaps they believe us now, and will act on the information, The locket of Salazar Slytherin, this is in the possession of Kreacher, the House elf at 12 Grimmauld Place. The last one is the diary of Tom Marvolo Riddle, which is in the possession of Lucius Malfoy. Once they are removed, Voldyprat cannot return, he will be in the afterlife, and will not be enjoying it."

Hermione, "We also need to end the Death Eaters, finally. They need to die. Last time they bought their way out of trouble, or were imprisoned. They rejoined their Dark Lord and attacked Azkaban freeing the rest. They killed hundreds of muggles, especially muggleborns like me, perhaps thousands. Dumbledore preaches forgiveness, he is an obstacle to a peaceful future, and responsible for Harry suffering child abuse for the first ten years of his first eight lives. I will happily kill him at some point.

Harry started, "We need to break down the blood barriers, blood purity is a purely British thing now, and the poor treatment other magical creatures receive gives people like Riddle an open recruiting ground. We sat in DEATH's cottage, in between time and I was quite happy to stay dead, Hermione was with me, and if I am honest only Andi was still alive out of all of you, I had nothing to return to, eternity with Hermione was a pretty good deal. I am apparently destined to fulfil a prophecy, so I was sent back. Dan, my new dad, was guided to

where Dumbledore had abandoned me as a child on a doorstep, so this life has been full of love and care. Having experienced the other lives, I can say I truly appreciate what wonderful parents I have now, and I thank you from my very soul for picking that little boy up from the doorstep."

Emma pulled Harry into a hug and kissed the top of his head, "You are welcome Harry, you have brought happiness to our home, and we have never regretted a second of our lives together. Hearing that I was already a grandmother once is a little scary, let's wait on that one this time, perhaps?"

Harry smiled, "we only learned of the pregnancy from Susan after we died again."

Sirius took up the reigns, "Kids, I had a few visits from Susan myself, I have been into Gringotts and taken up the Head of House of Black." He adopted a dramatic pose, "I am 'The Black of Black' now," he laughed "and I have attended to some outstanding business. I have reinstated Andi and Dora to the house, and I shall expel Bellatrix when it suits. I am going to get in touch with Narcissa, so we might be able to get hold of that diary. I have named you as my heir Harry. My time in Azkaban has removed my ability to have children, so I will pass on the name and the House to the pair of you. We can discuss retrieving that locket at some point, I need to go claim my seat in the Wizengamot at the Solstice session, and I will talk to Minerva about your Magical Guardianship. We have a few weeks to sort this stuff, tonight, let us celebrate being alive, and together with people we love."

Chapter 9: The Locket of Salazar

The following morning at the Tonks residence Andi and Sirius were sitting talking over a cup of coffee at the breakfast table, Ted was in his home office going over some papers, and making sure he had everything in order for the ‘gamot session after Christmas, where he would be with Sirius as he took his seat. He was also seeing who would be best as Harry’s guardian, as they expected a challenge from Dumbledore at the ‘gamot. Dora was only visible as a body sized lump under her duvet.

The wards registered someone had attempted to apparate directly into the house, and had expelled them. Sirius looked at Andi, a question on his lips. She answered, “I think Dumbledore just tried to crash into our house, it appears you paying the goblins for those expensive wards was not paranoia after all. You have our gratitude Siri.”

“He must have been at Kings Cross and seen you leave with Harry, I bet he thinks Harry lives here.”

“Harry is only four doors down, I am a little embarrassed by that, I have lived here for eight years, and I only met him last summer after Nymphadora met him by accident. But Ted and I usually apparate in and out of the garden or via the floo.”

“He will be back in a while I imagine, I will let Harry and Hermione know he is lurking,” Sirius sent his patronus off to tell Harry, only to see it stop at the back door. The door opened and Harry’s face peered around the door, can we come in, we wanted to have a bit of a chat about the lockets and stuff if that’s OK?”

“Bad timing Pup, Dumbles is sniffing around, we think he just tried to apparate straight into the house.”

“Harry stepped in with Hermione at his shoulder, “We’ve been expecting some form of showdown all year, we expected him to try it on at school. He thinks we have years to sort everything out, senile old buffer doesn’t realise we might have Riddle finished before new year.”

Hermione asked, “Where does your ward dump an intruder?”

“I am not sure, either the English Channel, or Coniston Water, depending on how hard they hit the ward, if we set them on their highest setting it’s some completely unpronounceable volcano in Iceland, sounds like a cough with a mouthful of sausage.”

“Eyjafjallajökull” Hermione said.

“easy for you to say.” Harry snarked

“Gesundheit,” Sirius replied. Hermione fixed him with a level 3 stare, they only become fatal above level 5.

At that moment Albus Dumbledore was drying himself off in his office having been dumped into the centre of one of the Lake Districts larger lakes, not warm in the height of summer the water had been truly freezing. He was convinced that the presence of such heavy-duty wards meant that Young Harry must be at the Tonk's residence. He looked across to Fawkes, the bird looked back and trilled something mildly derisive, it promptly flamed out of existence. Albus transfigured his robes into muggle attire. In his case a yellow and black plaid three-piece suit of a cut not seen this side of the nineteenth century, with bright red riding boots, and a purple felt top hat. Satisfied that he would be unobtrusive in the muggle neighbourhood he apparated once more, this time to a place slightly away from the Tonk's house and became painfully aware of a second equally powerful set of wards on a nearby house, these did not banish him to a lake as he landed outside of them, but they made his landing rough, and he was feeling every one of his considerable years when he materialised.

Dan was standing in the rear of the double garage that stood apart from the house, he had just been to the butchers to pick up their order for Christmas and was loading part of it straight into the chest freezer in the garage, he heard Dumbledore apparate, and having some experience of the form of travel recognised it for what it was. He saw the wizard, and equally recognised him, for a moment he cast about for a weapon, and then as Dumbeldore set off away from him relaxed and went into the house. He found Emma and told her what was going on, and went to open his bag of tricks.

Back at the Tonk's Hermione looked up, "He's back, he just triggered our wards with a near miss." Sirius and Hermione looked out of the window. "Here he comes, he looks like something out of a Dickens parody."

He stopped at the property boundary, and waited, "He is knocking on the wards," Andi announced. "I don't want to let him inside, shall we go see what he wants Siri?"

"We know what he wants, lets see if we can persuade him to clear off without a fight." Sirius and Andi opened the front door and walked out onto the driveway in front of their house, "Good morning Albus, care to explain the attempt at crashing into my cousins house earlier?"

Albus's eyes narrowed at the sight of Sirius, he had heard that the authorities had released him, he was innocent, but hadn't expected to see him any time soon. "I was looking for Young Harry, I need him to be safe, and I know just the place. If you could let me see him, I would be most grateful, it is for his own safety." He went with his number three smile.

"Harry doesn't live here, he came here for some pizza and to visit last night, but he is home now. We keep that location secret for obvious reasons. His address is not my secret to share, Albus. It is not something you need to know, and it is not your responsibility to decide where he lives. You kidnapped him as a baby, and you lost him. You have no credibility with his family, nor with mine."

"Sirius, my boy, there is no need to be so adversarial, I only intend what is the best for the boy, he needs to be with his family, it is for the greater good, he must be protected. I am sure you understand." He twinkled his eyes.

Andi replied, "Harry is with his family Albus. He has lived with his family since you dumped him on a doorstep, and the Dursleys refused to take him. Harry's Great Grandmother, was our

grandmother, we are family. Harry has the blood of the House of Black in his veins, do not try to polish the turd of your blatant attempt to wrest control of Harry from those people who have *HIS* best interests at heart and do not seek to use him for their own nefarious purposes."

Albus gave her his best disappointed look, "Andromeda, there is no reason we cannot agree on who is best for Harry for his future, I am disappointed that you have so little faith in me, I only want what is best, if you could just tell me where young Harry is I can iron this out with him in no time."

"By obliviating everyone I assume?" Sirius declared, "Andi is a Healer, her husband is in law, mind magic used on either is a stretch in Azkaban, perhaps you can use my old cell. Albus."

"No, no Sirius, not everyone." Albus whipped out his wand and was hit by the "*Expelliarmous*" spell cast from the side of the house by Harry, he called the wand to him and it flew to his hand, he felt it engage and the surge of magic ran through him, "Harry, there you are, I was just." He was cut off mid-sentence.

Harry had heard enough of the bloviating beard for the day, he tried to cast an obliviate and saw the spell impact Dumbles, he expected him to be quiet and freeze. He did not, he started to talk, "Well Harry, it is lovely weather we are having for the time of year, it's nice on these old bones of mine to have a warmer day. Young people just do not understand how cold and draughty Hogwarts can be when you are getting on in life, and the value of a pair of nice warm woollen socks….."

"Harry, what spell did you mean to cast?" Hermione asked.

"Obliviate, but all I could think was how the bloviating beard was in full flow, and I think I said 'bloviate' instead. Will he ever shut up?"

"I don't know, but he isn't casting anything in that condition is he. You have the Elder wand now as well. I think you had better keep that regardless, it balances things out a bit." Hermione marched over to Albus grabbed his arm as he was waxing lyrical about the flowers in the garden, even though in late December there were none. She side along apparated him to his office and then popped back to the garden. "That should keep him out of our hair until someone figures out how to reverse that misfire."

Sirius was laughing silently his shoulders shaking, Andi looked across, "What did you do Harry?"

"I tried to cast an obliviate on him, with the Elder wand, I was going to blank him and drop him back in his office, so he wouldn't come back, and I was thinking about him bloviating, and I said 'bloviate,' when I meant to say 'obliviate' I have no idea what I have cast if I am honest."

Andi smiled and chuckled, "Well it worked, let's go get a drink and perhaps a pastry." They walked back into the house to see Dora stood just inside the door.

“Way to go Harrikins, you have just invented the ultimate prank spell for blowhards. If I thought I would survive Hermione’s wrath I would kiss you.” She laughed and grabbed his face pinching his cheeks in her hands, “Intent is the heart of magic, I reckon it will take them a day or two to sort old Dumbles out, Hogwarts will be fun next term. Brilliant, the Twins would be in awe.” She turned back into the house, “I made a pot of tea.”

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Minerva McGonagall walked into the Headmasters office, one of the Hogwarts house elves had informed her that the Headmaster was not well, “Professor Kitty, Headmaster Bumbly is not making any sense, can you be’s looking at him?”

The Headmaster was dressed like a Victorian era circus owner, and was pacing up and down his office, “Is everything alright Albus?”

“Ah Minerva, I am so pleased you are here, my, my it is lovely to see you, how are you feeling today. Not too tired I hope, isn’t it a lovely day, I was just thinking to myself that it was a lovely day and it is. What brings you to my office on this most lovely of days, not that it isn’t nice to see you, because it is, but I wonder what it is you wanted on such a lovely day……” Albus rambled on.

McGonagall stifled a smirk and called the elf, “Tippy.” The elf appeared, “Please ask Professors Snape and Flitwick to come to the Headmaster’s office.” The elf popped away as instructed.

The Professors assembled in the office and stood listening to Albus describing what a nice day it was and thanking them for coming, on such a nice day.

Snape looked over to McGonagall, “Has he been confounded?”

“Not as far as I can tell, I tried a *Finite* but it had no discernible effect upon his state.”

Professor Flitwick was sweeping his wand over Albus, who currently was extolling the virtue of a steak and kidney pudding. “The magical signature of whatever was cast, is Albus own wand, he appears to have cast something and it has rebounded.”

“He is rather fond of obliviating people who disagree with his thinking,” Snape observed dryly.

“Judging by his clothes he was attempting to blend into the muggle world,”

“Merlin, save us. If he was seen in public looking like that, the poor people who witnessed anything will need obliviating to maintain the statute, and their sanity.”

“Can we check his wand and see what he cast?”

“He doesn’t have a wand on him, and I was wondering how he got back to this office.”

“Wonder, I wonder, I wandered lonely as a cloud, and gazed all around about me as I floated….”

------oooOOOooo------

Sirius, Harry and Hermione were sat in Gnarlak's office, waiting for the Goblin to arrive. Unusually they had been given refreshments and were sat chatting,

"I have a couple of ideas about it Harry, I'm hoping he holds off until the 'gamot session on Friday. I am perfectly happy to leave Minerva as your magical guardian, but if we need to fight Dumbles, Ted has a few tricks up his sleeve. Minnie told me that it took Severus and Fillius combined to undo the hex you put him under, and he has no memory he is admitting to of how it happened."

"What about the wand, now Harry has it, is he trying to get it back?"

"It's the wand of Ignotus Peverell, it's Harry's by birthright, a family heirloom, and it has joined with Harry and the Hallows, you probably over match Dumbles now. Even if you gave it to him, it is your wand."

The door opened and Gnarlak entered, accompanied by another Goblin, taller and dressed in fine clothes, he was carrying a long handled axe with a large red jewel at the top of the shaft, the eye of the axe. Hermione jumped to her feet and bowed to the two goblins then with her right fist clenched over her heart spoke, "Manager Gnarlak, King Ragnok, may your gold grow as your foes perish." She bowed again.

Gnarlak looked on, "Mistress Granger, may your foes perish as your gold grows." He returned the salute and the bow. "I see you recognised our King, Ragnok. These are the human young that Kragnok spoke so highly of, the adult, is not Warrior Granger, however." He introduced them, dismissing Sirius somewhat.

Ragnok gave each a short head nod of respect, "You fared well alongside members of my Horde in battle against a dark wizard, and the reaper itself favoured your cause. We have inspected the vault you suggested, and we can detect the dark magic within, but our contracts are absolute, and we may not enter the vault without it's owner's consent, unless carrying out our duties as bankers. This gives us a small difficulty, once we can enter the vault legitimately, we can confirm the breach of contract and act, but as the owners are in Azkaban, we currently have no reason to enter."

Sirius smiled and stood, he bowed and saluted as Hermione had, "King Ragnok, I believe I may be able to assist. The Vault belongs to Bellatrix Lestrange Black. As head of House Black, I can offer you several reasons to enter the vault. Firstly, a bride price was paid, and the marriage contract has not been fulfilled, the House would seek to recover these funds. Secondly, Bellatrix has brought shame to the House, and I intend to expel her, I would want any monies she has received as her stipend from House Black returned from the date she took the dark mark. Thirdly, as her head of House, I believe I can authorise you to check the vault for proscribed items, so as not to place the House in breach of contract with Gringotts." Sirius bowed again and sat.

Ragnok and Gnarlak talked briefly in Goblin and with a brief nod to the crowd Ragnok left.

“If that allows the goblet to be recovered, then we can organise the removal of the soul shard,” Hermione stated.

Gnarlak took a seat at his desk, “What brings you to the bank today?”

Sirius spoke, “I have a property that has been left abandoned, it too contains a Horcrux, we believe, and the evil has infected the very building itself. It has drawn all manner of dark creatures, and I would like to hire a team of cursebreakers to cleanse the whole property, and then builders to modernise and renovate the house, finally new wards to protect the property and those within.”

“This can be arranged, what is the address, of this town house?”

“Number 12 Grimmauld Place.”

“Is anyone resident at this address?”

“There is an old House Elf called Kreacher, the miasma has twisted his already bitter personage beyond reason. I am not sure of what to do with him.”

Hermione said, “Call Kreacher, you can get him to fetch the locket and witness its cleansing, that will help his mental state, he is trying to complete the last order he received from Regulus.”

“Perhaps, but as he is at this time, neither of you would be safe at Grimmauld Place, perhaps I should just knock it down and start again.”

A goblin entered carrying a box, he placed it upon the table and spoke briefly to Gnarlak, and then left. Gnarlak turned to the rest, “Ragnok has authorised an audit of the vault of Bellatrix Lestrange Black, and this dark item, proscribed under the terms and conditions of vault rental with Gringotts. Pursuant to this breach of conditions the contents of said vault are forfeit, and once the charges are levied the balance will be credited to Mistress Granger’s account as the first to notify us of this item.”

“Sirius, get Kreacher to bring the locket, we can call Susan and have them both cleaned at the same time.”

Sirius shrugged, “Kreacher.” He waited, “I Head of House Black, call Elf Kreacher.” He raised his eyebrows. The Elf appeared and stood muttering.

“Kreacher, fetch the locket Regulus entrusted you to destroy, we shall cleanse it of the curse for you this morning.” Hermione said to the elf.

Kreacher stood and regarded Hermione, he started muttering “Mudblood tells Kreacher what to do, but Kreacher wants to fulfil Master Regulus’s wishes, Kreacher does not like blood traitor Master.”

Sirius looked at Hermione and shrugged, “Kreacher. As Head of House, I order you to fetch the locket here, you may stay to witness it’s cleansing.” The elf looked at Sirius for a moment and popped away.

Harry called Susan, she appeared in the room, hair in a French plait, poker in hand. “What have you got for me today munchkins?”

Harry pointed to the box, “That should be the cup of Helga Hufflepuff, and we are waiting on Salazr’s locket to appear.” Kreacher appeared and placed the locket on the table next to the box.

“Oh, good work.” Susan placed the tip of the poker onto the locket and with a loud scream reaped the soul from within, she turned to Gnarlak, who was seeing her in her Goblin form as Grimlok, the Goblin Reaper. She spoke to him in Goblin, “Open the box please, Manager Gnarlak.”

Gnarlak did as asked and she reaped the soul shard from the cup as well. “Well done Munchkins, and you doggy, just one piece left and we can finish this dark wizard for good.” She curtseyed to those present and faded from view.

Kreacher was staring at the locket. “Locket is clean, Master’s task is complete. Mudblood achieved what Kreacher could not.”

“Kreacher, return to the House, and start cleaning, I want that house habitable as soon as possible.” The elf glowered at Sirius and popped away.

Hermione stood and picked up the locket, “At some point we should return these to the school, if we can get rid of Dumbles.” She put in the box along with the cup, “Manager Gnarlak, could you place these in my vault along with the Diadem please?”

“Certainly Mistress Granger.

Mister Black, we should organise a cursebreaker to visit the property and give you an appraisal and prepare a quotation for the work you outlined, once that is complete, I think the renovation works can follow. Are you free this afternoon, I can organise one of our Human employees to meet you near the property, so that you may grant them access.

------oooOOOooo------

Sirius was sitting on one of the benches that were scattered around the small park that sat in the centre of Grimmauld Place, and across the road from where his family home was. A small attractive woman with an almost elfin appearance walked up to him, “Mr Black?”

“Yes, are you from Gringotts?”

“I am. Samantha Bell, Senior Curse Breaker, I am here to assess the work required to your property. Can you take me through the ward lines Mr Black?”

Sirius stood and smiled at the lady, “Madame Bell, Please call me Sirius. Mr Black sounds like my father. The house is across the road, if you will follow me, I can take you over the ward boundary.”

“Likewise call me Samantha, Madame Bell sounds like my Grandmother, shall we go? Sirius.” He nodded and they walked across the road to where the house sat looking tired and

derelict. As they crossed the pavement, and walked up to the front door, Sirius reached out and took her hand.

“Allow me to bring you over the ward boundary, it will be safer this way,” As they walked to the door Samantha felt the wards wash over her, they felt old and malevolent.

“Nice place, it feels warm and welcoming.” She snarked as Sirius opened the front door.

“It fits right in with the family vibe, my loving mother and father were such welcoming people.”

“I am glad they are being welcoming, I would hate to try and visit if they didn’t like me.”

The portrait of Warlburga started screaming at Sirius, calling him a worthless blood traitor and demanding to know why he had darkened their hallways.

“Lovely woman, your birthday parties must have been popular.”

Sirius laughed, “I would never invite anyone back here, my best friends included a werewolf, and muggleborn girl and a few members of the light side of our world. My mother would have self-combusted.”

“If that portrait is any guide, that might have given you a better childhood.” She looked around and pulled a notebook and pen from her backpack, “Lead on, let’s see what this place needs doing to it to make it habitable.”

------oooOOOooo------

Christmas arrived on Rusper Road, Crawley, at the Granger’s house the kids were down later than any previous year, and it was a subdued affair, the older minds in the children not having any real enthusiasm for opening presents early in the morning.

The meal however was a more festive event, the Tonks family joined them with Sirius in tow and the eight of them sat down to a meal created jointly by Harry and Dan, Hermione had apparently inherited her cooking ability from her mother, and the menfolk set to and organised the spread.

Dora, Harry and Hermione were sat down one side of the table opposite Sirius and the Tonks adults. With the Grangers at the ends, “Where did you learn to cook muggle style Harry?” Dora asked him.

“Previous lives in the Dursley’s. I had to cook for them, or get beaten. I hated cooking for them, but I discovered that I like cooking when it’s my choice.”

Hermione gave him some side eye, “So why did you leave it to me in the tent? I am a terrible cook, I can burn a boiled egg. When we were starving to death, where was Chef Harry.” She huffed.

“Well. It’s woman’s work Hermione.” Harry grinned and ducked as she gave him a hard stare, “I am joking, it never occurred to me that there was something you were not amazing

at.” The side eye returned,

“Nice try Pup,” Sirius mock whispered, “I think you might have better results if you offer to cook Hermione something special.” Dora snickered to herself.

“What do you reckon Hermione. Get Harrikins to cook a nice meal, and act as your bultler all evening?”

“Hmmf. I am not sure, what I can tell Harrikins, is that his chances of an adult Christmas present have just evaporated.”

“You can do that?”

“When we portkey to Susan’s cottage, we are back in our original bodies from our previous life, so aged about twenty somrthing.”

“Pity you can’t come back in those bodies if you have to fight?” Dora pondered out loud.

Hermione looked at Dora for a moment, and nodded thoughtfully.

“So you have both been through School before?”

“Yeah. Hermione still makes me revise though.” He ducked and received more side eye.

“Yes, because of course your marks last time around were so exemplary, since you spent most of the time goofing off with Ron, rather than working.”

“What I meant,” Dora said, “Was that once you have sorted what you are supposed to do, you could simply take the exams and finish school, and have a life.”

Harry shook his head, “teasing Hermione apart, we need to build friendship groups and start alliances, we need to rid Britain of the scourge of blood purity, we can’t do that laying on a beach. We have to go to school.” He bumped Hermione with his elbow, and smiled at her, “Getting rid of Dumbledore would be a good start, he is a roadblock to modernisation, he regards witches as nothing more than wombs to bear wizards, he hoards information, he believes only he knows the correct path. Thousands died because he hesitates, because he believes anyone, except me, deserves another chance, no matter what they do, nor how little remorse they show. He potioned us in the past, and compelled us into relationships, twisted what we should have. He is our enemy.”

Hermione spoke, “For what I suffered, for what Harry endured on our previous lives, he deserves to die. Ron Weasley looked me in the eye as I died from the basilisk fang he stabbed me with, as it’s venom reached my heart he called me a mudblood whore. I was supposed to be his wife in Dumbledore’s plan, but the potions wore off. The toxic carrot killed me rather than let Harry and I be together. He will die. How we have not decided upon, but he is dead.”

“Whoo, you two are spooky at times, remind me not to get on your wrong side.”

“It will never happen. You were always a friend, you never betrayed anyone, ensuring you do not die this time is one of our goals.”

“OK kids, enough. This is supposed to be a celebration, not a wake for people who haven’t died yet. Lighten the mood for pity’s sake.” Dan spoke from the end table.

------oooOOOooo------

It was the morning of the Wizengamot Session, and Harry and Hermione had walked around the corner to the Tonk’s house, where they were met by the family and Sirius. Andi gave them both dark robes to wear and advised them to keep the hoods up and shield their faces in the Ministry, there would be plenty of observers at this session, held as it was in a school holiday, students were a common sight.

They used the floo into the Ministry Atrium and went in turn through security, without incident and took the lifts down to the level of the Wizengamot Chamber, they filed in and sat in the visitors’ gallery, keeping their hoods up, Andromeda sat with Ted on their left, Sirius settled on their right. As they sat waiting Neville and Daphne walked up and took seats in the row in front of them, Daphne spotted Harry, but with a finger to his lips he motioned her to be discrete and with a wry smile she nodded, and whispered to Neville sat at her side. He looked up and with a subtle nod, acknowledged Harry and Hermione.

Eventually the room was filled, Harry carefully looked around the room, Malfoy was sitting in his seat, with Draco at his side, Minerva was sitting across the other side from the Malfoy’s. He recognised a few from previous lifetimes, Cyrill Greengrass, Daphne’s father, and Augusta Longbottom, Neville’s grandmother, a few death eaters, Crabbe, Goyle. Some of Dumbles sycophants, Doge and Diggory. Harry remembered Diggory, his campaign against them. Some of those who would decide things on merit, Nott, Bulstrode, Shacklebolt, Macmillan, Ollivander.

Fashionably and ego massagingly late Dumbles made his entrance, wearing eye watering yellow robes, and smiling his best grandfather smile. Hermione squeezed his knee, and with a flick of her eyebrows, let him know what she thought of the performance. Dumbles took his seat and after a lengthy and largely unnecessary introduction asked the clerk of the court for the first item.

“The first item on the agenda is the New Head of House Black assuming his seat on the Wizengamot. The court calls, Sirius Orion Black.” Sirius stood and worked his way down to the front of the courtroom.

Throwing the cowl of his robe over his shoulders he stood tall and in a clear voice announced, “I Sirius Orion Black, of House Black hereby take my seat on the Wizengamot as entitled, may magic judge me to be worthy. So Mote it be.” His family shield briefly flared into existence in front of him, signalling to the ‘gamot that he was a rightful Head of House. Shortly after the crest of the House of Black formed over the back of the bench reserved for their House.

Sirius looked up at Dumbledore, it was traditional to invite the incoming Head of a House to say a few words. The assembled members turned awaiting his invitation. The clerk turned to Dumbledore and looked at him with raised eyebrows. Albus was not happy, he knew Sirius was out of Azkaban, but he was not expecting him to take his house, and the last meeting had

been erased from his memory. He sucked in his cheeks, “Does the new Head of House Black have any words for the Wizengamot today?”

“Why thank you, Chief Wizard, I was beginning to wonder if you would ever ask.” Sirius paused and looked around the room. “I would like to remind the honourable members, that I was falsely imprisoned, without trail. We shall be seeking recompense. I also announce that I have made my Godson, by ritual, Harry James Potter the heir to the House of Black, it’s properties and it’s titles. I shall be taking up all of the duties that come with the House, including those of Governor of Hogwarts. We of House Black are not satisfied with the safety of the pupils under the auspices of the current Headmaster. We feel he has too many roles and his responsibilities stretch his diminishing abilities too far.”

Sirius walked from the court up to his seat to a level of discussion, Dumbledore banged his gavel and the next item was introduced. A reading of the Bill on the standards for cauldrons and apothecary supplies. This was followed by a debate on the possible introduction, of a consultative document considering the prospect of allowing muggle communications technology called radio to be incorporated into the magical world. It was dismissed as unnecessary.

Finally it came to any other business, and Dumbeldore himself declared an item, “If it would please the court, I have an item for consideration. It has come to my attention, that Young Harry Potter has once again entered our world, after being removed all those years ago. I believe that it is in the best interests of all, that the role of his magical guardian be entrusted to myself, and I would like to put this to a vote.

“Objection.” Ted Tonks stood. “Firstly, if you wish to dispute his guardianship, and contest it’s validity you must recuse yourself from your seat as Chief Wizard. Secondly, you must recuse your proxy votes that you hold in the name of House Potter. As you have just confirmed that you are NOT his magical guardian, those proxies are invalid, and every vote you have made using them is equally invalid. This leads me to a point of order, you have been misleading the Wizengamot for ten years. You should face censure and possibly expulsion.”

The courtroom buzzed with discussion, the clerk, banged his gavel, and then looked pointedly at Dumbledore. “You have to step aside. It is Protocol. You cannot preside over your own motion.”

Dumbledore gritted his teeth in annoyance, but there was no way he was going to win this particular battle so he stood and with what dignity he could muster walked down to the seat reserved for the House of Dumbledore. The Clerk pulled a list and looked at the assembly, Madame Longbottom, are you prepared to chair this motion?”

“I am, I shall hand my vote by proxy, to the House of Black, Sirius, I entrust you to vote correctly in this matter.”

“I shall vote as agreed, Madame Longbottom.”

Augusta made her way up to the seat of the Chief Witch, in her case, and settled herself in. “Mr Dumbledore, you have a few questions to answer. Firstly however, who is the Magical

Guardian of Harry James Potter on record?" The clerk pulled a file out from the pile on his desk and turned to it.

"The Guardian of Record is Minerva McGonagall, who I believe is present. She is also listed as one of the guradians of choice on the will of James and Lily Potter."

"Madame McGonagall, can you answer a couple of points to the 'gamot, on this please."

