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Books > Harry Potter

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Harry Potter and the Four Heirs

By: Sinyk

Merlin, not happy with how the future unravelled for the life of Harry Potter, intervenes early to set the course of history back on track. Implied Pairing Only. Smart!Harry Bash!AD Idiot!RW

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1. The Mage's Act

A/N: This is an improved version of the original. All I've done is removed most, if not all, of the original errors. Then replaced all the chapters. I had promised I would be writing an extended version instead of using the big 'Deus ex Machina' I use in Chapter 25. However, I also have two other stories being written in the wings, at the moment; and I do not wish to abandon them.

So, that promise is still being kept. Just, not yet. But you can be assured I'm still writing.

A/N: As always, the usual disclaimers apply. I do not own the HP-verse; I only play in it and make no monies from it. All I earn is plaudits.

Chapter One - The Mage's Act

# # #

"Lad, I need you to wake up now."

He was having a wonderful dream. He had lots of toys, lots to eat, and lots of cuddles like Duddles got from Auntie 'Toona. Unca Vernon didn't hit him in the head, either. He liked his dream.

"Yes, lad; it's a nice dream. But, I need you to wake up now."

The man's voice was making his dream go away. He tried to make the man's voice go away by con'trating really, really hard. He wanted his dream to come back.

"I'm not going to go away, lad. I'm not in your dream. You need to open your eyes."

Opening his eyes meant waking up in his cupboard. Waking up meant feeling hungry and sore from the last time Unca Vernon hit him. Waking up meant getting sore hands from pulling weeds from Auntie 'Toona's garden. Unca Vernon made his head hurt; and the weeds made his hands sting.

"I promise you, lad; that will never happen again. Open your eyes and you will see."

The man sounded nice enough. It sounded like Unca Vernon's voice when he was talking to Duddles; not like it sounded when Unca Vernon was talking to him. Maybe he could have a quick peek and, if he didn't like it, he could close his eyes and go back to his dream.

"That sounds like a good idea, lad. Let's try that then."

He still didn't know if he should open his eyes; but, he knew he felt different. He felt as if he was lying on his back on a really soft pillow. But his bed wasn't a soft pillow. His bed was an old, dog-smelly thing Auntie Marge threw at him. It was lumpy. Not what he felt he was lying on now. Maybe he should open his eyes to see what it was.

"That's a very good idea. Do that."

He'd do it then.

Opening his eyes the small boy expected to see the bottom of the stairs above him. What he saw, much further away, was a roof made of rocks stuck together.

He started to look around. He was on a big bed. And it had red curtains around it! And the curtains were held up by big wooden poles! Wow!

He looked around some more. Beyond the opened curtains on each side of the bed he could see walls. The walls were made of stone just like the roof. And there were some little fires on the top of big sticks stuck to the walls. At least they looked like big sticks, he thought, frowning.

Fire was bad unless it was in the fireplace. He knew he was not allowed to play with fire. Duddles played with it and burnt the rug; and he got hit lots for it - even though it was Duddles who did it. He was only 'little' but knew it wasn't fair that Unca Vernon hit him instead of Duddles.

"I put the fires there, lad. And they're called 'torches', by the way."

There was that voice again. It was coming from down where his feet were pointing.

The boy, a child barely beyond toddler stage, sat up to look where the voice was coming from. It was coming from past the foot of his bed.

There was a man standing there. He could see him through the open curtains at the foot of the big bed he was on. At least he thought it was a man. He had a funny dressing gown on.

"I see you're awake now, lad," said the man.

The boy tried to see what the man looked like. He knew he had to be really, really old because he had a white beard and white hair. He scrunched his face up trying to see him properly.

"Who are you, Sir?" asked the boy.

He had to call all man-adults 'Sir' and lady-adults 'Ma'am', unless they were Unca Vernon, Auntie 'Toona or Auntie Marge. If he didn't, Unca

Vernon would hit him lots.

"You can call me 'Sir', if you like," the man said while walking around the bed to stand alongside where the boy was sitting.

The boy was glad the man came closer. It made him easier to see.

"I'm Freak!" said the small boy, beaming proudly.

The old man's eyebrows shot up on hearing that. "And what makes you say that?"

The boy scrunched his face up wondering if the man was upset with him.

"That's what Auntie 'Toona calls me," he moped. But suddenly brightly said, "But Unca Vernon calls me 'Boy'."

The old man gazed down at him for a while. The boy hoped he hadn't said anything to upset him. He didn't want Unca Vernon to hit him again because he upset the old man. Whatever the old man was thinking he suddenly didn't look like he was upset anymore.

"Lad. You are not a freak; and I will not call you 'Boy'," the old man said kindly. "Neither of those two words are your name."

"Oh," the boy sadly said. If 'Freak' and 'Boy' weren't his name he wondered what it was. He wondered if it was 'Lad'.

"How about you come with me, lad," the old man said, reaching to help the boy off the bed. "And I'll tell you all about your name and who you are."

The boy started to get off the bed but then hesitated. "Are you 'a strange man'?" he asked.

Hesitating, the old man asked, "What makes you ask that?"

"Unca Vernon said that, if a strange man should come up to me and tell or ask me to go with them, then I should."

The boy saw that what he said seemed to make the old man get angry again. It frightened him. But the old man was only angry for a very short

time before the angry face went away again.

Meekly, the boy said, "I'm sorry if I said something that made you angry, Sir."

"That's quite alright, lad," the old man replied, finishing helping the young boy off the bed. "I just didn't like that your Uncle Vernon said that to you."

Leading the small boy over to a chest of drawers against one of the walls he said, "Now - to answer your question - I guess I am 'a strange man'. I've been called much worse."

Kneeling, the old man opened a drawer and began to remove clothing fit for a boy of his young charge's stature.

"First, though, I'm going to get you out of those rags you're wearing and into something much nicer," he said. "Then we're going to go and have some breakfast."

"Me, too?" the young boy asked while the old man was helping him change.

"Yes. You, too."

'The boy had been even more mistreated than I believed,' the old man thought. He should have taken him earlier.

The boy brightly asked, "After, are you taking me back to Auntie 'Toona's and Unca Vernon's? Auntie 'Toona's going to want me to help with breakfast."

Pausing in finishing dressing his young charge, the old man said, "No, lad. You'll be living here now. And you won't have to help with anything like that."

"Okay," the young boy said. If he was going to live 'here' now - and he didn't have to help with breakfast, lunch or dinner - he wondered what other chores he'd be doing.

"Will I still be pulling weeds?" he asked.

"No, lad," the old man kindly replied. "You'll be spending a lot of your time learning and playing. And, the more you learn, the more you'll get to play."

The young boy's eyes lit up hearing that.

"Wow!" he said. "With toys and everything?"

"Yes," the old man replied with a smile. "With toys and everything."

The young tyke was really excited. He was going to like living here. It sounded much nicer than living with his Aunt and Uncle.

The boy asked eagerly, "Can we start after breakfast?"

Standing back up the old man took the young boy's hand.

Leading him towards the door he said, "Well, we can start learning some things now. And even while we're eating breakfast."

"Wow!" said the boy excitedly.

"For a start," said the old man as he led the young boy out the door, "My name is Myrrdin Emrys and I'm going to help you do something very important when you get older.

"And your name is Harry James Potter. Today is your birthday. As of today you are now four years old. Happy Birthday."

# # #

In his office at Hogwarts, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore was sitting up late doing parchment work. He noticed the monitoring ward he had upon the Dursley home had triggered for only a moment. Frowning, he watched to see if it triggered again.

When nothing happened after a minute he guessed it must have only been an anomaly. Such occurrences were rare but, with the fate of the wizarding world on the line, he wasn't prepared to take chances.

He'd approach the house under a disillusionment charm tomorrow to

ensure the boy was exactly where he was supposed to be.

It hadn't even dawned on him that today was the boy's birthday.

# # #

Within a few days of collecting Harry from the Dursleys, Myrrdin began to explain what Harry was going to do when he grew older.

In terms the small child could understand, he explained about the magical school known as Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

And how the small castle - keep, really - they were currently living within, was somewhat similar. He told stories about the four founders and made little dolls of each of them, keeping the boy spellbound for hours. He explained what an heir was and he explained how Harry was going to bring the four heirs of the founders together. And, together, they began to watch history on what the old man called a 'time viewer'. He also told the lad what sort of boy he was going to grow into. At least, what sort of boy Harry would have grown into had he not removed him from the timeline.

Myrrdin knew he would be years mentoring this child, but he also knew the future of the world hinged on his young charge. The old man had prepared for his role very carefully. And he would prepare young Harry James Potter just as carefully.

# # #

"I'm not happy hearing this, Myrrdin!" Harry stated angrily.

In the few years Harry had been with the old man, this was the angriest the old druidic mage had ever seen him. And it was the first time the young boy had ever spoken to him using his name.

"He volunteered, lad," the old man calmly answered. "And with his magics he can protect himself far better than you could have done for yourself if I left you in the same situation."

"That's not the point, Sir," snapped Harry. "He's a living sentient being! No one deserves that treatment! Not even the lowliest of non-sentient creatures!"

Myrrdin, or Merlin as he was otherwise known, knew this was going to be a touchy matter with his young student. But, when Harry began to understand he had somehow been replaced within the Dursley household to occlude knowledge from Dumbledore as to his absence, the old man thought it best to begin the discussion while they were having a spot of tea between study subjects. He did not expect Harry to be quite so... incensed... as to jump out of his armchair in the near rage he was obviously feeling. He realised what would have happened had he waited until Harry was older and his magical core was more powerful.

"Harry, I'm very proud of you that you feel that way," said Myrrdin. "But, I gave Dobby the opportunity to see what you did for him, or would have done for him, in May 1993. Plus for a few years after that.

"He knows you would have freed him, he knows you treated him as a friend, and he knows you love him, or will love him, even if you've not yet met. Please, trust me when I tell you the abuse he would have suffered within the Malfoy household is much worse than this."

"I understand why you did it, Sir," fumed Harry, pacing back and forth. "I understand that you used a very strong Polyjuice Potion to change him into me and that you'll continue to provide him the Potion until we switch back. I understand that you trained him in what were my mannerisms and speech of the time, and what they would become through to my staying overnight at the Leaky Cauldron the night before the Hogwarts train. I understand he'll be able to use the Polyjuice Potion antidote once we swap back. And I understand all this is necessary to prevent Albus Flippin' Dumbledore from discovering I'm missing."

Leaning forward, Myrrdin said, "You haven't thought it all the way through yet, lad. What it means for Dobby to be able to carry out his role."

Harry stopped and glared at his teacher. But the old man could see the boy before him was thinking furiously about the situation. He knew Harry was calm enough to understand he was trying to teach him something. Or, at least, trying to get Harry to figure it out for himself. After a few moments Harry gave a quick shake of his head and said, "No, I don't see it. Explain, please."

Instead of answering straight back, Myrrdin asked instead, "How are house elves bonded, Harry? And what are the requirements associated with that?"

Harry thought about it for a moment before answering, "House elves are bonded to an individual master or mistress, to a house, or..."

As Harry paused looking off into the distance, the old man saw the boy had begun to understand.

"Elves are bonded, and required through that bond, to come when summoned without hesitation," said Harry calming down while thinking hard. "That means, if Dobby was... is... still bonded to the Malfoys, he would have to immediately pop back to Malfoy Manor when summoned."

"Yes. So..." the old man encouraged.

"So, the idea of Dobby impersonating me would collapse the first time he was summoned as the Malfoys would see him in his Polyjuiced form..." said Harry, calmer now. "And, also collapse the first time it happened in front of anyone back with the Dursleys."

"So, the only possible explanation would be..." prompted the old man.

"That Dobby's no longer bonded to the Malfoys!" replied Harry with wonder.

"Correct, lad!" beamed Myrrdin. "I removed the bond when I brought him here."

"So, he's bonded to you now?" asked Harry.

"No, Dobby is now already a free elf," replied Myrrdin. "I freed him nine years before you would have done so, after the incident with the Chamber of Secrets."

Harry thought about that for a few moments before saying, "So, when you said Dobby volunteered to take my place, he did it when he was a free elf. It was solely his decision. He really did volunteer!"

"Correct," said the old man smiling.

"But, wouldn't the Malfoys have noticed he was missing the first time he was summoned?" asked Harry. "Wouldn't that have indicated something was up?"

"No, lad," the old man replied. "The current wizarding world believes a bond can only be broken by the master or mistress giving the elf at least one item of clothing, by the transference of bond from one master to another freely given, by blood or magical inheritance, or by the death of the elf concerned.

"The Malfoys know the first three did not occur, so only the fourth - Dobby's death - was possible. As far as they know, Dobby was either killed or succumbed to some unknown elvish malady somewhere of which they're unaware. Such a thing happens from time to time. I encouraged that by placing the suggestion of such an event in their minds while they slept the night of the first time they tried to summon him."

Harry resumed his seat in the armchair and slumped forward before stating very quietly, "I owe that... we owe that... little elf more than we can ever repay."

"And I'm sure you and I are going to make every attempt at just that

impossible feat after you return."

Then, leaning back, Myrrdin asked, "Now, shall we get back to our tea?"

Though, I think we need a new pot."

# # #

Sitting on the window sill of their combination study room / laboratory / library, Harry said, "Sir, I understand the concepts well enough. Through your magics and mastery of the knowledge of space and time you've created a piece of reality... space... outside of normal reality as the rest of us understand it. And, through your mastery of time, within that space you're able to manipulate time."

Harry had now been a student under Myrrdin's tutelage for what felt like a decade. But he did not really know because there did not seem to be any seasons other than Spring around their keep.

"Yes, you've got it so far. Keep going..." Myrrdin said, sitting at his desk.

"You're actually alive in the year 515 AD when you set all this..." said Harry, waving his hand about distractedly, "...up. And I'm alive in 1984 AD. At least, that was the year in which you pulled me out to join you here."

"Correct," the old man responded. "What else?"

"By creating this... pocket reality..." continued Harry pausing for a moment.

Interrupting, the old man said, "Pocket reality. I like that. It's a good name for it."

"...Pocket reality," continued Harry, "you've created an environment where we can both exist and you can teach me without causing a time paradox in... normal... reality."

"Correct. And what appears to be bothering you about this?"

"How does the paradox not occur when we drop out of the pocket reality

back into normal reality?"

"Ah!" said the old man, light dawning. "I can return back to my own time in normal reality pretty much any time after I left. I'm far enough isolated in my little abode I rarely interact with anyone, or anything, going on. However, I'm planning on returning to my own time no more than a few seconds after I left, thereby not causing a paradox to a time before; nor upsetting the time continuum. People will not notice any aging effects upon my behaviour or body due to my advanced age; and I already know the role I'm to play.

"As for you, I can send you back to any time after I removed you from the Dursleys. However, I need to put you back into normal reality before the First of July 1991, when you're soon due to receive your letter from Hogwarts."

Harry sat for a little while gathering his thoughts before saying, "So, I've only a couple of years left before I have to go back. Can we get everything done in time?"

The old man grinned. "Think it through, lad. I can go back to my own time frame barely a few seconds after I left. And should, as I've already explained."

Harry nodded focussing on his teacher's words, "So that means time passing in here is irrelevant to time passing in normal reality."

"Correct."

"But what about the effects of aging in here, not just on my wisdom and knowledge, but on my physical and magical self?"

Instead of answering, Myrrdin asked, "You've not noticed you don't seem to be growing in line with children the same age as you in the time viewer?"

Harry shrugged, "I thought I was just small for my age. Probably due to

the malnutrition I suffered at the hands of the Dursleys."

"No," replied Myrrdin. "I anticipated, in advance, it would take many years to impart upon you the knowledge you would need to defeat Riddle and counter Dumbledore's manipulations; and make a good start on restoring balance to the magical realm in Britain. As such I've slowed your aging process."

"I would have thought I'd learn faster if I was older physically, emotionally, spiritually and magically," said Harry.

"Yes, you would. Well done for recognising that," the old man congratulated him. "However, would you really want to go through puberty, in here with me?"

Harry visibly shuddered before answering with a grin, "No, no; definitely not."

He had not enjoyed the discussion about human sexuality he received from his mentor. As with all things, his mentor spoke with enthusiasm on the subject, and even used diagrams. He had trouble sleeping for a couple of nights after that particular lesson.

Grinning, the old man paused to ensure Harry had no further questions before continuing, "Now, shall we look once more upon the matter of the Protean Charm and its relationship with quantum entanglement?"

Harry groaned and dropped his head to his chest.

Myrrdin laughed and said, "Come now, lad. Since you've mastered Occlumency, and your mind is not the untidy clutter it once was, your memory is close enough to perfect to allow total recall at will. We only have to go over this once and ensure you understand, rather than just know it, before we can jump onto the next subject matter."

Knowing how to encourage his young student's eagerness for the subject at hand the old man said, "And after that, perhaps we shall make use of

the time viewer for a while. Though, I still don't know why you insist on calling it by the acronym 'teevee'."

Harry sat bolt upright on hearing that with a big grin on his face.

"And, after that, can we work some more on magic?" the boy eagerly asked.

Chuckling, Myrrdin replied, "Of course we can. That's a wonderful idea!"

# # #

Walking into the study Myrrdin saw a much matured Harry sitting in his favourite armchair speed reading a weighty tome. Other books were piled around him, either freshly read or about to be.

Harry now looked to be the eleven year old he would be once he was reinserted into normal space. The only sign of his fifteen years studying and maturing to what would have been nineteen years of age in the pocket reality was his eyes. Someone attuned to his emotional output may be able to sense there was depth to the boy not found in normal eleven year olds, but that was all they would discover.

"What are you reading, Harry?" asked Myrrdin.

"English and Scottish law as it applied circa 1000AD," said Harry not looking up and barely pausing during his rapid flicking through pages. Marking his page he looked up at the old man and said, "I want to make sure I'm not going to be conned or advised contrary to the law when I... sorry, we... smack the Wizengamot down.

"At least we now know the fracture of wizard law from mundane law mainly occurred during the Second World War and parallel Grindelwald War, and later. So, the work of synchronising them again won't be as difficult as we first thought. Most of the most appalling ones are only since Riddle's first run-around in the 1970s."

Myrrdin nodded. More and more over the past few years he had left

planning on the course of action of the four heirs to Harry. He had given the lad a good grounding in strategy, diplomacy and politics and watched as the boy took the lessons to heart and made his plans. And Harry knew he first needed to get the heirs together before they arrived at Hogwarts. "Have you given further thought to how you're going to contact the other heirs, lad?"

"I had thought the original plan was sound," the boy responded. "But I think we're going to have to go with 'Operation Nuclear Bang' and immediately bring the heirs and their guardians together. And once we get to Hogwarts we go with 'Operation Baby Steps'.

"Of course, if 'Nuclear Bang' fails then I'm going to have to go with 'Operation Knock Knock' and, if and where necessary, use the Obliviate Charm to prevent Dumbledore discovering what's what. I'm really not going to like doing that.

"If 'Baby Steps' fails we'll go with 'Operation Mailed Fist'. But, of course, that means having to use the memory crystals on the heirs before they go to Hogwarts, which I'd rather not do. I don't want to do that because I think it robs them of their childhood. However, to have 'Mailed Fist' in place in advance, I'm going to need to use the crystals well before we board the train."