Minerva stood, "What is it you wish to know? Madame Longbottom."

"Can you confirm that you are the guardian of record as per the will?"

"I can confirm that. I was present with Master Potter when the will of his parents was read, and of the listed guardians I was the one available. Your Son and daughter, first on the list, are sadly in St. Mungo's. Second on the list was Sirius, who was still illegally incarcerated, then the Lovegoods, but Pandora passed a few years ago and Xeno isn't coping well with her loss. Then Ted and Andromeda Tonks, at that time expelled from their family, which we felt would leave them and Harry vulnerable. That left me with the responsibility of ensuring Harry had a loving family, which he has, I took on his magical side, his family are exceptional, and Harry has grown into a fine young man."

"How did Harry come to be with his family?"

"They adopted him through the muggle legal system back in 1982."

"This is after he had famously been kidnapped, according to Mr Dumbledore."

"Albus interceded immediately following the murder of his parents, removing Harry from his home, and taking him to his muggle relatives."

"Did Mr Dumbledore have any authority to make these decisions?"

"Having seen the will, No he did not."

"Do we have a copy of the will?" she addressed the question to the clerk.

"Yes we have a copy here, some details are redacted for House privacy reasons."

"It is a matter of public record, that Harry was lost that night, do you know how this occurred?"

"I do, I know that Harry was left on the doorstep of his Muggle Aunt and Uncle on the night of the first of November 1981, at around eleven thirty, I to my eternal shame was there with Albus, although I objected to leaving him there. I was overruled and at that time acquiesced to his authority." Minerva paused to gather herself.

"I learned the rest of the story ten years later, when I met Harry's new family. The man that became his father saw Harry abandoned, in his words. 'like a bottle of milk,' and as a parent went to ensure the baby's safety. He rang the doorbell, and was told in no uncertain terms that Harry was not welcome in the household. As the parent of a girl of a similar age to Harry, he

decided the best course of action was to take the infant home, and as a result the family adopted Harry and he has lived happily with them ever since."

"May we know the name of this family."

"I believe it is on record with magical child services, but I would rather not declare Harry's home address in court to be reported in the press, for his, and his family's safety."

"For the moment I will accept that. Thank you Madame McGonagall." She looked across the court, "Mr Dumbledore, would you like to explain why you think that you should be granted the position of magical guardian to Master Potter, over the current guardian.?"

Dumbledore stood, Hermione placed her hand on Harry's arm and with a look prevented him casting his '*bloviate´* curse at him, for now. "Thank you Augusta," He was stopped by the bang of a gavel.

"Mr Dumbledore, in this circumstance, I am Chief Witch, or Madame Longbottom. You constantly use familiar terms for people to create the impression they support you. In this instance I am forced to be neutral, but if you do not follow protocol I shall find you in contempt, throw out your motion, and sentence you accordingly. Now I suggest you start again."

"Madame Chief witch, I believe that Young Harry has a destiny within the magical world, an important role to lead the wizarding world into the light. As such I truly believe that I should take responsibility for his upbringing, whilst his current family have done a good job, I believe that I should be his mentor for the future. As leader of the Light I can ensure that Harry is guided and mentored in the direction his destiny requires."

"Mr Dumbledore, you refer to a destiny, would you care to explain to the 'gamot what this destiny is?"

"I am afraid Augusta, that his destiny has to remain a confidence, lest his life be put in peril."

"Mr Dumbledore, I have already cautioned you about over familiarity, if you persist I will hold you in contempt. From that statement, can you provide any evidence to corroborate your claims that Master Potter has a destiny that requires your input."

"Alas no, madame Chief Witch, I must prevail upon the court's indulgence that I have not guided them wrong before and that I should be trusted in this instance."

"Do you have anything to add?"

"No, I believe my record stands for itself."

"Is there anyone here to speak on behalf of Harry Potter, or his adopted family."

"That would be my role, Madame Longbottom." Ted Tonks once again stood to speak. "I am retained by the Potter estate and I am also the legal representative to his family."

"Mr Tonks, the floor is yours."

“Thank you, Madame Longbottom. Firstly, I would address Mr Dumbledore’s record, that he wishes to use as his badge of honour. On the 31st of October 1981 James and Lilly Potter were betrayed and then murdered by one Tom Marvolo Riddle, son of a muggle and a squib, that styled himself as Lord Voldemort. Due to protections layered upon Harry by his mother the spell backfired and killed Mr Riddle, Harry survived, but at the cost of his parents.” Ted looked around the room, noting the faces at the revelation that Voldemort was not a pureblood.

“Following this terrible act, Mr Dumbledore sent his gamekeeper, the well meaning but indiscrete Rubius Hagrid to collect Harry and take him to Hogwarts. I wonder how Mr Dumbledore knew in advance of the attack, to have his man on the scene before any official response arrived. Hagrid refused to hand the boy over to his oath sworn Godfather, and no attempt was made to check the wills of the Potters’ to ascertain who should be given custody.”

“The next act was to abandon Harry on a doorstep in the dead of night, with the temperature well below freezing, with a letter informing his aunt of her sister’s death. No contact was attempted, with these muggle relatives of Harry’s. We know that if they had taken Harry into their home, he would have been abused, beaten, malnourished. His muggle relatives hate the magical world, his aunt and mother were estranged, the will specifies that Harry must not be left with that family. It states, ‘He will not be safe.’ It is a matter of public record that Albus Dumbledore lost Harry Potter, mostly because he ignored everyone and did what he believes to be for the ‘Greater Good’ a phrase he is fond of, but whose good, I wonder.”

“The man that has become Harry’s father witnessed him being abandoned on this doorstep, and knocked on the door, they turned the child away, so he took the boy home. He lives with this family, he is happy, Healthy and loved. His adoption is legal and registered in both the mundane and magical systems. Harry is happy with Minerva McGonagall and his godfather Sirius Orion Black sharing the magical guardian duties. Sirius is related to Harry, and as you heard earlier has made him the Heir Black.”

“I can see absolutely no reason to change any of these arrangements, in fact I believe that if Mr Dumbledore were to be given what he requests he would force Harry to return to his magic hating relatives, so that Harry would be pliable and compliant to this scheme of his, ‘For the Greater Good.’ In conclusion, I believe that Mr Dumbledore presents a threat to the wellbeing of my client and his family, and measures should be taken to safeguard Harry, from Mr Dumbledore’s influence.” Ted looked to Augusta, nodded and took his seat.

“Thank you Wizard Tonks,” she looked around the court. “Is anyone from magical child services available?”

Velma stood from her seat, “Here Madame Longbottom, Velma Dinkle, Magical Child Services, on a transfer from MaCUSA.”

“Do you have anything to add to these proceedings?”

“Thank you, Yes. Some time ago members of the Ministry became concerned with the department of magical child services here in Britain, finding that my predecessor had been hit with multiple compulsion charms, and certain orphans from the Blood War’s records were

being accessed unofficially. With this in mind I was stationed here to mind the shop, I have natural occulemency, and cannot be confounded or imperioused by any witch or wizard.

Since I have been in the office, Mr Dumbledore is a regular visitor, attempting to access the records for Harry Potter, or sometimes his godbrother, Neville Longbottom, your ward Madame. He constantly claims that these are requirements for his role as headmaster, but never produces any documentation to back up these claims. He has attempted legillimency on me on at least five occasions, without success."

She finished her statement, "I would support Law Wizard Tonk's assertation that Mr Dumbledore presents a threat to Harry and his adopted family."

"Thank you Miss Dinkel, does anyone else wish to speak?"

Doge stood, "I would like to add my support to Headmaster Dumbledore, I have complete faith in him, and if he believes the child should be in his care, then we should make it so."

"So noted, anyone else?" Harry looked at Hermione and she nodded.

Harry stood and flicked his hood back, "I would like to say a few words, if I may? Madame Chief Witch."

"Please, introduce yourself, and say your piece," there was some murmuring in the court.

Harry cleared his throat, "I am Harry James Potter. Son of James and Lily Potter, last of the line of House Potter. My parents will specified several families to look after me in the event of their death. Mr Dumbledore is not mentioned anywhere in the will. It specifies that I was not to be left with my aunt, and that is where Albus Dumbledore dumped me like a parcel being delivered on the doorstep. I believe his intentions were to keep me uninformed of the magical world, magically weak, physically retarded and emotionally vulnerable. In short he was going to groom me into a little faithful acolyte that would happily go to my death when he required it.

I will not acquiesce to any instruction to allow Albus Dumbledore any control over my person, my family, House Potter, or it's vaults. He is not fit mentally to be placed in charge of children. At this moment he has a Cerberus in the School, as part of a lunatic scheme protecting the philosopher's stone of Nicholas Flammel, or something that purports to be the stone.

He has baited a trap for someone to enter a school that contains hundreds of children. He will not reveal for whom the trap is, but it is for Tom Marvolo Riddle, Mr Dumbledore does not believe he is dead, and he further believes I must die in order for his final defeat. He is wrong on both counts."

Harry looked around the room, Dumbledore's grandfatherly countenance had disappeared, he was glaring at Harry. Across the room Amelia Bones was leaning over and whispering to her assistant who left the room immediately following their discussion.

Harry stood and walked down to the front of the court. “Magic judges if you are worthy of taking your seat, if you are of age.” He drew his wand. “I Harry James Potter, of House Potter hereby take my seat on the Wizengamot as entitled, may magic judge me to be worthy. So Mote it be.” His wand flashed, and the crest of the House of Potter appeared before him. The crest over the Potter seat appeared as well. “I nominate Andromeda Tonks as my Proxy.” He almost shouted over the furore in the room.

Augusta hammered her gavel. Eventually the court settled. “It appears Mr Potter, that you are emancipated by magic, given that you no longer require a guardian, the motion is dismissed.” She banged her gavel. “Regards the illegal use of voting proxies by Albus Dumbledore for ten years, I assume you can investigate, Madame Bones?”

“Madame Longbottom, I will commence the investigation at the close of this session. I have dispatched Aurors to Hogwarts to check to see if there is indeed a Cerberus in the school. It is either a case of child endangerment, or perjury and slander. I must propose a motion to suspend Mr Dumbledore from his position of Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, subject to the results of our enquiry into vote rigging.”

“Seconded.” Sirius called from his seat.

“Let us have a show of wands, green to pass the motion, red to block.”

The wand count was closer than it should have been, but Dumbledore was suspended. Harry stood in the centre of the court, he felt the stares of Lucius and Draco on him, he looked up at them and smiled a cold smile, as he did a dark shadow of a tall hooded figure with a scythe appeared to their perspective around him. Draco sneered at Harry, who laughed in return.

Augusta banged the gavel. “I call an end to this session of the Wizenagamot, the appointment of a temporary Chief witch or wizard can be addressed at the next meeting. Let the meeting Close, she banged the gavel one last time.”

Harry walked over to where Hermione was waiting, he felt Dumbledore’s stare and ignoring it left the room, where Ted and Andi Tonks waited. “I should scold you, young man, making me your proxy, you might have asked first?”

“Sorry, it was a late idea, Susan told me to do it, I assume no one else could see her?”

“No, you were alone to us.”

“OK, she pointed out, magically Hermione and I are in our twenties, so the Wizengamot magic would class me as an adult, and therefore no guardian.”

“Harry James, do not pull a stunt like that without telling me first. I was scared the magic would reject you and strip you of yours.” Hermione was standing with her arms folded and looking quite cross.

“Sorry love, Susan popped in by my side, I assumed you could see her.”

“See her, Yes, hear her No. You frightened me you prat.” She slapped his arms and Harry could see her eyes were wet, he pulled her into a hug, just as a set of neon yellow robes came into view. “Sorry Hermione, I didn’t mean to scare you. We can talk later, Fumbles is here.” He whispered into her ear.

“Harry my boy, I am so disappointed, you reveal so many things that should not be known. Why do you believe I want to harm you, we must work together for the greater good of wizarding Britain. Please come and talk with me when school starts again in the new year, you are being misled and we should be united against the evil that you describe.”

“Perhaps, but if you will excuse me, I have some matters of a private and legal nature to deal with.” Harry led Hermione over to where Sirius and the others waited.

“Way to go Pup, epic prank. Dumbles will be busy just surviving that assault. Now, who is for dinner? my treat.” Harry pulled his hood over his face and the group slipped out before the reporters worked out where they were. The Prophet would be interesting in the morning.

------oooOOOooo------

They left the Ministry by the main entrance and as they walked out into the cold sunshine of a London December afternoon, they heard a familiar voice call, “Padfoot?”

Walking towards them looking malnourished and rather shabby was Remus Lupin. “Mooney, you look terrible, where in Merlin’s name have you been?”

“Germany, the Bavarian Alps to be specific, one of the few places that would employ someone like me. I read the news of your innocence in the paper, but I couldn’t travel until a few days ago, to keep people safe.” He exchanged a look with Sirius.

“Well we are just going to get some lunch, you look like you could use a decent meal, we will have to sort something decent for you to wear, but you had better come along, then we can all catch up.”

“Harry, is that you?”

“It is Remus, it is lovely to see you again. We can tell you all about what is going on over lunch. Come with us, we can sort some clothes out quickly enough. Don’t worry we know all about your furry little problem.”

“You told them?” he looked to Sirius.

“No, my dad told me.”

Remus stopped in his tracks, “James is alive?”

“No. Come with us, it’s a story better told with food than standing outside in the cold.”

They apparated into muggle London, where a visit to a gent’s outfitters saw Mooney sorted into some nicer clothes and then on to the restaurant, where they brought Remus up to speed with what was going on, and introduced him to Dan and Emma.

Chapter 10: The Death of a Friend?

Harry and Hermione were escorted to the Station and onto the platform by the full complement of adults including the Tonks and stood briefly saying their goodbyes. Further down the Platform the Malfoy males glowered at them. Narcissa looked across and saw her Sister, knowing she had been reinstated to the family she could feel her in the Black family magic. She could also sense both Harry and Hermione and recognised the power the pair radiated. She bent to Draco's ear, "Do not antagonise young Potter, or his girlfriend. Be patient, bide your time. You will be better with them as allies than enemies."

Draco sneered, "Mother really, make friends with that. I would rather marry a pig."

"No Draco, be cautious, they are powerful, magically and politically. That boy has all but finished Dumbledore. Watch and wait." She smoothed down his robes, "Stay safe my son."

Harry and Hermione climbed onto the train and found Neville already in a compartment, so sat down and started swapping stories about Christmas and New Year. They were joined a little later by Daphne and Tracey with Susan Bones accompanying them. Once Tracey and Daphne had settled, Susan pulled a piece of parchment from her robe, "Harry, my mother asked me to hand deliver this to you. They are investigating what's going on at Hogwarts, and she want's to talk to you without," she mimed a long beard, "An audience. He is still the headmaster, despite everything." She nodded to the others, "I am going to find Hannah and Padma if that's OK. See you all at school."

Once she left, Daphne turned to Harry. "OK Lord Potter, spill the beans. How on earth did you claim your Wizengamot seat at the age of eleven and a half?"

"I can't tell you, maybe in a month or so. I had to take an oath." It wasn't true, but it was the best Harry could think of as an answer."

"Why do people keep calling Harry 'Lord' all the time?" Hermione asked.

Daphne smiled, "Ah, our bushy haired walking encyclopaedia has a gap in her knowledge. Let me fill that for you. In the 'old ways' the Head of a Sacred Twenty-Eight House was referred to as Lord. It has fallen from regular use, but some places will still use it, Gringotts might refer to him as Lord Potter now rather than Heir Potter, they might call you Lady Potter, as you are wearing a betrothal ring from the House of Potter. I assume it's just for

protection at this stage, or are you two lovebirds really older than you look?" she gave Hermione a cheeky grin.

"We are not doing anything inappropriate to our ages here," she replied. *I wonder if our activities in neverwhen constitute the sealing of the betrothal contract in this plane as well?* She wondered.

Daphne laughed, "careful answer," she smiled, "How does Dumbledore survive? he was shown to have broken dozens of rules at the 'gamot, and he is still Headmaster."

About three hours into the journey Malfoy appeared in order to make his required visit and insult Harry.

"Scarhead."

"Hairgel."

"Still with the muggleborn I see."

"Still talking first and thinking never, I hear."

"My father is going to sort out your nonsense at the Wizengamot."

"Oh, that's kind of him, I needed to make a couple of announcements, will he do them on my behalf."

"You think you're funny. Potter."

"You think you matter, Malfoy."

"You will learn, some of us have breeding."

"I think you meant to say, are inbred?"

"Wait until my father hears about this."

"Are you sure he is your father?"

Draco stormed off.

------oooOOOooo------

Albus sat in his gold chair at dinner looking over the Hall, the students had returned from the holidays a few days ago and he was still annoyed about the loss of control over Young Harry. Why did these fools not understand that everything he did was for the best. It was clear to Albus that Young Harry was being misled, he had fallen in with the Black family, a notoriously dark and twisted House. Their influence on Young Harry was the reason for him turning away from the light. Albus needed to do something to set Young Harry back on the

correct path. He was becoming too studious, too popular. For Young Harry to achieve the destiny that Albus foresaw as the correct path, he must be kept from this. A popular Young Harry would be missed too severely, others should not suffer grief for the loss of Young Harry, for sadly his death was both inevitable and necessary.

Young Harry was sat with the Granger girl at his side as always, when Young Harry met his inevitable demise at the hands of Voldemort, she would be upset. Harry's friend, the young Weasley boy could comfort her. She would bear him powerful sons. He had taken steps to ensure that Young Harry and the young Weasley would become friends, and that Young Harry's relationship with the Granger girl would wither. A cocktail of alchemical potions had been added to their drinks. He would add it to their food as well when the opportunity arose. If he could only remember where he had left the Elder Wand, he could easily compel them to the correct way of thinking. Nothing good would come out of this affection between the youngsters.

He had another meeting with the school governors later this week. Tedious, he was the Headmaster, they should leave him to run the school, or direct Minerva how to run the school, he was a busy man after all.

------oooOOOooo------

Sat at the table with their friends, Harry felt the warning from his house ring and his bracelet, he looked at Hermione who was regarding her own drink with suspicion. He leant close to her ear, and whispered, "Is your drink potioned as well?"

Hermione nodded. "Mm'mm." She looked around, "what do we do with them?"

"Switch your drink with Malfoy's, I will just vanish mine." Hermione completed the switch, and reached to check the new goblet of drink,

"This is potioned as well?"

Harry smiled and switched it with Ron's drink. "Well, I wonder who is potioning Malfoy?"

"To what purpose?"

"Could be anything, animosity to us, attraction to one of the girls?"

"This one is potioned, is everyone's drink?"

Harry reached over and poured himself some more juice, "This is OK, vanish that and start again."

Herrmione poured herself a fresh goblet of juice, as they looked her goblet flickered, "This is potioned now."

"So is mine."

"We need to talk to the elves I think?"

“We?”

“Royal We. As in you. If it is Dumbles ordering them to do this?”

“The water is clean, I can’t detect anything.”

“Well at least we can drink something.”

The following day they found their drinks spiked again and sticking to water, left the Hall early. Heading down to the kitchens where Hermine called the Head House Elf over.

“Tippy?”

“Yes Missy Herminny”

“Why are the elves adding potions to my drinks.”

“Headmaster Bubmblebee orders it Missy.”

“Harry as well?”

“Yes Missy.

“Who else?”

“Master Weasel, Master Dragon and Master Nevvy.”

“Tippy. Give me a sample of each potioned drink please.”

Five phials appeared on the table in front of Hermione, “Do not tell the Headmaster about this conversation.” They left the kitchens and headed up the stairs.

“Should we talk to Susan about this, find out what the potions are?” Harry asked.

“Good idea, we can pop to see her and have something safe to drink at the same time.”

The pair found a secluded part of the Castle and used their bracelets to transfer over to neverwhen. Once in the garden they walked into the cottage and called to see if Susan was in.

“Hello you two, what brings you here today, more stress relief?” Susan arched her eyebrows.

“Dumbledore is having some pupils potioned, we wondered if you could identify what each one is?”

“That should be easy enough, do you have some with you?”

“Here,” Hermione placed the phials on the table, as Harry placed a mug of steaming tea next to her elbow.

“Let me see then.” She picked them up one at a time;

“Hermione, yours has revulsion to Harry, Neville and Malfoy, loyalty to Dumbledore, and Weasley, and love for Weasley.

Malfoy, this has love and lust for Pansy Parkinson, revulsion to you, and Harry.

Longbottom, this has loyalty to Dumbledore, revulsion to Harry and you, and a slight diminishing effect, this would impair his abilities.

Weasley, Loyalty to Dumbledore, love and lust for Hermione and revulsion to Malfoy.

Harry, revulsion for Hermione, Malfoy and Neville, loyalty to Dumbledore and Weasley.

It appears that Dumbledore is still trying to regain control, I am not sure the one Malfoy is being given is from Dumbledore, perhaps someone has slipped that one into the mix.” She placed the last phial on the table and picked up her own mug. “These potions will no longer work on either of you, you can eat and drink the juice without concern.”

Hermione looked across, “Our rings and bracelets warn of potions or poisons, we can’t tell them apart.”

“Of course, death is a worry to you both. It shouldn’t be, you are to all intents and purposes death proof at this stage, it will still hurt of course so it is best avoided.”

Harry sat and looked at the list he had scribbled down, “I think I have an idea how we can use this to our advantage.” He smiled, and sipped his tea.

------oooOOOooo------

Sirius was sitting at the kitchen table in the Tonks residence looking over the estimate for clearing and renovating Grimmauld Place. The cost was staggering, and the conclusion was that it would be simpler and cheaper to knock it down and start again. Sirius had joked about doing exactly that, but seeing the numbers in black and white gave him pause for thought.

He picked up his jacket and decided to take a walk, the lane the house sat on led to a farm, and in the other direction the golf course that the houses backed onto, he had no taste for golf, but a drink in the bar at lunch would be a good moment to think. As he left the house the curse breaker from Gringotts apparated into existence on their driveway, in a sheltered spot. “Good afternoon, Miss Bell. I was just going to walk to the clubhouse down the road and have a think about what to do with Grimmauld, can I buy you a glass of something, and perhaps some lunch?”

“That would be very nice, Lord Black. Thank you.”

“Please, Lord Black was my Grandfather, those titles are old hat now, call me Sirius.”

“If you are sure, Sirius, then you must call me Samantha.” Sirius offered her his elbow and the pair walked down the road to where the clubhouse was.

“I didn’t think to ask, are you ok in a muggle establishment?” Sirius asked her

“My father is a muggleborn, we have plenty of muggle relatives, I am OK with it if you are.” They entered the bar and Sirius got them drinks and ordered food, then they walked over to a table near the window overlooking the course. “My father plays golf with some of his muggle friends, I wonder how often he uses his magic to cheat?”

“Not a game I have ever tried, Hermione’s father plays, so does Ted, they have asked me but I am not really struck on the idea of hitting a ball with a stick.”

“Me neither, not that my father has ever offered me a game. My niece plays though, she is quite sporty.”

“Really?”

“One of the chasers on the Gryffindor quidditch team, knows your godson quite well. Calls him their baby seeker. She is quite protective of him, even says he’s cute, and might even be fanciable in a year or two.”

“Katie, I see the resemblance now, I saw their match against Slytherin, all ten minutes of it. The chasers are very good, in fact, I think that team is a very good one. They should take the House cup this year easily.”

“Spoken like a Gryffindor, I thought you Blacks were all Slytherins.”

“White sheep of the family.” She rolled her eyes.

“Have you had a look at the estimate?”

“I have, even if you find nothing unexpected it is not worth the expense. Better to knock the place down and start again, I think. If there is something that we didn’t see when you visited, then it’s just good gold after bad.”

“The only saving grace for that property is its wards, they are very strong, and you would struggle to match them today. I suspect something quite dark was done to power them.”

“Knowing my family history, you are probably correct.” The food arrived and they spent a few moments sorting themselves. “Is there a middle ground, could we gut the insides of the structure and rebuild, keeping the wards?”

“I would have to ask the building division, to see if it’s feasible. It might be even more expensive than a clean”

“I am not emotionally attached to the place, I might buy somewhere new and just put the place in stasis.”

“Where would you buy, if you went that route?”

“Ideally somewhere near here, Harry lives a couple of doors down from Ted and Andi, I would like to be close by, even though we can apparate, it feels nice to be close.”

They chatted for a while and set off to walk the few hundred yards back up to where Ted and Andi had their house, as they walked a man called out, “Hi Samantha, not your usual stamping grounds, work or pleasure?” He was wearing a non-descript charcoal suit and tie, holding a clipboard.

“Hey there, Marcus, I am on a follow up visit with Lord Black here, what are you up to?”

“The family that owns this house is moving to America, the father works for us, has been promoted and transferred over to Boston. Getting a valuation sorted to put the house on the market.”

Sirius made a quick decision, “Can I view the property?”

“If you are serious about a purchase,”

Sirius looked at Samantha, he smiled, “Please call me Sirius, it is my name, and my intention. I was discussing just such an eventuality with your colleague, Miss Bell. If it meets my needs and we can agree a realistic price, I will buy.”

“Then please walk this way.”

Sirius looked over his shoulder at Samantha, he grinned and motioned her to follow, the three of them walked into the house.

------oooOOOooo------

Nymphadora was sitting talking to her friend Nikki at the lunchtime table, when she saw Harry and Hermione walk in, she waved them over. “Wotcha kids, we’ve got a bit of goss for the pair of you?”

They took a seat at the end of the Hufflepuff table, “what is so interesting then, Cuz?” Harry asked.

“Nikki’s folks are moving to the States, and they are selling their house, next door but one to where you guys live, and guess who is the buyer?”

“Dumbledore?”

“Nope.”

“Gandalf?”

“Nope.”

“Hagrid?”

“Be Serious.”

“Well obviously it’s Sirius, but if we guessed straight away, where would the fun be in that?”

Nikki looked from one to the other, “You used to be a really cute little kid, would talk for hours to me about Hobbitses and Orcs and Elves, or Star Wars and Jedi, you have been taken to the Dark Side by this Sith Lord you are associating with, Hermi-one.”

Hermione smiled and hugged Harry’s arm. “When will you leave for America Nikki?”

“Not until after my NEWTs, being a boarder, my folks are free to move, I can stay with Dora if I need to.”

“Worried or excited?”

“Bit of both, I might do a year at Ilvermorney so I can go to University in the States.”

“I would like to go to University, I have often looked at the States, rather than England, better choice.”

Harry poured them both some juice, and picked up the glass, he checked and was pleased to see for once it was clear of potions. He made himself a sandwich plate and picked a few bits and pieces.

They looked around, Ron was eating, he spent the whole lunch eating, most people had light meals. Malfoy was sitting with his minions, “We should set up a prank to get Malfoy to do a song and dance number on the table during dinner one night.”

Tonks snickered, “Get him to do a strip, much more embarassing.”

Even Dumbles would be more than a little disappointed in us if we did that.”

“How come he is still here?”

“It apparently needs a meeting of the board of governors, and he has managed to stall it so that it hasn’t happened yet, Sirius has plans, but it suits us for now.”

“Even after they found that gigantic Dog in the school?”

“They haven’t found the Basilisk yet have they, wait for that one.”

“Did you say Basilisk?”

“Yep. Sixty feet long, about a thousand years old. In the Chamber of Secrets.”

“Whoa. That’s fucked up. Wait how do you know,” Nikki asked.

“Previous life, I fought it in my second year, damned nearly killed me.”

Nikki nodded, “I remember – you told us last summer, I thought you were pranking Dora.”

“We were a bit, her mum delivered her son, not me.”

The four finished their meal and sat chatting for a while, their lessons not due to start until the next period.

As they left the Great Hall they could hear raised voices, at the top of the first flight of stairs Draco and Ron were facing off against one another, Pansy was stood next to Ron. Hermione asked Lavender, “What happened?”

“Ron snogged Pansy and she was groping his bum, then Draco walked out of the Hall and this all kicked off.”

“Weasley you are dead, I am betrothed to Parkinson, I am not going to let a blood traitor like you touch the mother of my children.”

“In your dreams, Malfoy, she loves me, and I love her. You haven’t got the balls to stand up for her.”

“Shut your mouth Weasel. Your whole family are no better than muggles,”

“Compared to the Malfoys, that’s a good thing, you family stands for betrayers. It’s what you are good at. We might be poor, but we are better than you inbred squibs.”

Their wands were out now, and they were exchanging hexes and curses, all non-lethal, and most missing the target. Harry quietly placed a shield at the bottom of the stairs and looked around, two Slytherin prefects were doing nothing, and no staff were about. Fine he thought, *let them fight.*

Ron hit Draco with a *Diffindo* that took the arm off his robes, Draco replied with a *Bombardia* that smashed the banister where Ron had been to pieces, Ron hit Draco with a leg locker, which caused him to start to topple down the stairs. In a fit of temper Draco cast an *Avada Kedavra* that hit Ron square in the chest

He dropped like a marionette whose strings had just been cut, Draco continued his fall, Hermione used a little wandless *Impello* to make sure his fall broke his neck, and the two duellists both died in tragic circumstances.

Harry dropped the shield and watched as Snape ran into the lobby. Harry cast a disillusionment charm over himself and Hermione and they slipped out of the doors, they would walk around to one of the other doors, no need to have Snape mentioning their presence.

“Well, that worked out well, might even be enough to finally topple Dumbles.” Hermione smiled, “Should I feel guilty for being happy about those two killing each other.”

“Nope. I hoped by swapping the potions around they would hurt each other, this was a bonus. The potion in Pansy is Dumbles, or Snapes, so when Madame Bones checks everything, even Molly might see him for what he really is.”

“I doubt it. If she caught him buggering Ginny, she would believe it was for the best.” Hermione scoffed.

“More likely to be Percy, I didn’t think girl’s were Dumble’s thing.”

“Charlie then, they aren’t his either.”

“OK, did not know that. Don’t care, but didn’t know that.” Harry mused.

“Strictly girls for you is it then?”

“Yeah, nothing against blokes with blokes, I think Dean is more into guys than girls, but it doesn’t interest me. What about you?”

“I might be curious, but not sure if I will ever do anything about it.” Harry nodded, and kept his council.

“We should head for the library, lessons are likely to be cancelled,” Harry thought out loud.

“Good plan, I need to research ward breaking, we might have to break into Malfoy Manor, since Draco just got himself dead.”

“Can’t we just hack a cruise missile and blow the whole place of the face of the earth.”

“Nope. But we could probably scoop a few Death Eaters if we pick the right time to attack.”

“We need to do some planning, I suspect.”

They arrived at the library and headed for Hermione’s favourite desk. This early in their school life she didn’t have automatic dibs on this particular table, but even so it was free and they settled their books on the table and set to work on their charms homework.

Harry pulled a banana out of his bag and placed it on one of the shelves nearby, Hermione saw him do it and her eyebrows furrowed, she said nothing. A few minutes later Harry pulled a book from the shelf on warding schemes for the private manor, and Hermione heard a faint, ‘Oook’, from somewhere behind the shelves. “Susan’s idea, it works.” He shrugged.

“I want to rescue Dobby. How can we get the Diary, and Rescue Dobby?”

“Have you tried just calling Dobby?”

“How would that work, we haven’t met in this timeline.”

“Just a thought, it costs nothing and takes no risks.” She went back to her books.

After another ten minutes a tabby cat patronus appeared and asked them to join Minerva in her office. They packed their books and things and headed off towards the office.

On arrival they found a quite full room, Sirius, Amelia Bones, Remus, Minerva, and Snape were already in the room. “Please come in and sit down.” Minerva motioned them to a two-seater near her desk.

Amelia took up the conversation, “Harry, and Hermione, we have collected a few witness statements about the fatal duel that took place on the grand stairs after lunch. We note that the pair of you witnessed the event but left, without waiting for anyone in authority.”

“Because Potter orchestrated the whole thing.” Snape sneered.

“Really, and just *HOW* did he do that Professor Snape?” Hermione’s words dripped acid.

“I don’t know..”

“Then keep your opinion to yourself or find yourself charged with slandering the Head of House Potter, and facing a blood feud over your responsibility for the deaths of James and Lily Potter. Harry can kill you out of hand, here and now, without consequence. Are you prepared to meet Lily and answer to her yet? Severus.” Hermione’s hair was bristling and small sparks were visible within.

Harry placed a hand on Hermione’s arm, “Madame Bones, please ask Snape to leave, or I may act as Hermione indicates. I am Head of House, he is directly responsible for my parents deaths. He lives under my sufferance.”

Amelia looked from one of the two to the other, she looked at Snape and indicated the door with a head nod, he billowed his way out, slamming the door as he left. “Why did you leave the Hall?”

“Because Snape appeared, and he would have blamed us, me specifically. I watched a stupid wand fight between two short tempered first years, if Draco hadn’t wasted time sending that curse at Ron, he could have freed himself. Draco killed Ron, using an unforgivable, he then toppled down the stairs, his death is almost accidental. However you see it, we were not involved, simply bystanders, we left so as not to be accused.”

“You went to the library, you are quite calm for watching two school mates die.”

Harry looked around the room. “Madame Bones, I assume my words here are confidential, and unless I reveal a criminal act will remain so?”

“Of course?”

“Hermione, can you clean the room, we don’t need Dumbles in on this.” Hermione pulled her wand and systematically stripped the room and all the people in it of charms.

“Remus, you need to let Andi purge you, Dumbledore has potioned you, and I think some compulsions, Sorry Remus.” She stunned him where he sat. “All clear Harry, I’ve put wards up, I expect Malfoy will be here soon.”

“Madame Bones, I have lived this live at least three times that I can remember, I have fought and killed Death Eaters on numerous occasions, including Riddle, Mouldyfart. I have been killed eight times I am told. Death is no stranger, in fact she has become a close friend, I would offer to introduce you, but most people are reluctant to meet their DEATHS. I saw many of my friends die fighting, seeing those two bigots kill each other, two less idiots to

breed. I am sorry, but I just don't care. DEATH sends me back each time, because I do have a destiny, not the one Albus Dumbledore believes, but I have a prophecy to fulfil, neither Ron, nor Draco are a part of it, they are irrelevant to my life."

"Can you share a memory to back up any of these rather outrageous claims Harry?"

"No. It would be sharing the future, I am not allowed to share. I can show you something else, I hold the title 'Master of Death' since I possess all three of the Deathly Hallows, the items from The Tale of the Three Brothers." Harry stood, "Madame Bones," he held out his hand. She stood and took his hand regarding him sceptically, "Cottage, Hermione."

"See you there," Harry and Amelia disappeared from the room, Hermione stood and straightening her skirt, disappeared as well. Hermione appeared in the garden, a large moon was transiting the planet, it's bright blue colour made it look like an eye.

"We call this Neverwhen. This is where we come after each time we die," Amelia looked around.

"Where are we? You are both older, adults."

"This is our magical age, hence I could claim my House. This place is nowhere, nowhen, we are outside of existence, and outside of time. This is where DEATH and his family, our family, live. Cup of tea. We can answer your questions here, and then return back to the moment after we departed."

Amelia looked around, "Do you have something stronger?"

"I am sure we can find something." Hermione walked to the garden table with a tea set and a tumbler, with a crystal decanter of an amber coloured fluid. She sat and poured tea for all of them. "Take a seat, ask away."

"Did anyone influence those two idiots?"

"Dumbledore had been attempting to potion a few pupils, Hermione and I amongst them. We are immune. Bonded Soul mates, and well, Dead. Someone was potioning Draco towards Pansy, if the potions got mixed up and Ron got Draco's perhaps? Hermione was being potioned to fall for Ron. We just vanished the juice and got fresh from the jug, even if we missed some it has no effect on either of us. Do you want to talk to Ron or Draco, since they are dead I can summons them."

"Are you two married in this realm. Is realm the right word?"

"Yes, we are betrothed, I am Hermione Potter in previous lives. I think of this as a plane of existence, so realm is a good word to use. According to Susan I was carrying our daughter when Bellatrix slit my throat."

"So Dumbledore is attempting line theft, among all his crimes." She shook her head, "He has Hogwarts set up like it's own kingdom, he is harder than a tick to remove. Today is his end. Draco was a spoilt brat, but he was an Heir, and both boys pure blood families.

“Lucius will ply money and pressure on Fudge to act now. Fudge is corrupt, his pet toad, Umbridge is worse, we will send you a file on her crimes.”

“Can I ask what this destiny is?”

“Vanquish Tom Marvolo Riddle and his followers. He calls himself…..” Amelia finished the sentence.

“Lord Voldemort. Ted Tonks used that in the Wizengamot. I had it checked out. He isn’t dead then?”

“He made Horcruxes, splitting his soul time and time again, we have recovered all but one, the soul shards have been reaped and await the final piece to join them in the afterlife, although it is not going to be nice for Tom. Or Albus actually.”

“His followers?”

“Death Eaters. They are all murderers, only a willing participant gets the mark, it is soul magic and cannot be forced upon an unwilling recipient, they may repent later, but part of the ritual to gain the mark is to torture, rape, and murder an innocent. They have all committed heinous crimes, usually against muggleborns and their families. Snape’s victim was a fourteen year old girl who had decided not to become a witch.”

“Can you give me proof of any of this. Proof I can use?”

“Proof yes, I can let you talk to the victims, proof that the Wizengamot will accept, no. Too many of them are either guilty, like Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, or have family members that are marked. They will never accept the evidence, even if I produce the victims, they will not accept it.” Harry sat and drank his tea. “The higher powers have set their fates; my task is to remove them from your world. I hope you can reconcile this with your role. If you need to see the evidence against each and everyone of them, it can be arranged. We do not wish to take any innocent lives.”

Amelia poured herself a large drink, and took a large pull from the glass. “If you could let me see enough evidence so that I can understand this is justice, not vengeance, then at least I will be able to sleep.”

Hermione spoke, “Most of the deaths will be natural. The suspicion will be that they are all marked death eaters, some of your departments will be short staffed for a while, and you will lose a few Aurors.

“Who?”

“Dawlish, Rowling, Arkwright. Check their arms, make all DMLE staff swear a loyalty oath. Dumbledore has pets in your department, his Order of the Pheonix. They mean well, but he has to go.”

Harry added, “Azkaban will lose a few inmates, tragic accident, but if they live, there is a chance of them escaping. In one timeline Bellatrix has a child to Riddle, and she is as

psychotic as the pair of them. In a previous life Bellatrix killed Hermione and our unborn daughter in front of me, and then killed me as I collapsed in grief. She is hellbound, nothing can redeem her."

Amelia finished her drink, "I am in half a mind to ask you to obliviate me."

"There is a better way, Madame Bones," Susan stood in the doorway, "I can give you a certainty, the actions of these two are not guided by petty motives, but are necessary to correct destiny, a destiny corrupted by two Dark Wizards' actions. We are very close to the end of Riddle, you have the means to neutralise Dumbledore now. Balancing the power base in your community is vital, if the purists stay along their current path, the mundane world will wipe you from existence within your niece's lifetime."

She walked to the table, "hmm, jammy dodgers. Not my favourite." She poured herself a cup of tea, and sat as a chair appeared for her. "Harry, Hermione, let me spend some time with Amelia, I will return her to the same moment as yourselves, you can return, or if you have other ideas, the house is yours."

Amelia looked at Susan, questioningly. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Susan Sto-Helit. I am the Granddaughter of DEATH. I have been tasked by DEATH and the *Auditors of Reality,* The higher powers that oversee the universe, to rectify the mess that has come to pass in your world. The two youngsters you know as Harry and Hermione are pivotal to your world. Harry is a 'Hero' of destiny, Hermione is his balance, they share a soul. Together they will set your world in the right direction, Hermione is an amazing young woman, but their daughter is the next Merlin, I clearly remember her impact upon the world. It is she that will bridge the gap between the mundane and magical worlds, the statute cannot survive, and the mundane technologies are close to emulating magic itself. That she was slaughtered before her birth once already almost broke time itself. Biscuit?"

Amelia took a biscuit and drank some tea, any more of the rather excellent whisky, and she would be buzzing. "This is a lot to take in."

"No matter, you can spend a year or a day here, you will return the moment after you left. We will take all the time you need to understand, I do not expect you to break any laws, but I do not expect you to obstruct Harry and Hermione in their tasks. They will be busy for the afternoon I suspect."

"Where have they gone?"

"They are young, very much in love, and forced to spend most of their time in young bodies, Harry's corporeal form has not achieved puberty yet. When they are here, their forms reflect their self image, they are the age they believe themselves to be, and they can enjoy pleasures befitting a married couple in the prime of their life. They think they are about twenty four, they are closer to two hundred, there have been too many dead end timelines. Dumbledore meddled so much, so many terrible lives. We allowed them to remember the three that would best explain their path, so many times they did not find each other, because they were blocked."

"Did they kill Draco and Ron?"

“No, although Hermione was murdered by Ron in her last life, and she was going to end him. His own temper and stupidity did the job for them, Draco wasn’t supposed to die yet, he was supposed to grow and reject his pureblood dogma and support our pair in changing the outlook of magical society. A shame, I always enjoyed the pain he felt apologising to Hermione, as he realised most of his hatred for her was the fact he was deeply attracted to her, and it conflicted with his upbringing. They even married in some timelines, quite happily. Not so good for destiny or Harry though.”

She dipped a biscuit and carried on, “you need to have a talk with your niece, she betrayed Harry on a number of occasions in other lives, they should be allies, they lost their parents to the same nonsense.”

Amelia nodded, “I will have a word, she should make friends with them. What can you tell me about dark marks, can I detect them?”

Susan smiled and poured them both some more tea, “Let me show you some details.”

------oooOOOooo------

The three of them appeared back in the room, having been away for less than a second to the others in the room. Amelia sat back down, as Harry and Hermione took a seat.

“Are the rest of you aware of what I have just witnessed?”

“You met with Susan Sto-Helit?”

“Yes, who else is in on this?”

“Harry’s parents.”

“What about yours Hermione?”

“My parents adopted Harry, we are the family Dumbledore wants to find. I assume now you know what we have to do, that I will kill Dumbledore before I allow him any control over Harry’s life. Did Susan show you how Harry was treated at the Dursleys?”

“She did, how did everyone fail Harry, so completely?”

“Dumbledore, and a lot of obliviating. Riddle is one Dark Wizard, Dumbledore is another.”

“What do we do next?”

“Get Dumbledore out of Hogwarts, Hermione and I have a plan to get the last item, if we can make it work.”

Amelia nodded. “I will need formal statements from you both, witness statements. If you could write them out and pass them to Professor McGonagall, I can collect them from her. I need to have the bodies put through a post mortem, and I shall be searching for certain

potions. Please don't kill Snape before I have a chance to interrogate him." She stood and left the room.

"Is Dumbledore still in the castle?" Hermione asked.

"He has the task of explaining the deaths of the Children to the Malfoys and the Weasleys. We are awaiting the members of the board of governors to arrive."

"Who are they?"

Minerva explained, "Originally the descendants of the founders, but these days the Elder Houses are represented, Black, Longbottom, Greengrass, Abbot and Potter. Malfoy was using the Black seat as he claimed proxy, and Dumbledore appointed Doge to sit on the Potter seat. As Sirius is Head of House Black, he can take up his seat, I suggest you appoint a proxy, we thought Remus, but since Hermione believes him compulsed, perhaps we can persuade Andi to take the seat for this meeting, and Remus might be able to after he is freed. Augusta Longbottom and Cyrill Greengrass are allies of the House of Potter. Abbot, whilst committed to what is classified as the Light Alliance, votes on merit, he is no fan of Albus."

"Can members of staff sit on the board?" Harry asked.

"No, it would be a conflict of interest."

"Then Remus will not become Proxy, you need a Defence Professor, he was the best one we ever had. Offer him the job once he is clear of Dumbles influence, Headmistress McGonagall."

"Why thank you Mr Potter, for your sage advice." Minerva replied with a look.

"No problem, Aunt Minnie." He grinned and waited for the smack.

"I will allow that this once young man, but not in front of staff or pupils." She smiled back. "Let us see if Andi, or Ted is free to take the Potter seat, we can oust Albus then, and sort this school out."

Sirius stood, "I'll take Remus over to St. Mungo's and I can see if Andi is free at the same time." With a quick rennervate, he pulled Remus to his feet and bundled them out of the floo and over to St. Mungo's.

Harry sat and wrote a quick authorisation of proxy for Andromeda to sit on the board of governors and he and Hermione slipped out of the room.

------oooOOOooo------

Harry and Hermione were walking away from McGonagall's office, heading towards the common room, when they saw Lucius and Narcissa walking towards them coming from the direction of Dumbledore's office, "Just what we need." He muttered.

"Keep walking, let's tuck out of the way, Narcissa just lost her son, she is no Death Eater," Harry took her hand and they stopped walking and tucked into an alcove to allow the

Malfoys to pass. As the pair went past Narcissa stopped, and turned.

“Are you called Granger?” she asked Hermione.

“I am, Mrs Malfoy.”

“I think Draco was very foolish, he has his father’s. Sorry He had his father’s temper, and he acted rashly, despite my advice. I believe he was attracted to you miss Granger, this caused him to lash out, he didn’t understand how he, a pureblood, could be attracted to a muggleborn girl, such a silly boy. He complained about how smart you were, in fact he mentioned you rather a lot. He was brought up to believe in blood purity, but it’s a falsehood. My own sister married a muggle and her daughter is the first metamorph in the family for nearly a century. Had Draco accepted this I believe he would have acted very differently to you, and to you, Mr Potter I assume?” Harry nodded. “My son was flawed, but I believe he would have grown past all this, you might even have become friends in later life. Now we shall bury him for some stupid argument over a girl he didn’t even like.”

“We think they were all potioned, Mrs Malfoy. You should ask Mr Snape what he brewed for the Headmaster, I think it might answer your questions.” Hermione said quietly.

“Can you tell me more?”

“Narcissa, let’s get out of here, before I kill someone.”

“Send a house elf to find us, we can send a letter back, discretely.” Harry said. Narcissa gave a slight nod, and left to join Lucius who was scowling a little way down the corridor.

They climbed back into the common room, the mood was quite sombre. Harry looked around and saw Katie sat doing some homework in a corner, he walked over, “Katie, are the twins still here?”

“The family has gone back to the Burrow, they are all in shock, it’s a bit of a mess isn’t it?”

“Yeah, Hermione and I saw the duel for what it was. Draco hit Ron with an AK, point blank. He didn’t suffer it was instant.”

Katie looked at them her eyes going from one to the other, “I heard from Lavender, she was there as well, she said Draco lost it with Ron, because Ron and Pansy were snogging? Did you see that?”

“No we walked out of the hall after the shouting started and just as the wands came out, we didn’t expect it to go this far.”

“What did Ron cast do you know?”

“A leg locker, Malfoy was falling over, instead of putting his hand out to stop himself, he fired the AK at Ron. He then didn’t have his hand out to break his fall and broke his neck on the stairs.”

Hermione slipped closer to Harry and whispered, “shall we go back to the library?”

The Governors had finally all arrived and made their way to the Headmaster’s office, and into the meeting room off to the side, Sirius looked at the room and thought Dumbledore was gone, unless the old goat had something up his overly lurid sleeves. With everyone seated, Augusta opened the meeting, “We have agreed that I shall chair this extra ordinary meeting of the board of governors, this meeting is called to consider the future of the current Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore.”

Augusta steepled her hands in front of her and fixed Albus with a stare, “The DMLE have removed a Cerberus from the school, isolated behind a door that could be opened with the simplest unlocking charm. This gives rise to a charge of over 300 counts of child endangerment. As we have student memories of you informing the student body not to go to this corridor, or suffer a most painful death, you obviously were fully aware of this particular creature being in the school.

This alone is sufficient for your dismissal. Today two students got into a duel of sorts, something that normally ends in one covered in pimples, or having green hair. Instead we have two dead students, one of whom cast an unforgivable on the other. Preliminary investigations show all three students had been dosed with potions, which include a loyalty compulsion to one Albus Dumbledore. This happened on your watch Mr Dumbledore. Do you have any realistic reason why we should not terminate your position as Headmaster?”

Dumbledore put his best smile on, “I can only assure you that my intentions were for the best, I have come to believe that Lord Voldemort, is not in fact dead, but had been possessing Quirinus Quirrell and the Cerebos was part of a trap designed to lure him to a point where he could be dealt with. Professor Quirrell is no longer attending classes, so I can only conclude that he is still at large. It is imperative that I remain here to protect the students, and all of Magical Britain from the threat of Voldemort returning. I cannot share with you how Voldemort is maintaining himself, for fear that this knowledge becomes more widespread, but this is a serious risk to our very way of life, we must not be complacent, or we shall fall, and our children will be at risk.” He beamed around the group.

“Does anyone have anything they wish to add?” Augusta asked.

Sirius nodded. He looked along the table, “We all have children at this school, Andi, George and Cyrill have their daughters, Augusta and I have our sons, all except Nymphadora being in the first year. Today two of their year are dead, this is completely unacceptable, I cannot think of any circumstances that the events discussed are acceptable at a school. I propose we vote to dismiss. I cannot see any reason for any further discussion.”

Augusta asked, “All in favour?” All five hands were raised. “Unanimous. Albus Dumbledore, remove yourself from the school, by five pm today, you will be removed from the wards, take only your personal possessions, and I need to remind you that you are subject to a DMLE investigation, ensure that you are available for questioning. Now Albus if you would give us the room, we need to appoint a successor.”

Albus stood and with what dignity he could muster he walked out of the room.

“Might I suggest we appoint Minerva as Headmaster on an interim basis, and then we can see if others apply, she may not want the position. It would look better if we wait a month or two before appointing her if we do, so we can consider the options. It would give her a chance to fill the vacant teaching slots caused and come up with some proposals to update the syllabus.” Cyrill Greengrass finished his thoughts.

Sirius added, “I believe that Professor Snape will bolt for the hills without Dumbledore to protect him, he is a truly appalling teacher.”

“What positions are open? Andromeda asked.

“Defence, Transfiguration, to help out Minerva, History, Binns has to go, Potions assuming Snape leaves. Muggle studies needs an update, it’s a bad joke. There should be a reciprocal course for the muggleborns to learn about the magical world. We also should teach muggle subjects for those who seek further education outside of the magical world.” George Abbot finished his list, “Did I miss anything.

Sirius laughed, “No George, Hermione, Harry’s muggleborn girlfriend tells me exactly the same, Harry is muggle raised and he thinks muggle studies is hilarious. He calls History nap-time. What does your daughter think of the school Cyrill?”

“Daphne is less than impressed, to my surprise, and pleasure, she and her cousin befriended Harry, and Hermione on the train, so her impressions are inline with what you have been told, I assume Hannah is saying the same thing to you George?”

“Yes, that’s who gave me the list. Anything to add Andromeda?”

“Some suggestions, Remus Lupin for Defence, or Sirius who is also pretty nifty at Transfiguration. See if Slughorn will return if Snape leaves, I might be tempted to cover OWL level potions if required, my sister Narcissa would be excellent for the magical studies, I think you should talk to the children about the muggle studies, I do not know if the current professor would like to update the course. Sirius and Remus could cover History between them, they might keep everyone awake.”

“We should call in Minerva, I assume we are in agreement to offer her the position, for an initial three months shall we say, and we can make a final decision then, and advertise if we feel the need to bring in another person to head the school.” Everyone assented, Sirius sent his Patronus to fetch Minerva.

Chapter 11: The Diary of a Teenage Drama Queen

Harry was sat opposite Hermione in their spot in the library, Hermione had a banana on the table next to her, and Harry was trying hard not to smirk about it.

“Do you think Narcissa will help us get the diary if we show her the potions information we have?”

“I think you should talk that over with Andromeda, she is more likely to be able to answer it than I can.”

“Good point, I wondered if you had any thoughts, on it.”

“Didn’t she lie to Voldypants telling him you were dead when you were faking it?”

“She did, but he cut my head off to take with him, so it didn’t work out as I had hoped. She did help me, but that was in return for me telling her Draco was still alive, he is dead, with a little help from his friends,” he grinned at Hermione.

“I am sure I do not know what you mean, he fell. Everyone saw it. It was an accident. If he had lived, he would be in Azkaban for life, next to his Aunt Bella. It was probably for the best.” She made a note on her parchment with a flourish of her quill. “Why do we use quills, we need to talk to Minnie about using mundane stationary supplies,” She dug a notebook out of her bag and clicked the action on a biro.

“Rebel.”

“Prat.”

“You love me anyway?”

“Do I?”

“You know you do.”

“Really, you sound very confident Mr Potter.”

“I believe you love me Mrs Potter, almost as much as I love you.”

“Prat.”

“How does this sound for a plan, We send Narcissa the list, and mention we got samples, and enquire if she want’s us to ask Andromeda to do certified tests on them?”

“Talk to Andromeda.”

“Are you angry with me for something?”

“No.”

“What have I done?”

“Nothing.”

“hmmf. Doesn’t sound like it.” Hermione glared at Harry, he was tempted to conjure her a marmalade sandwich, but food in the library is a rule Hermione never normally broke, except for the banana. “it’s the banana thing isn’t it?”

“Maybe.”

“If I explain, can I have a kiss,”

“If you don’t you can have a slap.” She said with a fake smile.

Harry laughed quietly. “Susan comes from a place called Discworld, a lot more magical than here, it is apparently a flat planet, balanced on four elephants, riding the back of a giant spacefaring turtle. She told me the turtle’s name, but I forgot. In the capital city of the country she came from, there is a place that wizards are educated. Apparently witches learn on the job, she does not have a high opinion of these wizards. This unseen university as she called it has a magical library, that exists in several dimensions, and is subject to bouts of what she called wild magic. The librarian was transfigured into an orangutan in some sort of accident, no one can really remember when, but he, or she, decided to stay in that form. If you wish for help from the librarian, it likes bananas. What book would you like from the librarian?”

Hermione sat with her head cocked regarding harry through half closed eyes, “If you made that up, you will be sleeping with Sirius for the next ten years.”

“You sound like mum when dad’s in the dog house.”

“Exactly, where does Sirius live?”

“OK, point made, that is what Susan told me, if it’s nonsense, it’s her nonsense. What book do you want, what subject?”

“Soul Magic.”

“OK, pass me the banana.” Harry took it and placed it on the shelf behind him, he closed his eyes briefly and let go of the banana.

He returned to the list he was making, He listed out the potions they had identified, who they were being given to, and mentioned that they had managed to get samples. He was wondering how to broach the subject with Andromeda, about how best to approach Narcissa, when he heard a soft, ‘Oook.’

He lifted a book from the shelf, and after a glance, passed it to Hermione. She took the book and opening it, her eyebrows, almost met in the middle. “It’s written in runes.”

“Maybe Susan can help? Probably a job for the cottage, rather than Hogwarts.”

“Mm’mm.” Hermione slipped the book into her bag. “Oook?”

“All it ever says, according to Susan.” A pause, “I have an idea,”

“careful.”

“cheeky, lets apparate home, have dinner with our folks, have a quick chat with Andi and Sirius about Narcissa, and then pop over to Susan’s for some help with that book.

“OK, maybe I do love you, a little bit.” She said, Harry laughed.

They arrived at their home and let themselves into the back door from the garden, Emma and Dan where not home just yet, “Should I sort some food out, or will they bring something home?”

“They usually order after they get home, what can you chef up, hubby dearest?”

“I see, dearest now it’s cooking you want.”

“Call me fickle.”

Harry had a rummage through the fridge, “Chinese or Indian?”

“Sorry?”

“The fridge has two eggs and some jam in it. I don’t think even Kieth Floyd can do anything with that. Cuppa?”

“Why not.”

Later they nipped around to See Andi, and found Sirius talking to a lady in the kitchen, “Hey Kids, this is my friend Samantha. Samantha, this is Harry and Hermione, who are basically playing truant from Hogwarts. But since he got the Headmaster sacked today, I think we can forgive them.”

“Hello,” they said in unison, Harry continued, “is Andi in?”

“Not tonight Pup, she’s meeting Ted in town, it’s date night for the Tonks. Anything we can help with?”

“I was wondering how to ask Narcissa for some help. We have some information she would be interested in, about Draco and Ron, and we wondered if we could get the diary as a return favour?”

“Ooh, interesting idea, sit down for a minute, Sam here is Katie’s aunt, so she has heard about the baby seeker from Katie.”

“They call him Bambi.” Hermione chipped in.

“Given my animagious form is a black panther, Bagheera would be better.” Harry complained.

“Your dad was supposed to be Prongs, so little deer, Bambi. Blame the marauders for lame nicknames.”

“Kitten, I am hurt,”

“Sorry Scooby.” Answered Hermione, Samantha snickered.

Sirius shook his head, “Cissy contacted me about dissolving her marriage, without Draco, she has no interest in being with Malfoy. Divorce is near impossible for purebloods, magic can take a heavy toll. There was a betrothal contract between our Houses, originally for Andi, who very wisely legged it out of there and married Ted.” He took a swig of his beer.