It amused Myrrdin how his young charge used modern military terms in his planning. But, he had to hand it to the boy; it made discussing strategy and various options so much easier. Of course, no plan survives first contact. So you need contingency plans for what happens after that event. Or, you'd need a first plan so over-the-top the chance of failure was greatly minimised. This was young Harry's preferred plan.

"As I've said before, but I'll reiterate, lad," said the old man. "The memory crystals are quite safe to use if they're activated when the recipient - or

recipients, in this case - are ready for sleep."

Harry sighed, "I know, Sir. But I feel as if it would steal their innocence doing that to them."

"You're a good lad, Harry," said the old man, coming up to put one hand on Harry's shoulder. "That care you have for the welfare of others will stand you in good stead as you work towards all four of your objectives. But, they would all lose their innocence soon enough if you fail."

"I know, Sir," sighed the boy again.

Backing away to sit in his own chair facing Harry, Myrrdin asked, "Have you given much more thought about how you and the other heirs are going to tackle those objectives?"

"Yes, Sir," Harry responded. "As you know, Sir, that'll be launched with 'Operation Queen's Ire' as long as you've managed to ensure each artefact is in its right place..."

Nodding, the old druidic mage said, "That's now been done, and I'll manage them across time to ensure they're where you need them to be, when the time comes."

"Good," said Harry, also nodding. Leaning forward he said, "Then, when the time comes, I plan to..."

# # #

## 2. The Prime Minister's Outrage

### Chapter Two - The Prime Minister's Outrage

# # #

At shortly after 9.00am on Friday, the 5th of July 1991, Harry popped back into normal reality in amongst the trees of St James Park near the Park Office, hidden from sight from mundanes. A quick check ensured he was wearing the disguise he and Myrrdin had worked out to get him inside 10 Downing Street; a school uniform with a school satchel holding

the necessary documents slung from his left shoulder.

He looked around, oriented himself with the direction he needed to go and set off on foot. He did not see a team of wizards suddenly apparate near to the spot he arrived.

Crossing Horse Guards Road he entered Downing Street from the west end and leisurely walked along the footpath towards the doors of Number 10. His timing needed to be exact for this part.

Just as he was within a hundred yards of the door he spied his ticket into Number 10 just ahead. The class of nine and ten year olds from Years 4 and 5 at St Tristan's Primary School were clustered around an already harassed teacher waiting to start their school tour of the Prime Minister's Office, which would begin momentarily. He simply approached the group from the rear and, blending in, cast a Notice-me-Not Charm on himself using a bit of wandless magic. Anyone looking at him would simply see a normal school student but wouldn't notice that no one knew who he was. The door opened and a young lady stepped out. She gestured to the teacher to follow her and went back inside.

"Alright, then, children. Here we go," the teacher called out over her charges. "Remember. Best behaviour now. The Prime Minister and his staff are very important people, and you're not to bother them or get in their way." Then she ushered her young charges in through the door.

This was necessary for Harry to get past the Office's main security checkpoint just inside the door as neither Myrrdin nor he, during their research, could discover whether or not mundane security systems could detect someone magically obscured. They didn't want to risk that they could.

Once past security Harry simply dropped back and allowed the group to pull ahead and, with a further piece of wandless magic, altered his

Notice-me-Not Charm to a Disillusionment Charm. He also changed his appearance to that of a young man wearing a business suit that looked to be right off a dressmaker's dummy at Saville Row. His school satchel now looked like a business satchel.

He headed directly to the Office of the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary. All he had to do was make sure he didn't bump into, or otherwise come into contact with, anyone along the short walk down a couple of corridors.

Passing a small security desk set up at the bottom end of the last corridor - pausing for a second to make it look like he was flashing the man credentials for the security camera - Harry reached his destination.

Thankfully, the door with a small wooden plaque that said 'Lady Muriel Columbus, Principal Private Secretary' was already opened wide and he only had to walk in.

The middle aged lady sitting behind the desk frowning down at papers before her matched the lady he'd seen on Myrrdin's time viewer.

'All good, so far,' he thought.

He glanced out the door to ensure he wasn't seen, dropped the Disillusionment Charm while the lady wasn't looking at him and quietly closed the door.

Turning back around Harry noticed the lady still hadn't paid him any attention, so he quietly said, "Excuse me, Ma'am."

On hearing his voice the lady quickly looked up at him, frowned and said, "What are you doing in here, Sir? You're not supposed to be here."

She started to reach for the telephone sitting on her desk.

Before her hand reached it, and looking her straight in the eye, Harry quietly said, "Merlin Yellow, Ma'am."

She froze.

Lady Muriel Columbus was not a lady easily startled, surprised or shocked. She had served her current Prime Minister since the day he had assumed office less than a year ago. She had also served him for nearly the entire time he served in the Ministry as Foreign Secretary, and then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the previous Government; and knew the Prime Minister thought of her as a trusted advisor.

As his Principal Private Secretary when her Minister assumed his current office, she was briefed on the magical world. A world she would have flatly refused to believe existed if she wasn't provided proof of its existence in the office through the unadorned door behind her and just off to one side. That incontrovertible proof she still found difficult to accept.

The knowledge of that world wasn't so much Classified as it was so... unbelievable. She knew she'd be removed from her posting if she ever spoke about it. People would think she was 'losing it', as her young grandson would say.

But, as part of that briefing she was told a set of code words that, when someone spoke one of them to her, would mean there was trouble in that other world; and that the person who spoke them would need to see the Prime Minister. 'Merlin Yellow' meant there was an imminent danger in, or originating with, the magical world, and that the person would need to see the Prime Minister immediately.

In shock, Lady Muriel stared at Harry and said, "Ehhhrrr... what?"

That was not something someone with her impeccable manners was normally wont to do, no matter the surprise.

To be fair, she'd never expected to hear that particular phrase as the magical world took care of matters themselves. They had given no indication trouble was brewing. She thought this may be some form of

elaborate prank or a security 'exercise'. People from 'that' place also normally didn't enter through her office door.

"Now, see here, young man!" she said with her sternest voice; the one she normally used with her grandson when he'd done something really bad. "I don't know what you're playing at, but I demand to know who told you to say that to me!"

Harry just stared back at her with an expressionless face and quietly said, "You have the code, Ma'am. Please, carry out your orders."

Lady Muriel could detect no subtle signs on the man that he was being anything but completely straight with her. She could detect no sign of subterfuge about him at all. There was no indication of anything whatsoever other than his piercing green eyes. Eyes that told her this young man was to be taken seriously.

Harry felt the lady's stern gaze upon him for quite a while. Then she suddenly rose from her office chair, turned to the door just off to one side behind her desk, and rapped on it twice.

"Enter!" Harry heard a muffled male voice call from the other side of the door.

Lady Muriel opened the door and stepped just inside.

Harry saw her turn slightly to her right and say, obviously to someone within the room, "Excuse me, Sir."

"Yes? What is it, Muriel?" asked a man's voice.

Hesitating a moment Lady Muriel then quietly said, "Merlin Yellow, Sir."

Clearly the man inside was more properly able to restrain himself from verbal utterances of surprise. And a moment later Harry heard the man say, "Send them in."

Lady Muriel beckoned to Harry, who walked forward and past her into the large office beyond.

Inside, Harry could see he was in the Prime Minister's public office. The man himself was standing over near his desk, clearly having just risen from behind his executive desk to greet his visitor. Harry heard the lady behind him step back out of the office and close the door behind her.

The tall man with short grey hair and large horn-rimmed glasses standing at the other end of the office from him stared at Harry and frowned slightly before quickly replacing his expression with a politician's smile.

"Hello, young man," the man said, continuing to come forward. "I'm Prime Minister Major. To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"One moment please, Sir," replied Harry, quickly casting a spell.

The Prime Minister saw the young man suddenly reach outwards away from his body with his right hand and make a few slight intricate motions. Suddenly there was a slight noise behind him.

Spinning around to see what it was the Prime Minister saw that a little trinket on his desk seemed to be dancing a little jig, before it suddenly flashed with a small bright orange light and fell over on its side.

Turning back to the young man that had walked into his office, the Prime Minister asked, "What was that?"

Smiling and stepping forward, Harry replied, "I just cast a small charm spell designed to detect, and then destroy, any magical item enspelled to act as... what you might call a... 'listening bug'. We will now not be overheard by anyone by magical means."

Listening to what Harry said the Prime Minister lost his politician's smile. It didn't take a Legilimens to see the Prime Minister was not happy about what Harry had just said.

"You mean to tell me," said the Prime Minister in a low voice, "That... that thing was being used by someone to listen in on anything said in this room?"

"Yes, Sir," said Harry. "If I may ask, Sir; who gave it to you?"

Frowning and thinking back the Prime Minister angrily said, "That peculiar man in the green bowler who called himself Minister of Magic."

"That would be Cornelius Fudge, Sir," said Harry. "He's one of the reasons I'm here."

"He gave that thing to me as a gift when I first took office," the Prime Minister angrily mused. "I don't know why I kept it, let alone on my desk."

"If I may, Sir?" asked Harry, gesturing towards the trinket.

Frowning at Harry the Prime Minister also gestured and said, "By all means."

Harry walked over to stand before the desk, waved his hand over the now frazzled little trinket, and said, "Ah! It's enspelled with a charm that encourages you to keep it here. Very clever of the man."

Then, after a few other quick hand gestures, said, "The charm's now been removed, Sir. You can dispose of it whenever you wish."

While Harry was talking the Prime Minister walked over to the desk to stand beside him and watched what he did.

After Harry finished removing the charm the Prime Minister asked, "Is it safe for me to handle?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "There is no longer any magic associated with it."

The Prime Minister reached over and picked it up. "I think I'll hold on to it," he quietly said. "Minister Fudge and I are going to have a little chat about it."

The Prime Minister walked around his desk, while staring at the object in his hand. Harry could see he was deep in thought.

The pause also gave Harry his opening. "Now, Sir; as to why I am here,"

he said.

The Prime Minister quickly looked back up at the man before him. "Yes; of course," he replied. "Merlin Yellow, and all that."

"Please, take a seat," he said pointing to one of the chairs in front of his desk.

"Thank you, Sir," said Harry, sitting down. "First, I should at least introduce myself... My name is Harry James Potter and I am the... presumptive... Earl of Slytherin."

The Prime Minister sat bolt upright on hearing that. "Earl of Slytherin, My Lord?" he exclaimed. "I'm sorry, I didn't know!"

"No reason you should, Sir," Harry calmly replied.

The Prime Minister then paused to think for a few moments, resettling into his chair and frowning. "I'm sorry for raising this, My Lord; but I've never heard of the Earl of Slytherin before now."

Harry smiled and said, "I'm not surprised in the least, Sir. The title 'Earl of Slytherin' has not been in use for almost one thousand years."

The Prime Minister, again, sat upright in his chair before spluttering, "But!... How?... What?... But that makes no sense! How can you be this... Earl of Slytherin... if the title has not been active for so long? It would be impossible!"

Harry raised his hand in a gesture of calming towards the Prime Minister while smiling towards the somewhat excited man.

Once he was sure the Prime Minister had recovered from his initial shock, Harry said, "Your... concern... was anticipated, Sir."

Harry turned slightly in his seat and gestured over to a painting mounted on the wall above the small office fireplace.

"That painting, Sir," asked Harry. "What do you know about it?"

The Prime Minister frowned at the young man sitting across from him...

the young maybe-lord, he thought... wondering about the sudden shift in the conversation to a rather poor work of art.

"What has a shabby painting to do with this?" asked the Prime Minister.

"If you would humour me for a moment, Sir; you will soon discover the answer to your question," responded Harry quite calmly.

The Prime Minister hesitated for a few moments before he answered.

"'Fruit in a Bowl' by an unknown artist," he said. "Nobody can get the damned thing off the wall. My predecessors have tried, I've tried; we've had art historians, carpenters, all sorts of people in here trying to remove it."

Harry just gently smiled as he listened to the Prime Minister grumble about it.

"I tried to convince the maintenance staff here to just remove the whole damned wall atop the fireplace and replace it," the Prime Minister went on, grumbling. "But, nooo; the building - including all the original walls within it - are protected under the British Heritage Act. And not even the Prime Minister is allowed to do that. Plus, the wall is a 'load bearing' wall and would destabilise the whole facade if it was tampered with."

Gathering himself the Prime Minister asked, "But, what of it, Sir?"

Harry grinned back at the Prime Minister for a moment, turned to look directly at the painting, and called out, "Myrrdin's Hand!"

Suddenly, there was a distinct click sound from the painting and the edge closest to the desk popped off the wall.

Harry then turned back to face the Prime Minister and, with a gesture to the painting, quietly said, "You'll need to look in there for your answers, Sir."

Astonished, the Prime Minister was beginning to wonder if this well dressed young man was intent on giving him some sort of coronary

before his unanticipated meeting was over. He was glad that, during his last visit to his personal physician, the doctor told him his heart was fine (though, he could do with some exercise).

The Prime Minister waited a few moments to make sure he was calm enough before rising, walking around his desk and crossing to the painting.

Grabbing the edge of the painting's frame that had come loose, he pulled. The whole side came away from the wall and swung on hidden hinges on the opposite side.

Behind the painting, he found a small box-shaped cubby-hole. And inside he saw a small stack of what seemed to be old documents with a crystal cube-shaped paperweight on them holding them down.

"You'll want to be very careful with those parchments, Sir," said Harry.

"They're very old."

The Prime Minister looked back at Harry for a moment and nodded. He turned back to the cubby-hole, reached in with both hands and gently lifted out the documents in one pile with the cube on top.

'Thank you, Myrrdin!' Harry thought to himself.

Turning, the Prime Minister walked back to and around the desk, and gently placed the documents on his blotter - knocking the dead trinket aside as he did so - before retaking his seat.

"Careful, please, Sir," said Harry. "The space from which you took them had strong protection charms placed on it to drastically slow down the aging process of what was inside. But those documents are still almost one thousand years old."

The Prime Minister had been looking down at the documents, and was just about to move the paperweight out of the way, when Harry said that. But as soon as Harry mentioned how old the documents were his head

snapped back up to stare at Harry in shock, yet again.

Harry was still calmly smiling back at him from where he was sitting back and relaxed in his chair on the other side of the desk.

The Prime Minister placed his elbows on his desk blotter either side of the stack of documents, dropped his forehead into his hands and said near plaintively with his eyes closed, "Earl... My Lord... Mister..."

"Call me 'Harry', Sir," Harry calmly interrupted.

Lifting his head to look over his hands, at what he now thought of as the most astonishing young man he'd ever met across the desk from him he said, "Harry, then." And then sighed before asking, "And these documents are?"

"They will inform you about the Earldom of Slytherin, plus three others, and how and why they were established at the beginning of the eleventh century."

The Prime Minister stared at Harry for a few moments before looking down at the documents again.

After a few moments, and carefully moving each top document aside to see the one beneath, he then said, "I do not recognise the writing, or the individual letters. How am I supposed to read them?"

"They're written in Anglo-Saxon runic script. It was the language of the day of kings, scholars and the clergy," replied Harry.

The Prime Minister, recalling his days in High School studying English History, realised the script was, indeed, Anglo-Saxon script.

"Well, I can't read this... Harry," he said. "But I suppose you have a solution?"

"Of course, Sir," responded Harry, still smiling.

As Harry brought his satchel around in front of himself the Prime Minister sighed, "Why am I not surprised?"

Pausing in what he was doing Harry replied with a grin, "Because you've already had more than enough surprises for one day?" Before returning to opening his satchel and reaching inside.

The Prime Minister only snorted with amusement in response.

Harry then drew from his satchel another sheaf of parchment and, still smiling, handed them over to the Prime Minister.

Taking them from the young man, the Prime Minister placed them on the desk alongside the original stack, gently used both hands to move the original stack off to one side, and then moved the second stack to the blotter in front of himself.

While they still appeared to be parchment, the Prime Minister could also see these were written using modern English lettering and language.

Before the Prime Minister could begin to read the top page Harry spoke up.

"While those documents will provide the evidence of which I spoke, they are not the main reason I am here."

"No?" the Prime Minister looked up and asked.

"No, Sir," said Harry quietly. "I am here to inform you the Minister of Magic, abetted by others, is fomenting sedition against the Crown amongst the people in the wizarding world."

"WHAT?! the Prime Minister near bellowed leaping to his feet.

"Yes, Sir," said Harry calmly. "And he is doing it, while almost literally, pulling the wool over your eyes."

"Explain!" the Prime Minister demanded with narrowing eyes.

"You are being lied to, Sir," said Harry. "And he is using magic to trick you."

"What do you mean?" demanded the Prime Minister.

"I shall demonstrate what I mean, momentarily," replied Harry. "But first,

please tell me what you remember of the meetings you have had with Minister Fudge."

The Prime Minister stared furiously at Harry for a moment before seeming to visibly give himself a shake, and resuming his seat.

He thought deeply for a few moments before saying, "I first met him when he came into my office through the fireplace over there," he said gesturing towards the fireplace, "about a week after I assumed office. He nearly gave me a heart attack when he did that. That's when Muriel came dashing into the room.

"He then pulled out of his sleeve what I thought was a stick and waved it about a bit. The door slammed shut and the curtains closed themselves."

"That stick would have been his wand, Sir," interrupted Harry.

The Prime Minister nodded and said, "Then he told me who he was and said to me he was here to brief me on the magical world. I had never heard of such a thing and thought he was a crackpot. I grabbed the phone and tried to call for security but the phone was dead. So, I walked over and tried to open the door but it was locked. I could not even pull the curtains apart when I tried them.

"He then said something along the lines of 'perhaps a further demonstration was in order'. That's when he turned a chair, the one you're sitting in, into an English shepherd. Then he made my desk float up off the floor. He did a few other things, too, before he changed the chair back and let my desk down. He then calmly walked over and sat in the same chair in which you're sitting, and gestured for me to do the same. Once I was sitting behind my desk here he told me all about the wizarding world.

"Then he got up, said he'd see me again soon, and disappeared in a flash of green flame back out the fireplace."

"And the next time he came, Sir?" asked Harry.

"We had a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters and he left," replied the Prime Minister.

"And the next time, Sir?" asked Harry.

"We had a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters and he left," replied the Prime Minister again.

"And the next time he came, Sir?" asked Harry again.

"We had a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters and he left," replied the Prime Minister yet again.

By this time the Prime Minister was beginning to frown at Harry again.

"And the next time, Sir?" asked Harry.

"We had a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters and he left," asked the Prime Minister yet again.

"Now, Sir," said Harry, leaning forward to stare intently at the Prime Minister. "With the exception of the first meeting, what did you discuss at any of these meetings?"

The Prime Minister replied still frowning, "We had a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters."

"Yes, Sir," said Harry. "But what matters... exactly?"

"I... We...," stumbled the Prime Minister thinking hard. "I don't remember."

"I didn't think so, Mister Prime Minister," said Harry.

The Prime Minister seemed quite confused. So Harry gave him a few moments before asking, "Does Lady Muriel maintain for you an appointment schedule?"

"What?" asked the Prime Minister looking up. "Yes, yes, of course she does."

"Would you mind asking her to bring it in here for you?" Harry asked.

"Ummm... Ah!" the Prime Minister said suddenly understanding. "Yes, of course."

The Prime Minister then reached out to his intercom phone and pushed a button on it.

A moment later the voice of Lady Muriel could be heard. "Yes, Mister Prime Minister?"

"Could you come in and bring with you my appointment schedule from... when I took office?"

"Of course, Mister Prime Minister," she said.

A few moments later Lady Muriel walked in carrying a large ledger, approached the desk, and placed it before the Prime Minister. She waited while he opened it and was obviously expecting him to ask her questions about it.

Harry said, "You're a busy man, Sir. See if you can find any time within it, around the time you believed you had these meetings, where you would have had the time to have them."

The Prime Minister then began flicking through it running his finger down the pages as he did so. As he went through the ledger his frown deepened and deepened.

Once he finished he closed the ledger with a snap and placing his hands flat upon it.

"How is this possible... Harry?" he asked.

"Other than the first, I believe the meetings never occurred, Sir," Harry replied. "Instead, I believe he or someone else came in, hit you with an Obliviate charm... a memory alteration spell... and told you that you and the Minister had... 'a long and fruitful discussion about wizarding matters'. Then left before you'd recovered.

"I believe the person, or persons, who did it would have only been in the

office no more than about twenty seconds, if that."

Harry then paused while he waited for the Prime Minister to process that bit of shocking information. He could see the Prime Minister was quite livid. And Lady Muriel, still standing alongside the Prime Minister's desk, was no less.

"Is there a way I can know what really happened, for myself?" the Prime Minister nearly growled in asking.

"Yes, Sir," Harry promptly replied. "It's going to require me to perform a counter spell. And I'm going to need to lightly touch you on the forehead when I do."

The Prime Minister, still mightily frowning, thought for a few moments before saying, "Do it!"

Harry calmly rose from his chair, walked around the desk and stopped alongside the Prime Minister, who had watched him come around turning slightly as he did.

"When I do this, Sir," said Harry, "you are going to feel a little dizzy for a few moments as the real memories reassert themselves."

The Prime Minister nodded his head and waited.

Harry then made a few little gestures with his right hand, softly called out, "Obliviatu Obscura Revealu!" before tapping the Prime Minister in the middle of his forehead with his right index finger. Then stepped back and away.

The Prime Minister sat there appearing stunned for a moment before suddenly taking a deep breath of air. He suddenly grabbed the arms of his chair and swayed a bit as a look of amazement passed over his face. After a few moments the look of amazement was replaced with one of fury.

Suddenly he shot to his feet and slammed his fists onto the top of his

desk. Staring off into the distance, he snarled, "That... that... bastard!"

Lady Muriel jumped back in fright before exclaiming, "Mister Prime Minister!"

The Prime Minister, not seeming to have heard his personal private secretary while staring off into the distance, snarled even more venomously, "That... traitorous... prick!"

"John!" exclaimed Lady Muriel. "Your language!"

Harry, in the mean time, had calmly walked back to his chair and sat down to wait out the Prime Minister's furious rant.

The Prime Minister, finally hearing Lady Muriel, visibly got himself back under control before more calmly saying and sitting back down, "I apologise, Muriel. I... was just... surprised."

The Prime Minister took a few more moments to close his eyes calming himself before, opening his eyes again, he picked up the ledger and handed it back to Lady Muriel.

"Thank you, Muriel," he said. "I will call if we need you again."

Knowing a dismissal when she heard it Lady Muriel stiffly responded,

"Thank you, Mister Prime Minister." And walked out.

'Not a happy lady,' thought Harry.

After Lady Muriel closed the door behind her the Prime Minister looked up at Harry and said, "I thank you for telling me this, Harry."

"You're welcome, Sir," Harry replied but, sensing a dismissal coming up, said, "However, the information will do you no good when Fudge returns for his next visit."

The Prime Minister thought about that for moment before saying, "He'd just do it to me again, wouldn't he?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "Before you could even open your mouth.

Surprise would be on his side."

Then Harry went on, "I expect he will also be back sooner rather than later. I expect he's going to come and find out why his little listening device has failed."

The Prime Minister glanced down at the little trinket on his desk before looking back up at Harry and saying, "What can I do to stop it?"

"I'm sorry, Mister Prime Minister, you can't," said Harry slowly shaking his head. "You have no way to protect yourself from it."

The Prime Minister was thoughtful for a while before looking back up at Harry and saying, "What if we..."

Suddenly there was a flash and 'poof' sound from the fireplace.

Harry spun around just in time to see Fudge step through wearing a chequered suit with a lime green derby on his head.

Harry immediately thrust his right hand at the man and said, "Stupefy!"

Fudge collapsed to the ground on the spot.

"What on earth was that?" exclaimed the Prime Minister.

Turning back to him, Harry softly said, "A spell to knock him out. He'll be out for a while until I wake him."

Rising from his chair, Harry walked over to Fudge's body and started rifling through his pockets.

Finding what he was looking for he removed something from one of the man's pockets.

Holding it up, Harry showed it to the Prime Minister, while making the 'Shhh' signal with an index finger vertically over his lips. It was a trinket identical to one of which Harry had already dealt.

The Prime Minister clearly understood Harry meant him not to say anything, so wisely kept silent. However, he was also clearly furious.

Harry then cast an almost silent spell on the object. He hesitated a moment before placing a second one on it. And then a third.

"Well, that happened faster than I thought," Harry suddenly said. "I didn't expect him to come checking for at least a day."

"And, sorry, Sir," continued Harry. "For not saying something but I couldn't risk anyone back at the Ministry from overhearing."

"However, I don't think there will be," he went on. "This is Fudge's doing and he won't want anyone else knowing what he's up to."

Reaching for his telephone the Prime Minister said, "I'll have security deal with him. I want to..."

"No, Sir!" interrupted Harry.

Hesitating, the Prime Minister turned back to look at Harry and quietly asked, "Why not?"

"Firstly, Sir," replied Harry, "he's a wizard. Nothing your security services have can hold him. Secondly, when he doesn't return, the Ministry will send through Aurors, magical police, to look for him. Thirdly, we can use this to our... your... advantage."

Dropping his hand back to the desk the Prime Minister said, "Explain."

"I can use the same spell on him that he's been using on you," explained Harry. "I can give him similar... hypnotic... instructions to make him believe he successfully replaced his listening device."

"I've already placed a spell on the device to stop it from listening in, and replaced it with one that provides false information back to him. I've also removed the charm on it that makes you want to keep it on your desk."

"Okay, I'm with you so far," mused the Prime Minister. Gathering himself and speaking more authoritatively, he said, "However, the man is still a traitor; and there is still the matter of sedition within the magical world."

"Yes, Sir," said Harry. "But the sedition is greater than you think."

The Prime Minister frowned and said, "Then you'd best tell me who else is involved."

Seeing his opportunity, Harry went in for the kill.

"Fudge here," he said tapping the man with his toe, "Is only what you've seen of it. He, and a great many others, believe the magical world is nobody's business but theirs. Almost everyone in the magical world agrees with him. And, overtly or not, they nearly all work to keep the mundane world ignorant."

"WHAT?!" the Prime Minister near bellowed.

"Near everyone in the magical world," Harry calmly continued, "believes the mundane world has no right to know what's going on. That includes all other forms and government... And Her Majesty."

"LIKE HELL!," the Prime Minister near bellowed again.

"As far as the magical world is concerned," continued Harry as if the Prime Minister hadn't said anything, "Her Majesty is nothing more than a muggle. And that is a derogatory word on par with calling a black person a gollywog, or similar. Some would even consider Her nothing more than... a clever monkey... not worth their attention."

By this time the Prime Minister was near incoherent with rage. "Those... those... people! Those... GAHH!"

Again, Harry waited for the Prime Minister to take control of himself.

But, while he waited, the door to the office opened again and Lady Muriel returned. She paused for a moment when she saw Fudge on the floor but then simply walked around him.

"Mister Prime Minister," she said a little angrily, "You have guests awaiting you in my office; and we can hear all your shouting from there. Some have also already left not wanting to meet you while you are shouting."

When it appeared the Prime Minister's temper had at least dropped back to anger rather than full on fury, she then said, "Now. Do I need to call

security or medical staff for the man on the floor?"

"Mister... Harry, here... is going to stuff his arse back out through the fireplace when we're done with him," the Prime Minister retorted. "He can bloody well lie there for now, as far as I care."

"Very well," said Lady Muriel. "In the mean time, please modulate your volume down to a dull roar."

Just as she turned to leave again she hesitated for a moment before turning back and said with exasperation, "And please try to mind your language."

Then she exited the office again closing the door softly behind herself.

Harry then said, "There are thousands of them in that world, Mister Prime Minister, in Britain alone. While they may not have committed war upon the United Kingdom, through their magics they have still effectively seceded as a... peoples... from the mundane world."

"No, they have not!" retorted the Prime Minister. "I will not allow it!"

"There is nothing you, personally, can do about it, Sir," replied Harry.

"Other than Fudge, here, you will not even be able find them unless they want you to. They employ magics to occlude themselves from mundane eyes."

"Then how, pray tell, can we deal with it?" asked the Prime Minister angrily.

"First, Sir, I think we need to send Fudge here back," said Harry. "After, of course, I do to him what he did to you. He will be missed very soon if I do not."

The Prime Minister grumbled for a minute before he gestured for Harry to do it.

Harry then bent over Fudge a little and stuck the man's wand into his pocket. He searched his pockets again and found... a little container with

Floo powder in it. Pocketing that himself he cast a weak Enervate charm, then immediately helped the groggy man to his feet. He immediately cast the Obliviate charm on him and kept him in a confused-like state.

While the man was staring vacantly off into space Harry, using a little bit of Legilimency on the man, said, "Minister, your mission to replace your listening device on the Prime Minister's desk was successful. You obliviated him of any memory of it then immediately floo'ed back to the Ministry with no one aware of what you'd done.

"On your return you will find your listening device is working perfectly. You will not need to return."

Harry then put the man in the fireplace and, taking a pinch of floo powder, tossed it in and called, "The Ministry!"

The Minister disappeared with a flash.

"Right," snapped the Prime Minister. "How do we deal with them?"

Harry then set about telling him what he needed the Prime Minister to do. But, it wasn't until Harry played his trump card, that the Prime Minister finally made the telephone call Harry needed him to make.

# # #

### 3. The Queen's Wrath

Chapter Three - The Queen's Wrath

# # #

The ride to Buckingham Palace was made in silence. It was only a short trip, after all.

The Prime Minister's car was not what Harry expected it to be, either.

But, Harry wasn't surprised the Prime Minister would want to get him in to the Palace somewhat incognito. He just did not think a MI5 black Ford Explorer with tinted windows driving directly from Downing Street to the Palace side gate on Birdcage Walk was all that incognito. Photographers

took pictures of the four wheel drive leaving Downing Street, and other photographers took pictures of it driving in through the Birdcage Walk entrance. It wouldn't be long before photographs from each location were compared at some newspaper editor's desk and for someone to start investigating why Downing Street was paying the Palace a visit.

Once inside the gates the car was driven up to a portico at what Harry thought of as the rear of the Palace proper.

After an inspection of their persons by Palace Security Harry and the Prime Minister were escorted through the Palace to the Queen's Audience Room not far from where he knew the Queen's private chambers were located. Harry was still wearing his glamour and carrying his satchel, while the clearly uncomfortable Prime Minister was holding a folio case under his left arm with both sets of documents. The one's from the hidden wall cubby, and the translations Harry handed him. The cube was in his pocket.

Once inside the room their Royal escort left them, but they weren't alone. Royal Page's were stationed at quiet attention paired at each end of the room. At least that's what Harry knew they pretended to be, instead of the highly trained bodyguards he knew they really were. Harry stood with the Prime Minister in silence in the middle of the room while they waited. It amused him the power play in action here. It was straight out of modern business practices to show dominance to a person making them wait like this.

After just over half an hour the door at the opposite end of the room from the one they entered opened. The Queen entered with a small retinue before she took a seat at a small desk. Harry could see she was quite angry.

The Prime Minister didn't move from where they were standing about

twelve feet from the front of the desk, except for turning to face the desk; so neither did Harry. He just shifted position slightly to be standing alongside the Prime Minister facing the desk.

After taking Her seat and making Herself comfortable, and with Her retinue arrayed either side of Her desk, only then did She look up. "Now, Mister Prime Minister," She said. "We had to cancel a number of very important appointments for this outrage. The last time someone pulled this stunt on a reigning Monarch they enjoyed a week at Our pleasure in the Tower. Privilege of the Peerage, indeed."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said the Prime Minister, clearly quite uncomfortable and not knowing what else to say under the stern stare of his Queen. He was not going to use his normal informal manner of addressing his Queen while She was in this mood.

"We believe you have some documents for Us," She said.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied the Prime Minister, bringing the portfolio before him.

The Queen didn't move but one of her retinue stepped forward, took the folio, and carried it over to the Her desk. She took the case without a word, pulled all the documents out in the two bundles they were in, and laid them upon her desk. The original documents were on top.

"And these are?" she quietly asked without even looking up.

"The top bundle are the original documents found hidden in a secret compartment in my office, Your Majesty," replied the Prime Minister. "It is believed they have rested there since before 10 Downing Street became the Prime Minister's office.

"The second bundle is the translations provided to me by... Lord Potter, Your Majesty."

The Queen then set the top bundle aside, opened the second, and began

to read.

Harry could see She had both some experience in speed reading and clearly understood the documents.

After She read the first couple of sheets and, without looking up, She said, "We need to see a list of peerages for the Kingdoms of England and Scotland of late tenth century onwards; and any information on the Earldoms of Slytherin, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Gryffindor."

One of the retinue who was close to the door said, "Yes, Ma'am," and quickly left.

The Queen continued to read without seeming to pause or even hearing the response to Her command. She was only interrupted in Her reading by the return of the missing member of her retinue with two large tomes. Taking both books off the person She opened each book in turn, flicked through a few pages, and ran Her finger down a page before pausing for moment. Then She set each book aside and returned to reading the documents.

Once She finished reading the last document, and had set the pile on top of the first bundle, She looked up and fixed her stare upon Harry. "That is all well and good, young man," She said. "But, it does not prove you are the Earl of Slytherin."

Harry could tell she was referring to his enacting Privilege of Peerage.

"No, Ma'am," Harry calmly replied. "For that final piece Her Majesty will need to summon a goblin, as they are the only folk who have the skills necessary to prove my claim."

About half the people standing either side of the desk looked at him in shock, and the other half looked at him as if he was crazy. The Queen, however, barely flickered an eyebrow on hearing that. Harry was surprised at how much control She maintained in both expression and

body language. If he wasn't watching Her very closely to see what Her reaction would be to his statement he would have missed it.

After hesitating in Her response for a few long moments, and still staring straight at Harry, Her Majesty said, "Send for Sir Kingston Davies. Those who know they're not privy to what Sir Kingston and I discuss may leave now." Flicking her gaze to the Prime Minister she said, "You two stay put."

About half of Her retinue quietly left with murmurs of, "Yes, Ma'am." And Harry noticed they were the ones who thought he was crazy.

After the doors closed behind them Her Majesty said, "We will also be informed of how four of our Earls disappeared from Our view some nine hundred years ago."

"They chose to, Your Majesty," said Harry. "When they could no longer agree on magical matters, instead of fighting each other for domination, they eventually all agreed that none would, and walked away from it all."

"Very well," She said. "Now, while We await Sir Kingston to attend Us, We have been informed this meeting is also about sedition in Our Realm. You shall inform Us of this matter now."

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Harry. "As background, with the exception of very specific cases, the wizarding world does not interact with the mundane world - that is, with those who are non-magical. To ensure this continues to occur, the Ministry of Magic through the Wizengamot has enacted laws under their own authority to heavily penalise those who show magic, or talk to mundane people about magic, outside of their authority. Those who do so are usually penalised anywhere from a stern lecture to imprisonment in the wizarding prison called Azkaban.

"You and Your Government, Ma'am, are also now considered to be of the mundane world. As such, the Ministry of Magic would rule I have broken

the law speaking about this with you, and would probably seek I be placed in Azkaban for a very long time. That sentence will probably exceed my life span as most folk sent to that prison rarely survive past a few years into their sentence."

As Harry spoke he could see the Queen becoming more and more incensed with what he was telling her.

"Further, when a non-magical learns of the wizarding world, or even just that magic is real, people working for the Ministry are sent to wipe their memories of the knowledge, by force if necessary."

On hearing that the Queen raised Her right hand in a stop gesture.

"Do you mean to tell Us," She said in a low angry voice. "One of Our Ministries... is passing laws of which We are unaware... and carrying out aggressive acts... against Our subjects... without Our knowledge?"

"Yes and no, Ma'am," Harry quietly replied.

"Explain!" snapped the Queen.

"You may have noticed I referred to it as the Ministry of Magic, rather than the Ministry for Magic," said Harry. "The Ministry has now reached the point - under the direction of the current so-called Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge - where they believe they no longer have to pay any attention to any non-magical whomsoever; including you, Your Majesty."

"WHAT!?", the Queen nearly bellowed.

The Prime Minister, showing more backbone and fortitude than Harry initially gave him credit for, took a short step forward raising his hands in a placating gesture.

"Ma'am, please," he pleaded. "Your blood pressure."

Swivelling her gaze to Her Prime Minister She asked, "And what do YOU know of this, Mister Prime Minister?"

"I learned of this only a few short hours ago, Your Majesty," he replied.

"When Mister Potter here presented himself to my personal private secretary and, using a secret code phrase that indicated there was trouble in this magical world and someone needed to talk urgently to me about it, demanded an audience with me.

"I must confess I spent a great deal of that time trying to verify a lot of what he told me before contacting Your offices," he said. "Even then I delayed in action trying to verify as much as I could before Mister... Lord... Potter claimed Privilege of Peerage and forced my hand."

"There's more, isn't there, Mister Prime Minister," demanded the Queen.

"Errr... yes, Your Majesty," he said. "During the course of the morning Lord Potter dealt with a magical device that was the equivalent of a listening bug that was on my desk. And... and he cast a spell upon me that undid spells Fudge had cast upon me to make me believe the meetings we have had were... long and healthy discussions over a wide variety of subjects. When Lord Potter removed the effect of those spells I was able to remember that those meetings I had thought we had held were nothing more than fallacies. That, in fact, the meetings had consisted of nothing more that Fudge walking into my office, casting the spell on me, and then walking out again."

Just as the Prime Minister was speaking his last few words, the door through which the Queen had entered opened again and a man appearing in his late seventies with white hair, a trimmed beard and wearing an expensive suit entered and closed the door; before starting to make his way over towards the Queen's desk.

"WHAT!?", the Queen bellowed again.

The elderly gentleman, on hearing that, recoiled in shock.

Still showing the depth of his fortitude the Prime Minister again raised his hands in a placating gesture and pleaded, "Ma'am, please."

Pausing for a moment before swivelling her basilisk-like glare on the elderly gentleman, the Queen said, "You!.. Sir Kingston!... Why haven't you briefed me on the sedition... treason!... I'm hearing about... coming from the magical world?"

"Tr...treason? Your Majesty?"

"Yes, treason!" she exclaimed. "These gentlemen are informing Us that all is not well with Our subjects in the magical world. Why are We only hearing about this now, and not by you?"