“The contract stated at least two children, within five years, so it is broken. This allows me as House head to nullify the marriage, I think if I ask she will bring the diary when she leaves, it isn’t like she is going to ask Lucius.”

“Ask her to bring Dobby as well if she can.”

“The crazy elf you told us about?”

“Saved our lives last time around, and died doing it. We buried him by hand, and cried over his grave. He is as much part of our family as you are Scoob.” Hermione chipped in.

Samantha picked up a pistachio and cracked it open, passing the bowl she asked Sirius, “Whooby Snak?”

“Who in Merlin’s name is Scooby, or Whooby?”

“Sam, you need to find some TV time to educate our poor pure blood.” Hermione and Sam did a fist bump over the table. Harry grinned as Sirius looked absolutely baffled.

Harry said, “How is Remus, is he clear of potions or whatever was done to him?”

“They are keeping him in overnight, he had to go through a purging regime, no fun for anyone, and they checked him for compulsions, but his Werewolf side helps in that respect. I had to put him in a private ward, that pink Toad of Fudges has removed Werewolves rights to medical treatment at St. Mungo’s.”

“They just make it so easy for people like Riddle to recruit don’t they. She isn’t even a pure blood, her dad is muggle born, used to be the janitor for the fourth floor of the Ministry.” Hermione commented.

Sam looked across, “how do you two kids know all this stuff?”

“We aren’t kids, we’ve lived multiple lives, think Groundhog Decade, with additional death, torture and some more death. This is our best go around so far.” Harry grumped.

“We really are on first name terms with Death.” Hermione added.

“Yeah, come on, kids.” Sam scoffed.

“Susan Sto-Helit.” Harry finished, “Granddaughter of DEATH.” He shrugged.

“What do you need munchkins?” Susan asked form the corner.

“Some help with a book from the monkey library, we can pop over to the cottage if that’s easier?”

Susan looked at them for a moment, “Easier, or older?”

“Both.” Hermione said, “I am a little out of sorts.”

Susan smiled at them, “My treat.” She waved her hand and the adult versions sat at the table in their stead.

“Woah.” Samantha looked at the pair and to Susan, “You are Death?”

“His Granddaughter actually. It’s a very long story, centuries long in fact. But the HIgher Powers have tasked me to help our heroes here to complete their destiny. It’s been fun so far.” She cocked a head to one side and her hair changed to a chignon, “Samantha Bell, you need to change jobs, unless you want to meet me professionally before you are due.” She faded out of the room.

“Sirius, don’t you need a personal assistant, for all your important House business?” Hermione smirked as she looked at Sirius. “Or at least someone to walk you in a morning.”

“Kitten, you are slaying me. I am not sure about the assistant, but the school needs professors, how about Defence Professorship, Samantha?”

“We hoped Remus might be interested in that?”

“He wants to do History, he was a bit of a nerd at school, but we still like him. I was considering the DADA role myself, but I am better at Transfiguration, so I can help Minnie out now she is Head.”

Hermione perked up, “Is it official?”

“Announcement will go up tomorrow, but yes. Three months trail period, then it’s hers. She has so many ideas she wants to push through, it is going to be a fun ride. We spent most of what was supposed to be her interview discussing new staff requirements. Muggle studies is in for a complete overhaul.”

Hermione leaned back in her chair, “We should do day trips for the magicals into muggle England, it would be hilarious.”

Samantha snorted, “It would be a complete nightmare?”

Harry grinned, “In small groups it would work, how many purebloods have been to the cinema?”

“You just want to get into the back row with Daphne Greengrass.” Hermione grinned,

“We are eleven Hermione, Daphne grows up almost as beautiful as you, but right now, not interested at all.” He laughed, “If I am taking someone else, I want to take Luna, she will flip out.”

“I hate it when you do that.”

“What.”

“Be all bloody adorable. Luna would be in heaven at a cinema. Whacky little pixie that she is. I want to go find her this summer. She needs to be with us when she starts school. No way we let her suffer like last time.”

“Agreed, Ravenclaw treated her like dung didn’t they. Let’s get her safe in the Lions den.”

“Might not be an issue kids. Minerva is considering scrapping the House Dorms, and doing it in year blocks.”

“Interesting? We still go over and kidnap her for the day at least. She has no friends.”

Harry looked puzzled, “She lives next door to the Weasleys?”

“Ron called her Looney until we told him to pack it in, not an issue now, but Ginny and Luna aren’t friends, and Ginny might be a fangirl still.”

“OK, lets send her an owl and start writing to her. My mum was a friend of hers at school, we could take her to see her mum Pandora, we know her mum’s death really affected her.”

“Pandora Lovegood?” Sirius asked.

“Yes. Did you know her?”

“Yes, she was one of Lily’s study group, Pandora Rowle back then, married Xeno. Hippies you would call them, a really lovely pair, very weird, no inhibitions, none at all. If her daughter is one of your friends then do whatever is necessary, if she is lonely, she can stay with us over summer, we can sort something. Pandora died whilst I was on erm, holiday.”

“Luna saw it happen, her mother died in her arms whilst Luna was calling for help. No one came. She is very weird, very lovely. Was nearly Harry’s first, if only Harry wasn’t so dim about girls.”

“I am not that dim.” Harry said falteringly.

“Really, how many times did you step aside for Ron, when I loved you. I settled for the demonic ginger garbage disposal unit, because the boy I loved didn’t see me. You told me you loved me like a sister, so you wouldn’t upset Ron. Dim, Dim, Dim.” she was poking Harry’s chest with her finger at each of the last three words.

She snorted. “At Slughorn’s party, Luna was head over heels because you were nice to her. No one had ever been nice to her at school, she wanted to go to bed with you, she wanted to be in your arms all night, she asked me after the Ministry debacle, did I love you, did I think she had a chance. She adored you Harry, she offered to share if I wanted to. Teenage fantasy time, and you had no idea.”

“No I didn’t, but I really do think of Luna like a little sister. It feels wrong to even consider doing anything like that with her. I *love* her. But I am *in love* with you. It’s different. Yes, it has taken me a lot of lifetimes to learn how to say that, but this life has been so different to what I used to suffer. I understand what it is like to be loved, I never had that as a child before.” Harry took her hands, “For what it’s worth, I am truly sorry, but I did not understand what I was feeling. I had two friends, one of them hugged me and made me feel warm inside. I had nothing to compare it to. I am sorry for all those wasted lives.”

“Prat, you always do this. I get annoyed and there is that scruffy little lost boy that saved my life from a Troll, and flinched when I hugged him. Luna isn’t the only one that adored you. I owe you an apology, I knew you had no idea, but I chose to wait, rather than do anything. I should have acted. Sorry Harry, you had enough to deal with back then. Come on, I want to pop back to see mum and dad as adults, then lets go to the cottage and spend the night, I think tomorrow we might be amending the castle wards for Minnie. We are nearly through this, maybe we can stay adults afterwards or something.”

They stood and with a nod made their exit. “Sirius, let us know what Narcissa says, thanks” Harry called as they headed back to their parents’ place. As they walked back, they passed what would be Sirius’s house, they could feel the new wards in place, “I wonder if we could get one of the others?” Harry mused as they passed.

“Not if we are still twelve.”

“I guess we can sort something.”

They arrived back at their house, already mentally, their parents’ place, and let themselves back in, Hermione called out, “Mum, dad. Little surprise for you. Where are you?”

“Kitchen.” Came the reply from Emma.

They walked in, “Hi mum, dad, meet adult us.” She grabbed her father and gave him a huge squeeze. “We have some runic homework to sort with Susan, and she let us have our of age bodies for the evening. We thought you might like to meet the people inside the munchkins.”

“Hi” Harry spoke from the door, “I feel nervous. Why am I nervous?”

“I don’t know Harry, come here and give your mum a hug you handsome devil.” Her eyes were sparkling, “wow, we have talked about, and believed you were old people in little

bodies, but this is something else, actually seeing you." She brushed his hair back over his head, "You are so tall. All grown up," Tears ran down her face.

"Not for a few years yet, mum, and we will be with you for a very long time, and you will have grandchildren to spoil, eventually. After university, after Hermione becomes Hermione Potter PhD. Sorry, maybe this was a bad idea, I didn't want to upset you."

"You haven't, you are a fine-looking young man, and my daughter is a beautiful young woman, these are happy tears, don't feel bad. We have a very weird family, that is for sure.

Hermione broke away from the hug with her father, and wrapped her mother in a hug, they were the same height, Harry stepped back and looked at Dan, his eyes were sparkling,

Dan's voice was a little hoarse as he spoke, "Hermione looks a lot like Emma did when I met her, look after her Harry, be safe, don't go breaking any hearts now we are nearly there."

Harry smiled softly. He wrapped Dan in a bear hug, he was nearly as tall, but not as broad, "I will come and talk to you about the last bit, we have some trash disposal to do, and we need to do it fast and hard. We will be needing your expertise, I think. It's nearly over. We have a lead on the diary, we might get it without a fight.

"That would be good, that finishes Riddle then?" Harry nodded.

"It's a done deal. He has nowhere to go, we just need to clean up his idiots, we can talk about that later." Harry and Dan separated, Emma was holding Hermione's hands and they were both crying, "Hermione love, shall we get back, we'll pop back as our young selves before we apparate into the school, so you know your kids are still here, if that's OK?

Emma nodded, "please, it is lovely to see you two like this, but I will miss my little ones, you have grown up so fast already."

Hermione took hold of Harry's arm and with a smile on her face the pair popped out of the room, and then reappeared as their eleven-year-old selves. "Hi mum, missing us yet," she smiled a cheeky grin, as her dad swept her up into a hug.

"Yes, Princess, it was fantastic to meet older you, but scary." He lowered her to the floor, "How long did you spend up there?"

Hermione blushed, "about six months, we had to learn a new language, and a new type of magic, and we had a holiday."

"Anywhere nice?"

"A lovely Island, on a disc, on four elephants, on a massive turtle called the Great A'Tuin. It was very nice, but now I have to wear proper clothes again, and be twelve. We did keep the trunks though, they will be a laugh come summer." She reached up and kissed her mother, "Come on Harrikins, Hogwarts, Ho!" she giggled. Harry looked at her parents and made the 'tipsy' hand movement before wrapping her in his arms and apparating them back into the school. They appeared in the common room, to the surprise of Katie and Alicia.

“Did you two just aparate into here?”

“No. That would be impossible. We were here all along.”

“Where have you been really.”

“Home, we needed to see our folks.”

“Yeah, I get that.”

“Met your Aunt Samantha, seems nice.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, I think she is my Godfather’s girlfriend? Not positive, but it looks that way.”

“Ok, does that make us relatives?”

“Not as far as I know. Does that matter?”

“Only if I am looking at you naked in the showers after a game, I wouldn’t want to think my brother was cute, would I?” She giggled as Harry blushed. “Is Hermione asleep on your shoulder?” Harry nodded. “OK, let us take her from here, we can get her safely into her bed. It’s pretty much curfew. See you in the morning Bambi.”

“Night Foxes.”

------oooOOOooo------

The following Monday morning Harry was up early, reading the notice pinned in the common room.

To all Pupils and Staff of Hogwart’s School of Wizarding and Witchcraft

With immediate effect Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore has been removed as Headmaster of the School. Pupils are advised not to interact with Mr Dumbledore if they encounter him outside of the school grounds. Pupils are reminded that Mr Dumbledore faces numerous criminal charges.

Professor McGonagall has been appointed interim Head Mistress until the Easter Break, after which the New Head will be confirmed.

The following New Professors Shall be teaching courses as soon as they become Available:

Prof. R. Lupin	History, Magical and Mundane
Prof. S. Black	Transfiguration to OWL level.
Prof. A Tonks	Potions to OWLS level.
Prof. H. Slughorn	Potions to NEWT level. (Elective).

Prof. S. Bell Practical Magic (formerly DADA)
Prof. N. Black Magical Protocols and etiquette (compulsory for muggle raised students).

Existing Professors shall continue to teach as follows:

Prof. M. McGonagall Transfiguration to NEWT level. (Elective).
Prof. F. Flitwick Charms & Spellcraft.
Prof. B. Babbling Ancient Runes. (Elective).
Prof. S. Vector Arithmancy. (Elective).
Prof. A. Sinistra Astronomy. (Elective).
Prof. C. Burbage Mundane (Muggle) Studies. (Compulsory for all magical raised students).
Prof. S. Trelawney Divination. (Elective).

New Heads of House are as follows;

Gryffindor Prof. R. Lupin
Slytherin Prof. N. Black
Hufflepuff Prof. S. Bell

Prof. P. Sprout moves to Deputy Head Mistress.

Prof. S. Snape has resigned from the school
Prof. H. Binns has moved on to the afterlife.

Prof. C. Burbage is bringing Mundane Studies and current affairs (formerly Muggle Studies) up to date and in line with the ICW standards. (Compulsory for all magical raised students)

In the interim as the new staff become available existing staff will cover the lessons as available. We ask for your cooperation and patience as these changes are introduced.

Signed.

1. McGonagall Head Mistress (acting)

------oooOOOooo------

As he was reading Hermione joined him, and swiftly made a copy of the notice before heading for the door, Harry followed as they headed down to the Great Hall for breakfast. She read the note as they walked, Harry steering her away from suits of armour as they walked.

“He is finally gone then?”

“Yes, I will be happier when it’s permanent.”

She looked up at him and smiled, “Same here.”

They walked into the great hall together and looked over to the high table as they sat. The Gold chair was gone, and Minerva sat on a more standard chair, Harry spotted Sirius and Remus at the Gryffindor end of the table, and Narcissa and Samantha at the other end of the table. Sirius nodded and caught his eye, they walked up to the table. “Good morning Professor Black,” Harry said with a grin. “How are you today?”

“Very well thank you Mister Potter. I hope you like your new and improved line up of staff. Narcissa has left the Malfoy family and manor now, and brought you a present as a thank you to the House of Black for her restoration. She also has a personal elf that is very eager to meet with you both?” Sirius grinned, “It’s back at my place, we can sort it out after Dinner if that is acceptable?”

“That sounds very good.” Harry replied.

Hermione looked over to Remus, “Are you feeling better now Professor Lupin?” she smiled at Remus

“I am thank you Miss Granger, or should I say Mrs Potter?” he smiled and the yellow in his eyes flared. “As head of Gryffindor house, I can offer our Lord Potter private quarters, and as his betrothed you would be allowed to join him there. Should I go ahead?”

Hermione grinned across the width of her face, “Thank you Remus, that would be fantastic.”

They trooped back to their table and set about breakfast.

The day went well, they had their first History lesson with Remus, who led a discussion of the impact of the Nazi party on pre-war Germany, and the events leading up to the Holocaust in comparison to the pureblood agenda and some of the ideas for dealing with so called lesser creatures. Harry and Hermione took careful note of the reactions of some of the pupils. With Malfoy no longer in attendance only a few die-hard purebloods supported the rhetoric.

Charms was the same as usual, although Harry felt that the attitude in the castle was more positive. After lunch they had Potions. Without Snape in the building they wondered who would be taking the lesson, Narcissa opened the door and called the class inside. She spent the double period going over what they had been taught, and spent some time teaching safety protocols. She gave them an assignment to write up the safe methods for beginning a brew, and advised them, Professor Tonks would be in charge of their next lesson. They finished with a free period, so they headed back to the common room, not being sure when Sirius would be free. As they entered the room they saw Remus working in a corner of the room. Hermione spoke, “Good Afternoon. Professor.”

“Aah, the Potters, welcome, allow me to show you to your new accommodations.” He bundled the marking into a bag and shrank it into a pocket. He walked towards the exit, “come with me,” he led than along the corridor a few yards to a recess guarded by a suit of

armour. “Toujours Pur” he said to the suit of armour, it stepped aside revealing a door. Remus opened the door and motioned them inside.

“These are assigned if the Head Pupils are Gryffindors in any particular year, but they can be allocated if a Head of House is at the school, not usually first years.” He grinned at them both. “Let us go into the common room for the apartment. The room had a window, presumably magical Harry thought. But the room had its own fire, a sofa and two armchairs around a table in front of the fire. At one end were bookshelves, with a desk in front of them. It was all in red and golds, Hermione smiled, she was sure she could tone down the colour scheme. A large portrait of a Godric Gryffindor stood over the fireplace. Harry looked up at the picture, “Are you awake Godric?”

“I am Lord Potter, good evening Lady Potter, I trust you are both well?”

“We are thank you, and you.”

“Better for having family in the room. We shall discuss security once we are alone, Lord and Lady Potter. Welcome to the Den.”

Hermione opened the doors off the corridor, each led to a spacious room, she noted both trunks were in the same room, entering she found an ensuite bathroom, this would do very nicely, she thought.

Remus made his farewells and left the room. Harry was looking around and a thought struck him. “Dobby.”

The hyperactive elf appeared in the room, “The Great Wizard Harry Potter calls for Dobby. Dobby is not worthy.” He started tugging his ears.

“Dobby, my friend, calm down.” Harry stepped forward and wrapped Dobby in a hug. He was joined by Hermione, their magics fed Dobby and when the pair released him, he was looking healthier, and happier than at any time in their lives.

“The Great Harry Potter calls Dobby friend, and shares his magic with Dobby?”

Hermione spoke up, “Dobby, you are more than our friend. You are family. You saved our lives and gave yours to do it in a previous timeline.”

“Dobby looked from one to the other, “Lady Potter, calls me family? Great Harry Potter, is this true, am I family?”

Harry replied. “Dobby you are family to us.”

“The Great Harry Potter is also the heir to the House of Black, Dobby is an elf in that House. Dobby can feel your magics. Dobby feels strong. Dobby is proud to serve Lord and Lady Potter. What can Dobby do for you.”

Harry laughed, “I would like a pot of tea, cups and a plate of biscuits please.”

Dobby snapped his fingers and the tea appeared on the table. “Thank you Dobby, will you answer if we call?”

“Dobby will always answer if the Great Harry Potter calls .” He popped away.

Harry walked to the sofa, “Cuppa Hermione?” She sat,

“If the Great Harry Potter Sir is offering, then I shall be delighted.” She snarked. “I had forgotten just how devoted Dobby is to you.”

They sat and had their tea and started on their potion’s assignment to get that cleared out of the way, eventually Sirius’s patronus appeared in the room and asked if they were free, Harry sent his back in reply, and they apparated over to Sirius’s new House.

They were let in to the rear of the property, and Sirius had a box sat on the dining room table, Sirius picked it up, and Harry took hold of him by the wrist and the three of them portkeyed to Susan’s cottage. As they walked towards the rear of the building, DEATH and Susan walked out of the door, “IS THIS THE LAST PIECE OF THE DARK WIZARD?” DEATH spoke from the corner of the terrace.

“I believe so,” Harry replied. Sirius laid the Box on the table, Susan opened the lid and DEATH touched it with his scythe. “IT IS COMPLETE. THAT IS THE COMPLETE SOUL OF TOM MARVOLO RIDDLE. WELL DONE, HAVE A HOB-NOB.” DEATH faded from view.

Sirius looked around, “That is Voldyfarts done and dead then?”

“It is Padfoot.” James walked out of the cottage, followed by Lily. ”I think we might just have cause for celebration.”

“Do you want me to go fetch Mooney?” Harry asked.

“If you don’t mind, if he isn’t busy.” Lily asked.

Harry popped away, and laughed as he appeared, not in his private common room, but in the middle of the Gryffindor common room, in his adult form. The conversation in the room stopped dead. The foxes were staring.

“Harry, is that you?” Remus asked.

“Ahem, er yeah, this is adult me. Guess how I claimed my seat isn’t such a secret. I have all three of the Deathly Hallows, and I am the last of the Peverells so,”

“The Master of Death.” Fred finished. “Wicked Harrikins.”

“It means I am his agent, not his master. Remus, sorry, Professor Lupin. We are having a party at DEATH’s place, we got the last remnant of Voldypants, he is permanently and totally dead, and in whatever passes for hell. James and Lily are there, are you free?”

Harry appeared back in the garden with a puzzled looking Remus, all three chasers, the Twins and Lee Jordan. Katie slipped over to Hermione, “Sweetie, your boy is smokin’, if you ever want a night off, give a girl a call.” She giggled and took the proffered bottle that was handed to her.

Hermione smiled, “I am sure we are breaking the rules of creation, but Harry and I have died multiple times trying to finish Riddle, I think we deserve a party. I might nip and fetch a few others.”

Soon Dan, Emma, Andi, Ted and Dora were in the garden, as the drinks were passed around Sam and Narcissa appeared. Harry spotted Hermione talking to Susan, and smiled, Fred and George were staring awestruck at the planet and moons hanging over them.

“Where are we Harry.”

“No where, No when, we are outside of time and space. We call this place neverwhen. I suspect you will struggle to remember this place tomorrow morning. This is where Hermione and I return everytime we are killed.”

“Everytime you are killed? How many times has that happened?”

“Eight they tell me, maybe more. I had a lot of really shitty lives in the past.”

“is Ron here somewhere then?”

Harry’s head dropped. “He might be, but he murdered Hermione in our previous life, he will be paying for that. He was part of Dumbledore’s schemes potioning Hermione and me, he was interfering in destiny, and he will be suffering for his greed and temper. I know he is your brother, but he lied to me, was a false friend and killed my soulmate out of jealousy. I can’t feel any sadness that he is suffering.”

George looked askance, “He murdered Hermione?”

“Yeah, we three were all close friends, we thought, in the last three or four runs, but he was betraying us, he stabbed Hermione in the chest with a basilisk fang and called her a mudblood whore, last time around, because he was jealous that we had found each other. Sorry.”

Fred shook his head, “He always was a lazy little scrote, always wanted nice stuff, never wanted to do anything to get it.”

George nodded, “Sorry Harry. We can sort of feel that you and Hermione have a bond, how bad were the previous trips?”

“Last time around pretty much everyone in this room died, maybe Katie survived. I think Andi and Cissy were alive, but Voldy had won, so they wouldn’t have had much of a life.”

“Does this mean you are free then?”

“From your Destiny?”

“Not quite. We have to wipe out the Death Eaters, so this shite doesn’t happen again in ten years, and we have to break down the barriers, get rid of the stupid house rivalries, that carry on into life after school. Somehow get rid of pureblood superiority.”

“Finished by lunchtime tomorrow then, Harrikins.”

“I wish.”

“Bambi, over here a minute.” Tonks called across the group.

Harry shook his head, “Later lads,” he walked over to Tonks.

“Hermione told me I was allowed this, for all the trouble you cause me.” She pulled Harry into a full on lip crushing snog, and held it for at least a minute. Hermione was giggling, as Harry regained his breath, “Not bad Bambi, I can see why she puts up with you.” The chasers laughed, Harry turned rather red. Tonks then grabbed Hermione and repeated the snog to much muffled squealing and giggling, from Hermione. “Have we got music available, we girls need to dance, she declared.”

Lily picked her way across the throng, and wrapped Harry and then Hermione in hugs, “Brilliant kids, brilliant. You have saved so many lives this time around. I am so proud. So proud.” She sniffed a little, James appeared and wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

“Hi kids, you two are older than us now, aren’t you? That is so weird.” He shook his head. “You have won a huge victory, and no one will know about it.” He wiped his eyes. “I think I might be a little bit emotional.” Hermione wrapped her arms around Harry’s waist and resting her head on his shoulder replied. “We have a lot to do, but this is a huge milestone. We have got rid of Dumbledore, but we owe him a few deaths, of his own.”

Some music started, seventies era disco and the girls were all dancing in a group. Harry walked over to where Remus was standing with Sirius, Andi and Cissy, Samantha was in the gaggle of ladies boogying on down, or up, perhaps left. Who can tell. “Well Pup. This is a big day. I hope you understand how big this is.”

“Trust me dogfather, I do. How many times I died to get here. This is a good day.”

“It took me a few moments to realise who you are Harry, seeing you as an adult, when we are used to the child, it is a shock, but a nice shock. It makes much more sense thinking of Hermione as your wife seeing you both like this.” Andi wrapped her arms around him, and Harry returned the hug.

“Thank you Andi, for everything you have done for all of us, and for all that you will do.” Harry stood and saw Narcissa staring, “Narcissa, the last time we spoke, I offered to help you prove how Draco came to fight Ron Weasley, I can tell you here. Dumbledore was potioning students, they got the wrong ones and Pansy and Ron were potioned into snogging each other, Draco was being potioned to Pansy already, their tempers sparked off the rest. Because Hermione and I are who we are, we are immune to potions, and on that day, we were sat with Nymphadora, so our potions probably wound up in Ron.

“It is done now Harry, it is a surprise to see you here as an adult, and I thank you for including me, knowing the Dark Lord as Lucius called him is being roasted over a hot fire, will allow me to sleep more easily.”

“You are more than welcome, the diary you gave Sirius contained the last piece. Thousands of lives will be spared because of today.”

“What of his followers?”

“They must die, if they survive then this all starts again. We have plans, and we have the big guns. Lucius will die, will you inherit?”

“No, I am Narcissa Black, I am your family now Harry. I can feel both you and your ladies magic, you are both very powerful.” She shook her head a little and sipped her drink, looking back to Harry, “I was young and foolish, I thought Lucius was handsome and clever, he was not, he was vain and foolish. He took the mark, and his knee to a disgusting shell of a man. I will not mourn him.”

“Bellatrix will have to go as well, are you both prepared for her loss?”

“She was lost to us all years ago, she was always cruel, but Riddle, as you call him, brought out a side of her that was inhuman, I mourned her loss many years ago.”

Harry was standing trying to put an understanding face on, but failing, as a hand took his elbow, “Sorry oldies, my husband owes me a dance, and then a long romantic break somewhere with palm trees and no fighting.” Hermione was pulling him away as Lily asked, “Did you ever have a wedding?”

Hermione stopped. “No. we just, are.”

“Then I think we have an excuse for a huge party, and I will pester Susan to allow everyone from all your lives that cares to come along.” Harry groaned, “Sometimes, I don’t miss my mum.”

“Harry James,” she mock scolded him, “come dance with me, we are free, it’s over.” She crossed her arms around his neck and they kissed. “We need a long break.” Harry nodded and held her in his arms.

They looked at the group of people. Susan dancing along with the Foxes, her hair in a wild monochrome afro, Hermione pulled Harry into the mix and the party carried on until, well that would be telling.

Chapter 12: Time to be Death Meeters

The night was dark and it was raining heavily, a cold wind blew across the sea whipping the wave tops into foam, and the thunder of the storm is almost lost in the booming of the waves breaking around the Island, a flash of lightning illuminated the stark black tower in harsh relief. The lightning flashed again and two figures, dressed in black and kitted out for combat stood on the roof top, rapidly moving to the door and entering the tower.

Once inside they quickly moved though the upper floors of the prison, identifying the death eaters, silently stunning each and opening the doors for the dementors. The strange creatures moved past the two intruders, recognising them as their true masters. They feasted on the souls of the death eaters one by one.

Hermione reached the cell she had been looking for, Bellatrix Lestrange. In the cells further down the corridor, her husband and brother in law were dispatched to meet their fates. Hermione opened the door, Bellatrix stood and faced her, “Ooh look, all sneaky and dark. Have you come to end me ickle girl.”

“It is your time Bellatrix, your Lord is no more, time to join him in Hell.”

“You lie, The Dark Lord is immortal, he cannot be killed.”

“My master, DEATH, would disagree, time for you to go.”

Bellatrix leapt forward to attack Hermione, but was not facing a starved and weak teenage bookworm, but a highly trained and physically fit adult. Hermione allowed Bellatrix to grab her around the neck and grabbed the back of her neck in her right hand as she slid the Fairbairn-Sykes knife in her left hand up into Bellatrix’s solar plexus and her cold bitter heart.

The look of shock on her face as she felt the knife enter her body, and realised she was done, no magic, no way back. She died as Hermione stared into her eyes, “That is for all the innocents that you killed for amusement, that is for my daughter, you bitch.” Hermione hissed the words into her face.

She pulled the knife free of her chest and sealed the wound with a wandless spell. Cleaning the knife she returned it to its sheath. Hermione looked at the small broken looking body of the woman from so many of her nightmares. “I should revive you and kill you a dozen more times, you foul disgusting wretch.” She turned and left the small cell. Harry stood just outside the door. They exchanged a look, he had held back to allow her to deal with Bellatrix, this was one of her personal demons, and he knew she must be the one that finished her. “We are done, let’s get out, they will find the bodies in the morning.”

The pair slipped back to the roof, and relocked the door, before disappearing into nothing, the anti apparition wards meaning nothing to the agents of death.