The old man spluttered, "I... I don't... I'm unaware of any such treason, Your Majesty!"

"You're supposed to be Our Royal Wizard, Sir Kingston!" she barked. "We find Ourselves, at the moment, most wroth with you!"

"Your Majesty! I... I don't understand!" he spluttered.

"Save it!" snapped the Queen. "We will have words with you concerning your lack of knowledge on this matter at another time. For now, you are to summon a goblin to Our presence with all haste. See to it and return here immediately. Now, go!"

"Y... Yes, Your Majesty!" the old man blurted before turning tail and hurrying from the room just as a younger, middle-aged, man in a similar suit walked in through the same door and approached the Queen's desk.

"Pardon me, Ma'am," he said deferentially, while offering Her a thin document folio. "I have that information you requested."

"Thank you," the Queen said, taking it from him and placing it on Her desk before Herself. Opening it, She began to read.

The man bowed deferentially to His Queen before turning and quietly leaving the room through the same door.

Harry hoped, whatever it was, the time she spent on it would help her calm down a little. However, he soon saw she was still somewhat upset.

Looking up from Her reading, the Queen angrily stared at Harry before asking, "Who are you really, young man?"

"I really am Harry James Potter, Your Majesty," he replied. "I swear to it on my magics and my life."

"Well, Mister Potter; then We have a problem," the Queen said. "I have before me background information on one Harry James Potter, and you are not he.

"According to Our information, Harry James Potter is a ten year old boy just shy of his eleventh birthday who resides at Number Four, Privet Drive in Little Whinging, Surrey, with his Aunt and Uncle, his guardians. And, at this very moment, he is sitting in a classroom in Little Whinging Primary School, with the rest of his class."

Knowing his cover was now blown, Harry softly sighed and said, "I was hoping to do this while your Royal Wizard was here, Your Majesty, so he could verify what I was doing. However, I need to cast a small spell upon myself, if you don't mind."

Still glaring at the young man before her, the Queen asked, "Is it dangerous?"

"No, Ma'am," Harry firmly replied. "It's a simple glamour cancelling charm."

The Queen hesitated for a moment before saying, "We give you permission."

Harry then reached up before himself a little above his own head and cast the charm. Then, as he slowly lowered his arm back to his side, the glamour he had been supporting with his magical core for so long slowly faded away.

As the glamour slowly faded Harry could hear the quiet gasps of surprise coming from the Queen's remaining retinue and, even closer, from the

Prime Minister standing nearby; who took a couple of quick steps away from him in his surprise.

The Queen, however, didn't even bat an eyelash at Harry's reveal. Even though, what She now found before Her, was a small and slender dark-haired ten year old boy with a short back and sides haircut and wearing a dark blue sports jacket over the top, white buttoned-up collared shirt with a plain unadorned dark blue tie, dark grey slacks with a black belt, and black lace-up shoes. The only thing that hadn't changed was the black leather business satchel he still had hanging from his left shoulder. His most notable feature was the small lightning bolt scar on his forehead below his hairline just over his right eye.

The Queen stared at him for a moment longer, looked down at the photograph of the ten year old boy in the folio before her, before again looking back up at Harry.

"Then, if you really are Harry James Potter, just who is it currently attending Little Whinging Primary School?" she asked in an almost flat monotone.

"That is Dobby, Your Majesty," Harry calmly replied. "He's a House Elf, a magical being, who has taken a potion to take my place until the first of September, this year."

"And just why would he do that?" the Queen asked in the same voice.

"And why the first of September?"

"He volunteered for, and took on the role, on my fourth birthday," Harry replied. "It was necessary to ensure a manipulative old wizard in the wizarding world did not learn of my disappearance while I studied and learned of my heritage under the tutelage of my teacher.

"And the first of September is the day I board the train for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in Scotland at Kings Cross Station."

"To what purpose is this... house elf... impersonating you?" asked the Queen.

Just as the Queen was asking her latest question Sir Kingston came hurrying back into the room. He'd come about four steps in before he noticed the young boy, Harry, standing near the Prime Minister.

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed in shock at Harry. "You're Harry Potter!" drawing all eyes towards him.

"Sir Kingston!" said the Queen loudly. And then more calmly called to him, "Come. Here."

Sir Kingston flicked his eyes back and forth between Harry and his Queen for a few moments before actually blushing when he paid more attention to Her and stammered, "Oh... Your Majesty... I'm sorry."

Then he continued to walk quickly over to the Queens desk and addressed her directly. "Your Majesty, the goblins have been contacted and their... ambassador... will be with us momentarily," he near stammered rushing his words out. "He will be arriving via the Floo network and will come out into the room from the fireplace over there," the old wizard said gesturing toward the fireplace half way along the side wall opposite the windows. "I've also temporarily dropped the palace wards to allow him to come through. But I'll have them back up for you once your business with him is included."

"Sir Kingston!" the Queen firmly said. "Calm yourself in our presence. We are definitely not amused by your behaviour this day!"

Blushing and near-physically trying to calm himself, the old wizard said in a calmer voice, "Y... Your Majesty, I sincerely and deeply apologise. I just did not expect to see the hero of the wizarding world standing here before you."

"Be that as it may," said the Queen. "If We did not need your counsel,

right now, We would be banishing you from Our sight! However, as We will be needing your counsel, go stand over there," the Queen gestured off to one side. "And get yourself under control, man!"

"Yes, Your Majesty," the old wizard said much calmer now before bowing and moving to where his Queen directed him.

"Hero of the wizarding world, young man?" enquired the Queen turning back to Harry.

"Errr... yes, Ma'am," replied Harry blushing. "The wizarding world - all of them - believes that I killed one of the most powerful dark wizards in their history while I was only a fifteen month old baby."

"Extraordinary!" She said.

Hesitating a moment expecting Harry to say more she then said, "We believe you were about to inform Us as to why this... house elf... is impersonating you."

"In the magical world, Your Majesty," began Harry, "there is a very powerful wizard named Albus Dumbledore. Over the past sixty plus years he has been setting himself up as..."

Suddenly there was a 'poof' of sound and magical flame from the fireplace. And from the fireplace a goblin dressed in a mundane business suit without a jacket and carrying a small business satchel stepped out startling nearly everyone. The goblin brushed a few spots of soot off himself before calmly turning and walking towards the Queen's desk settling his satchel more comfortably on his shoulder. He paid no attention to anyone else in the room.

A few steps short of the desk he stopped, dropped to one knee with a flourish while also bowing his head, and said, "Your Majesty," to the Queen.

Pausing a few moments he then rose back to his feet, looked at the

Queen, and asked, "You wished to see me?"

Hesitating only a moment the Queen said, "Yes, and you are?"

"Grunnark, at your service, My Lady," the goblin replied. "I am Director Ragnock's envoy to you. The Director hopes I find you in good health and asks how Gringotts of London may be of service to the Crown of the United Kingdom."

Pausing to look over at the old wizard the Queen just asked, "Sir Kingston?"

Sir Kingston stepped forward a few steps and calmly said, "Your majesty, the goblins are a proud warrior race who now dedicate themselves to running the banking system for the wizarding world. They take care of all the monetary needs of the wizarding world as well as hereditary matters and the passing on of estates and heirlooms. Their dedication to that role is absolute and, while they can be ruthless in business, are utterly uncompromisable in their trustworthiness."

"Thank you, Sir Kingston," she said with a small nod and turned back to look at the goblin.

The old wizard bowed and backed back into his spot against the wall.

"Grunnark, on your return please inform Director Ragnock We are in good health and hope he is also," the Queen said. "In the mean time, We are led to believe the goblins are able to confirm an heir for Us associated with the wizarding world."

"We can do such a thing, Your Majesty, but we cannot divulge the findings without the permission of the heir involved," replied the goblin.

The Queen nodded and said, "The young man behind you claims to be the rightful heir of the Earldom of Slytherin. We would have this confirmed."

Grunnark nodded and turned to face Harry. He paused a moment and

said, "You are Harry James Potter. We of Gringotts would know why you have not responded to the correspondence we have sent you."

"I have received no such correspondence, Grunnark," replied Harry almost haughtily. "I believe my magical guardian, Albus Dumbledore, has not been forwarding it to me."

The goblin stared at him for a moment before replying, "Very well." Then he reached into the small satchel he was carrying, removed a small vial and knife, and said, "I will need a few small drops of your blood."

"I shall give you no such thing, Grunnark," Harry said. "Instead, you will return to Gringotts, gather the material you need to perform your tests, and return here. I wish for Her Majesty to witness the rite so she may verify for herself the validity of my claim."

"As you wish," the goblin said, and dropped the vial and knife back into his satchel. Turning back around to the Queen he said, "I will need about twenty minutes to gather what I need."

"Then you have Our leave to depart via the means you came here," the Queen responded. "We shall see you once more in twenty minutes."

The goblin then just turned and walked away back to the fireplace. Once there, he then Floo'ed away.

Harry wondered why the goblins had been trying to contact him.

"Mister Potter," said the Queen, drawing Harry's attention back to her, "you were quite rude to that goblin. He was an envoy and deserved respect."

"Your Majesty, as Sir Kingston said the goblins are a warrior race," replied Harry. "When someone is polite to them they think it's because that person is weak. Instead, I acted exactly as a rightful heir should by showing I believe myself to be better than he. In that way I have gained his respect."

"I also denied him taking my blood away because blood, freely given, can be used in magics against me. He knew this, so he was being contemptuous with me by demanding it. When he returns he will demonstrate greater respect and we will establish a better relationship." The Queen thought about what Harry said for a moment before turning to Sir Kingston and demanding, "And why did you not make Us aware of this, Sir Kingston?"

"My apologies, again, Your Majesty," the old wizard said. "It has been many years ere I have been anywhere near a goblin's bank. And I do not believe I even knew those facts back then. It is not something they taught us at Hogwarts, Ma'am."

"Then after we have concluded today you are to begin updating your knowledge of the wizarding world," huffed the Queen. "As Our Royal Wizard We expect better."

The old wizard blushed and contritely said, "Yes, Your Majesty," with a small bow.

The Queen then focussed her attention back on Harry before saying, "Now then, you were telling us about this Mister Dumbledore. A name I also heard you say to the goblin was your magical guardian. We would hear more."

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Harry. "It is a long tale but will both update you on the wizarding world and answer your question."

The Queen just gave a curt nod in response.

"Back during the Second World War there was also a magical world war going on," Harry began. "The two wars were about the same thing; one man trying to claim power over everyone else. In the mundane world you had Hitler trying to take over. In the magical world you had Grindelwald trying to take over. It is also believed Grindelwald was driving Hitler

onwards in his quest to hide what he, himself, was doing.

"Albus Dumbledore, a powerful wizard, rose during the war to become one of the leaders for 'our' side. He fought hard for what became known as the Forces for the Light.

"Dumbledore is then credited as the wizard who defeated Grindelwald in a duel and ended the magical war. For this the Ministry awarded him the Order of Merlin, First Class. What really happened is Dumbledore came across Grindelwald by accident and, approaching from behind, shot him in the back."

"Mister Potter," interrupted the Queen. "It is not the place of one of Our Ministries to award medals. That is Our prerogative!"

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "But, as I said, the Ministry do not seem to be bothered with that."

The Queen was once more quite irate. "Just how long has this... sedition... been going on, Mister Potter?"

"It has slowly been building and getting worse and worse since at least the First World War, Ma'am," replied Harry. "But it is since the Second World War it has become... more overt."

The Queen was quite livid. It took her quite a few moments to get herself back under control. Then she said, "Please, continue, Sir."

Continuing, Harry said, "Peace reigned for many years after that, with Dumbledore being lauded right across the wizarding world as a great hero. He then built his political power base from the adulation of the populace.

"But, after many years, the hard won peace once more came under threat. By this time, the early 1970s, Dumbledore was an established professor at Hogwarts and in line to take the mantle of Headmaster. Quite a prestigious position.

"A past student of Dumbledore, by the name of Tom Riddle, had recently returned from Eastern Europe where he'd headed soon after his graduation in 1945. He began to foment discontent among the magical community by espousing how those wizards of pure blood - though, there's no such thing - should be running things. He convinced others to join his cause; and his number of followers grew. He also gave himself a brand new name; Lord Voldemort."

"Lord Voldemort?" asked the Queen. "Another Lord of which We are unaware?"

"No, Ma'am," replied Harry. "He named himself that, but he was no Lord. Riddle chose the name so he could convince those who were Pure Bloods, those with money, to follow him. He took it to hide the fact he was what the wizarding world call a Half Blood; born of a magical mother but a mundane father.

"By the mid 70s a structure of authority had formed within Voldemort's followers. He collected about himself a core of about twenty of his most fanatical and bloodthirsty followers and marked them with a magical... tattoo... on the inside of their right forearms called the Dark Mark. These people he named 'Death Eaters', and then he let them loose to wreak havoc. Which they did.

"The Ministry and the rest of the wizarding world were under attack and many within the magical community were being killed in large numbers; especially those who were half bloods, and those born where both parents were mundanes. Many of the so-called pure bloods in the magical community look down with disdain upon those whom they think are not as pure as they. They even have quite derogatory terms for them. And, such folk are often treated as second class citizens within that world.

"The Ministry's own law enforcement branch sent out their Aurors, those

trained in handling wizards who break the law, to bring down these Death Eaters; and those who followed Riddle but were not so marked. However, they were failing; they were losing.

"Also by then Dumbledore had secretly drawn about him his own group. They were a collection of about a dozen people who knew something had to be done and, as the Ministry's Aurors were failing, decided to do something about it. By this time the wizarding world, especially here in Britain, truly was at war."

"Do you mean to tell Us a war existed in our realm," the Queen asked ominously. "That one of Our Ministries knew of it; and that they failed to advise Us of it?"

"I believe, Your Majesty," Harry responded. "That the Minister for Magic reported to your then Prime Minister that a small terrorist group was causing a few minor problems within the wizarding world but they were handling it."

The Queen was furious. Harry knew that one Cornelius Fudge would soon learn his Queen's wrath was not to be trifled with.

After a short while the Queen once more got her temper under control and said, "Please. Continue."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "Dumbledore's group called themselves the Order of the Phoenix. They numbered Aurors who were disgusted in their own Ministry, and others with skills in offensive spells and battle tactics. They came from pure blood families, the elite of the wizarding world, through to what is referred to as muggleborns; those born of non-magical parents. In order to protect themselves and their families the Order operated in secret. Few outside the organisation knew who was in it. Both my parents were in the Order.

"The war didn't rage on continuously, either. There were periods of

months at a time where both sides were silent. But, all within the magical community knew that Voldemort - Riddle - was winning. It was only a matter of time, and Riddle was proving to be a patient man.

"During one of these quiet periods in early 1980 two of the ladies of the Order fell pregnant pretty much at the same time. My mother was one. And not too much later the fighting broke out again.

"Also by then, and due to a spy within their ranks, Voldemort had learned of the Order of the Phoenix. He gave orders to his Death Eaters to hunt them down as a matter of priority. However, the Order also discovered that they had been discovered through their own spy within the Death Eater ranks.

"The Order went into hiding; all except for Dumbledore, who returned to Hogwarts and hid behind its powerful wards. Wards similar to what you have upon the palace, here.

"By this time Dumbledore was Headmaster and was trying to ensure he had enough teachers to fill the vacancies caused by the war. He tried hard to ensure wizarding children were still receiving an education.

"During the interview of one Sybill Trelawney, who had applied for the vacant Divination Professorship, he found the woman to be a little... scatterbrained. He was about to thank her for her time and dismiss her when, suddenly, she dropped into a full Seer's trance.

"Miss Trelawney then began to speak. She said, 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies. And the Dark Lord will mark him as equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches'."

"There was a sudden noise outside and Dumbledore jumped up to quickly

investigate. He saw no one. But the sudden noise startled Miss Trelawney enough to knock her out of her Seer's trance. Dumbledore tried to get her to drop back into her trance, but she couldn't do it.

"Believing there was more to the prophecy, and there was though he didn't know that, he hired her on the spot so that she would be close by him if she ever dropped back into the trance and finished the prophecy."

"It was real?" asked the Queen. "It was a real prophecy?"

"Yes, Ma'am," said Harry. "In the magical world a prophecy uttered by a magical Seer is real. It's just that people more often than not do not know to what they pertain.

"However, Dumbledore believed he knew what it meant. He believed that the child born to either my mother, Lily Evans-Potter, or another lady within the Order, Alice Longbottom, would be the prophesised child. He then sent both sets of parents into hiding.

"Not long after, Dumbledore learned that Voldemort knew of the prophecy, or at least part of it. It was an agent of Voldemort's who had made the noise that knocked Miss Trelawney out of her trance. So he sent both sets of parents into deep hiding."

Suddenly, the fireplace gave another flash of magical flame and soot.

Grunnark again stepped out of it. But this time he turned around and waited. A moment later the fireplace gave another flash and cough.

Grunnark then reached in and pulled from it a polished wooden box about two foot long, a foot wide and about six inches deep. He waited a few moments more and a third flash and cough another goblin stepped out dressed in an even better business suit than Grunnark's.

Grunnark then bowed to the second goblin and, carrying the box in front of him, led the second goblin over to the Queen.

Just in front of the desk both goblins dropped to one knee, bowed, and

said, "Your Majesty."

As both stood Grunnark said, "Your Majesty, I present Director Ragnock of Gringotts of London." Then he stepped aside.

Ragnock then said, "Your Majesty, due to the importance of this situation, I felt I should attend this matter personally."

"Thank you, Director Ragnock," said the Queen. "Did Grunnark inform you of what we wish to discover here today?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Ragnock. "We have the necessary equipment with us to perform the rite."

Then looking around, he asked, "If we may have a small table on which to place this box?"

The Queen nodded and one of her retinue hurried across to the side of the room, grabbed a small Queen Victorian side table, and brought it back placing it in the middle a few feet in front of Harry.

While Grunnark placed the box atop the table Ragnock looked up at Harry and said, "Mister Potter. I have been informed you have not been receiving the correspondence we sent to you. I will have words with you concerning that ere we are done here today."

"If there's time, we shall do so, Director," replied Harry.

Grunnark had opened the lid of the box and removed from it a sheet of parchment and a small pointed knife. He closed the lid and placed both atop and stepped back.

"Now, Mister Potter," instructed Ragnock, "you will need to use the knife to prick your right ring finger. You will then allow one drop of your blood to land on the parchment. The magics within the parchment will then reveal to us your true heritage."

Harry looked up at the Queen who then, after a moment, nodded back.

He stepped up to the box and did as he was told before taking a step back

and pinching down on his finger to stop the bleeding.

From where he was standing Harry could see the single drop of blood beginning to seep into the parchment. Even the Queen had risen from her chair to lean over her desk and watch.

After a few moments the drop of blood suddenly all but disappeared and very quickly lines of red began to flow out from where the drop had landed upon the parchment. After a few more moments it stopped, leaving written lines in its place.

Ragnock then stepped forward and picked the parchment up, orienting it to himself so he could read it.

Quickly scanning through what was written Ragnock said, "Hmmm... I see."

Then, turning to look at Harry, he said, "You are, indeed, the heir to the Earl of Slytherin, Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Slytherin; just as you are the rightful heir of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter, and the rightful heir of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black."