Amelia Bones was tired, she was sitting at her desk reading the report and drinking her third coffee of the morning and it was not yet eight o'clock. One of her Aurors walked in, he had a piece of parchment in his hand. "Boss, there has been a situation over at Azkaban, they have lost a few prisoners to the dementors."

"What happened, is it suspicious?"

"Cell doors open, the dementors had a picnic."

Amelia shook her head, "Do we know who?"

"The high security wing, all the Death Eaters by the looks of it."

"Send a couple of duty Aurors up to check for foul play, but don't waste a lot of time. No one is going to support an investigation into an overdue execution for those animals."

"Any preferences?"

"Send Dawlish and Rowling." She smiled, *let them learn their fate*.

"They aren't in yet Boss, I will send them when they get here.

In her hand was an unsigned note in an elegant script, it informed her that all the soul pieces of one Tom Marvolo Riddle were incorporated back into the whole, and that they now resided in that area of the afterlife reserved for the foulest of individuals.

She knew in her heart that the dead prisoners in Azkaban had been, Reaped. She also knew that it was justice, and carried out under the auspices of a 'Higher Power.'

"Reed, send someone around to check on those two, is Arkwright on duty today?"

"No, she is on leave."

Amelia nodded. "OK, send whoever is free to Azkaban, but let them know it routine, we aren't looking for a conspiracy here."

"Boss." He turned back into the bullpen and issued some instructions to the Aurors in the room.

------oooOOOooo------

Hedwig flew into the Great Hall at breakfast and dropped a copy of the Daily Prophet on the table in front of Hermione. She had a subscription, but Hedwig insisted on delivering it to her. She hooted at Hermione. "Thank you, girl, get her some bacon Harry."

"Yes dear."

"You are so whipped mate." Nev commented from his side and passed the plate with the bacon to Harry, who picked a couple of pieces and fed them to his owl.

“Nev, you might be right, but would you say no to either of these two?” Nev laughed and shook his head.

Daphne and Tracy took the seats either side of Hermione, and most of the Quidditch team appeared shortly after and sat alongside them.

Harry opened the paper as Hermione wasn’t bothering, he saw the news on the second page about the deaths in Azkaban, he showed it to Neville. Nev took the paper and read the article slowly. Harry reached over and placed his hand on his brother’s shoulder and gave it a squeeze.

“Does that give you any peace Nev?” Harry asked. Nev sat in silence for a few moments and nodded.

“I am going to get some air.” He stood to leave the room.

Harry tugged his sleeve before he left, “Do you need any company?” Nev shook his head,

“Thanks Harry, I just need a bit of time to myself.”

“Understood mate, understood.”

Tracey watched Neville walk out of the room, “Harry, what’s eating Nev? Is he OK?”

“There was an incident at Azkaban a couple of nights ago, and the Death Eaters all got kissed. You know about Nev’s folks?” Tracey nodded. “The Lestranges all died. It ends it for Neville, if only his parents could be brought back from wherever they are.”

Hermione was staring straight at Harry, “Where are they?” she murmured.

Fred slipped into the space vacated by Nev, “Bambi our seeker of fame and fortune, are you all psyched up for the match this weekend?”

Harry laughed, “No. I had completely forgotten. Hufflepuff right?”

“The Puffs indeed, their seeker is pretty decent. You will need to be awake.”

“Diggory isn’t it?”

“Yeah, do you know him.”

“In another life maybe, I’ve got his measure.”

“When you say another life, are you joking? After that party, and I know it happened because the whole team remember it. I don’t know what to think.”

“Bit of both, Pettigrew killed him last time around, right in front of me. I didn’t handle it very well at the time. He also beat me in a game in our third year after I was taken out by dementors and his father never shut up about it. Cedric is OK, bit pretty really, but his father is an arse, complete Dumbledore acolyte, so far up Dumbles butt he can See Doge.”

George laughed. “You reckon we should be OK then.”

“Best Quidditch team in the school. The game is ours to lose.”

The team members all beamed, Hermione and Daphne had matching eye rolls of deafening proportions. “Smell that Hermione? That’s the smell of victory, that is, or is it from a dragon’s bottom.” Daphne snarked quietly, they giggled. “Dragon, or a Bull. Hard to tell.” Hermione replied.

------oooOOOooo------

Dolores Umbridge was working in her home study, late in the evening, she sat looking over some proposed legislation she was working on, limiting even further the rights of magical creatures. She was working on having Werewolves reclassified as creatures rather than beings. Making them a class of animal, rather than a wizard with an affliction. It did not cross her mind that no one chose to be a werewolf, nor that werewolves were not born, but infected.

Her kitten patterned china teacup was empty, she stood and walked into her kitchen, with a few waves of her wand she had a fresh pot of tea brewing, and stood looking out of her window the moon was full, and in the clear January sky her modest garden was bathed in light, she thought she saw movement, a skulking figure.

She still held her wand, and walked to the door, she would teach this common criminal not to mess with Dolores Umbridge. She stepped out into the garden and the werewolf sprang grabbing her, batting her wand away and biting her neck. He released her from the bite, “welcome to my pack, bitch. You like to make us suffer, well now you will know how it is to be one of us.” Fenrir Grey back dropped the screaming toad on the path, her body began to transform in front of him, and his teeth bared in a feral grin. He watched her go through the agony of her first transition, then biting the back of her neck pushed her to submit, holding her down until his anger was gone. He left her laid in her garden, he loped off his path illuminated by the moonlight, he had the ability to control his transformations, so he left in good order.

When he reached some woods on the outskirts of the town, he slept. He awoke in the morning, stiff and cold and stopped to wonder. How had he arrived at that garden? The previous night he had been drinking in a bar in Montenegro near the border with Albania, he had followed a pretty young witch out of the bar, her scent had inflamed him, as he grabbed her, to bite and rape and devour, she had smiled, her chocolate coloured eyes staring right into his eyes, “Hello Fenrir, Puppy.” She had said, the world had gone black. He had awoken in the garden of the Umbridge woman, with the knowledge that she was responsible for the persecution of his kind.

Fenrir was no hero of the Werewolves, he embraced his animal side, he liked to kill. He loved the taste of fresh blood, watching and feeling as his victim’s life ebbed away in his jaws. The smell of their fear in their last moments on earth. He had satisfied one appetite the previous night, now he wanted to kill, preferably someone young and innocent.

He woke early, his sense of smell alerted him, and he moved though the woods to a footpath where he saw a young girl in her school uniform with a pale blue backpack, perfect he thought. He jumped out in front of her, half transformed and stopped. He expected screams, her to run, or freeze, wet herself in fear, and to cry and beg.

What he got was. “Are you the big bad wolf then Fenrir? because I am not little red riding hood, and my granny lives in France, not Cricklewood.” She smiled, “Contact,” was the last thing Fenrir ever heard.

At the top of the path Dan and Harry sat in a makeshift hide, disillusioned and other charms hiding them and their scent. Harry had a spotter scope and was watching over Hermione carefully, they were only about four hundred yards away.

Dan had ‘borrowed’ another piece of kit. This was brand new, a prototype, the ‘Arctic Warfare’ variant from a company called Accuracy International, currently bidding to supply the Army with its next sniper rifle. The current version of the gun was known as the ‘Green Meanie’ and a variant would hold the record for the longest kill at over two thousand four hundred metres for a few years in the near future.

Today Dan was looking down the hugely powerful scope and could clearly see the beast towering over his daughter, he heard her call the shot, and squeezed the trigger, the specially made rune carved, silver cored magnum calibre round hit Fenrir square in the centre of his chest, fragmenting on impact, the impact knocked him on his back and with a twitch he died.

Hermione transformed his remains into a stuffed toy, a cute little wolf puppy, and dropped it into a large double seal food bag before putting it into her backpack, then skipped Luna style to meet Harry and her father.

Dan looked at his daughter, “Seriously pumpkin, Little red riding hood jokes.” He couldn’t stop his grin. “You were definitely trained by Cat. That Asshole.” Hermione grinned and pulled the desert eagle from the base of her backpack, it was feather weight charmed so she could hold it, but the recoil sat her on her butt every time.

Harry gave her a hug, “did he kill Umbitch?”

“Better, he infected her. If you will pardon the language, She is SO fucked.”

“Umbitch is a werewolf, we should tell Mooney. Wicked.”

Dan had the hide folded up, “C’mon crew, breakfast time.” They linked hands and popped home for bacon butties and mugs of tea.

------oooOOOooo------

Luna was sitting outside her home watching the birds wheeling and diving above it was a cold clear February morning, the sky was a pale washed out blue and the sun sat low in the sky, bringing little warmth. She was intrigued by the dance the birds appeared to perform in the sky around the tower she called home. As she watched the birds scattered, a large white owl flew in and landed on the back of the chair opposite the one she occupied.

Hedwig regarded Luna with its large eyes, and held her leg out to the girl. Luna looked. A letter for her? She had received her Hogwarts letter the previous week. She carefully took the attached letter from the bird, and slipped into the house, returning with some chicken for the owl. “I am sorry my beautiful girl, we have no bacon in the house. I shall make sure we have some for next time,” she fed the bird the pieces of chicken, “They expect an answer, thank you for waiting.”

Luna opened the envelope, and found a birthday card. Today was her eleventh birthday, the thirteenth of February. She had forgotten. She opened the card, it was from Harry Potter, and Hermione Granger. She knew who Harry was of course, everyone knew about the boy who lived, but he had written to her.

“*Dear Luna, Happy Birthday. I know what it is like not to get any Birthday cards, and I know how lonely it can be on your special day if no one remembers. Included in the card is a voucher for Florean Fortescue’s Ice Cream parlour. Hermione and I would love to meet you for an ice cream tomorrow afternoon, we can meet you at the Quibbler offices if that suits you best. Please send your reply back with Hedwig, she will wait.*

Your friends Harry Potter & Hermione Granger

P.S. Hedwig likes bacon best, or chicken.

Luna smiled to herself. Friends. They said they were her friends, she used to have a friend called Ginny, but she didn’t call around any more, not since Luna’s mother had moved on. It would be nice to have friends. She could go into the office tomorrow with her daddy and meet them for ice cream.

She got some paper and started on her reply, singing to herself as she worked.

The following morning she dressed herself in her favourite dress, it was sunflower yellow and was puffed out with petticoats around her legs, she tied her long blonde hair back with matching ribbon and joined her daddy for breakfast. “Good morning Moonbeam, you are up early, and dressed as well.”

“Good morning daddy, I am coming to work with you today, my new friends Harry and Hermione are taking me for ice cream as a birthday treat.”

“Oh, that’s nice Moonbeam, have I met your friends?”

“I don’t think so, have you ever met Harry Potter before?”

“No, he disappeared after you-know-who killed his parents, I believe he is at Hogwarts this year. You will meet him in September when you start.” He returned to his breakfast.

“I will meet them at one o’clock when we go for ice cream with Hermione.”

“That’s nice dear.” Xeno wasn’t really paying attention, Luna smiled. He hadn’t said she couldn’t go.

Later that morning as they finished their lesson, Harry and Hermione told Professor Lupin, that they would be out of the school for the afternoon, they were taking a friend to lunch for her birthday.

“Pandora’s girl?” Remus asked

“That’s right, Luna.” Hermione replied.

“I haven’t seen her since, well you know what happened.” He mused, “be back for Dinner, I believe Minerva wants to have a word with you both.”

“Thanks Mooney.” Harry added. Remus gave him a wry smile.

The pair nipped into their quarters and changed into jeans and trainers, tee-shirts and hooded tops, before apparating to the alley near the Quibbler offices. Harry checked his watch, it showed that it was five minutes to one, they walked over to the door of the offices, but it opened as they approached and Luna stood at the door beaming, “Are you really my friends.”

Hermione gathered the waif like girl in her arms and hugged her, “We are Luna, and we always will be.”

Her smile was splitting her face, “I think I am going to be happy to be your friends, I think we were friends before weren’t we?”

Harry picked her off the floor and swung her around, “We were the closest of friends Luna, we were family. You will always be welcome in our lives.” He put her down, “Now, how about some ice cream?”

Luna closed the door to the offices and took Harry and Hermione’s hand in each of hers and started to skip along the alley towards the ice cream parlour. Hermione gave Harry a smile over Luna’s head, they would make sure their surrogate sister was cared for in this lifetime.

They sat inside at the ice cream parlour and shared a massive bowl of mixed flavours, “Would you like to go to a muggle cinema Luna, and watch a movie?” Harry asked.

Luna regarded Harry for a few moments. “I don’t know what that is Harry” She put her spoon down, and wiped her face with a napkin. “Do you think I will enjoy it?”

“I think you will love it.” He replied.

“I think for us it’s a choice between The Addams Family, or the Star Trek one.” Hermione commented.

“I like the sound of the family one,” Luna said. “I like the idea of family, I miss mine.” Hermione gave her a side hug.

“Leicester Square isn’t far, we can walk in ten minutes, or we could apparate?”

“Let’s walk, don’t want to spook anyone. Should we age up?” Hermione nodded. With a quick check to see if anyone was around they transformed into their adult selves, an ability they had been granted after collecting the last part of Riddles soul.

Luna looked up at Harry, her eyes shining, “Have you met my mummy?”

He crouched down to her level, “Not yet, but we could go visit after the movie if you want to, we could have some tea and cake with her. Would you like that?” Luna nodded, her eyes sparkling. They took Luna’s hands in theirs and walked along letting her swing between them and skip as she beamed at the world, through the Leaky and into muggle London. Hermione conjured a jacket for Luna, it was a cold day, and they made their way across to the Odeon Cinema in Leicester Square, and paid for the tickets to the Addams Family.

Luna sat enthralled at the idea of movies, actors, and the whole thing. “They remind me of some of my family, there are some boys I would like to torture.”

“Really Luna? I never had you down as one for vengeance.”

She looked at Hermione, “Ginny’s brother, he was horrible to me, and Hermione, but he has gone now. I should not be glad about that, but I am happy that he will not be at school when I start. He called me Looney, I pretend I don’t mind. I see things other people can’t, and they don’t understand.” She said all of it with a smile, and shrugged. “Where to now?”

Harry checked around, the cinema was dark and no one was looking, they took Luna’s hand and slipped through reality into neverwhen, “Take a seat Luna. We can have some tea and some cake,”

“Lulu. You have grown so much,” A blonde woman, clearly Luna’s mother ran to her and swept her up into her arms. Luna wrapped her arms around her neck. Hermione brought out a tea set and some Victoria sponge cake, made with real cream. She knew this would not be allowed by the guardians of English tradition that was the Women’s Institute, but she wasn’t going to sing Jerusalem either.

Susan appeared, and gave them both a certain look, “I will allow this, Luna has a role in the future, and deserves some peace. She will have to wait for Samhain in future, or you will have the *Auditors* on our backs once more. If you want to leave Luna to spend some time with her mother, you can go, I will take her back home later, her father will forget her otherwise. You might want to consider letting her live with your family at the school during the week?”

Hermione looked at Susan, and her hair sorted itself into a French plait. “Got it, at least my hair is cooperating now. Susan, are Nevilles parent’s up here, or are they trapped somewhere?”

“They are not here, they are not even due for years yet. They need some help finding their way back from where they hid. You have the ability, I believe. How is the trash disposal progressing?”

“We cleaned up the prison, and the Ministry is missing a few employees, they all caught dragon pox and passed away in their homes. We have a plan for Malfoy and his cadre, we are waiting for them to meet up so we can scoop them up in one go.” Harry replied. Susan nodded, “The rest we think we can use their mark to track them, perhaps more. Hermione has figured out the magic behind it.”

“You are both doing well. I believe we will be able to reward you when it is complete.” Hermione smiled.

------oooOOOooo------

They returned Luna to her home themselves in the end, Pandora turned out to be every bit as out there as they remembered Luna to be, and she told them a few choice stories about Sirius, Remus, James and Lily from their days at Hogwarts in what she referred to as the marauders era. Sirius had not been joking when he said she had no inhibitions, some of her stories were certainly adult content. They returned when Luna fell asleep, in her mother’s arms and they popped her into her own room, put her to bed, with a note, explaining how to contact them.

They apparated into their own school apartment and with a sigh and a last kiss, transformed back to being twelve year old selves, or nearly in Harry’s case. “This is getting old.” He complained. “Or rather it isn’t.”

“Not long Harry, once we get the rest of them, then I think we can stay adult one way or another.”

“I hope so, I haven’t even hit puberty. It sucks.” Hermione kissed him on the cheek.

She replied, “I think it’s cute.” Harry snorted.

They had dinner in the Great Hall, telling Katie about the Addams family movie, she lived in a muggle area, and understood cinema. The others were fascinated, and they made plans to see if they could get a small group together to visit a cinema at the weekend at some point. They laughed at the idea of some of the Professors out in the muggle world.

As they were standing to leave the hall a note appeared on the table.

‘*Harry and Hermione Potter*
Please come to my office after dinner, I have a few items I wish to discuss.

Prof. McGonagall

HeadMistress’

Harry passed Hermione the note, they exchanged a look and set off to the Head's office. As they arrived the gargoyle was missing and they walked up the stairs, and knocked on the door.

"Come in," Minerva called, "Hermione, Harry. Pease take a seat. A pair of chairs appeared in front of her desk. Harry took a look around and noticed the lack of do-dads and nik-naks in the office compared to Dumbledore's day. He took a seat next to Hermione, "What did you want to see us about?"

"I would like to have a chat about the castle wards, if I may?"

"Of course, what can we do to help?" Hermione replied as they sat in the chairs conjured for them.

"After Albus was removed, Fillius and I went to the ward stone room, and we discovered in the logs, that the wards had been heavily, I will say, repaired, perhaps reset, a few weeks ago, by Rowena Ravenclaw. A lady that passed away nearly a thousand years ago. I enquired with the elves about some of Albus's excesses, especially with regards to potions being given to pupils, and they explained that Lady Ravenclaw and Lord Gryffindor had told them to stop and not to tell Albus.

Their descriptions of the Lord and Lady are of the pair of you. Am I correct in my assumption that this is work directed by our friends from beyond the veil?"

Harry grinned, "We spent months with the founders, Rowena herself helped Hermione fix the wards, I left her to that one. Runes isn't my best subject, and it's a passion for Hermione. Have you been able to remove Albus from the wards?"

"We believe so, but I would be very grateful if 'Rowena' would check them for us. Perhaps you could show Professor Bell what you know, she is very capable with wards.

Hermione beamed, "I would be delighted to check the wards for you, Rowena showed me how to remove and add users, the best way is to swap the equivalent of the users identity, as you have surmised, when I access the wards it records me as Rowena, and Harry as Godric. We did this so Albus could not lock us out of the wards, or into the castle. He had damaged the ward matrix to the point of collapse."

Harry asked, "Where is he at the moment? I doubt the old goat has given up trying to run my life. We have finished with Riddle, he is in the afterlife, and never coming back."

"Run or ruin?" Hermione quipped.

"Same thing, his meddling caused me more pain than Riddle managed."

Minerva stood, "before we check the wards, I have to ask. Did you engineer Ronald Weasley's demise?"

Hermione looked at her, "No. I was going to kill him myself, look into his eyes as he did me, feed him the memory of being murdered by a close friend, let him feel my pain and hurt and

betrayal. Then I was going to end him. I hadn't decided the exact method at the time, and the potions got mixed up, we assume Ron consumed his usual quantity and would have had enough in him to make an erumpant frisky." Minerva looked a little shocked at Hermione's calm demeanour describing how she intended to kill Ron. "Minerva, with your permission, I will show you that memory?"

Minerva paused, "No, thank you Hermione. I think experiencing something that awful, is perhaps something I will pass. It is difficult to reconcile what you two have experienced with the cute little girl sat in front of my desk. I am sorry, I understand your feelings to the late Ronald Weasley, and I am glad you did not have to act on them in the end." She walked around the desk, "shall we take a walk to the ward stone?"

Hermione grinned, "We have founder level privileges, we can apparate within the castle. Harry, please go and see if Samantha is free, I can show her the wards structures, it is easier to understand if you know how it is assembled. I will meet you at the door." She took Minerva's hand and they disappeared.

Harry popped into being outside Sam's quarters and knocked on the door, privately relieved when she shouted, "Come in Harry," and on entering he found her alone, marking papers. "What I can I do for my favourite Grim Reaper?" She asked with a grin. Harry stopped. It was true, he was a Reaper of sorts, and Sirius's dog form was a Grim. He laughed, Trelawney wasn't so far off seeing death in his life, just not his.

"Hermione is helping Aunt Minnie with the wards, since she has Rowena's access levels, and she want's to show you how they are set up so you can manage the wards for the castle, as ward work was in your old day job." Sam stood and stretched, "OK Bambi, lead on."

Harry snorted, *Bambi*. He took her hand and popped them down to the chamber.

"You can apparate in the school?"

"Hermione and I have founder level privileges, and as you rightly called me, we are Reapers, or at least part of the team, so we can go anywhere." Hermione opened the door and Harry watched them file into the room, "I am going to have a chat with Sirius and Remus about Luna, love."

"OK." He heard from the room as the door closed. He popped himself over to Sirius's office, it was empty, so he nipped to the common room, Remus was there, "Do you know where Scooby is Mooney?" he asked poker faced.

"Professor Black is at home I believe, Mister Potter." He said looking at Harry with raised eyebrows. Harry nodded and fired off his patronus, Remus blinked, "I don't know why, but I should realise you can cast a patronus, I expected a stag, not a big cat."

It used to be a stag, for a lot of my lives, but since Hermione and I bonded, we both have big cat patronuses, hers is a snow leopard, mine is a panther. They are the same as our Animagious forms." He transformed into his Panther form.

Daphne, Tracey and Katie chose that moment to enter and decided that Harry had to be petted. He was still laid on his back chuffing in pleasure at having his belly rubbed when Sirius walked into the room, He barked out a laugh. “You ladies do know that’s Harry you are all stroking don’t you?”

“What?” they asked together, Daphne continued, “He is animagious as well. Hermione is a lucky girl.” Harry rolled himself over and wriggled free of the girls before transforming, accidentally into his adult form and then into his school self. Tracey and Daphne exchanged a look and a nod.

Katie climbed to her feet, “What is Hermione’s form?”

“Snow Leopard.” Harry replied, “It’s really cute, but she mauls me quite badly if I say so.”

“Well, sadly you are still stuck with Bambi, even if Baggy would be better suited.” Sirius quipped,

“That’s OK Scooby. I can live with it.” The girls mouthed ‘scooby?’ and looked askance,

Sirius dropped into his dog form for a moment, and returned, “It’s Padfoot.”

Katie looked, “Nah, Scooby Doo is way funnier.” She giggled, “Muggle TV show, we need to fix up a TV for the common room, you guys need to learn mundane cultural references.” She directed at the others.

Harry laughed, “Can I have a word with you and Remus, about family stuff. Maybe in our room?”

They followed him into the rooms he shared with Hermione, “Grab a seat, anyone want a drink?”

He ordered a pot of tea from Dobby and asked the elf to stay when he returned with the tray. “Hermione and I have contacted Luna Lovegood recently, Pandora and Xeno’s daughter. She is just like her mother, who says to tell you both the offer she made to the pair of you concerning a bowl of whipped cream as clothing still applies.”

He smirked as Remus actually blushed a little. “Xeno can’t really cope with Luna and she spends most days alone, she is still grieving her mother, and she needs to be in company. The nearest family is the Weasleys and Ginny has turned her back on Luna for some reason. Hermione and I are in these bodies so we can’t really help, but I want to ask you guys to organise it to let Luna stay at the school, even if it’s just in the daytime, between you two, Dobby here, Cissy, Andi, Sam, Hermione and I we can give her company. She will be here from September, and she will spend summer with us as much as she wants.”

Remus looked at Harry, “That is extremely noble of you Harry, I think we can talk to Minerva and sort something out, I doubt Xeno will object, as strange as he is, he loves his daughter. If she stays here in the week, would you and Hermione be happy for her to use the spare room until she starts as a pupil?”

“Yes, we had thought that might work, she is really attached to us both, she was very close to us in our previous lives, but she was in Ravenclaw, and they picked on her for being odd, we didn’t meet until our fifth year I think. We love the whacky little pixie, she sees magic in a way none of us do, but doesn’t know how to describe what she sees, so makes up names for it. Nargles are a favourite of hers, I think it means you are stressed or worrying. We want to fix that this time around.”

“How is the other stuff going?” Sirius asked.

“We have cleared the Death Eaters from Azkaban and the Ministry, and Fenrir Greyback is dead.”

“Greyback is dead?” Remus asked.

“Hermione’s dad shot him in the chest with a specially made bullet. He never heard it coming. He was the one that turned you wasn’t he?” Remus nodded, “before he got shot he turned Dolores Umbridge.”

Sirius started laughing, “You set that up didn’t you?” Harry shrugged and grinned.

“We need Fudge gone as well, but Malfoy and his cronies are our next target, he has meetings of the senior Death Eaters at his Manor once a month or so, as soon as we know when the next on is, we are going in hard and killing them all. Fancy a bit of action, be warned this isn’t Dumbledore’s order of the Pheonix stuff, we are going to kill anyone with a Dark Mark, including your old sparring partner Severus. The attack on them at Malfoy Manor will also be a statement, sending a message, if you have a Dark Mark, your days are numbered.” Harry drank some tea.

“Hermione and I can go through any wards, and Dobby here knows the Malfoy elves, they will tell him when the next meeting is and he will rescue the elves prior to the attack. Once we go in, use only deadly spells, we will lock the place down against any form of exit and clean house. If Dumbles turns up, he dies.”

Remus looked a little concerned, “Harry this is pretty dark stuff, are you sure?”

“Remus, I work for DEATH. As Sam joked earlier, I am a Grim Reaper, more or less. I have been granted this life and these abilities to put the magical world back on track, and these assholes that believe they can rape and kill and rob anyone who doesn’t fit their world view of what a wizard should have no place in it. Every one of them had multiple counts of rape and murder over their head, often minors. These men commit the most foul acts and justify it because their victim was a muggle.”

Harry had subconsciously transformed into his adult form as his anger had risen, “What they wanted to do to Hermione marks them all as dead men walking. She was their number one target, me they would torture and kill, Hermione would have welcomed death if they had captured her. If you cannot do this, then stay away, we will not be dissuaded.”

Sirius spoke softly, “It’s OK Harry, I am in, Mooney can decide, but I have some of my memories of those lives, and we lost friends in the first war. Marion, Lily, James to name a

few. Do you have a plan drawn up?"

"Only in the broadest sense, but we have a huge advantage, once they meet, we can go into neverwhen, and plan our attack. We can spend days if we need to, and no time will pass. We will plan it in detail when we know who is there and in what part of the manor. We will pop in, and blow the wardstone to pieces, throw anti apparition and anti portkey wards down, and then hit them from all side at once with maximum aggression."

------oooOOOooo------

The Quidditch match against the 'puffs was finally on them, Harry was sat amongst the team with Hermione, Tracey, Daphne and their new fan Luna at breakfast on the Saturday morning of the match. Everyone was in high spirits, the sky was clear and although it was the last day of February, the day was dry and the sun was shining. Harry was eating a light breakfast and watching Luna pack away pancakes with the same gusto he used to see in Ron.

The girls had adopted Luna immediately and had taken her into their group as if they had known her their entire lives. After the second night she slept in the first years dorm with the girls in the bed that had once been Hermione's and had taken to sitting in on lessons. She was easily keeping up with the subjects. Harry looked at the 'Claws table, Cho and Su-li had been two of her antagonists, yet the lions had welcomed her like the stray cub she was, well except for McLaggan.

Harry thought back to how McLaggan had once more proved to be a complete prat. He wondered if he would survive a third strike from Hermione. It had been Luna's first day staying with them up at the school, Dobby had picked her up and elf popped her into the apartment for Friday lunch, they had Friday afternoons free, and she was staying the weekend. She had not been home since.

They introduced her to the girls in the dorm at lunch, having explained the reasons at breakfast, and the whole gang, had gone back to the common room that afternoon. Luna had been talking dreamily about him having wrackspurts and he should let Hermione clean them away, when McLaggan had opened his mouth.

"Who asked for any more of your stupid little girl fantasy nonsense. Can't you just stop for a minute and let people with actual brains say something for once." He was breathing in to carry on his rant as Hermione walked across the room towards him, as she walked she shifted into her adult body, complete in combat gear, with guns and knives attached everywhere. Harry sat and thought to himself how hot her arse looked with the pistol holster straps across the tops of her thighs.

McLaggan started again, "We have all heard…." Hermione picked him up by his throat and held him with his feet off the floor.

"Come with me Cormac, time for a lesson." They both disappeared.