That startled Harry. It was more than he anticipated hearing. Grunnark again opened the box, placed the knife within it and removed what looked like three small ring boxes, before closing the lid again.

It took Harry a few moments to regather himself before he said, "It is Her Majesty who sought this information today. Please, show her."

Ragnock gave Harry a small bow before turning and walking over to stand in front of the Queen's desk.

"Your Majesty," he said, offering the parchment to Her.

The Queen, who by this time had recovered her seat, took the document from Ragnock and quickly read through it.

After a moment she looked up and called Sir Kingston to her side.

"Well?" she asked him.

"It is authentic, Your Majesty," he said. "The document, and the information on it, cannot be forged."

"Very well," she said motioning the old wizard aside before turning back to face Ragnock.

"We require a true copy of this document, Director Ragnock," she said handing the document back to Ragnock. "For Our records."

Hesitating but a moment the old goblin said, "Of course, Your Majesty."

Turning back to Grunnark he made a small gesture. Grunnark reached back into the box and drew out a second sheet of parchment and the small knife.

Then, turning to Harry, he said, "You will need to repeat the rite, Mister Potter, to make the copy."

Harry stepped forward for the second time and, again pricking his finger, repeated the rite before again stepping back.

When the blood finished its work Ragnock stepped forward, picked up the document and compared the two. Then he walked over and handed it to the Queen.

Walking back over to stand before Harry he asked, "Will you be taking up your heirs rings at this time, Mister Potter?"

Instead of immediately answering Harry asked, "If I take up my rings will the Wizengamot and my magical guardian, Albus Dumbledore be informed?"

"Yes, Mister Potter."

"Is there a way I can take my rings and not have the Wizengamot nor Dumbledore informed?"

The old goblin hesitated for a moment before replying, "It has never been done before, Mister Potter. But it could be done."

"What is this Wizengamot of which We are hearing?" the Queen asked firmly.

"The Wizengamot, Your Majesty," began Harry, "is a body of wizards set up by the Ministry. It is formed of three parts. The first is the Heads of the Most Noble and Most Ancient Houses, the Noble and Most Ancient Houses, the Noble and Ancient Houses, the Noble Houses and those Magical Houses who hold a lordship; and the second is the Heads of Department within the Ministry, usually Undersecretaries, who are not part of the first two groups but are there as advisors in magic. Albus Dumbledore is Chief Warlock of the small group of powerful wizards.

"It is this body that write and pass the laws that govern Magical Britain, and the Ministry enacts."

"They most certainly do NOT!" the Queen called out. "It is the Houses of Lords and Commons in Westminster who write and pass laws in the United Kingdom - magical, mundane or otherwise! And they do so only under Our authority!"

It was Ragnock who responded in the face of the Queen's ire, "They do not agree, Your Majesty, and have passed laws to that affect in their own name."

"WHAT?!" the Queen near bellowed again, rising from behind her desk. And again, it was the Prime Minister, who had been content to try and make himself as little noticeable as possible since the last time he spoke, who once more stepped forward trying to calm his Queen.

"Y... Your Majesty!" he croaked. "Your blood pressure!"

Again, visibly controlling Herself and retaking her seat, the Queen called, "Davies!"

The old wizard blanched but hurried forward.

"Yes, Your Majesty?" he asked quite deferentially.

"We are hearing of yet more information of which We were not aware,"

She snapped. "Explain yourself!"

"Your Majesty," he said. "The sum total of the time I spent immersed in the magical world consisted of the time I attended Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry from shortly after my eleventh birthday until the year I turned seventeen. On graduating I sought employment within that world but, on finding none, I returned to the non-magical world. I have not returned since.

"I believed Your Prime Minister was receiving regular briefings from the Ministry, so I saw no reason to make my own investigations."

The Queen just glowered at the poor man for a moment before gesturing,

"Go back over there!"

'Yep,' thought Harry. 'The Royal Wizard is in deep doo doo'.

Ragnock spoke up just then and said, "Shall I gut him for his incompetence, for you, Your Majesty?"

The Queen turned her gaze back upon the old goblin, hesitated for a moment, and said, "No. We shall deal with him in Our own manner at a later time."

The old goblin bowed and said, "Very well, Your Majesty." But he gave every sign he was quite disappointed in Her response.

That, at least, seemed to amuse Her Majesty, even if the only sign of it was a slight twitch near the edge of her mouth.

"Now," she said looking back up at Harry, "I take it you have reasons for not wanting this Wizen... whatever... from learning of your... elevation, My Lord?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," he replied. "My investigations lead me to believe members of the Wizengamot - led by no less than my own magical guardian, Albus Dumbledore - will attempt to prevent me from taken my

rightful place within the wizarding world if they... catch wind... of what I'm up to.

"My own plan - which has taken a great deal of forethought and planning between my tutor and myself - has for me to ambush those sons of... folks before they can act."

"We see," said the Queen. "We shall hear more of this plan of yours once We are satisfied We have what information We need.

"In the mean time, Director Ragnock," she said looking down at the old goblin, "By Our command, you are to ensure these rings of which you speak do not advise this Wizengamot, nor anyone else, that Lord Potter has accepted them."

"As you wish, Your Majesty," the old goblin said, bowing deeply forward.

"Lord Potter," She said turning to Harry. "You are the Earl of Slytherin and by Our command you will take up your Earl of Slytherin and other rings."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said Harry stepping forward to join Ragnock before the large box.

Ragnock, on hearing what the Queen said, looked back down at the rite of inheritance document and seemed a little startled by what he saw.

He then picked up one of the small boxes and looked up at Harry, before saying, "First will be the Head of House ring for the House of Slytherin."

He then opened the box, cast an intricate spell upon the rings inside, and offered it to Harry, "Yours is the ring on the left. The magics of the ring will not now notify anyone it has been donned. Please put it on the ring finger of your right hand."

Harry then reached into the box with his left hand and removed the ring on the left. Then, raising his right hand before him, he slipped the ring onto his finger as he'd been directed. After a few moments, the ring

slowly shrunk to his size finger before giving off a little flash of light.

Harry could see the house crest of Slytherin on it in detail.

"That was the final confirmation that you are, indeed, the new Earl of Slytherin," the old goblin said. "Congratulations, my Lord. By ancient law you are now emancipated as a minor. And you have the full rights and authority of an adult in the wizarding world.

"Now that you are recognised as an emancipated minor you no longer require a magical guardian to act in your stead. However, as the magics of the ring has been suppressed from notifying anyone you have donned it, your magical guardian will not be automatically informed."

Then, turning to and picking up the next box, Ragnock turned back, opened it, and cast the same spell on this ring before offering it to Harry.

"Place this ring, on the left, on the same finger, My Lord. It will merge with the first."

Following the same process Harry then took the ring and placed it on his finger, watching as the two rings combined into one on his finger before giving off the same flash of light.

"That was the final confirmation that you are the new Lord and Head of House Potter," the old goblin said. "Congratulations again, my Lord."

Ragnock went through the same steps with the third ring offering it to Harry. "This is the Heir's ring for the House of Black. It is the one on the right. Same finger, my Lord."

Following the same process Harry watched as it merged with the first two and flashed.

Ragnock then waved his wand again over the rings and said, "All three rings are now bonded to your magical core, My Lord. All you need to do is think of which ring you want displayed and it is that one which will show itself."

"Is there any way I can obscure them from sight if I don't want them seen?" Harry asked.

"Yes, My Lord," replied the goblin. "You merely need to will them to disappear and they will do so."

Harry looked down at the merged ring on his finger, willed it to cycle through the three different Houses, and then willed it to disappear, before lowering his hand again.

Harry looked up just in time to see the Prince of Wales enter the room.

The tall, middle aged man, walked a few paces into the room and noticed the goblins, Harry and the Prime Minister. He hesitated a moment before making his way over to the Queen.

"Mister Clinton will be arriving momentarily, Mum," he said in his deep soft spoken cultured voice.

Turning to look up at him the Queen said, "You go deal with the philandering fool, Charles. We are about to invest a new Earl into Our Peerage. Tell him We will see him tonight. If he doesn't accept that, confide in him We've taken ill."

"Yes, Mum," said Charles before turning around and walking back out the door.

The Queen then gestured towards one of the pages in Her retinue and said, "Go and get my sword," before then turning to another and saying, "Get four chairs and bring them over for Our guests to sit. They've been standing long enough." The two so indicated scurried off to do their Queen's bidding.

Then, turning to the goblins, She said, "Director Ragnock; you and Grunnark are welcome to stay."

"One moment, if I may, Your Majesty," Harry said, interrupting.

"Lord Potter?" She asked, clearly a little annoyed with the interruption.

"Your Majesty, I happen to know the identities and probable locations of the other three Earls."

Focussing Her stare on Harry the Queen waited for a moment before asking, "And just why are We learning of this now?"

"Your Majesty was focussed on the matter of sedition we were discussing, and my... claim," he said. "I thought it best to wait until you had received information to your satisfaction on those matters before raising the matter of the others.

"Secondly, they, too, will need to verify their claims through the rite of inheritance we have just carried out here concerning my own... elevation.

"And, finally, none of them are aware of their current... status. They are unaware they are the heirs."

"Lord Potter," the Queen said. "You and I will be having a long discussion concerning how you have this information and We are just learning of it now. We also find your manner of speech quite... advanced... for someone of your purported age.

"For now," She said reaching for a blank sheet of paper and a pen. "We will have those names. Take a seat."

"Yes, Ma'am," Harry replied as he and the Prime Minister sat on the antique chairs they were supplied. "Earl Gryffindor is Neville Francis Longbottom. At present he should be at Longbottom Manor under the care of his Grandmother, Madam Augusta Longbottom. He is considered a Pure Blood and I believe his family rarely interact with the non-magical world. Longbottom Manor is located just outside of the village of Staining just outside of Blackpool. Neville is one day older than I am and is the other child Dumbledore thought to whom the prophecy might apply."

While Harry was speaking the one sent off to get the Queen's sword returned with it in his gloved hands. And just stood there with it,

waiting.

Harry barely paused before continuing. "Neville's parents are still alive but both are now... mentally incapacitated. They are permanent patients at Saint Mungo's Hospital, magical Britain's wizarding hospital, where they are under twenty-four hour care. Madam Augusta Longbottom is acting as Regent for the Noble and Most Ancient House of Longbottom on the Wizengamot."

Harry waited while the Queen wrote down the information before She glanced up again and quietly asked, "What happened to them?"

"Neville's parents? Frank and Alice Longbottom, were tortured to the point where their minds... snapped," Harry quietly said. "The Death Eaters tortured them to find Neville's location but, as they didn't then go after him as he was in the care of his grandmother at the time, the Death Eaters were clearly unsuccessful. Voldemort's - Riddle's - minions used the... event... as an example of what would happen to anyone who stood against him, saying there were worse things than death for those who defied him."

Seeing the Queen was no longer writing Harry went on.

"Countess Hufflepuff is Susan Charity Bones. She is about the same age as me just a few months younger. At present she should be at Bones Manor under the care of her Aunt, Amelia Susan Bones. She is a Half Blood, the same as me; and both her parents and magical grandparents were killed in the recent war I was talking about earlier. Bones Manor is located in High Stakesby about twenty miles east of Middlesborough along the east coast.

"Amelia Bones is the current Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, the DMLE, within the Ministry and Chairs the Wizengamot as presiding Judge when a criminal case is brought before them. It is the

Wizengamot that acts as a court in such matters. It is the Chief Warlock, Albus Dumbledore, who Chairs the Wizengamot at all other times. The DMLE is the wizarding world's version of MI5 and Scotland Yard combined."

Harry expected the Queen to say something about that. But the only sign he knew She understood what he meant was a slight pursing of Her lips and narrowing of Her eyes.

Once the Queen paused in Her writing Harry continued.

"Countess Ravenclaw is Hermoine Jean Granger. She is about ten months older than me. At present she should be at Highgate Middle School where she is in Year 7. She is mundaneborn and lives at home in Highgate with her parents. All three have no idea Hermoine is a witch but they know there is something... weird... going on. They should be visited within the next couple of weeks by Minerva McGonagall, Deputy Headmistress at Hogwarts, who will bring with her an invitation for Hermoine to attend Hogwarts.

"Professor McGonagall will also set the Grangers straight about what it means to be a witch or a wizard and make sure they understand they cannot speak about the wizarding world. That is one of the rare exceptions to the secrecy... rule... I spoke about earlier.

"Doctor Daniel and Doctor Emma Granger are dental surgeons who run a dental practice together in Highgate proper, not far from their home."

After the Queen finished taking Her notes, She asked, "Is that all, Lord Potter?"

"Not quite, Your Majesty," Harry said. "Both the Longbottom and Bones manors are hidden from mundane eyes. That is, non-magical folk would walk right past both manors and not know they were there. The Granger home, however, can be found in the local telephone directory.

"You will also find little to no record in any system concerning Susan Bones. She has spent her entire life within the wizarding world and I am unaware of any time she has interacted with the mundane world where they would be entered into a record.

"Madam Amelia Bones, in her role as Head of the DMLE, is likely to have interacted with either or both MI5 and Scotland Yard in her work within the DMLE. However, both organisations are unlikely to know of her, or her role within wizarding Britain. I would suspect knowledge of her would have been wiped from the minds of the officers and agents concerned.

"Susan's mother, Charity Bones nee Martin, was a mundane born. There should be a birth certificate, medical and school records of her available somewhere. A search on such records for her will find she disappeared shortly before 1st September when she was eleven years old. And to answer the obvious question; yes, it was because she attended Hogwarts. As far as I know she never returned to the mundane world except, possibly, to visit non-magical family members.

"Though Neville is a Pure Blood, he was born in a mundane hospital. The same one as me, actually. And only a few hours before. The Order sent both our parents to give birth in a mundane hospital because they had intelligence Riddle knew when our mothers were due. As Saint Mungo's is the only wizarding hospital in Britain it was too great a risk for either of us to born there. So, you will be able to find a birth certificate for Neville but no other records.

"That is all I have about the other heirs, Your Majesty," finished Harry. The Queen finished jotting down the last of Her notes before She gestured for another member of Her retinue to step forward. Giving the couple of sheets She had been written upon to him She said, "Get this to

the Director of MI5 immediately. He is to make his own investigations and report directly to Us with the results. We would have those results within... ninety minutes. If he seeks clarification of any matter he is to contact Us immediately. Go."

The man in question said, "Yes, Ma'am," bowed, and fled the room.

Turning to look back at Harry she said, "Lord Potter, We would be informed as to how you obtained this information of which you are providing Us now."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry.

He then turned to the Prime Minister and asked, "Mister Prime Minister, may I have the message cube, please?"

The Prime Minister hesitated a moment before he reached into the pocket of his suit jacket and wordlessly handed Harry the cube he drew from within.

Harry then stood up and stepped forward to the goblin's box, which was still sitting on the little table upon which it was first placed and remained during the rite of inheritance.

He placed the cube on top of the box, looked back up at the Queen said, "Your Majesty, this is a message from the person whom I'm proud to call my tutor, my mentor, and my friend. He is the first person to ever hold the position of Royal Wizard in England. It is he who set me on the path I now tread.

With that, Harry reached out with his right index finger, tapped the top of the cube twice and said, "Begin!" before stepping back and resuming his seat.

The space above the cube shimmered slightly and an image of Myrrdin appeared facing towards the Queen.

"Your Majesty," said Myrrdin, "my name is Myrrdin Emrys, I have been

called many names, but you may know me as Merlin Ambrosius."

# # #

#### 4. Merlin's Message

##### Chapter Four - Merlin's Message

# # #

Harry watched the sudden shock ripple across the Queen's retinue, but wasn't surprised by the lack of response from the Queen other than a slight twitch in her eyebrows.

"I have been called a druid, magician, mage, seer, sorcerer, legend, fantasy and," Myrrdin smiled, "an old fraud. What I am - or was, from your point of view in 1991 - is a druidic mage and seer.

"Please be aware young Harry can pause, or end, this message at any time. You've only but to ask him.

"By now, young Harry has given you a great deal of information concerning what is happening in the wizarding world in your time. He will have also given you some information on the other heirs. And, by now, you will be wondering just how it is he knows what he does.

"The answer is simple. I told him. And we investigated matters further, together.

"Normally, I do not take an active role in the affairs of man. I remain conscious at all times of the paradoxes involved with... fiddling... with the time streams. However, while messing with the time streams is dangerous, watching what happens across time, is not.

"Many, many years ago - or a few moments ago - it depends on your point of view of time," Myrrdin smiled again, "I became aware that a manipulative old know-it-all wizard who goes by the name of Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, had learned of part of a prophecy and - full of his own pride, arrogance and overweening self importance -

decided to use what he learned and shape events to fit what he thought should happen.

"He developed a plan, shaped around what he believes or believed, is 'The Greater Good'. It was designed to make the prophecy come out the way he thought it should. Instead, he set in motion a chain of events that, if I had not stepped in, would have resulted in a world-wide wizard war that would have cost billions of lives, both magical and mundane. Quite possibly, almost probably, it would have driven the world to almost total annihilation.

"If, on the other hand, he had left things alone - or will have left things alone - then an evil man would have been destroyed, and the one who did it - young Harry here - would have gone on to unite the magical world under a... banner... of equal opportunity for all. He would have brought that world's unlawful and unfair laws and behaviour back under control; and the magical world would have been a very happy and safe place for folks to be.

"That was to be young Harry's destiny... until Dumbledore interfered. So, I felt I had to... take steps. However, I could not and cannot take steps directly, due to one of those irritating time paradoxes I mentioned.

"In simple terms, what I did was create what Harry calls a 'pocket reality'. It is a place outside of time and outside of your reality. In that reality I made time run at slightly less than half the rate it does in normal reality.

"I then grabbed from your reality of 1984, a house elf Harry was supposed to rescue from his abusive magical master in late May 1993. I brought him into the pocket reality, showed him the information leading up to and beyond May 1993, freed him of the magical bond that forced him to serve his abusive master, and asked if he would be willing to take Harry's place as a... magically altered doppelganger... and continue life as

Harry would have done if I had not removed him.

"If I had not removed him, the Dursleys would have continued to abuse him; lock him for days on end in the cupboard under the stairs; clothed him only in hand-me-downs from his much larger cousin; allowed him to eat little more than table scraps; and forced him to do all the household chores including caring for the gardens, the cooking, the laundry, cleaning the house from top to bottom, and any other chore they could imagine for him.

"During this time he would have been constantly physically abused with beatings by his uncle and his cousin. A cousin who is constantly spoiled by both his parents who has now become nothing more than an overweight brat and bully. His Aunt, once Harry was able to dress and toilet himself, would never touch him again. And would even encourage the beatings he received."

When Myrrdin started describing what Harry's life was going to be like Harry began to, at first, wince, before finally dropping his head into his hands and moaning slightly.

"As it was I rescued Harry on his fourth birthday. At that time he was malnourished - his eyesight was becoming poor as a result, which would have led to him needing spectacles - was undersized, had sore hands from constantly weeding garden beds, was covered in bruises, had a mild concussion from a beating from his uncle the evening before, and was under the impression his name was 'Freak' because that was the only name they called him, and had damage to his magical core that would have weakened his magic. His weakened magical core would have, in part, led to him being unable to fulfill his role in prophecy.