"Hermione is really scary when she gets angry Harry." Neville murmured.

Harry smiled, “Luna is our surrogate sister, she is family. I think McLaggan is about to learn that the world is a very scary place if you piss off the wrong person. Hermione’s knife skills are top notch and she had more of them attached to her than I can remember, and pistols. He is probably about to die a few times as a lesson in etiquette.”

“Shouldn’t you go help?” Daphne asked.

“I would get my arse kicked as well, McLaggan is a jerk, and I was going to tell him to shut up, but he really angers Hermione, they have history in previous timelines, he got handsy with her at a party. One I took Luna to coincidentally, so she has a short fuse with him. If I turned up to ‘save Hermione’ she would be furious. I used to sneak off and do the risky stuff without her, thinking I was keeping her safe. Half the time she had to rescue me, we work best as a team, but she can take McLaggan one handed without magic.”

“She didn’t have to bother Harry, he was listening to his nargles, it didn’t upset me.” Luna said, whilst plaiting Daphne’s hair into a braid down one side of her face.”

Harry shook his head, “Luna part of what we have to do is to make people realise that we are all equal, and allowing that prat to bump his gums like that does no one any favours. This is probably his last chance, if he makes her angry again, she will feed him to a dragon, or maybe the Basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets under the school.”

“Did you just say that there is a Basilisk under the school?” Tracey asked.

“Yes, it was Salazar Slytherin’s familiar. It killed Myrtle Warren back in 1943, when Tom Riddle opened the chamber. It’s sleeping at the moment. It’s on my to do list.”

“Aren’t they really rare? And really hard to kill.”

“Yeah, this ones about a thousand years old, if I can talk to it I don’t really want to kill it out of hand, but it’s about sixty feet long and probably gone a bit mad. So if it does attack it is really difficult to stop and can do a lot of damage, especially if it comes up into the school.”

Hermione reappeared in the room, McLagan was curled at her feet whimpering. “If I ever hear you talk down to another woman, I will end you McLaggan. You are a pathetic excuse for a male. Be very happy I am leaving you male. Now go to your dorm and write Luna an apology.” He half crawled half ran out of the room, Hermione turned to the group, hair bushed out and crackling.

“Everything OK, Hermione, love?” Harry asked as she shrank back into her schoolgirl form.

“HE. Just. Makes me. SO ANGRY. How can one person be so full of sh..” Harry pounced on her in panther form and rolled her over to the ground, she shifted to her Leopard form and the two big cats wrestled on the floor until she settled, and calmed, purring and sleeping as the girls stroked the big cuddly cat.

Neville leaned into Harry, who was back in his schoolboy form, “What did she do to Cormac?”

“No idea. I will ask in a day or two when it’s safe.” He never did.

The match started and Harry shot vertically to about fifty or sixty feet, and started to look for the snitch, Cedric kept trying to get on his tail, and was trying to make Harry get annoyed and lose concentration. Harry considered using a wandless stunner on him for a moment or two, but thought better of it, he had a faster broom, he knew he was a better flyer. He decided to have a bit of fun. This game had been over in ten minutes last time around, and that wasn’t happening today, it was already twenty minutes. Harry dropped vertically and powered straight down pulling out at the last moment so he almost brushed the pitch, Cedric didn’t get pulled into the feint and bailed early, but he didn’t try to buzz Harry again.

The Chasers and Beaters were being relentless, Gryffindor was scoring almost every couple of minutes, the score was currently 190 – 10 in their favour. The snitch didn’t matter anymore. Harry wanted it, his pride demanded it. He flew up a bit higher and made a fast circuit of the stand looking for the glint in the weak sunlight.

There it was, behind the ‘puff’s keeper. He would block Harry if he tried to get it, unless? Harry flew out wider still orbiting the pitch as if searching flying out past the stands and behind the Hufflepuff hoops, then dropping and turning, he could see the snitch through the hoop on the left to his viewpoint. At close to maximum speed, he threaded the eye of the needle and grabbed the snitch as he passed, flipping upside down to avoid Katie as she threw the quaffle through the same hoop and made the score 200.

He braked to a standstill and held his left arm aloft the snitch wiggling in his hands. The Gryffindor stand went wild. He flew over to where Hermione was sitting, she was trying to look angry, but her smile betrayed her. She shook her head and pointed to Luna, who was jumping up and down with excitement. He stopped just above her and held the snitch out to her in between his finger and thumb. She looked to Hermione for confirmation and when Hermione smiled and nodded reached up and took the snitch from Harry. He did a mid air back flip and flew down to join his team mates. Katie grabbed him tears running down her face, “You mad, brilliant, lunatic.” She kissed his cheek and hugged him. “you scared me to death you bloody awesome little monster. Did my goal count, or had you caught it already.”

“That’s our secret, I won’t tell if you don’t. 200 points before the snitch. Epic. I told you we were the best team.” She smacked his chest, and the rest of the team lifted them both onto their shoulders.

The party went on long after Harry had fallen asleep in a corner with Luna curled up at one side and Hermione at the other.

Chapter 13: Reaping What you Sue

Lucius Malfoy was angry. His puppet Fudge was demanding more money, his new assistant was neither corrupt, nor remotely interested in anything he had to offer. When she had been shown the legislation that Dolores had been preparing, to outlaw werewolves, she had torn it to ribbons, quoting endless laws dating back hundreds of years and international treaties that would be breached, she threw it in Fudges bin in front of him, Lucius Malfoy, and told them both that pureblood supremacy belonged in the past with idiots like Grindelwald and Riddle.

He sneered and said “Riddle?”

She looked him stone cold in the eye and said, “The Dark tosspot himself. Moldypants. Whatever. Son of a squib, Merope Gaunt and her love potioned muggle husband. A half blood who had idiots like you kissing his feet because he spouted what you wanted to hear. Tom Marvolo Riddle. He was head boy at Hogwarts when he made up ‘I am Lord Voldemort” you followed a teenage psychopath with narcissistic tendencies. Branded you all like cattle and then died trying to murder a baby. You expect anyone to fear him? She walked out of the office.

“Cornelius, I do not believe that young lady is treating me with the respect the many galleons I put in your pockets warrants. I would prefer not to see her again. Where on earth did she come from.”

“Sarah something, she is an American, she is a temp, I will have her replaced, but since Dolores got herself bitten by Fenrir Greyback of all the werewolves to choose, and then went on a rampage herself before getting captured by the Aurors I have to be a little circumspect. She was here for a month as a werewolf, without being discovered. It makes me shudder to consider what may have happened. Her crimes are coming to light, we may have to be a little patient.”

Malfoy had made a few enquiries, the Dark Lord had indeed been a half blood. He swirled the brandy in his glass, his fine Manor House was empty now, his son had got himself killed in a pointless duel with a Weasley, of all families to fight. Over a girl he professed to despise, saying she looked like a pig in a wig. Then Narcissa left, his marriage dissolved by her cousin, the Black vaults and riches removed from his reach, and to add insult to injury the dowry reclaimed from his vaults.

The Death Eaters in Azkaban had all been executed, he suspected that Bones bitch in the DMLE. She had spurned him and laughed in his face at school. He had his revenge as they killed her brother and his wife some years later. The brandy was making him feel brave, and less cautious, perhaps he and his friends should don their masks and pay Amelia Bones a visit she would not forget, they would arrive soon, something had to be done. People should bow to Lucius, if they didn’t he would end them, and their families.

The first of his cohorts arrived shortly after he finished the glass of brandy, and the rest flooed in over the next fifteen minutes. Crabbe and Goyle, Nott Senior, The Carrows, Flint, Parkinson, Rosier, Rowle & Travers, Yaxley. Aside from those in Azkaban they had been the Dark Lord's innermost circle.

In Neverwhen, Harry stood at the table, the floorplan of Malfoy manor laid out and the location of the occupants clear. In the informal drawing room a group of twelve Death Eaters were gathered, in the dungeons two muggleborn teenage girls were tied up, playthings to share later.

Dan and Chris, Dog and Cat, were leading the briefing. They discussed entry points, fields of fire, avoiding friendly fire, and egress and exit methods. Sirius was in awe. He had been in the fore front of the first war, and these two were schooling all of them in methods and techniques they could only have dreamed of. Then they lead them to a mock up of the room, and they ran through the assault over and over again, James, Lily and the Prewitt twins joining them, conjured mannequins acting as the bad guys. Only after the fourth or fifth successful assault without loss, did Cat give them the thumbs up.

They transferred down to the ground near the manor, split into three teams, one to rescue the girls, the other two to hit the Death Eaters. Dan was on overwatch, he grinned when his mate Cat walked across, "Can't let you have all the fun. This lot have really annoyed the powers that be, you have walking dead fighting with you." He had the same weapons as Dan, they would cover the outsides, anyone on their list of Death Eaters would receive a headshot.

Dan looked across at his son and daughter, they looked like members of his old squad, Hermione looked like a knife seller, or a circus act. She had taken to knives with a vengeance, with good reason. She had knives on her arms, her webbing. Inside of her pistol holsters and two in the small of her back, she carried a pair of Glock automatics in thigh holsters and third in the small of her back, she alone wore a combat helmet and goggles. Harry was more magical weapons, but he was packing pistols and knives, and a Katana across his back. His parents, James and Lily were stood with them, Lily looked particularly sorted to Dan, hair in a tight bun, pistol strapped to her leg, and wands and knives on her arms.

James, Harry's father, looked too confident. Dan had kept quiet, but he understood why Lily had rebuffed him so often. Harry was humble, his father was not. Dan actually thought he was a bit of a dick, he would not have passed selection, and if it wasn't for the fact he was already dead, he would have objected to him coming along. Sirius and Remus were close by, the three of them were a tight knit group. "James." Dan spoke up, "Your task is to make sure Sirius and Remus walk out of that building still breathing. If there are any of those killing curses, you step in front, you cannot die twice, that's Harry's trick." James looked as if he was going to say something smart back, but Lily nudged him and gave him a look. She was just like Emma and Hermione. "Time for jokes is over. Once we get the go, no jokes, do what must be done, and everyone comes home.

Dobby appeared with three elves, but one popped away, "Sorry Master Harry, he be's a silly loyal elf."

Dan nodded to Harry, he and Hermione blinked away, Sam and Sirius threw the anti-apparition and portkey wards up. In London, Sarah casually closed the floo to Malfoy Manor, and picked up a magazine to read. Harry and Hermione appeared at the wardstone for the manor and taped the two backpacks onto each side. They popped back to the rest and Harry flipped open the detonator control and pressed the fire button. Two kilos of military grade explosive turned the wardstone into flour. The house wards dropped like skittles, and the assault teams apparated into their insertion points.

In the dungeon, a swift bombardier and a kick destroyed the door, Samantha and Nymphadora went straight in, grabbed the terrified girls and wearing bracelets keyed to the new wards side-along apparated them straight to the hospital wing at Hogwarts. Nymphadora sent her patronus to Dan to tell him they were successful and clear.

Harry, Hermione and the Prewett twins blew a panel of the wall away on their mark.

Simultaneously on the adjacent wall, at ninety degrees to the others, Sirius, Remus, and the elder Potters blew the doors in.

Hermione and Remus threw in three flash bang grenades each, the resulting concussions leaving most of the occupants reeling.

James stepped in first, Harry had his wand out as the green flashes connected with James, he laughed and stepped into the room, Harry was hit and felt the momentary disconnect of yet another death. *Bugger, I'll be in trouble for that.* He fired an overpowered piercing hex at the outline of one of the wizards, and it dropped, another *AK* splashed across him and he sent the caster on to meet with Susan.

Lucius Malfoy was laughing, eight against twelve, he loosed off three *Avada Kedavras* before the fools even responded, one was a girl. He would have fun with her, she pointed at him, not even a wand. He saw the red light and the flash and everything ended. A woman with white hair with a black stripe looked at him. "Malfoy," she said, and hit him with a poker.

Crabbe and Goyle Senior saw the doors blast open and fired *AK's* into the gap as quickly as they could fire them off, they hit the two figures in the doorway, but they didn't drop. Goyle switched to *bombardier* and *diffindo* and saw one of the figures drop, before he could target the other he felt something thump him twice in the chest and his vision narrowed and his consciousness faded. He looked at the woman, "Goyle," she said and a poker laid him low.

The Carrow twins were firing every dark curse in their arsenal at the doorway, and the two redheaded men stood and took it all. Around them their compatriots were trying to get shields or get a clear shot, but the red beam that flicked over them knocked lumps off them like a *bombardier.* Amycus turned to his left and saw a girl flicking this red light from wizard to wizard, two white flashes and it moved on, he raised his wand *Avada Kedavra,* he saw the spell hit the woman in the chest. She looked at him and with a hand gesture removed his arm at the shoulder, the red light flicked into his eyes blinding him for a second, and his head exploded. As he died, he wondered who she was.

Alecto felt the death of her twin brother, lover and father to their children. She screamed and lashed out at the figures in the opening sending *Avada,* after *Avada* with every ounce of

power she had, she saw the male tumble to the ground and turned on the girl only to feel the impact of a knife in her chest, as her life drained away her wand taken from her she looked at the bodies piled around and watched the man she had killed, stand up again.

She met the woman, “The other Carrow,” and was laid out with the poker.

Harry picked himself up, he had taken at least two *AK’s* from Alecto, and it stung. He was still alive, Hermione would give him so much shit for this he thought to himself. He was wrong, she grabbed him and kissed him passionately. “I am so horny right now, we need to ditch the oldies.”

He started to laugh, and laugh and lost it completely finishing up crying like a baby and four lifetimes of stress poured out. “I love you, you crazy, brainbox. But I need a minute before you ravish me.”

Her laughter started then, edging towards hysteria, a hand on their shoulders, and Cat’s calm scouse accent, “Get out of here youze two, go get a room.” The grinned back at him. “Go check in with Dog face, he will be fretting. Go on, git out of here. We can stage the scene now. How many bodies, has anyone done a head count?”

“We’ve got nine.” A voice said from the room, the smoke still hanging in the air, making the room look eerie and strange.

“Bollox.” Cat turned to the rest, “We have three tangos in the building. Stay in pairs, work together, do not shoot each other.”

Harry took a deep breath, he watched Hermione swap the magazines out on her pistols for fresh ones and run her hands over her knives, checking her weapons. “Still some cleaning up to do then.”

She pulled the goggles back over her eyes, and readjusted her helmet, “Let’s go dish out some death.”

They picked a direction for each pair and headed off into the building, being told an *AK* would have no impact was one thing. Believing it was another. They walked to the first door, using a version of *Homono revelum* they were checking for signs of life, they reached the turn in the corridor, with a look Hermione unclipped a flash bang and threw it around the corner, the grenade went off almost simultaneously and Harry dropped to a knee and looked around the corner, a wildly aimed *AK* flew past him and he dropped the sender with a *reducto* that blew the man’s chest out. Harry stood and moved forward throwing a *lumos* into the corner, it was a dead end. He turned to see Hermione grabbed from behind by a brute of a man. Harry raised his wand as the man pressed his wand into her temple.

His victory was short lived as Hermione stabbed him in the thigh with one knife and as his grip momentarily lapsed drove a second into his wand arm paralysing it, and then drove another onto his skull under his chin and he dropped at her feet. “That trick is old, Bellatrix got me once, no dead beat is ever slicing me up again.” She kicked the dying man in the groin hard enough that Harry winced.

Harry thumbed his mike, Dan we have two Tangos, both down, East corridor. Clearing back to centre. No injuries, Harry out."

"Roger. Received. Sirius and Remus in contact with last Tango, return to staging, Dan out.

Sirius and Remus had split from the Potters, a mistake. They had encountered the last of the Death Eaters, Flint. A vicious and callous killer, he was raining curses at the pair of them with ferocity. He was in a good spot to defend, the columns of the hallway meant he could shift position without exposing himself, and he was moderating the power of each spell. He would not exhaust himself quickly.

Remus and Sirius were at the corner of the corridor, it already looked like a bomb site, shattered statues, and blown plaster littering the floor. They had him trapped, but he had them pinned down. They needed him to move so they could finish this.

The two marauders held a quick conversation, Remus darted from cover to an alcove on the other side and made himself as small as possible as Flint fired of a few blasting curses at him, smashing the walls and the sculptures in their wall sconces. Sirius burst forward to a column closer to him. Flint turned his attention to Sirius, and Remus let fly with a spell chain of cutting, blasting and piercing hexes that reduced the column he was sheltering behind to rubble. Flint had to move to take cover and Sirius moved forward, taking over the job of hurling hexes at Fint as Remus moved up the side of the corridor.

Flint responded by firing a blasting hex into the ceiling bringing half of it down on everyone. Sirius was forced to jump clear of falling beams and Flint took advantage stepping out of cover and hitting him with a cutting curse to the chest. Remus was quick to respond and hit Flint with a *reducto* to the chest that ended him, his lifeless body toppling into the rubble. Remus ran up to him and put a second through his head to be sure, before scooping his friend up and helping him out of the battle ground. Remus thumbed his mike, "Dan. Remus. We have taken out the Tango, Sirius is injured, but walking. Coming in. Out."

"Roger. Received Sirius, all Tangos accounted for, Return to staging. Out"

Harry and Hermione arrived back at the staging point, Cat and his parents were there, the Prewett twins stood off to one side, Dan pulled each of them into a bear hug, "The waiting does not get easier." They smiled back at him, the adrenaline was falling away now and they knew they would crash soon. Remus and Sirius came hobbling into view Remus was helping Sirius walk, and Harry saw the sickly colour of his godfather.

"Are you OK Scooby?" he asked.

He smiled, "It's nothing, it's just a flesh wound, I have had worse." He laughed but it hacked and he coughed up blood as he collapsed. "Hospital wing, Andi will be waiting for incoming." Dan instructed, Remus responded without arguing and side apparated Sirius to the hospital wing at Hogwarts.

Dan turned to James and Lily. Hermione had seen this Dan before, only once. He was furious. "What the fuck was that Potter? I fucking told you to stay with Sirius, you cannot be fucking killed, but you two fuckwits let the two mortals in the party go off together. The kids

are Reapers, you are basically solid ghosts. You should have split one each with those two, AS. I. TOLD. YOU. TO. Now Sirius is injured because you are an arrogant prick. I wish you were alive, so I could kill you myself. I cannot believe how fucking selfish and self centred you are, that you let Harry's last link to you in this world be injured.

James reared his head back and started to reply, and Dan's punch put him on the floor. Lily stepped forward eyes blazing to receive a massive slap from an equally furious Hermione. "You are supposed to be the smart one, what the fuck were you thinking." She stared Lily down, who had the sense to stay quiet. "Who the fuck did you idiots train with, you act like it's a fucking movie. We have fucking died, so many times because we did stupid noble shit. DO NOT give these fuckers an opening, use every advantage, and you two did what? I am ashamed of you. I thought you were better than that." She stood staring Lily down, eyes blazing and her magic crackling around her.

Harry walked slowly to her and gently pulled her away, he looked briefly at his mother, but said nothing. Lily felt the dismissal like a knife in her chest and watched as her son and his wife popped away from them. Susan appeared in the group. OK time for everyone to come home, with a wave it was just her and Dan, "Do you need some time to unwind, the kids are back at the cottage, Hermione is basically exploding, I think she needs to vent. How are you?"

"A drink with Chris before I go home would be good, can I let Emma know everyone is OK?"

"Done, and done." She handed Dan a scotch and his friend clapped him around the shoulder.

"Harry's dad is a bit of a prize, eh? Twonk's attitude would get people killed. C'mon mucker, time to get shit faced. Right now, I *really* regret being dead, since I know Charlotte is still single. I really fucked up there man, you made a good choice, and you are a good dad to that lad. Better than that eejit."

Dan sighed, "They are kids, we forget, Harry and Hermione are older than James and Lily. They have seen so much fighting, they learned the hard way, they died time after time for their errors. They lost their friends, so they were really motivated and they trained like nobody I have ever seen. James was lucky until he died, we underestimated the training they needed. If Sirius dies, help him give James the spanking he deserves, eh?"

"Hahhah, sorted, but I think Hermione is going to hand him a new one. Harry and her are on another level, if he doesn't eat shit when she sees him she will decorate the walls with his innards. She told me how losing Sirius broke Harry the last time, and he doesn't really connect with the Potters, you are his father to him. If Sirius dies, I think Harry will find some way to kill James again."

Dan blew out a long breath. "Thanks for being here man, I am too fucking old for this shit now. Even knowing that the kids are, I don't know what they are, unstoppable, Hermione, was a little button nosed bookworm six months ago, now she is some sort of Valkyrie, she would go through a special forces unit like they were children. With Harry and her together, who would stop them. Even so I was nearly puking with worry, it is no good having family in the action, it makes it too hard to be clear headed."

“It’s done now. The rest is pick ups and traps, no risks needed. This was the statement raid. Let the world know what happens to people like this. Didn’t Harry say something about a holiday? Do you think there would be room for an old dead pal?”

Andromeda stood at the bedside, Sirius had received a deep cutting wound to the chest, and it had taken all her skills to repair the wound. They had filled him with blood replenishing potions and a dose of dreamless sleep, he would be fine by the end of the weekend. She cleaned her robes off and accepted the offer of a drink from Poppy Pomfrey who had assisted her. As she sat for a moment she witnessed Harry and Hermione appear in the ward, still kitted for battle and smelling of smoke and gunpowder and death. Harry spun to face Andi, “How is he?”

She stood, “He is resting now, he will be asleep for twenty four hours whilst he heals, but you can visit after then, please dress a little more like a schoolboy, than a soldier, when you call next.” She finished talking with a smile. “What happened to Sirius?”

“My idiot father was supposed to be paired with him, and Lily with Remus, but they let Sirius and Remus go off together and Sirius got tagged. They are the only two of the team that were actually mortal. James was told to shield Sirius, to take any lethal curses, and he goofed off. I discovered today that my father is a bit of a jerk.”

“He always was very sure of himself, but don’t be too hard on him. The magical world can fix so many serious injuries so easily it makes them take stupid risks that mundane people would consider insanity.”

Hermione huffed, “If Sirius had died, I would resurrect James and kill him again. I watched Harry break when Sirius went through the veil, last time, we don’t need that this time because James doesn’t think things through.” She folded her arms scowling.

“May I recommend that you two go off somewhere, get showered, get drunk, get laid and blow off steam, you are both still strung out and you need to come down from where you are.” Andi gave them both a look, and waved her hands, “Away now, if a pupil comes in and sees you two, there will be questions.” The pair disappeared.

------oooOOOooo------

Harry was laid on a hammock strung between a pair of palm trees at the edge of the beach. The sun had set on the island they were alone on, the sky was full of stars and the moon was rising out of the sea on the horizon. Harry watched as Hermione walked up out of the surf in her orange bikini contrasting her coffee coloured skin, he stared at his wife’s shapely figure as she walked up the beach towards him, her hips swinging, and water droplets running down her skin. She climbed into the hammock with him, her wet hair and body chilling his ardour a little. They kissed for a while then she stood and taking his hand led him to the beach shack, “Wash my hair for me love?”

Harry laughed, “I think I can manage that.” He followed her around to the outdoor shower that the shack used, and set the shower running, the cool water coursed over their bodies as

he took his time and worked the shampoo into the mass of hair, and then rinsed and applied conditioner, Hermione leaning back against his chest and almost purring with pleasure. He unfastened the top of her bikini and slowly soaped her body, his swim shorts and her briefs ending up in the shower tray as the soaping became less about cleaning and more about pleasure.

Hermione was the first to wake in the morning and brought fresh coffees to the bed they had shared. “I am struggling with the idea of going back to little me, I don’t really care about studying the method of transfiguring a rock into a rabbit, when I can do it with a thought already. We need to finish this soon, and talk with Susan about what we do next. I don’t think I can do six years of school, when we overmatch the professors. What do you think?”

Hermione was standing talking to him naked, and Harry wasn’t really capable of serious thought if he was honest with himself, “Errr. No, going back to schoolboy Harry does not appeal, not when you are standing there starkers and sending me cross-eyed with desire for you.”

Hermione smiled a wry grin, *nudity wins arguments, noted!* “Do you want me to get dressed, or climb back into bed?” Harry flipped the cover over in invitation.

------oooOOOooo------

The Daily Prophet carried the News of the Death Eaters found killed at Malfoy Manor. The DMLE were investigating but the story being fed to the press was that Lucius Malfoy had been dealing with muggle drug dealers and they had died in a deal gone wrong.

Amelia sat at her desk, Cornelius was sitting across from her blustering “Madame Bones, the Auror Corps should put every available man on the case, we must leave no stone unturned to find the killers of these fine men, these bastions of the Magical Community.”

Amelia leaned onto her elbows and steepled her fingers, “Cornelius. Stop. We both know Lucius Malfoy had kidnapped two muggleborn teenage witches and was going to use them as playthings before killing them and disposing of the bodies. Every single body in that manor had a dark mark. They met their match that night, our investigations show most of them died as a result of mundane firearms. If it was a drug, or slavery deal gone bad, they were taken out by a team of professionals. The hit team most likely left the country straight away and we will never ever bring anyone in over this.” She sat back and sipped her coffee as she watched the man’s face for a moment.

“If you intend to stay as Minister, you need to read the room. Someone is removing blood purity extremists from the board, the magical world is being pushed to move forward. These backward looking laws that were being heralded, they place us at a disadvantage compared to other nations. Mundane technologies should be embraced, so called muggleborns should be celebrated. Trying to insist that over sixty million people should bend the knee to a few thousand magicals is a good way to bring about another era of witch hunts. Dolores was the worst of the worst, a half blood, lying about her origins, and persecuting people like her own father. One of my nieces classmates is a muggleborn, she is easily the standout pupil in her year according to Susan, and is Harry Potter’s girlfriend to boot.”

“Well, be that as it may, but we have survived hundreds of years without needing muggles, and I am confident we shall survive many more. Now you have your instructions, Madame Bones, I await the results of your investigations.” He rose and left the room. She pondered to herself, *So, part of the problem then Mr Fudge, I will investigate the Malfoy Manor attack, and since I have a Ministerial Instruction, I can contact Gringotts for the details of the transactions from the Malfoy vaults, and if that leads me to you Cornelius, all the better.* She returned to the pile of reports and opened a letter addressed to her.

Madame Bones.

It has come to our attention that Barty Crouch Junior, is not buried at Azkaban as believed, but is being kept under an imperious curse by his father at their home. The body in the Prison graveyard is his mother, who used Polyjuice to replace him.

Best Regards

The Grimm Reapers.

She didn’t really understand the joke at the end, but realising who it was from, she sent a couple of old hands to pop around to see how Barty was doing in semi-retirement. The man was an arse, but a hardline one, he had pushed back at the Death Eaters in his day, and the Azkaban prison had been filled on his watch. Dumbledore’s continued pleas for leniency had prevented them being executed, but that had been taken care of.

------oooOOOooo------

Albus Dumbledore was sitting at his kitchen table with a modest breakfast and was reading the Daily Prophet, he had lived for so long at Hogwarts his own house had taken some time to bring back up to a standard that he felt acceptable. To add further insult to unacceptable levels of personal affront he had received in the last few weeks, he had been removed from the ward scheme at the castle, the Elves no longer answered his summons, and when he had tried to access the castle he had bounced off the wards. He was having to prepare food for himself for the first time in over seventy years. Well, he was having to pay for it for the first time in over seventy years.

He was reading the report of the raid on the Malfoy manor, twelve dead Death Eaters, including most of the inner circle. This was the work of Sirius Black, he was convinced, Young Harry was being deflected form the light and to the path of darkness. This must be stopped, Young Harry would not fulfil his destiny, if he failed to sacrifice himself as the prophecy required, then the next dark wizard would rise. He would have to act to bring Young Harry back onto the path his destiny required.

He must remove him from these influences and guide him to the conclusion that he, Albus Dumbledore had determined to be the correct outcome for the best, it was for the Greater Good. He sat and pondered over how and where he would be able to gain access to Young Harry, perhaps taking the Granger girl, Harmony, Ermine, something like that would make him pliable. She was muggle raised, no one would miss her.

He would confer with his supporters they could be relied upon to see the truth, and not be fooled by dramatic headlines in the papers. We would gather his most trusted friends, they would understand that Young Harry must be brought under Albus's control, for his own good. He drank his tea and made his plans.

------oooOOOooo------

Hermione had created a map table that tracked Dark Marks, the mark was keyed to Riddle and tied the wearer to him at the most basic level, using his magic, his very essence and the Soul Magic she had learned on the Disc, she had charmed the table top in DEATH's office to display the location and identity of wearers of the marks. She was sitting in the office, wearing sweatpants and a hoody, her hair in a huge bun over her head, watching a marker with the name 'Dolohov' traverse a park in the centre of Wroclaw, Poland.

Harry was standing in his black combat gear opposite. She looked at the way the tee shirt fitted his chest, and the way the combat trousers clung to his rather nicely shaped butt. She took a breath, *concentrate Hermione, take out the trash, then have a treat.* She zoomed the view onto the park and Harry shrugged into his webbing, they were both of the opinion that muggle military equipment was the best option, and most magicals really did not have a defence for simple attacks with knives or guns.

"Ready?"

Harry was patting himself down, muttering a checklist as he made sure he had everything, he picked up the HK from the bag and snapped it into the clips on the front of his webbing, and pulled its strap over his head. He pulled on the helmet and grinned at Hermione, "Ready as I will ever be."

She tapped the table at the location and Harry was ported into cover behind some bushes, dropping into a crouch and disillusioning himself, he heard Dolohov talking. He was trying to offer his services to a local trafficker, telling him he could make 'the young bitches' do anything they wanted. Harry had a silencing field up around himself, he reported back to Hermione what he was hearing.

"Take them all, make it look like a deal gone bad."

Harry popped the flash bang into the centre of the group, and it exploded as soon as it appeared, a few feet above the ground, disoriented and blinded they staggered back, Dolohov tried to apparate but a group of 9mm bullets to the chest made that difficult to complete. Harry broke cover and used a pistol to put the sex slave traffickers down, he removed all the bullets with a gesture and apparated away as the last slavers life ebbed away.

"Any more for tonight?"

"Snape is in Paris. He is looking for someone I think?"

"Better to get them all then, unless you want to be rid of the Bat?"

“We can wait, go get a shower, I will be along to wash your back in a moment.”

Harry smiled as he stripped, and with a touch of magic, cleaned the guns, before stashing them in the rack. He caught Hermione around the waist and gave her a kiss, “shower, you stink of gun oil and smoke.” She said.

“Sexy isn’t it?”

“Yes. So go get naked.”

------oooOOOooo------

Neville sat between his parents, his mother sometimes responded to his voice, his father rarely reacted. They were in a private room at St. Mungo’s and had been for the last ten years. He was reading the paper to them, a report from the Polish Authorities that Dolohov had been killed. This made the tally of Death Eaters meeting fatal ends around Europe reach sixteen, The paper noted that all the deaths could be explained as gangland turf wars, but it speculated how many of Voldemort’s old supporters were still breathing and how much longer that would be the case. Neville noted that they used his name, no more ‘He-who-must-not-be-named’ nonsense.

The door opened and Neville watched as Harry and Hermione walked in. Older Harry and Hermione. Neville blushed, he had a massive crush on older Hermione, he liked his friend Hermione, but her adult shape captivated him, she was fierce and beautiful. A warrior, she was a fantasy image made flesh. Harry grinned, he knew Nev had the hots for Hermione, in a few years the girls in his group of friends would all be beauties, and Neville would be hard pressed to choose. He wondered who he would be with in years to come.

“Neville, can I have your permission to try to find your parents consciousness?”

“Err, sorry, Hermione.” Her figure hugging jeans had almost wiped Neville’s cognitive skills. “Yes, anything to try and help.” She smiled at their friend, she knew he was a bit soft on her at the minute, and he was a sweet child, she didn’t want to hurt his feelings.

Hermione walked around the far side of the bed to look at his mother, bending over in front of Neville was probably pushing the young lad too far. She held her head and with her thumbs opened her eyelids and pushing her magic into Alice, slipped into her mind.

It was dark and silent. Hermione cast a mental ‘lumos’ and created a werelight that floated over the mindscape. It was barren, there was nothing to see. She floated her perception point up and mentally flew in ever increasing circles looking for any sign of occupancy. She searched for what felt like an eternity, she found nothing, she had flown around the planet of this mindscape she thought.

Hermione stopped, the darkness surrounded her, a pool of wan light around her imagined light source. She studied the ground upon which her imagined form stood. It was made of hand sized hexagons. Millions of them. Was this the shield? She probed at it with her mind, she stilled herself, and concentrated on her love for Harry, and her friendship with Neville, and pushed the feelings into the floor. It changed colour, like oil on water, a rainbow of

colours appeared, rippling out around her she concentrated on Neville, showing the image of him checking out her bum from earlier that evening, showing him sat with Daphne, Tracey, Katie, Luna, Harry, Suzy, Hannah, Dean, Seamus, Padma and Parvati, his friends and trying to capture the fondness everyone held him in.

Chinks of light started to show around the tiles making up the floor, Hermione recalled all Nevilles terrible jokes for the last six months, then she showed the image of older Neville standing up to Voldemort and wielding the sword of Gryffindor against Nagini.

Alice stood in front of her within her mindscape. “Alice, come home, come and meet your son, he is a friend and a hero. Be proud of who he is.”

She felt rather than heard the question. “I am Harry’s wife. Your godson, Lily’s boy. We have lived our lives over a few times now, we want to help our dear friend Neville, even if he is staring at my bum right now.”

Alice laughed as the image accompanied the thought, “He is noticing girls already?”

“They will soon notice him, he grows tall and handsome. He is a true gentleman. Time to wake up, Bellatrix is dead.”

She felt the fear, and the question, and shared the memory. “Alice startled, but then smiled and the pair hugged inside her mind, Hermione eased back out, and as she did she saw comprehension return to Alice’s sight. “Nev, if you can tear your eyes off my arse, your mum would like to say hello.”

Harry snorted in response, “Busted Nev. Honestly, eyes in the back of her head.” He snickered.

Alice rolled her head to one side. “Neville?” he reached out and hugged his mother, tears rolling down his face and sobbing. Hermione looked at Harry and with her eyes and a head nod told him it was time to leave.

“Nev, Alice, I am done today, I will come back and see if I can find Frank next week. Get well.”

Neville looked up, his face tear stained, “Thank you, Hermione, thank you.” She reached out and holding his head in both hands, kissed his forehead.

“My pleasure Neville, you are a true friend. Always.” She stood and they slipped out of the room.

------oooOOOooo------

Alastair ‘Mad-Eye’ Moody and Kingsley Shacklebolt walked in through the Bull pen, in front of them in supressing cuffs, where the Crouches, father and Son. The room fell silent as the gathered Aurors recognised Barty Crouch Junior, back from the dead. The murmuring started, and Amelia stepped out of her office. Moody growled at Amelia, “I will put them both in holding, or should I take junior straight to the veil?”

“Holding, Statements first, we need to sort security at Azkaban, then we can deal with a trial for Senior, and carry out any sentences on both as appropriate.” She looked at Junior. “Your lord and master, the Dark Tosser is gone Barty. He is never coming back, but you will meet him soon enough.”

Junior ranted at Amelia, but no sound came out, Shack pushed him forwards and looking at his boss said, “He is completely mad. We had to put a silencing charm on him to be able to think.”

------oooOOOooo------

The Great Hall was buzzing, a myriad of conversations going off at once as the students met up in groups ready to head into Hogsmead later in the morning. Harry glanced at the top table, one or two of the professors were eating, most were absent, on this Saturday morning in late March.

After breakfast Harry and Hermione led Luna out to the carriages and jumped into the front one which set off for the village immediately. The three of them chatted away about which shops they would visit first, and what they wanted to buy, and in no time at all they arrived at the village. They jumped down from the carriage and Luna pulled a bundle of napkins from her coat pocket and fed the thestral with some meat she must have brought from the hall. She stroked the creatures head as it ate, and Harry found himself regarding it as a quite attractive and noble creature, compared to the first time he had seen one, when he had been mildly disgusted by its appearance. As he stood in thought it nuzzled his chest, “Sorry there, I didn’t think to bring anything, I will get you something from the three broomsticks when we come back.” The thestral snorted a reply, that Harry took to be scepticism.

They headed into the village proper, and to the Tomes and Scrolls bookshop, Harry glanced at Hermione, “Order your books and we can pick them up on the way out, rather than carry them all the way around the village.”

“It’s OK, I can either shrink them, or get Dobby to collect them.” She replied.

After almost two hours of Hermione and an equally focused Luna looking at every book in the shop, they finally reached the counter, and it was Dobby that appeared to take the purchases away.

“Shall we go and get some lunch, or is there another shop you want to visit before that?”

They visited Scrivenshaft’s quill store and bought quills and some inks, Harry grumbled about preferring a notebook and a biro, but still bought a few quills. Hermione was fussing over some fancy patterned parchment and envelopes. Luna had found some enchanted paper butterflies that were flying around her head and the shop was filled with the sounds of her laughter.

They left the shop and walked towards the Three Broomsticks and some lunch, as they passed one of the alleys between buildings Luna was hit with a stunning spell, and as Hermione spun to face the direction of the attack she felt the tug of a portkey and the world went black.

Harry fired a stunner at the attacker as it apparated away, and as he turned to check on Hermione he saw a brief image of Hermione and a wizard as a portkey took them away.

Chapter 14: Dumbledone

With a quick *enervate* he brought Luna back to consciousness, and glancing around, saw that the attack was over, they had planned to take Hermione. He took Luna's hand and helped her to her feet, before he led her to the pub. He was pleased to see the foxes were sat at a table so he took Luna over to them. "Can you guys please mind Luna for me, someone," he mimed a beard, "has just portkeyed away with Hermione. I assume the next move will be to demand I meet him somewhere. I need to pop away and get ready."

"You are very calm, I would be going mental in your shoes," Angela commented.

"If he allows Hermione to regain consciousness, he is a dead man. If he kills her out of hand she will take him with her. The fact she hasn't reappeared tells me he has managed to subdue her, somehow. In my last few lives I charged straight in, and often got other people hurt or worse. Dumbles has no idea what he is dealing with." He turned to talk to Luna, "Will you be OK with the girls? I need to pop over to Susan's and track down Hermione."

Luna nodded, "of course I will Harry, you go and find Hermione, we will get you some lunch for when you get back." She smiled, her confidence made Harry chuckle.

"Is there anything we can do?" Alicia asked,

"Report Hermione's kidnapping to the DMLE for me, send Amelia Bones a message telling her what's happened and that I suspect Dumbles." He stood and was about to jump out to the cottage when a letter appeared on the table. Harry recognised the handwriting, it was Dumbledore.

Dear Harry

I am disappointed that you steadfastly refuse to accept the truth of your destiny. It is with great sadness that I am forced to a position where I have to take Miss Granger in order to gain your attention. This letter is a portkey that will bring you to me, so we may talk. It is imperative for your safety that you understand the role you must play in the defeat of Voldemort, and that you must return to the ways of the light. Your path has strayed too far into the dark. The activation word is 'phoenix'

Yours Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

Harry looked at the letter, and shook his head. "Your time is due, old man." He ported himself out to the cottage. Susan appeared almost immediately,

"Where is Hermione?" She asked. "I can't sense her fully."

"Dumbledore took her, he gave me this portkey, it is supposedly to the location. I don't trust him one bit, and I think perhaps it's time for my father to earn some forgiveness, what do you

think?”

She smiled, “I like that, I think we can make this work.”

Hermione was aware, she could hear, but she could not see, nor sense her location, nor could she feel Harry in her magic. She realised she had been grabbed and portkeyed to a location, but she had been confident that she could take whoever it was on arrival, so had not panicked. It appeared she had underestimated her kidnapper. They had frozen her, she could not move. She wondered if it was the last of the Death Eaters, or Dumbledore.

Time would tell.

Harry spoke the code word and the portkey activated. Albus stood waiting in the basement room he had designated for the portkey’s arrival. “Harry my boy, I am so sorry we have come to this, if only you would be reasonable, you must understand that you have a destiny to fulfil, you must complete the prophecy, so that we may defeat Voldemort once and for all.”

“Albus, you really are an evil, scheming old goat fucker.” James stood holding the letter. “You kidnap Harry’s wife, my daughter in law, and talk as if you have invited him for tea. Voldemort is gone, so are all his horcruxes, Harry had his removed from the scar before he was two years old. By a muggle.”

James looked around the room, Diggory and Doge, Albus’s fan club were covering him with their wands. On a chair between them, Hermione’s twelve year old schoolgirl body sat, hands and feet tied, her eyes were rolled back in her head. A large bronze coloured amulet hung around her neck on a thick chain and sat on her chest, James could feel it’s ancient magic from where he stood.

“James, is that you?” Diggory asked.

“Yes, do you think Harry is stupid enough to trust Albus, after all the harm he has done to him in the past. You are following a wizard every bit as dark as Riddle, but one that believes he is doing good. The Greater Good.”

“But you died?”

“Yes, have you never seen a ghost? You do know that the afterlife is real, death is just a doorway. Don’t you?”

“Enough, where is Harry, sadly, he must die before Voldemort can be finished, I must be the one to end this, I am the leader of the light.”

“No. Albus. You are a senile old man, you have deluded yourself for years, and now you attack children in a temper tantrum because no one follows you any more.” Dumbledore raised his wand, “Cast whatever you like, I am already dead, what do you think you can do to me?” He stared at Dumbledore.

Albus cast a stunner, that had no effect, next Lightning arced out of Albus's wand wrapping around James as he stood and looked at the old wizard, he went for his most nonchalant expression, bored almost. "Is that it? old man." Albus fired a variety of spells at James, growing ever more agitated, eventually resorting to an *Avada Kedavra.* "Now who has gone dark Albus? An unforgivable, against a ghost, really? What did you hope to achieve?"

Amos Diggory was clearly struggling, he stood watching the 'Leader of the Light' cast an unforgivable curse against the greatest hero of the first Blood War. A voice next to his ear calmly spoke to him, "Amos, take the amulet off Hermione's neck, you might not spend eternity in hell." Lily was standing just behind him. She had arrived with the portkey, suitably dissolusioned. He looked at her, "Albus has gone dark, Hermione is a child, and you would kill her?"

This was too much for Amos and he reached over to remove the amulet. Dumbledore turned on Amos stunning him, "No, do not free the witch, she is dark, she is in league with dark forces, her powers are not natural, she must die for Harry to see his path." Amos collapsed away from Hermione his hand holding the chain around her neck and causing her to topple over as he fell.

Lily and James both turned on Albus and bombarded him with spells, he shielded and deflected, holding his own against his one-time acolytes. Elphias Doge was conflicted, he was Albus's greatest supporter, but this innocent young girl had to die? He stood transfixed looking down at Amos as he rolled away from the girl as he slumped unconscious to the floor. With a clatter the chain came off her neck and the girl transformed in front of his eyes.

Standing in front of him was the scariest hit witch he had ever seen. She was dressed like a ninja to his eyes, athletic and strong looking, her combat fatigues covered in knives. "Drop your wand Elphias, you were deceived." She turned to Albus and as she walked towards him another hit wizard appeared in the room. "Better late than never dear, I was beginning," She punched Albus in the face knocking him back, "to wonder if you," she punched Albus hard in the solar plexus causing him to double over, "were going to turn up . Harry hit Albus with a stunning spell and he collapsed into a heap. "Still, nice to see the oldies stepping up. Hi Lily, James,"

The two wrapped each other in a hug. "What is that amulet. It put me in stasis, I didn't think that possible, and where in the seven realms are we?"

Harry looked down at Albus, "I am surprised you used just your fists, I thought you were going to kill him on sight?"

"He is senile, he has lost the plot, at one point he called me Morgana. Killing a senile old man in cold blood, I couldn't quite do it." She turned to Amos who was standing rubbing his head, "Have you got a magic shielded container for that thing, she pointed to the amulet." He nodded and fetched an old case and carefully placed the amulet into it, as he closed the lid, they felt their perceptions restore.

Susan appeared in the room. "I think it might be best if I take that. It is not something that is supposed to be available in the mortal realm, our old friend has been making deals with Daemons." She took the box, and turning to Harry and Hermione. "I think Amelia might

enjoy a talk with Albus, she is in the three broomsticks with your friends, and Luna has ordered you both lunch. Ciao Bella." She left.

Harry looked at the two men, "Are you finally convinced that this old goat is no longer on the side of the good?" Amos and Elphias exchanged glances, and nodded slowly. They reminded Harry of Ron, unable to form an actual apology, even when they knew it was required. "OK, as you can see, we work for a higher power. If we have to visit you, it will be your last moment on this earth. This is not an idle threat, we are employed by DEATH itself, do not cause us to visit you before your time is up."

They bent to grab Albus under his armpits and apparated over to the pub.

James and Lily enveloped each other in an embrace. "They didn't hit us this time, do you think we might earn a hug next time." James quipped. Lily shook her head and laughed as they faded from view. Amo2s looked over to his friend.

"How did we get that so wrong?"

"I don't know, Potter said Voldemort is gone, and we know someone is tracking down Death Eaters across Europe. I think it's those two, they look like the scariest hit wizards I have ever seen. She didn't even bother with magic, she just hit Albus. I am out of this." Amos nodded in agreement and they apparated away.

The three broomsticks was chaotic, filling up with students wanting lunch, a group of senior Aurors stood in the middle of the room talking to Luna, who was dreamily explaining how Hermione had been snatched away, as plates of food were put on the table around her.

Into this mix Harry and Hermione appeared with an unconscious Dumbledore at their feet. "Good afternoon, Madame Bones. Can I hand the kidnapper Albus Dumbledore into your custody, I would recommend a few drops of veritaserum, he is quite mad, and quite senile." Harry turned to Luna, "What did you order me for lunch?"

"Steak and kidney pie, mash and peas, and Salmon and dill ravioli with a carbonara sauce for Hermione, is that OK?"

Hermione smiled, "Perfect Lulu, I am absolutely starving." She walked past Shacklebolt, "Hi Kingsley, can we give you our statements after we eat, it's been a busy morning." He looked at the young woman,

"Miss Granger?"

"Lady Potter in this form, it's a long story, Amelia knows what's going on, but Miss Granger is the little girl. This," she pointed to herself with her fork, "Is Harry's wife, Lady Hermione Potter. If you will excuse me for a minute, I need some food."

Shacklebolt looked at Moody and in turn his boss Amelia, she smiled, "Shack get some suppression cuffs on our dear Albus. He just kidnapped a twelve year old."

Harry passed her the letter. “He sent me this. You will need to talk to Amos Diggory and Elphias Doge as well. I have a pie with my name on it, we will pop in later and give you statements if that’s OK.”

Amelia regarded the pair, “take Albus to holding, strip him, and make sure his cell is warded, I don’t want that phoenix of his breaking him out, he will have portkeys on his person. I will come in with the Potters once they have eaten.” Moody grunted something, and the pair of them apparated out with Albus between them.

Amelia flooed back into the Aurors area of the Ministry with the young versions of Harry Potter and his girlfriend muggle born Hermione Granger. Amelia was of course fully aware of the kickass alter egos of these two quiet kids. She played along with the game and removed the soot from them with her wand and walked them through to a meeting room, where they could be statemented. “Hermione, who is your magical guardian? they should be in attendance for this.”

“Minerva McGonagall originally, but as Harry is legally emancipated, and I am betrothed to him, I believe Harry can act as my guardian.”

“He can, but I wish to take a statement from Harry as well, and for probity, you should be in separate rooms, so Harry is not the ideal person to act as a responsible adult on your behalf.”

“Granted, adult and responsible are not words commonly associated with Harry, usually reckless and idiot are the ones chosen. If Minerva is busy, then either Sirius Black, or Remus Lupin, or Ted Tonks, he is our Law Wizard.”

“Ted would be a good choice, that will keep everyone happy that no undue pressure is brought. If we are going to pin this on Dumbledore we have to be very correct procedurally. He has too many people believing that the sun only shines if he lets it.”

Ted arrived after about half an hour, and Hermione gave her statement, describing what they had been doing, where they where and what she had seen. Which amounted to not much until James and then Lily had appeared and it had kicked off. Amelia collected the memory from Hermione, and viewed it in the pensieve, she listened to James arguing with Albus, and him declaring that both she and Harry had to die.

She collected Harry’s statements and his memories, but he had only arrived after the amulet was removed and he could apparate to Hermione. “Did anyone witness the whole thing?”

“Diggory or Doge are the people you need to talk to.” Harry replied, they will have both heard and seen the whole thing.

“Including your parents and Susan Sto-Helit.”

“So. Ghosts are common knowledge among magicals, I am the last of the Peverells, so knowing Death is hardly a surprise, it’s in the Tales of Beadle the Bard, for Merlin’s sake.

You could ask Susan if she is willing to be a witness, or if she could bring James and Lily tell of everything Dumbledore has been up to?"

"She can't do that Harry." Hermione said, "The Auditors would have a fit."

Fudge's assistant walked into the room and placed a folder on Amelia's desk. "I was tidying up and I found all these account statements, they don't appear to be official, they look rather like a list of bribes to me, but I could be mistaken. They do come from the Malfoy account at Gringotts, so I assumed they would be useful to your investigation." She smiled a fake smile, nodded to the kids, "Harry, Hermione." And turned to leave the office.

"Sarah. Thanks for the help." Hermione called.

"Thank Susan." As she walked out of the door.

Amelia looked at the two, "Another one of yours?"

"Another time traveller, she had to go back and save herself and her son John, and prevent a disaster in the mundane world, killer machines and the end of the world level stuff. She is one tough lady, taught Hermione her knife and pistol skills. Dad's mate Chris knew the guy who trained her, some American Special Forces guy, totally paranoid, their equivalent of Moody I guess."

Dumbledore was questioned under veritaserum the following morning. The Interrogators ended the session after five minutes, and summoned a healer from St. Mungo's. After some preliminary scans they confirmed that Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, was quite senile, and quite divorced from reality. He was as mad as a box of Jarveys. His medical condition mandated his magic to be bound, to prevent him harming anyone, this was carried out by one of the unspeakables from the Department of Mysteries, who placed a few selective memory blocks to help him settle into his new identity. Albus was quietly transferred to a rest home run by squib members of some magical families, for retired wizards, who for various reasons have lost their magic. He was admitted under the name of Albert Dunning.

------oooOOOooo------

Neville Sat between his parents, his father had emerged from his mental cocoon the previous week and the pair of them were now in a private ward on the medical floor of St. Mungo's whilst they were monitored and given nutrient regimes and potions to restore their withered bodies.

Neville was sitting telling his parents what he could about his time at Hogwarts so far.

"Harry, that's James and Lily Potter's son, my godbrother."

"Yes we remember Neville." His mother chided.

"Well he is the Quidditch team Seeker, as a first year, youngest for a century or so. He is insane on a broom, he flew through one of the hoops last time and caught the snitch upside

down as he passed under one of the chasers who was throwing the quaffle into the same hoop. We were watching and we don't know how they didn't collide. We won that game 350 to 10, it was a massacre.

"He sounds as bad as his father, or his friend Sirius, they were always up to no good."

"Sirius is still a bit mad, Harry lives a few doors away from him I think, Harry lives with Hermione's parents, she is muggleborn and so clever. She is a bit scary as well."

"Quite attractive though, eh Neville?"

"Dad, don't let her hear you say that, she is fierce. I have never seen anyone, wizard or witch as dangerous as Hermione when she is angry."

"Don't worry Neville, when she pulled me out of my coma, she was laughing with me that you were sitting staring at her bum as she worked on me. She knows you have a little crush, and she isn't annoyed, but try to be a bit more circumspect, it is not the done thing to stare at a lady.

Neville blushed and wondered what Hermione would say to him at school on Monday

------oooOOOooo------

In the Department of Mysteries Barty Crouch Junior had an appointment with the veil. He had been interrogated with truth serum, and his list of crimes was sickening. His escape from Azkaban dictated the veil, and it was to be carried out that morning.

Wearing suppression cuffs and still under a silencing charm, he was levitated through the veil without ceremony at ten o'clock that morning. As he passed through the murmuring that could be heard near the veil, and indistinct vague sense of conversation went silent. As clear as crystal, "What, another one. Where are you lot coming from?"

The unspeakables in the room turned their hidden faces to each other, as the surface of the veil rippled and a figure stepped into the veil room.

"Why do you keep dumping these people in my Grandfather's broom cupboard?" Susan Sto-Helit asked in her loudest school marm tones. "You, Croaker, this is your department. Why are you using our home to dump your trash?"

Unspeakable Croaker kept his calm and didn't reach for his wand, "May I enquire who I am being addressed by?"

"I am Susan Sto-Helit. Granddaughter of DEATH. This tear in fabric of the universe leads into our broom cupboard. Do you realise how annoying it is to have criminals transported directly into your home?"

"No one has ever appeared before?"

"Not surprising, I only recently took responsibility for this world, and a sorry state you idiots have got it into, having your future in the hands of a boy, because of a drunken woman's

prophecy. I expect you to be better in future, I shall be watching." She turned and started to leave.

"Miss Sto-Helit, could you answer a question for us, what are the voices we hear?"

"It's my wireless in the kitchen, I am particularly fond of the Archers." She left.

------oooOOOooo------

Harry and Hermione were both looking at the charmed conference table in DEATH's office. Snape's name was moving through some of Paris's backstreets in the area between the sidings for the Gare du Nord. Two other names were visible, Avery and Bulstrode.

"Wasn't sure if Bulstrode had a mark, he didn't always vote with Malfoy's poodles according to Sirius."

"Maybe he regretted it in later life, doesn't remove what he did to earn it." Hermione replied. "They are converging on this area, the Square Marc Séguin, clever – there are three areas with trees and bushes, lots of cover. Easy to hide, and six streets converging."

"We can stop them portkeying or Apparating. I am pretty sure we could run any of them to ground in under a minute."

"Yes, but they will starburst, all in different directions. We would have to split up. It makes ambushes possible. That Amulet that Dumbeldore had acquired, it's Daemonic magic, if they are involved, we can be overpowered."

"Do we give James and Lily another chance, he behaved when we came for you?"

"OK. But make it clear, Lily is in charge of James."

"Agreed." He leant over the map, "What's the plan then?"

The group blinked into existence on the flat roof of a twelve storey apartment block overlooking the road junction. Chris settled into position with a sniper rifle and Sirius's younger brother Regulus settled next to him with the spotter scope. Harry and Hermione, James and Lily were all kitted out in black tactical gear, Lily had gained more knives, she had taken to training in earnest with Hermione, and was working hard to repair the rift between the two couples. James had a knife and a pistol, but still thought his wand was the better weapon.

Hermione was dressed as she had assaulting Malfoy Manor, and Harry had a helmet and goggles now, it carried the comms they would be using. He was carrying a HK33 Assault rifle chambered for 7.62mm NATO with a red dot scope and a laser sight, he wanted something with range.

The thermal imaging on the scope revealed one of the wizards standing under the trees, Snape was standing disillusioned in the shadows of a Chinese supermarket's doorway, across

the road from the former. The last one to approach, was identified as Avery. He was walking from the west quite openly; Hermione exchanged a look with Harry. “Foolish or bait?” she whispered.

“We will find out soon enough.”

The four apparated down to the street and Regulus activated the anti-apparition and anti-portkey wards, They popped into place one each on the Northern and Western roads, corralling their targets into the square or to head East or South, towards Chris and his Rifle.

Avery saw Lily on the Northern road to his left and turned, seeing Hermione on the West behind him, he stepped off the path and raised his wand. Chris hit him centre mass and he died instantly.

Bulstrode saw Avery go down, and tried to Apparate away, realising he couldn’t he ran up the Eastern most of the three roads running north, Harry dropped him with a snap shot from his assault Rifle.

“Where is Snape?” crackled over the comms.

“Chinese Supermarket door on the corner between Hermione and Lily. I don’t have a shot. James cover the junction, Harry move to a position to give fire support to Lily and Hermione.”

Snape fired a series of curses at Lily, she was in cover in a doorway twenty metres from him and returning spells, James started to fire curses from the small park across the road, as Harry jogged into position. Hermione moved past Avery, checking he was down and collecting his wand. She crossed the road to get cover and moved to a point where she could see Snape. He stood ten feet from her with his back turned.

All the memories of every snide remark, all the poison the man had spewed rose in her and she covered the distance on silent feet and buried a knife in the side of his neck, severing his carotid artery and driving it between his neck vertebra and cutting his spinal cord. He dropped like a sack of loose potatoes. “Snape is down. I can hear sirens, time to go.”

They all popped back up onto the roof, and with a blink back to the cottage.

“Is that the last of them?” Lily asked as Hermione poured everyone a glass of Prosecco and handed them around.

“Yes, the table is clear, if there are any Death Eater’s left, they did not take the mark.”

“Are you two finished with this then?” James asked.

“Not quite. We need to be rid of Fudge, and we need to put blood purity where it belongs, in the list of stupid beliefs like the earth is flat, or the moon is made of cheese.” Hermione commented.