"If I know Harry as well as I believe I do, and I know I do, right now he's currently wishing I would just shut up about it. So, I will, for now.

Though I've told him this many times, he has no reason to feel embarrassment about how the Dursleys treated him, and would have treated him."

Harry glanced at the Queen to see how she was handling this. What Harry saw was his Monarch, looking like she was ready to commit murder on the spot. And Her remaining retinue were in a similar state. So were the goblins.

He then wondered if the Prime Minister was going to give his little 'calm yourself', speech to his Queen. Instead, a quick glance across at the Prime Minister, showed the man was also staring bug-eyed at the image of Myrrdin and he was looking quite choleric with rage.

"Now, please don't concern yourself about the little house elf, Dobby, who has taken his place," Myrrdin continued. "A house elf is able to take and handle much more abuse than a small child. He has his own brand of magic which allows him to almost instantly heal his injuries and he's able to make the Dursleys believe through minor illusions that his body is... suitably... battered and ill-treated.

"Further, while Dobby is a volunteer, he is also able to leave the Dursleys at any time if he feels unable to continue with the charade. That he hasn't yet is testimony to his bravery and dedication to Harry. Dobby may be... just... a house elf. But he's also one of the bravest people I have ever met.

"Though Harry would rather forget about the Dursleys and just let the matter go I, for one, will not countenance such treatment of a child. I ask that you have them suitably dealt with after, but not until, the 1st of September. We desperately need the charade to continue until then. Your law enforcement investigators will find signs of 'his' abuse in the cupboard under the stairs, from interviews of their neighbours, and from his school at Little Whinging Primary.

"Now for why Dobby had to take his place instead of just taking Harry.

Dumbledore has set upon the Dursley residence spells and charms that allow him to monitor Harry and the household. He did this to ensure Harry was right where he wanted him to be so that when he has Harry... rescued... Harry will look upon him as his saviour, making him more malleable to Dumbledore's manipulations.

"That's right, Dumbledore knows full well what the Dursleys are doing to Dobby, who he believes is Harry. While Dumbledore would never directly kill another person, or abuse another person, he is more than happy for another person to commit such acts so long as he could justify it to himself as being for what he calls 'The Greater Good'.

"I now return to Harry himself; the real Harry.

"As I said, I took him from the Dursleys during the early hours of his fourth birthday. After I healed him I began to prepare him. But, while he was still a small child, I also made it fun for him. I made sure his childhood was a very happy one.

"One thing I did to him just after he arrived in the pocket reality and I healed him, was slow his physical growth and development to match the rate at which time was slowed. That way he would not leave the pocket reality looking like a young adult. Instead, he looked - looks - like a normal, healthy, happy and well-rounded eleven year old.

"However, I allowed his intellectual, emotional, spiritual and magical cores to develop normally. That is why he probably looks to you, if you think about it, like a nineteen year old, or someone even older, trapped in an eleven year old's body.

"And now for the full prophecy which, other than about the pocket reality, Harry believes was about the only thing I was going to tell you about."

Suddenly the image of Myrrdin seemed to jump to one side, and another image of lines of text slowly started to scroll up the screen.

Myrrdin, though, began to speak in a deeper voice. "The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies. And the Dark Lord will mark him as equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives. Before two more hands of full turnings shall pass... The one with the power will come forth from whence he has been lost. He shall be joined by loyalty... He shall be joined by wit... He shall be joined by resolve. The four are rejoined! They shall defeat evil and restore order to magical kind."

The words continued to scroll up the screen before fading out at the 'top'.

Back in his normal voice Myrrdin said, "Now to translate." And the prophecy once more began to scroll up the screen. But this time much more slowly.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... that could be anyone at this point.

"Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...

That could have meant Harry or young Neville Longbottom.

"And the Dark Lord will mark him as equal... Now that's definitely Harry.

The scar on his forehead was from Riddle trying to kill him in his crib on the night of the 31st of October 1982. The mark left by Riddle of a killing curse that rebounded and... temporarily... killed Riddle.

"But he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... According to

Dumbledore, that's the power of love. The love of his parents that saved him from the killing curse. And the love he has for others now.

Dumbledore is wrong.

"And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the

other survives. He will either kill Riddle, or Riddle will kill him. So, yes;

Harry has to kill Riddle to save the world.

"Before two more hands of full turnings shall pass... A decade in normal space time.

"The one with the power will come forth from whence he has been lost...

That's Harry, again, but coming out of hiding.

"He shall be joined by loyalty... That's Hufflepuff.

"He shall be joined by wit... That's Ravenclaw.

"He shall be joined by resolve... That's Gryffindor

"The four are rejoined!... That means Harry is Slytherin. But, to be properly rejoined, they will have to come together where the four founders parted. That's Hogwarts. The first time that can occur will be the evening of the 1st of September 1991 when all four walk in together into the Great Hall at Hogwarts, when all first year students are sorted into their Houses.

"They shall defeat evil and restore order to magical kind... Harry will defeat Riddle and the four of them working together will destroy any other evil, including Dumbledore's brand of it, before they then go on to fix the problems in the magical world bringing true law and order... restore order... back to all the magical races."

The second image then disappeared and Myrrdin's image jumped back to its original spot.

"Pause the message, Lord Potter!" the Queen called out.

Harry jumped up and quickly stepped forward reaching out to tap the top of the message cube.

"Now, as to..." Myrrdin's message continued just as Harry tapped the cube and said, "Pause!"

This left Myrrdin's image paused similar to a DVD player.

"Your Majesty?" asked Harry.

"Lord Potter," She calmly said. "We are not someone to put much faith in prophecies. However, according to what We have just heard, if you do not... kill... this Riddle person..."

"Tom Riddle; yes, Ma'am," said Harry, interrupting.

"Tom Riddle. Then the world, as We know it, will be destroyed," continued the Queen. "We do not like the sound of that."

'That's an understatement,' thought Harry.

"As the one upon whom all this hinges; and the one who, in the other timeline where Dumbledore meddled, would have been killed soon after his... my... seventeenth birthday and failed; neither do I, Ma'am."

"We are beginning to more than suspect you and... Merlin... have a plan to deal with this," She mused.

"Yes, Your Majesty," said Harry. "And I'm hoping Myrrdin's message get's on with it and discloses it to you. Because I'd rather you be upset with him about what he's done than with me. I don't think there's much to go now, Ma'am."

"Very well," said the Queen. "Continue."

"Yes, Ma'am," said Harry before reaching out and once more tapping the top of the cube and saying, "Play!" before heading back to his seat.

Myrrdin's message then continued, "... your role in this. Please, do not worry, you're going to like this."

But Harry could see a fair bit of consternation ripple across the Queen's people. No one messes with their Monarchy.

"Back in April of 1910 I organised for an old wizard of that time to cast upon the Crown a spell that is linked directly to the House of Windsor and would imbue the person so crowned certain magics of their own," continued Myrrdin. "You may think of these magics as Royal Magics.

"The magics include subtle charms relating to compulsion, which compels your subjects to obey you when you push with your magic; charisma, which will lead your subjects to really like you, if not love you; and magical compulsion, which means your magical subjects will have to obey your commands when given.

"However, to stop the wizarding world becoming aware of this, I made the radius of the effect of the charms quite short. In you, it should be about 100 yards. And that is way beyond the effective spell range of a wizard.

"Further, the spell is most effective upon magical folk, including wizards. Even wizards highly skilled in Occlumency, the shielding of the mind, will be affected. In effect, no magical being within range of you and under compulsion can do you harm or disobey your lawful commands." Myrrdin paused to think for a bit and then said, "Perhaps I should also clear something up here. All of the House of Windsor, from George the Fifth on, has these magics inert within them. However, it is only the ceremony in which the rightful heir is crowned, that activates it. It is magic linked by blood.

"I debated whether or not you should be informed you had this power. I was, at first, against it. Knowledge of the power could conceivably corrupt you; and you did not need to know about it for it to be effective. However, Harry insisted and said he would inform you if I did not. He also felt I should be the one to tell you as I was the one who did it to your House.

"As for why I did it, Harry and the other heirs are going to have a hard enough time setting things to rights in the wizarding world as it is. Harry and the other heirs will need the power of your authority over the wizarding world - to drag them kicking and screaming in opposition in

some cases - to get things back on track sooner than would have occurred in the original timeline.

"Harry is working on an accelerated timeline here from the original. In the original, before Dumbledore interfered, the four heirs of the founders, the Earldoms, would have taken up their rings on their seventeenth birthdays; when they reach their majorities under wizard law. And they would have spent the next half century at least setting the wizarding world back to rights.

"However, since I had to take a more active role than just monitoring, then we're going to fix things faster. It will save many lives that would have otherwise been lost. Especially, those of children and non-magical folk.

"I'll leave it to Harry to tell you about bringing balance back to the timeline. He'll also be able to answer any questions you may have.

"He is loyal to the Crown, Your Majesty. He will do your bidding without question. But he and I have also spent years planning how to bring balance back to magical Britain and the world. I ask you to heed his counsel."

Myrrdin then bowed, and the image then winked out.

The room was silent for a few moments until the Queen, having gathered her thoughts, spoke, "We are not happy to hear of tampering occurring with the blood of the House of Windsor, My Lord."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Harry said. "But I think I need to clear up a couple of things Myrrdin said and I will then show you at least part of the effect of the Royal Magic."

The Queen just gave Harry a slight nod to continue.

"The magical world think it is blood itself involved; and, as such, they refer to it as blood magic. However, it's actually the DNA contained

within the blood to which these forms of magic are linked," explained Harry. "If it was just the blood then it would not be passed on to each successive generation. But, as it's linked to the DNA of the person, it can be passed on.

"That is how the goblin's rite of inheritance is able to determine someone's bloodline. They just further use the plasma in the blood to spread the red blood cells across the page to form the words."

Harry paused to check that the Queen understood before moving on.

"As for a demonstration of your magic in use you will notice Director Ragnock and Grunnark are still here and haven't moved much," said

Harry indicating the two goblins.

"I and Sir Kingston are much more affected by your magics than any non-magical human as we are partly magical. The goblins, however, are far more magical so it affects them even more.

"Now, goblins are a proud warrior race, as Sir Kingston said earlier. In goblin culture, in a time of war, Director Ragnock would be a war chief of his clan. And yet he, and Grunnark twice, both did not hesitate before kneeling before you. He would never do this to anyone else, including Prince Charles, Ma'am."

Harry was watching the two goblins to see their reactions on hearing this. Harry thought both had expressions of shock on their faces; but it was hard to tell with goblins.

"Further, the goblins have now channelled their warrior... spirits... into the banking world. They have pretty much dedicated themselves to the... war of the boardroom... and making money.

"Both would, right now, much rather be back at the bank running businesses and making money. And yet, neither has sought to leave. And, finally, the goblins are very avaricious. Yet they have not charged you for

the service they have performed today."

The Queen thought about what Harry said for a moment before turning to face the goblins.

"Director Ragnock," she asked. "Do you feel this... compulsion?"

"I had not noticed it until Lord Potter mentioned it, Your Majesty," he replied. "But, yes. I can sense it now it has been brought to my attention. It is very subtle."

The Queen again hesitated for a moment before she said, "Then We apologise to both of you, Director Ragnock. We have unknowingly kept you and Grunnark from your... endeavours. Please inform Us of a suitable fee for your service here this day and you shall be duly awarded."

The old goblin merely bowed before the Queen went on.

"We shall shortly be in need of your services, yet again, when the other heirs are brought before Us. Will you avail of Us your services at that time?"

"I would be honoured, Your Majesty," the old goblin said bowing again.

"We thank you," said the Queen. "We shall call then."

Both goblins then bowed.

Seeing his opportunity Harry then said, "Director Ragnock."

The old goblin turned to him and waited.

"You have also done a great service for me, today. Please take a suitable fee, plus ten percent as bonus, from my vaults as recompense."

"It shall be done, My Lord," the old goblin said.

"And may I ask, what was the phrase you used to floo into this room?" asked Harry.

"Buckingham Palace, My Lord."

Harry nodded in response, then said, "Then, may gold flow as rivers into your vaults; and what few remain of your enemies tremble at mention of

your name."

The old goblin was a little surprised but clearly pleased before formally replying, "And may our business together prove most fruitful for us both and line our pockets with gold."

He then gestured to Grunnark who stepped back up to the box, carefully moved the message cube to one side and took up the box between his hands before heading back to the fireplace. Ragnock hesitated for a moment before he said to Harry, "There is still the matter of the business we would discuss with you. And, now that you are emancipated, there's the matter of the Potter Will."

"The Potter Will?" asked Harry, surprised.

"Yes, My Lord," he replied. "The Will of your parents, James and Lily Potter."

"I was unaware of a Will, Director," said Harry. "Could you bring it with you when Her Majesty next calls upon you?"

"Of course, My Lord," the old goblin replied before bowing once to Harry, then turning to bow once more deeply to the Queen. He then turned on his heels and strode back to the fireplace to join Grunnark, before both then left.

Harry then turned to the Queen who asked, "We would know what that was about gold and enemies, My Lord."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "It is a goblin greeting to mention something about them getting more gold, and harm coming to their enemies. Few folk in the magical world bother to even learn of it. Silly of them, really; as the goblins will respond better to you if you do."

"You would have noticed Director Ragnock did not mention the Potter Will until I gave the goblin the greeting of parting?"

The Queen nodded.

"The goblins are scrupulously honest, but they will not often freely give information unless pressed for it," said Harry.

"We see," replied the Queen.

Hesitating for a moment Harry said, "There is also one other example of your Royal Magic you caused to occur today you should know, Your Majesty".

"Yes?" asked the Queen.

"The goblins were going to give me the heir's ring for the House of Slytherin after the rite of inheritance as, under magical law, I am... or was... not permitted to take up the Head of House ring until I come of age on my seventeenth birthday, or my magical guardian emancipates me," said Harry.

"It is Our purview as to when one of Our peers is recognised, Lord Potter," said the Queen.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "And that's what I'm referring to.

When you said, 'by Our command you will take up your Earl of Slytherin and other rings', your magic overrode the magic denying me the Head of House ring. In response the magic that protects the rings, and the magic of the rite of inheritance document, did the only thing they could; they recognised you as my Queen emancipating me and the words on the document of the rite of inheritance changed from Heir of House Slytherin and House Potter, to Head of House Slytherin and House Potter."

The Queen then looked down at the document before Her and mused,

"We see."

"As for the state of the three magics Myrrdin mentioned," Harry went on.

"The charisma and magical compulsion are always 'on'. The normal compulsion for non-magicals, isn't. Non-magicals can, with enough determination and focus, disobey you. However, enhanced emotional

states, such as you getting angry, will make the passive compulsion component active; and make the other two flare up stronger. At that point none of your subjects will be able to disobey you. And that is why Myrrdin was hesitant in telling you."

"Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely," said the Queen.

"That was Myrrdin's argument; yes, Ma'am," said Harry.

"We understand, Lord Potter," the Queen said. "We thank you for your trust and loyalty to Us in informing Us of this."

"Your... welcome, Your Majesty," Harry hesitantly replied.

"Now, We would know more of this information you were providing Us while We awaited the goblins, My Lord," the Queen said. "We feel We should hear this before We hear of your plan."

"Of course, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "I had reached the point where Dumbledore learned that Voldemort knew of the prophecy, or at least part of it, and he sent both sets of parents into deep hiding. The Longbottoms and the Potters.

"As Lily Potter was mundane born she had been raised for her early years in the non-magical world. She would also, during her time at Hogwarts, go back to visit her parents and other family members. Her parents met my father on a couple of occasions over holiday periods but, sadly, they did not live long enough to see their daughter wed.

"Based on her knowledge of the non-magical world, Lily took her husband and the Longbottoms into the mundane world to hide. To hide even further, they set aside their wands and did their best to live as non-magicals would. That is, just like any other normal British subject.

"Though they were in fear of their lives they had fun. Electric lights, telephones and the television, for example, amazed the Longbottoms, while James tried to make it seem like it was all 'old hat' to him - based

on the times he had holidayed with the Evans's.

"When both women went into labour at almost the same time. It was Lily who managed to get them all to a local mundane hospital through mundane means in time for the babies to be born. This is why the birth records of Neville and I show us as being born at the same hospital.

"The Potters and Longbottoms remained with their babies in the mundane world for about another fourteen months. By then they felt they should be safe enough to return to the magical world. They still took protections, however.

"The Potters then went into hiding within the magical world. They moved into a small cottage in Godric's Hollow and asked Dumbledore to place the cottage under a spell called a Fidelius Charm. It made the cottage invisible to all eyes, including magical. However, the spell requires someone to be what is called a 'Secret Keeper', that is someone who knew the location and was the only one who could speak of it.

"The Potter's asked my Godfather, Sirius Black, to be their 'Secret Keeper' but he refused. He argued that he was their closest friend and, as such, would be the obvious person to be the 'Secret Keeper'. At the last minute he convinced them to name another member of the Order, Peter Pettigrew, to take his place. Reluctantly, they agreed. It was their greatest mistake."

As Harry was talking there was a knock on the door. One of the retinue reluctantly hurried over to it and looked outside. They were handed what looked like another document folio and returned to the Queen's desk offering it to her.

Harry paused while the Queen looked inside of it for a moment, flicking through a few pages, before closing it again and motioning for Harry to continue.

"Pettigrew was Riddle's spy in the Order. Less than a week later, late in the evening of the 31st of October 1981, Pettigrew led Riddle and a small group of his Death Eaters straight to the Potter cottage. After quietly laying a network of spells preventing the people inside from leaving, they attacked. James was downstairs and was the first to be killed, trying to defend his family. Lily was upstairs in the... my... nursery. Hearing the fighting downstairs she quickly placed me in my crib, which was heavily warded with ancient magics, of which she had an affinity.

"Moments later, with my father already dead, Riddle and a couple of his followers burst into the room. They quickly killed my mother. Riddle, remembering what he knew of the prophecy, ordered the others to hold their fire against me.

"Standing right in front of the crib he launched his favourite killing curse straight at my head."

Harry heard a couple of gasps from the retinue, who were still standing after all this time.

"However, this is when the magics my mother, Lily, had cast upon me and my crib activated.

"For the first time that anyone knew the curse was blocked, and it bounced. In so doing, it left this scar above my eye," Harry said pointing up to the scar on his forehead.

"The curse bounced right back at Riddle... and killed him.

"However, Riddle's spirit did not leave this plane of existence. Instead, it rendered him down to spectral form - a wraith - similar to a ghost. Which then fled.

"The Order learned of the attack on the Potter cottage only moments before it was due to occur. My godfather, Sirius, was the first on the scene. He arrived only moments after Riddle was killed and too late to

save his best friends.

"Enraged and on his own he went after the Death Eaters. But, as their leader had just been killed, they jumped out of the cottage and apparated away. A difficult spell that allows a person to disappear from one spot and reappear in another place even up to miles away. It requires significant focus to pull it off without being injured or even killed.

"Pettigrew, however, was in a state of near panic. Sirius knew he was the 'Secret Keeper' and, therefore, was the only person who could have led Riddle to the Potter cottage. It also identified him as the spy within the ranks of the Order.

"Due to his panic Pettigrew couldn't apparate. So, he fled on foot, instead. Sirius, still enraged, gave chase. The only thing on his mind was vengeance.

"The chase lasted quite some time. Pettigrew did everything he could to escape Sirius. He was looking for a chance to stop, relax, focus and apparate away. But, Sirius was relentless.

"What Sirius didn't know was, just as he ran off in pursuit of Pettigrew, a few members of the Order had also arrived. They saw Pettigrew running away with Sirius in hot pursuit. They then gave chase of Sirius as they thought he was the Secret Keeper.

"This particular evening was, of course, also the night of Halloween. And there were a fair number of non-magicals about in the streets trick-or-treating, or visiting each other.

"When Pettigrew couldn't shake Sirius he ran out into the middle of the street amongst the non-magicals and cast a spell called a Blasting Hex to open up the sewers below him. The size of the blast he cast killed thirteen non-magicals who were going about their normal social lives. As wizarding folk are built of sterner stuff, both he and Sirius were only

knocked off their feet. Sirius was knocked semi-conscious. Pettigrew lost the little finger off his left hand from a piece of flying debris.

"Pettigrew then used the opportunity to change into his animagus form, a rat, and disappeared down the sewers."

The Queen interrupted, asking, "An... animagus, Lord Potter?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "An animagus is a wizard who can change into an animal of some kind. The wizarding world think it is a rare gift. Anyone who can do it is required, under wizard law, to have their form registered with them.

"What the wizarding world do not understand is that any wizard or witch can do it. All it requires is much study and meditation to, first, learn of what form your animagus takes - it's different for each - and, second, to develop the skill to actually change to that form. While in that form the wizard or witch retains their human mind but for all other purposes is the animal.

"Once they change to that form and back again it becomes successively easier each time they do it, until it reaches the point where all you need to do is think to change and you will.

"Pettigrew, my father and Sirius were all friends in the same year at Hogwarts and studied hard and meditated long to learn their forms and be able to do it. My father and Sirius accomplished it in their fifth year; Pettigrew accomplished it in their sixth year.

"Pettigrew, of course, took the form of a brown rat. My father took the form of a stag. And Sirius took the form of a big, shaggy wolfhound. The animagus form will always be a creature that most closely represents the character of person who seeks it.

"None of them registered their animagus forms with the Ministry. As war had already broken out they kept their animagus forms secret, so as to be

a useful skill in spying for the Order. The other members of the Order knew but also kept it quiet. As Pettigrew's form was a rat, I'm still surprised no one in the Order suspected he was the spy."

"Have you learned this skill, Lord Potter?" asked the Queen, again interrupting.

Harry was not surprised she asked. He was actually expecting it.

"Yes, Your Majesty," he quietly replied.

"May We see it?" she asked.

He sighed a little but answered, "Of course, Your Majesty."

He then stood up and moved a little away from the Prime Minister and gave himself a little more distance from the Queen.

While moving away he said, "I ask that everyone in the room please understand that I retain my human mind and that I will cause no harm to anyone. Please don't... shoot me."

"Fear not, My Lord," said the Queen.

Harry then crouched down on the floor a little, before he then suddenly leapt straight up. When his feet reached a couple of feet off the floor he changed. With a flash, where once was a boy of almost eleven years of age, now hovered on beating wings what appeared to be a horned owl with a body of rich earth browns, a black head and wingtips. No one had ever seen it's like.

Harry then dropped one wing, executed a tight about turn, and flew back down the length of the chamber before banking around and flying back to where he first changed. Hovering again on beating wings.

After a pause he flashed again and Harry, in his human form, dropped the couple of feet absorbing the impact on the balls of his feet.

Then he calmly walked back to his seat.

Everyone else in the room were, to put it bluntly, gobsmacked. Even the

Queen sat there with somewhat raised eyebrows.

Harry waited for everyone to collect themselves again. Not surprisingly the Queen was the first to do so.

"A bird, My Lord?" she asked.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. And, anticipating Her next question, quietly and calmly said, "A bird thought mythical; but just not seen for many thousands of years. My animagus form is that of an earth phoenix." And, with that, Sir Kingston made a slight "Eep!" sound and collapsed to the floor where he was trying to be inconspicuous against the wall.

All eyes turned on hearing the noise of the poor old wizard's collapse.

One of the retinue on the end of the line closest to him hurried over and checked his pulse.

Turning to look at his Queen he said, "He's alive, Ma'am. He seems to have only fainted."

The Queen frowned and said, "Go and get two medical personnel and have him carried off to the hospital ward. His presence here is not required for now."

The first retinue member laid the old wizard out and gently put him in the coma position while another member ducked out the door, obviously heading off to collect such medical personnel.

Turning back to Harry the Queen said, "Thank you for that... very visual display... of your skill, My Lord Potter.

"If there is anyone here who had doubted magic was real and existed," she continued, "We believe you have put those doubts to rest."

"You are most welcome, Your Majesty," replied Harry with a small bow.

"Now that We have reached a break in your tale, My Lord," said the Queen. "We believe you should hear about what MI5 have given Us on your other... heirs; on Our, if your information is confirmed, missing

peers."

The Queen looked back down to her notes and said, "We have the addresses and all the details of your young Miss Granger and her family. What you did not inform Us was that Dr Emma Granger, while studying for her undergraduate degree in dentistry, worked part time in the maternity ward at the hospital where you and young Mister Longbottom were born.

"Then Nurse Granger would take her infant daughter with her to work and she would be left in the nursery while her mother worked. We would not be surprised if you and young Mister Longbottom have not already met her; though you all would have been much too young to know."

Harry was completely shocked, "I... did not know that, Your Majesty"

"Then it appears your information is not as complete as We assumed," said the Queen with a smile.

'Hey, I'm only human!' thought Harry.

She then reached out, picked up another slip of paper, wrote a few lines upon it, and handed it off to another in Her retinue. That person then hurried from the room.

"We have sent a car to collect the Grangers and bring them to Our presence," said the Queen looking back at Harry. "We suspect they will be here within the hour."

Harry winced internally hearing that. He had planned to have been the one to collect the Grangers, after first collecting the Longbottoms and Boneses.

"Now, the Longbottoms," said the Queen. "We, of course, have confirmed young Mister Longbottom's birth. We have found no record he has attended one of Our schools, though he is most certainly of age to do so. There are no other records of the Longbottom family even existing.

"We also have city records of the construction of a Longbottom Manor and where it was built," she continued. "However, two of Our constabulary have visited the location where it is supposed to be located and only found a property with... 'a vacant ramshackle house upon it surrounded by a chain link fence'." And looked up at Harry.

"An illusion, Your Majesty," said Harry, understanding the question in the statement. "That's one of the ways wizards hide their presence from the mundane."

The Queen simply nodded once and looked back down at Her notes.

"As you informed Us there are no records of anyone named Bones in the High Stakesby area. However, local records do show information concerning a Bones Manor. Two officers of Our constabulary were sent to investigate this manor, as well, but were unable to carry out their investigation," the Queen read out. "They attended the address given by local records and yet, on attending, found street numbers one, three, five, nine, eleven and thirteen for that side of the street. Number seven, where the Bones Manor is supposed to have been constructed, does not seem to exist.

"When Our constabulary enquired of local residents as to the location of Number seven," the Queen went on, "Most older residents remember there was once a Number seven but no one remembers how it happened to disappear. When pushed for information, the local residents seemed to... 'get confused and wonder what the officers were talking about'."

As the Queen looked back up Harry replied, "An even stronger form of illusion, Your Majesty. In this case they've not only hidden the manor from mundane eyes, they've also hidden the space in which it resides.

"Both manors and the lands on which they sit," continued Harry in explanation, "will also be warded to make non-magical folk want to not

pay any attention to it. Which is why, in the case of the Bones Manor, your officers were met by confused local residents; and, in the case of the Longbottom Manor, your officers I suspect did not even attempt to enter the property."

"And how are Our people meant to collect these two families if they are unable to even see the doors on which they would have to knock?" asked the Queen.

"I or Sir Kingston will have to go, Your Majesty, to show what has been hidden," replied Harry.

"We take it you can see through these illusions, Lord Potter?" she asked.

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Harry before continuing, "The illusions are meant for mundane eyes only. Myrrdin and I had anticipated this eventuality and we have an answer to it."

"Enlighten Us," said the Queen.

"Though I cannot apparate directly onto the grounds of the manors, as I do not yet know the nature of the wards that protect them, I can apparate to just outside of each property and, as I can see through the illusions, walk up to the door and knock," Harry explained. "However, though I suspect they will recognise that I am Harry Potter, I do not know if they will come with me back here.

"Further, I suspect that either or both Madam Bones or Madam Longbottom will contact Dumbledore, as he claims to be my magical guardian, to let him know where I am," said Harry. "And, as I've mentioned before, I cannot have Dumbledore know where I am or what I'm doing just yet.

"What I now ask of you, Your Majesty, is to have one of your people, who looks suitably officious, accompany me," Harry explained, "And for that person to bring with them two Royal Writs that would require their

presence before you, that they accompany us immediately, and that they contact no one to tell them what's going on."

As Harry explained, the Queen was nodding Her head slightly seeming to agree.

"And how long would this take, Lord Potter?" she asked.

"With the Writs I anticipate I should return with both heirs and their guardians within the half hour, Your Majesty," replied Harry.

"The Queen thought for moment, nodded Her head once, and said, "Get Us the papers for the Writs."

One of the retinue near the Queen leaned over slightly towards Her and said, "In your top left drawer, Ma'am."

The Queen removed a couple of sheets of parchment from the drawer, placed them on Her desk and once more took up Her pen.

Before She began to write She looked back at Harry with an expression of slight amusement and asked, "Did this plan of yours include any of Our people, specifically, to accompany you Lord Potter?"

Harry hesitated for a moment before he replied, "I would recommend it be someone with a stout constitution and a most important title, Your Majesty, in order to impress. A stout constitution will be needed as apparating, or other forms of magical travel, can make folks not used to it feel a little... queasy. If there is someone you feel could... deal... with that, but does not hold an official title with a grand enough name, might I suggest... 'The Royal Summoner'?"

Clearly quite amused, The Queen looked back at Harry for a few moments. Then She looked back down at the parchments before Her and began to write.

After a few minutes the Queen reached back into Her drawer and withdrew a wax sheet with what appeared to be red wax decals with two

short pieces of wide ribbon hanging from each. She affixed one each to the bottom of each piece of parchment.

Again reaching into Her drawer the Queen put the wax sheet back and draw forth two short red ribbons. She then lightly rolled each sheet of parchment and tied a ribbon around each with a nice little bow.

Once She'd done that and had both rolled up and tied sheets sitting on the desk before Her, She quietly called, "Colonel Benton!"

One of the male middle-aged members of Her retinue suddenly blanched.

But, after hesitating just a moment, stepped forward, turned slightly towards the Queen, and asked, "Yes, Ma'am?"

"How is your... constitution, Colonel?" She asked.

Again hesitating just a moment the colonel replied, "I am in fine health, Ma'am."

The Queen, looking back at Harry with a small smile, asked him, "Does he appear officious enough to you?"

Harry looked back across at the colonel for a moment, noticing he was dressed in an expensive black business suit with white shirt and a... army regimental tie, before looking back at the Queen.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry with a smile of his own. "But, if I may make a small change?"

She replied, "You may."

Harry then turned back to look at the colonel. Frowning and thinking for a few long moments. Then he then cast a small transfiguration charm at the colonel.

Suddenly the colonel was wearing a purple silk ribbon about four inches wide as a sash from his right shoulder to where it crossed and was pinned together at his left hip.

Thinking a bit more Harry then placed embroidery of the Royal Crest on

the ribbon where it crossed over the colonel's right breast, but angled to be level. Then he added gold embroidered trim a half inch wide on each side of the ribbon. And then a nice clasp where they were pinned together.

The Queen and everyone else in the room watched Harry perform the little pieces of wandless magic and the effect it was having on the colonel. The colonel, after first noticing the ribbon appear, then seemed to close his eyes with a slight look of 'why-me' on his face.

Thinking he'd done enough Harry then turned to the Queen and, indicating how the colonel was now attired, said, "Does this meet with your approval, Your Majesty?"

The Queen thought for a moment before saying, "Our colour is red, My Lord."

"Certainly, Your Majesty," Harry immediately responded.

Another quick flick of wandless magic and the sash was now red.

"Is that all, Lord Potter?" asked the Queen.

"I think that will impress them quite nicely, Your Majesty," said Harry with a grin.

"Then, in that case, you'd best come around before Us, Colonel."

The colonel physically braced himself up and walked... no, marched, Harry thought... to step before his Queen. But not quite as to block Harry's view.

Harry could tell the colonel thought he looked like an idiot. It amused him.

"What is your full name, again, Colonel?" asked the Queen.

"Alexander Edward Benton the Second, Ma'am," replied the colonel.

"Alexander Edward Benton the Second," intoned the Queen. "We hereby temporarily elevate you to the title of... The Royal Summoner."

"Your task is to take these Royal Writs..." the Queen handed the two parchments over to the colonel who took them with his left hand, "... and present them to the children's guardians of Neville Longbottom and Susan Bones. You will accompany them and the children and return here at Our convenience.

"You will hold the title of Royal Summoner until you return here with your charges."

Hesitating a moment the Queen then said, "If you carry out your task with the aplomb and dignity We deem the office requires as Representative of the Crown, We may consider making the position permanent."

"Yes, Your Majesty; thank you, Your Majesty," the colonel formally responded before stepping back and away a bit.

Looking back at Harry the Queen said, "We've never had a Royal Summoner before. We usually just ask for someone to make a telephone call."

Harry smiled, "I'm sorry, Your Majesty, but magicals do not own them."

"Is there anything else you may need before you... depart?" she asked.

Standing Harry said, "No, Your Majesty. However, I should warn you that when we return with the Longbottoms and Boneses they will probably be dressed quite... oddly. And with a manner to match."

"Oh?" asked the Queen.

"As an example, Your Majesty," explained Harry. "The last time I saw an image of Madam Longbottom she was wearing upon her head a stuffed vulture. She thought it was the height of fashion in the mundane world."

"Why ever would she think such a thing?" asked the Queen quizzically.

"I believe she may have seen a non-magical lady wearing a fascinator that had a small bird affixed to it, and she made assumptions from there.

"Further, folk who live more or less constantly in the magical world still believe we live in somewhere around the eighteenth century; but, that we're very clever and have invented clever toys. They will act accordingly."

"We see," replied the Queen. "Then We shall be prepared. Is that all?"

"Yes, Ma'am"

"Then you may depart," she said. "We shall have tea on your return."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," replied Harry formally bowing. "Please ensure Sir Kingston leaves the wards down so we may return through the fireplace."

"It will be done," She said.

Then looking at the colonel, The Royal Summoner, Harry said, "If you would come over here, colonel? I'll give a short explanation of what is about to happen and then we'll be away."

Harry walked over to where he'd changed into his animagus form and the colonel walked over to join him.

"Now, Sir," he began, "I want you to stand on my left and put your right hand on my shoulder. You should take a firm grip while I'm going to put my arm around your waist and take a firm grip of you."

The colonel did so.

Everyone else in the room watched with fascination as Harry prepared his 'passenger'.

"Now, what we're about to do is vanish from here and almost instantly appear outside Longbottom Manor in the village of Staining up on the east coast," Harry went on. "In doing that it's going to feel as if someone grabbed you and yanked you through the eye of a needle without harming you in any way. It's going to feel... oogy. But, you will come to no harm."

Harry could feel the colonel flinch as he heard that.

"When we arrive, you're probably going to stagger forward a bit, so be prepared for it. Plus, due to differences in air pressure between here and there, your ears may pop just as they do when you fly," Harry finished.

"Got all that?"

"Yes, My Lord," said the colonel.

"Okay, then," said Harry. "Here we..."

\*POP!\*

# # #

## 5. The Colonel's Trip

### Chapter Five - The Colonel's Trip

# # #

\*POP!\*

Suddenly, on the footpath of a semi-suburban road in Staining, up on the east coast of Britain, two people appeared out of thin air. No one else noticed. Not that there was anyone around to notice.

Harry had a good grip around the waist of the colonel and, as Harry said he would, the colonel staggered forward a half step. However, it didn't take much effort on Harry's part to hold him from falling over.

"We'd like to thank you for travelling with Harry's Magical Apparations today, and hope your trip with us was an enjoyable one," said Harry imitating a commercial airline steward. "Please take care and we hope to see you again soon."

The colonel, bending over at the waist and putting both hands on his knees, moaned, "Oh, God!"

Knowing the colonel had found his balance Harry let him go and stepped slightly apart from him. He didn't want to be... in range... if the colonel suddenly lost his last meal.

"Come now, Colonel," said Harry brightly. "Stiff upper lip, and all that. For Queen and country!"

Still bent over and breathing ragged breaths, the colonel softly asked, "Are you trying to be funny, My Lord?"

"Of course!" replied Harry. "I hoped it would help to take your mind off it."

Not bothering to respond further the colonel waited a few moments more before he slowly rose to stand up straight, squared his shoulders and took another deep breath to settle himself and said, "It didn't."

"Well, Colonel," said Harry. "You handled it much better than I thought you would. Well done!"

"Yes, My Lord," the colonel blandly replied.

Then, looking around he asked, "What now?"

"Well, I know you can't see it, but we're standing right in front of the gates of the manor," said Harry.

No, the colonel couldn't see it.

"What I want you to do is take my elbow as a blind person would and, if you feel it necessary, close your eyes. Then we're just going to walk forward a few steps," instructed Harry.

"It's not going to feel like... that... did, is it?" the colonel asked.

"You should feel a very light tingle on your skin as we step through, but that's all," replied Harry.

The colonel then gave a curt nod, took Harry by a tight grip on his left elbow and closed his eyes.

Harry waited until the colonel was ready and then just walked forward.

As they passed through the wards Harry felt the colonel give a quick clench of his elbow like a flinch. Then he stopped them both.

"Okay, Colonel," said Harry. "You can open your eyes now."

Opening his eyes the colonel looked in wonder at the beautiful home before him. The gardens were immaculate. He was amazed that all this was hidden from him less than six feet behind him.

"A couple of points before we go up to the door, colonel," said Harry.

"The Longbottoms will probably have at least one house elf, and the door will be answered by one of them. They're a little shorter and much skinnier than goblins, have very little hair, big bright eyes and floppy ears. Please don't stare."

Glancing back at Harry, the colonel processed that for a moment and gave a curt nod.

"Secondly, please call me Mister Potter at all times until we return to the palace. We wouldn't want to give the game away, just yet, would we?"

The colonel gave another curt nod.

"Okay, then, Colonel," Harry said. "As you're the 'Royal Summoner' this is your work to do, please lead the way. Let's go meet the next Earl of Gryffindor."

The colonel braced himself up, said, "Right," and headed to the door.

Walking up the path Harry kept a half pace back, letting the colonel take the lead.

The colonel knocked three times quite sharply on the door, took half a pace back, almost stepping on Harry's foot, and 'braced up' with the Writs tucked up under his left elbow like a conductor's baton.

A few moments later the door opened to, as Harry suspected, a house elf.

Hesitating barely a moment, the colonel said, "Good day, I am..." before the voice of the house elf rode over the top of him.

"Mistress and young master be here soon," the little elf rapidly gushed.

"You be waiting in the parlour."

Then the elf reached out, took the colonel by his right hand and dragged

him in through the door.