“We have to remove the basilisk from Hogwarts, it’s too dangerous to leave it at the school. If there is somewhere it can be taken to be safe, we can move it. Salazar thinks it has probably gone mad, especially after Riddle messed with its mind back in his day.” Harry finished.

Lily held her glass out for a refill. “The fighting, the war is over for you though?”

Hermione poured her some more drink, “Yes. Once we sort the Basilisk, well, I say we, probably Salazar if it’s sane. Once that is sorted, the rest we can leave to our younger selves, and perhaps we can take a long holiday somewhere long ago and far far away.” She smiled as she said the last bit. “We need to find some peace now.”

“Amen to that.” The four toasted a peaceful future.

------oooOOOooo------

Amelia was once more at her desk with a pile of paperwork. This however was the case against Cornelius Fudge, she had him cold for corruption, his lackey, Dolores was guilty of at least three counts of murder, and at least one she had done to assist Fudge. It might not stick in court, he just might not have known, but it was enough to put him in court under veritaserum, and that would see him spend at least twenty five years in Azkaban.

That gave her two problems, avoiding being railroaded into the position of Minister, and if she failed in that task, finding a replacement for herself. Moody was nearing retirement, Scrimgeour was a possible, if a little tactless, perhaps Shacklebolt? A problem for later she mused.

A knock on her door brought her from her thoughts, Shack and Dennings stood at her door. ”You wanted some help with an arrest boss?”

“Yes,” she stood and walked around her desk, “Time to take Cornelius Fudge in for questioning, he is likely to run, and I need to make sure he doesn’t get to the floo in his office.”

The three walked out of the DMLE department and headed on up to the Minister’s Office. As they walked in his ‘temp’ assistant was sat at her desk in the outer office. Fudge had yet to appoint a permanent undersecretary, so Sarah was covering a lot of those duties. “I am here to see the Minister.” Amelia stated. Sarah smiled and rising walked to the office door, “He is in, follow me.” She opened the door, “Madame Bones to see you Minister.”

“Not now Sarah, I am busy.” He replied making a shooing movement with his hand. He was reading the paper, the news of the deaths in Paris had reached these shores.

“Cornelius Fudge, I am arresting you for corruption whilst in Ministerial Office, anything you say from this moment on will be admissible as evidence. You will be granted leave to seek legal advice. Shack, cuff him.” Fudge moved with surprising speed for a man in his poor shape and leapt from his desk towards the floo. Sarah moved faster and before the Aurors even had their wands out three drum beats sounded and Fudge toppled like a broken shop mannequin to the floor.

Sarah looked over at the Aurors, “You really need to rely less on your wands. At this range I could take at least two of you before you reached them.” Shacklebolt laughed.

“You aren’t related to Lady Potter by any chance are you?”

“No, but we are good friends, I am one of her instructors in unarmed, knife and close combat. Hermione likes knives more, I like to punch blowhards if I am honest, and I have wanted to punch this one since I met him.” Dennings was laughing, he cuffed Fudge and standing held his hand out to Sarah,

“Chris Dennings, Senior Auror. Pleased to meet you, I think we might be talking to our instructors after this.”

“Pleased to meet you Chris, Sarah Connor, I only train with ladies, I get a little crazy with men if they touch me in the wrong place, and it’s difficult to keep a lid on things sometimes. People get upset when I break arms.”

“I will bear that in mind, and never touch anywhere I am not invited to?” Sarah fixed him with a look.

“You do that.” She looked across to Bones, “He has a bunch of unofficial files in his desk drawers under a ‘notice-me-not’ spell, but even I can see them. I don’t suppose you know who is supposed to look after the shop until you elect a new minister do you? Should I contact the head of your Wizengamot and see if they have a person in mind?”

Amelia nodded, “good idea, it’s going to be a bit chaotic for a couple of weeks. Thank you for your assistance.”

“No problem, Madame Bones, it’s why I was placed in this department, after all.” She smiled and left the office. Denning levitated Fudge and they headed off to the interrogation rooms.

------oooOOOooo------

Harry sat at breakfast between Hermione and Neville, Luna was still up in the dorm with the rest of the first year girls, they were up early for a Saturday and the hall was quiet.

“I was thinking we might have a trip to the Chamber of Secrets, and see if the Basilisk can be talked down, or if we have to put it down. Fancy coming along?”

Neville looked at him a bit sideways, “Basilisk, the King of Snakes. The ones that can kill with a look?”

“Yeah, it’s about sixty feet long from memory.”

“You are mad, I would not go near that willingly, not at wand point,” Nev looked at Harry as if he was barking mad.

Hermione looked thoughtful, “We would need to collect Salazar, and a suitable weapon just in case. So we need to visit the cottage first.”

Harry nodded, “We can bring Salazar into the Chamber, but not really the school, having an actual founder wandering about might be a bit much.”

“Did you ask Dad what he reckoned would stop a Basilisk?”

“Yeah, he said, ‘What the blazes, is a basilisk.” Harry laughed as Hermione smacked his arm, “After I explained, he reckoned an RPG, Russian or a copy. Basically blow it’s head right off.”

“Will that work?”

“They are supposedly almost immune to magic, and since their looks turn you to stone, we can’t try and get close.”

“What about the cockerel crow thing?”

“Harry shook his head, “Just a myth, they prefer dark places, where the death stare is more effective, so they retreat at dawn, and that apparently got twisted into cock crows being able to end one.” Hermione nodded, “Makes sense. If it can be talked to, where are you going to take it?”

“Susan wants it. I didn’t ask why.” Hermione nodded.

They dropped into the chamber from the cottage in adult form and basic combat gear, Hermione had a back pack full of the rockets, and Harry had the launcher tube over his shoulder. Salazar was a little bemused by their attire.

“My friends, you dress quite unconventionally for a wizard and his witch, do all dress as you in the era.”

Hermione rolled her eyes, “Sal, this is fireproof clothing, of we have to fire a rocket at the snake, it’s one less worry. Women do wear trousers quite commonly, but some witches still wear robes. The magical world is a long way behind the mundane world at the moment.”

“You have told me this before Mistress Hermione. It is a shame. We separated the worlds because religion was the dominant force amongst the people and they hunted the gifted and killed them, it appears that in doing so the world of the gifted has fallen behind.”

“Wasn’t it just a power struggle? The old leaders wanted the population to be theirs to control.”

“Perhaps, what you explain to me as science amongst the people, was called alchemy and was strictly a pursuit of the gifted. Perhaps it is time for the secrecy to end. Many of the advantages of magic can be replicated by the automata of the people.” He shrugged and walked into the centre of the chamber. He spoke for a short while in parseltongue, and the

mouth of the statue opened as Harry remembered from his previous trip to the chamber to rescue Ginny.

Hermione cocked her head to one side. “Ron could speak parseltongue, he said he just imitated the sounds, but it doesn’t work that way, does it?”

Harry looked thoughtful for a moment, “No. The sound is a side effect, snakes have no ears, it’s a magical language. He deceived us for how long. Your memory, it was just a skeleton in here?”

“Yes, picked clean.”

“Ron must have sold the remains. No way the skin would have rotted away in that time, I wonder how much money he made behind our backs?”

“I want to go find him in the afterlife and kill him all over again.”

“We should make it an annual thing, on the anniversary of your murder, go and kill him in a different way, surprise each other with ideas,” Harry started to laugh. “We are getting a bit dark aren’t we.”

“Not in Ronald’s case. No. I can think of a few ways to end him, enough for the first century anyway.”

Salazar was speaking again, *“§ My Familiar, are you still here, come and greet your Master.§”*

Harry heard the reply, *“§ Master, is this truly you, not the deceiver? §”*

“§It is me, I have come to take you to a new home, somewhere nicer and more things to hunt, if you wish it§” They heard the sound of the great beast moving out of the area it slept in, and Harry and Hermione slipped a rocket into the launcher, as a precaution, but kept the weapon pointed up clear of the place the snake would appear.

“§ Master, it is you, where are we going, it has been so long. I feared you had abandoned me. §” The Head of the basilisk emerged into the chamber, it’s eyes red rather than yellow. The snake turned it’s huge head to the two and it’s tongue tasted the air. *“§You have family with you, greetings younglings.§”*

Harry replied, *“§Greetings to you, do you have a name? §”*

“§Rowena called me Sally. §”

Hermione replied, “*§Greetings Sally, you are magnificent, it is a pleasure to meet you.§*Hermione turned to Harry, and whispered, “I can speak Parsel?” Harry winked.

“*§Salazar, can we transport Sally straight from here to her new home? §”*

“§No. She needs to be clear of the castle wards as she is so large, and steeped in magic. Why don’t you and your witch ride her to the surface and take her out of the wards. I cannot

accompany you, Susan will not permit it. §" He looked up at the snake, "*§ the youngsters will guide you, I cannot be seen within the castle, Harry is my descendent, and Hermione his witch, they will guide you. §"*

"§The female's magic has the flavour of Rowena, I thought she was one of hers. I will go where they guide me.§"

Harry and Hermione popped away and back in their younger forms, the snake lowered it's head and they climbed up behind the horns and sat either side of its huge head.

"*§We need to leave the castle Sally, whichever way is easiest, §"* The snake set off towards an opening in the wall and the two riders had to duck down below the horns as it powered up a pipe and emerged moments later in Myrtle's toilet, then shot along the corridor towards the stairs.

Hermione was staring straight at Harry with a look of severe disapproval he hadn't seen since their earliest days at the school, when she had been trying to get them to do homework. He grinned back and shrugged. The screaming started as they dropped down the stairs to the ground floor.

Harry was thankful the doors were open, not so much that the doors to the Great Hall were also wide open, so everyone who was at breakfast saw the huge iridescent green beast slither out of the school. Harry looked over his shoulder to catch a glimpse of Sirius and Mooney laughing their heads off as the head of the basilisk went out of the doors with inches to spare. Harry pointed the way towards the quidditch pitch and looked back at the school to see a crowd gathered at the door.

"Shame Colin isn't here yet, this would have been a good picture." He mused, only to receive a slap from Hermione.

"We could have gone into the forest, out that exit, and no one in the school would have known." She had her arms folded and Harry couldn't help but laugh.

"You are so cute when you are angry. I love you." He smiled.

Hermione looked him in the eyes with her hardest stare, "You can be impossible Harry James Potter, Aargh. I can't even stay mad at you." She started to laugh. "You massive prat."

They were covering ground at a prodigious rate and soon felt the wards wash over them, as soon as the tip of the snake's tail was clear they shifted and they were on another world. Susan stood with Salazar and the snake surged up to them both. Harry and Hermione dropped down, and Harry ran from Hermione who was chasing him calling him names, they reappeared at the quidditch pitch and ran laughing back to the castle doors.

On entering the castle Sirius called them over, "Pups, was that the basilisk you fought in the chamber last time Harry?"

"It was Sirius, it was in the thrall of Tom Riddle then, this time we had help from Salazar, so we've taken it to where it can live free."

“You fought that monster with the sword of Gryffindor? In your second year? We should go visit Albus and feed him to that thing.”

Harry and Hermione exchanged a look, and a nod.

Chapter 15: Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The trial of Cornelius Fudge was an anticlimax. Realising he was caught and had no one to buy his way out, he entered a plea of guilty to corruption and threw Umbridge under the bus, he was sentenced to ten years in low security and banned from holding any government office ever again.

Dolores Umbridge was executed by a Dementor, the veil being out of use for that purpose until further notice according to the Unspeakables.

Amelia Bones remained in post as head of the DMLE, and her department was awarded independence from the ministry with regards to criminal investigations, especially corruption. The Election for the new Minister was a close-run thing, the winner was Frank Longbottom, recently returned to fitness and running on a manifesto of inclusion. He was heavily supported by the light and grey factions, led by his mother Augusta, the dark faction being sorely depleted because of so many of their number passing away for various ‘unconnected’ reasons.

Frank offered the temp Sarah Connor the role of Senior Under Secretary.

She declined saying, “I don’t want to wait around just in case Albus Dumbledore returns. I don’t want Alby back.”

She left in favour of a trainer post at the Auror Academy, where she specialised in teaching the witches enrolled there, advanced close quarter combat skills.

In an attempt to pacify the remaining purebloods Frank appointed Narcissa Black and she became a fearsome political powerhouse pushing to remove pureblood agendas.

All members of the Auror corps where required to swear an oath of allegiance, this cost the corps a few older members, but the cost was worth the benefit to the rank and file. Ministry workers were also required to sign a magical declaration to serve the best interests of the public and this further reduced corruption.

A series of employment guidelines were introduced, mirroring those from the mundane world with regards to discrimination and inclusivity, the terms, mudblood, muggle and muggleborn were removed from the language of the ministry. A process of reviewing the staffing appointments within the ministry began to weed out the purebloods that had been promoted beyond their abilities. This was going to be a long process, but with the loss of many blood bigots, their departments were being looked after by magicals of supposedly lesser status, but higher capability. Nepotism was no longer normal but removing it has always proved impossible even in the mundane world, so it persisted in the corners where the light was not cast.

At Hogwarts the Easter break was soon upon everyone and Harry and Hermione headed home for the break. They left to meet with Susan almost immediately on arriving home and accepted the offer that the Higher Powers made them, to separate their age identities into distinct existences. Harry James Potter, still eleven, returned to his adoptive parents with his girlfriend Hermione Jean Granger, aged twelve. They had some wild memories of their school year and were both very capable magically and mentally, perhaps a couple of years higher than would be expected. They knew their Aunt Susan was a scary one, and loved their expanded family.

Luna had tested and successfully joined Hogwarts straight into the second year, the hat placed her in Gryffindor. She spent every holiday with the Grangers, and later the Peverells, she was one of the flower girls at their wedding.

Henry (Harry) Ignotus Peverell, and his wife Hermione Iolanthe Peverell, spent a year relaxing and travelling the world, then in the July of 1993 aged, 28 and 29 moved into the recently vacated house between Sirius/Samantha and Dan/Emma, and introduced themselves to their new neighbours.

Dan answered the front door, he could see the two silhouettes standing outside, he opened the door, to a pair he hadn't seen for a year, and Dan knew little Hermione was sitting in the garden with Luna and Harry, "Hello, I haven't seen you two for a while. Why did you knock?"

"Dan, dad, can we come in, we can explain, inside,"

"Of course, what can I get you?"

"Just tea thanks, it's a bit early for anything else." Hermione replied. The four of them sat at the dining table overlooking the garden, where they could see their younger alter egos sitting and playing cards with Luna. "I assume Susan explained that the munchkin versions only have partial memories now, just enough to fill in the blanks, but none of the killing or the fighting."

"Yes, she explained that you two were being given new lives, and allowed some time to recover. How have you been, I know from my own past it can be difficult to return to normal life. I had you, Hermione, to focus on." He looked over his shoulder at his little girl. "I am glad that the kids get to have childhoods again, although they are all three mischief magnets." He smiled, "I wouldn't have it any other way."

"How is Luna settling in? Is Xeno coping?" Harry asked.

"Luna pretty much lives with us all now, Xeno visits, but he has thrown himself into his paper, and it's doing well, he has a few reporters now." He laughed out loud, "You once described Luna as a whacky little pixie, she certainly lives up to that reputation. She is in equal measures adorable and weird. Emma loves her to bits."

"Where is mum?"

“Hermione, is that you?” Emma spoke from the door, looking freshly showered. She looked out into the garden. “There are two of you now?” Hermione walked over and gave her mum a hug.

“They separated us, our reward. They allowed us, the Hermione and Harry that had been re-lifed so many times, to stay adult, and the innocent versions to have their childhoods without any trauma. They sat at the table. Hermione continued, “We have bought the house next door, so you will see a lot more of us. I hope you agree, but we don’t intend on telling our younger selves about who we are unless we have to, and even then, only to them as adults.” She drank some tea.

Harry spoke up, “I am officially Henry Ignotus Peverell, and this is my wife Hermione Iolanthe Peverell. Call me Harry anyway, it is a short form of Henry. We have just spent a year travelling, dancing on moonlit beaches, meeting lots of people, relaxing drinking, more dancing, and of course getting Hermione pregnant.” He smirked as he said the last bit.

“Harry, you complete prat, I wanted to tell my mum myself.” She smacked his arm hard enough that the crack could be heard outside. “Mum, Dad. We can’t really call you that any more except in private, and if one of the kids overhears us, it will be awkward. We want you to be godparents to our daughter. If that’s ok?”

Emma lost it and was hugging her daughter and crying, “Of course, we will be Aunty Em, and uncle Dan, it’s a lot to handle, but lovely news. How far on are you, when are you due?”

“I am about three months, and I am due at the end of January.” Her smile lit up her face.

Dan took a deep breath, “Wow, you two always made an entrance. That is brilliant news, I will be honoured to be a godparent. Have you told Sirius yet?” he blew out his remaining breath.

“No we came here first, we will go see them later.”

“Why not ask them around now, I think we might have to celebrate a little. I guess you aren’t drinking alcohol now princess?” Emma asked. Hermione shook her head.

“No, we both stopped drinking once we knew I was pregnant.”

“Susan told us the morning after, Soooo embarassing.” Harry added.

“Did she tell you the sex of the baby,” Emma asked.

“No. I can tell. I can feel her magic, she is going to be off the charts powerful when she reaches her full potential. I ate some spicey food, and she floated some milk over later, it was upsetting her. Accidental magic in the womb.” Hermione shook her head, smiling. Harry sent his panther patronus off to find Sirius, and as it bounded out of the patio doors into the garden they heard a squeal from the kids outside

Luna bundled in and immediately hugged Harry. “You are back, I missed you, my brother.” She buried her head in Harry’s chest. Little Harry and Hermione stood looking at the older

versions from the door.

“Do we *know* you?” little Hermione asked,

Older Hermione smiled, “We are old friends of your parents, We served with your Dad for a while Hermione. He named you after me, I am called Hermione as well.” She caught the slight smile and nod from Emma, the little lie would avoid an awkward question or two.

“Really?” Little Hermione walked over and stood next to her older self, “I thought it was from a Shakespear play.”

“It is, it is also the daughter of Hermes of legend, We,” she indicated Harry, “Have been undercover for years, but that’s all finished now, and we live next door, so you have a new Aunty and Uncle of sorts, that is if you would like to be our friends.” Little Hermione beamed,

“Yes, that sounds lovely, you look a lot like my mummy, are you related?” elder Hermione’s eyes sparkled a little, and she looked at her mum.

“I don’t think so, but my Harry and I are orphans, so anything is possible.” Luna untangled herself from Harry and walked around to both Hermione’s.

In her daydream voice, “Susan told me you were happy now, and little Lyra is growing fast, she is happy to be home.” Little Harry looked at the group with a thoughtful look, and when young Hermione caught his eye an unspoken conversation, *talk later.*

Sirius arrived at the back door and took in the scene. Samantha appeared just behind him, she spoke first. “Dan, Emma, is this?” her voice trailed off looking at the three youngsters.

Dan responded, “May I introduce the new residents at number thirteen, Harry and Hermione Peverell. Dear old friends of ours. They were on the Malfoy Manor raid with us if you can remember that far back?” he added with a grin.

Sirius smiled, “I never thought we would see you pair again, it is really fantastic to see you both well.”

“It’s we three Sirius, I am expecting.” Hermione smirked. Samantha shot through the doors and wrapped her old friend in a warm embrace,

“When are you due, do you know what it is yet?”

“January, and it’s a girl. Luna just named her Lyra. I rather like that name.” She smiled her eyes sparkling.

Remus appeared a little later, and the Tonks arrived as everyone sat down for pizza, older Hermione had her anchovy and pineapple one to herself. Younger Hermione regarded the topping as an abomination against everything holy.

Later that night after everyone had gone home, at the Granger household, Hermione crept into Harry’s room. “Are you awake?”

“No. Fast asleep.”

“Prat.” She sat on the edge of his bed, “The new neighbours. What do you think.”

“She looks exactly like you from my dreams. It sounds stupid to say, but I think they are older versions of us?”

Hermione nodded. “He looks like you from my dreams, I have a recurring one where we are dancing on a beach together, and he looks like you from the dream. His scar is exactly the same as yours. So are his eyes.”

“Her eyes have the same gold flecks in them as yours, and Luna knew them immediately. I have that dream, you are wearing an orange sundress, and the necklace she was wearing today. We are dancing to that old Sade song mum and dad like.”

“Smooth Operator. Is it a dream or a memory then?” She chewed her lip.

“It doesn’t matter, it means you grow up super hot, and I am one lucky guy.” He smiled.

“Blech, cheesy much there Harry.” She giggled, “Older you might be a teeny bit hot. Just don’t get any ideas I hear all the stories about your parents from Uncle Sirius and Uncle Remus. You will have to wait, soul mate or not.”

Harry laughed, “I am in no hurry. We will just have to wait, we will figure out what’s going on.”

Next door, “You OK love?”

“Yeah, little you has figured it out. You always were way too smart.”

“I think Harry junior worked it out as well, he recognised me. When he looked at me it wasn’t ‘who are you, it was more like he had an answer figured out.”

“Well, at least they get to enjoy childhood, we get to enjoy a life.”

“mm’mm. She settled into his side. “rub my back?”

“Always.”

The Peverells ‘renewed’ their vows on Harrys’ Birthday. The party was attended by the Good the great and even some of the dead. James and Lily attended with Susan and Chris. Chris got a slap followed by a kiss from Charlotte, who then cried for about an hour. She insisted happy tears, they sat in a corner and Chris filled her in with the three overlapping stories, and how he had tried to make his death have some value.

Charlotte would never marry, but would spend every Samhain night in her parents old holiday cottage in the mountains. One night she simply crossed back over with Chris and spent the rest of time together.

Lyra Emma Peverell was born in January of 1994.

Sirius and Samantha married the following Summer solstice.

Cormac McLaggan disappeared during his fourth year after a Gryffindor Quidditch victory celebration party, he was drunk and attempted to push his luck with Luna. He was missing at breakfast and no sign of him was ever discovered.

The Triwizard Tournament was hosted by the school, each school fielded teams in various events. Beauxbatons were the close winners of the cup, Hogwarts narrowly missing out and Ilvermorney a close third. Harry asked Hermione to the ball, Neville took Daphne, and Tracey and Luna went with some nice American students they met during the competition.

Mark Daniel Peverell was born in September 1996

Harry Potter and Hermione Granger became engaged on Harry's seventeenth birthday, they returned to Hogwarts as Head Boy and Head Girl for their final year, and Hermione graduated as valedictorian. The whole gang took a year out and travelled the world.

Harry and Hermione Potter-Black both attended Oxford University where they studied law.

Hermione continued on to gain a PhD. Harry left after graduation and worked in magical child services. He successfully campaigned to convert some of the old 'grand manors' to orphanages and worked from the once opulent Malfoy Manor for a few years. Hermione worked in Ted Tonks Law firm, eventually taking over the practice with Harry, specialising in child welfare cases.

Albert Dunning fell deeper into dementia, in later years his orderly, a university student working to cover his tuition and partly responsible for his care, Dudley Dursley, was heard to discuss Albert's insistence that Dudley should help him escape, dark forces were gathering. Dudley was quite patient with Albert, especially when he told him his cousin was a dark wizard. Dudley would smile and nod and agree with old Albert, as far as Dudley knew he had no cousin. Albert passed away in 2001, a young looking couple were the only people to attend the funeral other than Dudley. They laid a bouquet on his coffin consisting of geraniums (stupidity), foxglove (insincerity), meadowsweet (uselessness), yellow carnations (you have disappointed me), and orange lilies (hatred). It was the Peverells.

Albert, once more Albus was warmly received in the afterlife. Perhaps more warmly than he bargained on. Lily and James had a lot to say about his actions, he was then introduced to Henry (Harry) and Hermione. They introduced him to Sally, who met him for dinner, a meal Albus did not enjoy. It became a weekly favourite, of Sally.

Ginny Weasley gained her professional debut with the Harpies as Seeker in the 2000 season opener against the Chudley Cannons. She caught snitch in the first five minutes and the game was won 160-0.

She was on the front page of the prophet photographed by fiancé Colin Creevey.

A Student exchange programme was developed between Hogwarts, Ilvermorney, Beauxbatons and Kookaburra in Australia. Others joined the programme over the next decade. Durmstrang, a bastion of dark magics and pureblood ideology was not included, its steadily falling intake of students causing it to close for good in 2002 . The influx of foreign students eroded pureblood beliefs amongst students at Hogwarts, and a continual relentless rejection of their beliefs by, the now, Minister for Magic Narcissa Lupin pushed them into the corners of unacceptable beliefs.

Bill Weasley married Nymphadora Tonks in the spring of 2001.

Hermione met with Ron the adult incarnation, to celebrate their anniversary, she introduced him to her memories, and Godric Gryffindor, or at least his sword. She kept her promise and visited him annually, with a new present for every year. On the tenth anniversary of her murder she dropped him into an Acromantula's nest, knowing how much he loved spiders.

Susan eventually relented and moved the other side of the veil to Sally's home, where she entertained her dinner guests with relish, or ketchup. Sally the Basilisk is enjoying retirement and is being well fed and cared for, she finds that Albus does give her gas, Cormac is quite crunchy, Dolores just tastes wrong. Ron is a vegetable, one of her five a day. She isn't keen on Snape as a lady of her age should avoid greasy food.

Dudley Dursley married Hannah Abbot in the spring of 2002 and was befriended by the cousin he discovered did exist. Their Daughter Willow Rose Dursley was born that December, she was a witch. Dudley's father had died of heart failure some years before and his mother was estranged. Dudley was amazed and delighted that his daughter was so *gifted.*

Neville Longbottom married Padma Patil in the summer of 2003. Their twins Victoria and Andrew were born just over a year later.

Jayne Emma Potter-Black and her twin brother Steven Oliver Potter Black were born in August 2005.

Susan Bones married Daphne Greengrass in 2006, They adopted twins from the magical child services the following month.

Luna married in 2007 to an American she had met on a transfer years before, Luna Connor gave birth to Pandora Sarah Connor six months later.

Tracey Zabini gave birth to twins in April 2008.

Senior Instructors Chris Dennings and Sarah Connor finally married a month after the birth of her grandchild in Las Vegas.

Teddy Weasley was born in June 2008. He was a metamorphmagus like his mother.

Amos Diggory was arrested for the kidnapping in May of 2009 in Buenos Aires. He had been on the run for eighteen years. Elphias had died some years previously. He never made it to

trial, committing suicide in a holding cell in Argentina. He spent the next century cleaning Sally's nest. He kept finding a wristwatch with the name C. McLaggan engraved on the back face.

Lyra Peverell graduated from Beauxbatons in 2011. She went on to study mundane medicine in Paris and then magical medicine in America, Brazil and Australia. She married an Australian potions master, and they found the cure for Lycanthropy in 2032.

Mark Peverell graduated from Ilvermorney in 2018, he went on to MIT, JPL and Caltech. He met a brilliant young grad student called Pandora and after a long courtship married in 2030.

Susan Sto-Helit was sitting with a glass of Caol-Ila a rare Islay malt, only available occasionally, but her current preferred dram. Hermione Peverell was sitting across the table with a large glass of Argentinian Malbec, a discovery from a visit to that country a few years earlier.

They chinked their glasses. "Here's to us. Leave it to the girls to sort this shit out." They laughed.

Chapter End Notes

Caol-Ila (Cull-EE-lah) is a distillery in Port Ascaig on the Island of Islay, it is owned and marketed by Diagio - Johnny Walker. Personally, I prefer Jura, from the distillery across the straights, but Caol Ila was a nice malt for a change, it is quite smokey, so it fits Susan in my head canon.
I tried to make the weapons true to the era of the 90's. I am not 100% sure green lasers were available back then, but it makes the AK gag work. I used the Heckler and Koch MP5 as they were the preferred choice of the SAS in that era. All my weapon information comes from reading books, or Wikipedia.
I am English and we don't own guns as a general rule.
Susan Sto-Helit is a character from DiscWorld by Terry Pratchet and the wireless in the kitchen gag is an attempt to channel Terry's humour. The Archers is a BBC Radio 4 series that has been on the air since the Romans were here. It is a rather middle class show, the sort of thing Petunia would feel obliged to listen to.
I once more married Narcissa to Remus, I must do something more original if I write another, but haughty pure blood with a werewolf does have a bit of a Lady Chatterley and the gardener vibe, and allows Nymphadora to make inappropriate doggy style jokes.
Albus spends the last few years of his life being patronised, treated like a simpleton and generally ignored, he has no control over his life, and no one tells him anything. His afterlife is not pleasant. He gets fed to Sally the Basilisk on Wizard Wednesdays.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!