Harry noticed they were in a large entry hall before the elf led them through a set of folding doors on the left.

"You be waiting here. Can Penny be getting you anything?" the little elf rapidly asked. "And you be, so Penny tell Mistress?"

"Errr... No thank you," said the colonel said.

"No thank you, Penny," said Harry. "And please tell Madam Longbottom it's an envoy from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and Harry Potter."

"Yes, Sirs, you be calling Penny if you be wanting anything bye!" \*blink\*  
And the elf popped away.

Harry, expecting it, then glanced at the colonel to see his reaction.

Still staring at the spot Penny was standing in when she disappeared, the colonel said, "That was..."

"A house elf, yes," finished Harry. "They have magic just as we... sorry... witches and wizards do, but it's as different as it is the same."

"Oh," the colonel softly said.

Harry just grinned at the man, though the colonel didn't look back at him. But, a moment later, the colonel seemed to give himself a little bit of a shake, and then looked around a little.

The parlour, at least, was furnished in what Harry thought of as late nineteenth to early twentieth century. What he knew would be thought of as quite modern in the wizarding world. A large rug on the polished wooden floors, nice overly sprung couches and armchairs, a coffee table between two arm chairs off to one side, and quite a large fireplace on what he knew to be an outside wall.

As they both had a bit of a look around there was a sound from the door leading back to the entry hall. A tall lady carrying herself elegantly

walked in. She was dressed in a fashionable scarlet wizard's robe with black trim and very fine black filigree through it covering her torso. And she was advancing with her wand at the ready.

'Nice', he thought. 'Ready for a bit of a quick spell if need be.'

Looking at Harry she said, "Oh, you're young Harry Potter."

"Yes, Ma'am," said Harry. "And this is..."

"...Colonel Alexander Benton, Ma'am," the colonel cut in nicely. "Royal Summoner and envoy for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second."

'Well done!' thought Harry.

"I have been charged with delivering unto you this Royal Writ," the colonel then said, offering one of the writs towards Augusta.

Augusta hesitantly walked forward and, raising her wand, carefully passed it over the rolled document. Not appearing to find anything that may have been a threat she took it from the colonel's hand.

Taking half a step back she unrolled it and began to read. Reaching the bottom of the document, and without lifting her eyes, she called,

"Penny!"

The little elf popped back just near her looking at her, "Yes, Mistress?"

Harry felt the colonel barely flinch. 'Good man', thought Harry.

Looking down at the elf Augusta said "Tell Neville I want to see him."

"Yes, Mistress!" the elf said before suddenly popping away again.

Augusta then rerolled the document and handed it back to the colonel, who reluctantly accepted it.

"What is this about?" she asked the colonel.

Then there came the sound of someone running on carpeted floors and clattering down the stairs in the entry hall. Augusta gave a slight pained look.

"Her Majesty will explain, Ma'am," replied the colonel.

Suddenly, a dusty haired boy with slightly chubby cheeks wearing a plain open black robe dashed into the room.

"You wanted to see me, Gran?" replied the boy before noticing anyone else in the room, "Errr... You asked for me, Grandmother?"

Then he looked at the colonel a bit quizzically before looking at Harry.

Clearly startled he said, "You're Harry Potter!"

"Neville!" snapped Augusta.

"Sorry, grandmother," Neville said a bit sheepishly, before looking back at Harry with delight. "The Boy-Who-Lived in our home!"

"Neville," said Augusta, ignoring the last bit, "the muggles' Queen asks us to attend her. Go and put on your best robe and comb your hair. You're the heir of House Longbottom, and you will look the part."

Harry felt the colonel stiffen when he heard 'muggles' Queen' and was worried the man would protest. "Easy, colonel," he murmured.

"Yes, Grandmother," said Neville, before walking quickly out of the room and racing up the stairs.

"If you gentlemen wouldn't mind waiting I won't be long," said Augusta, about to turn around.

"Ma'am, Her Majesty is waiting..." the colonel began to say before Augusta rode over him.

"Yes, yes," she said. "But, it would not do to arrive in less than a presentable state."

Then she turned about in a stately fashion and walked from the room.

After she left out of hearing range, Harry softly said, "Relax, colonel.

They mean no harm by it. They just don't know any better."

"My Lord, I find it difficult to... countenance such language against my Queen," the colonel gritted out.

"I know," said Harry sympathetically. "But I have no doubt Her Majesty

will very shortly set them straight."

The colonel just 'hurrumphed'.

"There's a reason I said we'd be about half an hour, colonel," said Harry.

"I expected this."

More thumping down the stairs announced Neville's return, who then came 'power walking' into the room again. He was wearing a black satin robe and his hair looked wet with comb marks through it.

"Hi, Harry," he said a bit sheepishly, "I'm Neville. I'm very happy to meet you," before blushing and dropping his head a bit embarrassed.

"Neville," Harry calmly said walking a few steps closer to the shy boy.

"Your mother was my godmother; and my mother was your godmother."

"Yes?" asked Neville softly.

"As far as I'm concerned, that makes us godbrothers," explained Harry.

"You're my brother, Nev. You never need to be shy or embarrassed around me."

Neville snapped his head up to look at Harry with delight. "We're... brothers?" he asked with a bit of wonder in his voice.

"As far as I'm concerned," Harry firmly stated, "Yes!"

Neville's face broke out in a big grin. "I've never had a brother before!" he said a bit excitedly.

"Well, you do now," Harry promptly replied.

A little shy and abashed Neville began to ask a few questions about what Harry had been doing with his life. Harry calmly avoided the questions and was a bit relieved when Augusta returned.

She was now dressed in a satin black robe with frog buttons down the front, with a large hat on her head with a wide white band that also had a few black ostrich feathers stuck in it. And she was carrying a pair of white gloves and a small black clutch.

"Alright, then," she said. "Are we ready?"

"Your pardon, Madam Longbottom," said Harry. "We need to stop by the Bones residence on our way."

"Oh? And why is that?" asked Augusta.

"The colonel," said Harry, nodding a bit towards the colonel, "has a similar writ for Madam Bones."

"Very well," sniffed Augusta. "Shall we floo or apparate?"

"Excuse me, Ma'am," asked the colonel.

"Yes?"

"Is this floo thing anything like... apparating?"

"Heavens, no!" replied Augusta.

"Then, may I ask we go that way?" the colonel asked. "I found the other way... nauseating."

"Ah!" said Madam Longbottom in understanding. "First time, was it?"

"Yes, Ma'am," the colonel replied looking a little ashamed.

"It happens to us all, dear," she said. "Then, I shall floo call and see if Amelia's home."

Walking around the colonel she walked over to the fireplace, reached into an ornamental jar on the mantle and took out a pinch of powder.

She dashed the powder into the fireplace before calling in a clear voice,

"Ossuary!"

There was a flash and the fireplace was full of green flames.

Thinking it was normal fire the colonel backed off a couple of places.

However, he quickly realised there was no heat coming from it.

Bending forward slightly Augusta called, "Hello, this is Augusta Longbottom."

A moment later a female voice replied from within the flames. "Gus?" the voice asked. "It's Amelia here. Is there something wrong?"

"No, dear," replied Augusta. "I have Neville here, and two guests who need to talk to you. May we come through?"

A pause, and then the voice said, "Give me a few moments to open things up a bit. Then you can come through."

"Thank you, dear," said Augusta. "See you in a bit."

Then, standing up, she waved across the flames, extinguishing them.

"Madam Longbottom," Harry spoke up. "The colonel, here, is a non-magical. Someone you would call a muggle."

"I suspected as much, Mr Potter," she replied.

Nodding, Harry then said, "This will also be his first time travelling through the floo network."

"Oh!" she said in understanding. "In that case, I shall go through first, the colonel can follow me and you can show him what to do, then you and then young Neville."

"That sounds fine, Ma'am," replied Harry. Turning to look at the colonel, he called, "Colonel."

When the colonel turned to properly look at him, Harry said, "Pay close attention to what Madam Longbottom does and says. When she disappears do the same thing, okay?"

"Yes, My... Mister Potter," he replied a little nervously.

"Don't concern yourself with it, colonel," said Harry comfortingly. "This is much safer than side-along apparating."

The colonel paused a bit before nodding in understanding.

Augusta waited until the colonel turned back before saying, "Here we go, then."

She slowly took a large pinch of floo powder from the ornamental jar, stepped into the fireplace, and said, "Ossuary!" throwing the powder down at her feet.

With a flash she appeared to spin in the fireplace a bit before disappearing in a flash of green flame.

Watching Madam Longbottom disappear the way she did gave the colonel a bit of a fright and he hesitated for a long moment.

Then he took a deep breath, squared his shoulders and marched up to the fireplace.

Taking a large pinch, just as he saw Augusta do, he then stepped into the fireplace and turned around to look at Harry.

"Now, Colonel," said Harry, "apparating feels like you're being yanked through a needle; this will feel like you're spinning like a top for about a second and then brought to a halt inside another fireplace. Wait only a second then simply step out. Okay?"

The colonel simply nodded and Harry nodded back in encouragement.

The colonel then closed his eyes and threw the powder down to his feet calling out, "Ossuary!"

Flames and a flash and he was gone.

Neville laughed and asked Harry, "Did you see the look on his face?"

Harry turned to look back at Neville with a grin before he stepped up to the fireplace and, pausing a moment to look back at his godbrother, said, "Come on, Nev. We'll go together!"

Neville grinned and hurried forward to stand with Harry in the fireplace.

"Ready?" asked Harry.

Neville nodded back with a grin.

"Ossuary!" Harry called throwing the powder at their feet.

When Harry and Neville arrived at the Bones Manor they landed safely on their feet stepping lightly out onto the carpet. They were just in time to see Augusta help the colonel straighten up. Amelia was standing slightly away to the side with her wand drawn.

'He must have fallen out on arrival,' thought Harry.

"How was that, Colonel?" asked Harry.

Finishing straightening up the colonel said to Augusta, "Thank you, Ma'am. Most appreciated."

And turning about to look at Harry said, "It's fine, thank you."

Before grumbling something under his breath.

Clearly, Amelia must have heard something of what the colonel said as she said, "The one thing it has over one of your Bentley's, sir, is that it's near instantaneous."

Turning suddenly towards Amelia he blushed a little before dropping his head and saying, "I apologise, Madam. I misspoke and should not have done so."

"Accepted," said Amelia. "Now, what can I do for you?"

The colonel, realising his position, said more formally, "Madam Bones, I am Colonel Alexander Benton the Second, Royal Summoner and envoy for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second."

Then, turning to indicate Harry, said, "And this is..."

"...Harry Potter," finished Amelia. "The Boy-Who-Lived."

The colonel then turned more to stare at Harry before asking, "Is there anyone in this magical world who does not know who you are?"

Harry just smiled and blushed while giving his shoulders a shrug.

The colonel just stared for a moment longer before turning back to Amelia. "Madam Bones, Her Majesty has charged me with delivering unto you this Royal Writ," he formally said before offering it to her.

"A Royal Writ?" asked Amelia, stepping forward and looking at the document in the colonel's hand.

A quick wave with her wand over the document and she reached out with her left hand to take it from him.

She then quickly unrolled it and read it.

"What is this about?" she asked with a frown at the colonel.

"Her Majesty will explain, Ma'am," replied the colonel with a stony face.

"And she wants me to bring young Susan?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Gus?" she asked, turning to Augusta.

"I know as much as you do, 'Melia," replied Augusta.

Stepping forward a bit Harry said, "Madam Bones, I swear to you both on my magic and my life that no harm will come to you, Susan, Madam Longbottom or Neville."

That startled Amelia a bit before she said staring at Harry, "I have no doubt of that, Mister Potter. I merely wish to know more before we go."

"Ma'am," Harry said. "Her Majesty will explain it to you. It is not for us to explain it to you in her stead. However, I assure you, it's nothing bad."

Amelia stared at Harry for a moment more before calling out, "Susan!"

Susan stepped into the room barely a second later. Clearly, she was listening just outside the door.

"Yes, Aunt 'Melia?" she asked.

"Susan! What have I told you about..." Amelia sternly said before stopping with a sigh.

Susan was a slightly chubby girl with long auburn hair tied back in a pony tail and wearing a plain powder blue witch's robe. She, at least, appeared abashed about being caught snooping.

"Quickly go and put something nice on, brush your hair out, and come back here," Amelia instructed her. "We're going to go visit some important folk from the muggle world."

This time, the colonel didn't flinch upon hearing the word 'muggle'.

Amelia, having recently arrived from a meeting in the Wizengamot or

other important business was already dressed in finery, for a witch.

"Madam Bones?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Mister Potter?"

"May I ask how you know what a 'Bentley' is?" he asked.

"As Head of the DMLE, and an Auror with a great deal of experience, I've often had to go out into muggle London and elsewhere throughout Britain. You cannot successfully carry out your role as an Auror without having some understanding of the muggle world," she explained.

"I see," said Harry. "So you understand just who Queen Elizabeth the Second is, then?" Harry went on.

"Of course, Mister Potter," she replied. "She is the person who the Prime Minister answers to; and the Minister answers to the Prime Minister."

Frowning a little, Amelia was deep in thought.

"That means," said Harry patiently, recognising that both Augusta and Neville were also paying attention, "Her Majesty is your boss's, boss's boss. Correct?"

Startled a little Amelia said, "Yes... Yes... I suppose she is."

Putting his own two bobs in, the colonel then said firmly, "There is no 'suppose' about it, Madam Bones. Your Minister answers to Her Majesty. He is Her servant. And, as you work for your Ministry, you ultimately answer to her."

'Bless his little heart,' thought Harry smiling.

"But, she's a muggle," spluttered Augusta.

Turning to look at her, Harry said, "No, actually, She is not. And, please stop using the term 'muggle' when you're referring to non-magical folk.

Either use 'non-magical' or 'mundane'. Do you not see that 'muggle' is actually a pretty derogatory name?"

That had the three magical folk in the room frowning and thinking about

what Harry had just said; even Neville. The colonel had also turned to Harry and was smiling a little as he bobbed his head slightly in recognition of just what Harry had done.

Just then Susan came traipsing back into the room dressed in nice robes with her hair freshly brushed and laying loose about her shoulders. She suddenly stopped, looked around at the faces of the others in the room, and said, "What?"

Amelia, snapping out of it, turned to Susan and said, "Susan, we're going to visit Her Majesty, the Queen. While we are there please don't use the word 'muggle'. I'll explain why, later."

"Yes, Aunt 'Melia," replied Susan, clearly wondering what was going on.

"Thank you," said Amelia to her before turning back to the room. "I think that's everything. Will we be floo'ing there?"

"I think that would be best, Ma'am," replied Harry. "I know the palace's wards are still down to allow floo'ing in to the Queen's Audience Room. That will get us straight there."

Then, turning to the colonel, he asked, "Colonel? Floo'ing or apparating?"

"Floo'ing!" the colonel quickly said.

"Good choice," Neville piped up with a small smile.

"Right, then," said Harry. "I believe I should go first as they already know me. Then, please send the colonel through."

He waited to see if anyone had anything to say, and said, "The address is 'Buckingham Palace'." He turned and stepped back to the fireplace.

Looking on the mantelpiece he saw a little open container and reached in to it. Taking a large pinch of what felt like floo powder within it and brought his hand out to look. It was, indeed, floo powder.

He stepped in and, hesitating, said, "Want to join me again, Nev?"

"Yeah!" gushed Neville, quickly jumping in beside Harry and wrapping an

arm around his waist.

Harry did the same with his off hand, and throwing the powder at their feet, called, "Buckingham Palace!"

Flash!

"Boys!" said Susan with a bit of disgust.

Amelia just snorted a bit with amusement.

# # #

Harry and Neville stepped lightly out of the fireplace where the goblins first arrived.

Neville, looking around, said, "Wow! Big room!"

Without even looking Harry just took an extra step forward and spun around calling, "Nev! Give me a hand to catch the colonel as he comes through."

"Yeah! Sure, Harry," he replied.

A few moments later the colonel flashed into existence and staggered out.

Harry and Neville caught him on each side and helped the man to stand up straight. Harry then pulled him a bit further into the room and asked, "You alright, there, Colonel?"

"Oh, God," he muttered. "I quit!"

Harry just grinned at him.

Then, in quick order, the rest came through; Amelia with her wand out, Susan, then Augusta also with her wand out.

"Wands away, please, ladies," said Harry. "You're in Her Majesty's house here. You don't want her bodyguards thinking you're here to do her mischief."

Both, looking around a bit, put their wands away. Both went up the opposite sleeves of their wand hands.

'Interesting,' thought Harry.

Looking around himself for the first time, Harry noticed the room was empty; except for one of the Pages standing just off to the side of them. Clearly the man was waiting for their arrival.

Once Harry looked at him the Page then stepped a few paces forward.

"Is everyone here, My Lord?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you," replied Harry. "This is everyone."

Then the Page turned to the colonel and said, "Her Majesty is in the Games Room and asks that your guests join her other guests in the Green Drawing Room for tea."

"Thank you, Peter," responded the colonel.

Then, the colonel turned back to the others and said, "If you would follow me, please?" before heading off out through the door Harry had first entered.

Harry then hung back to shepherd the others out before him. He also noticed the Page had just stepped back and waited.

"Coming?" he asked the man.

The page hesitated for a bit before answering, "No, My Lord, two more guests to arrive, momentarily."

Harry thought about that for a moment before it dawned on him, and he said, "Ah!" Then he turned and followed the others.

Led out through the door and down the hall a bit, Harry could see the others looking about and gawking like tourists. He'd probably be doing the same if he wasn't so focussed on what he was here to accomplish.

The colonel was standing just inside a set of doors near the end of the hall where two other Pages were holding the doors open for them.

Following everyone inside he saw a nice light buffet laid out off to one side with waiters serving tea and light refreshments. The wafting of aromas from the table reached him and made his mouth water. Harry

watched as the others were led to seats by wait staff.

'God, I'm starving!' he thought. 'I haven't eaten since before I arrived in the park!'

Paying little attention to anyone else he headed directly to the table. He was a boy on a mission!

He was stopped just shy of it by a waiter who said, "Please, take a seat, My Lord. I'll be serving you today."

Frowning with frustration Harry looked around to see who else was there. He noticed the Grangers all sitting together around one side of a large coffee table. Harry could see they were as nervous as cats in a house full of rocking chairs.

'I've got to calm them down,' he thought.

There were a few spare seats next to Dan, so he took the one closest to him and where he could see the others.

The wait person had obviously followed because he was right near Harry's ear when he asked, "Tea or coffee, My Lord?"

"Tea, please!" replied Harry. "And one of those honking big plates of sandwiches, please. I haven't eaten all day!"

Both Dan and Emma were looking at him with horror. Hermione, sitting opposite, was just grinning at him.

"Very good, My Lord," the wait person said, departing.

"You know what it's like, Sir," he said to Dan. "March when you're ordered, fight when you have to, eat and sleep when you can."

Dan snapped his head towards Harry before pausing to frown at him. He didn't say anything, though.

"I know a lot, Sir," said Harry having fun sounding all mysterious.

Now that all the heirs were in the palace, and knowing what was about to happen, Harry felt he could relax a little bit.

A few moments later, the wait person was back placing a tray bearing a tea cup and saucer with a couple of lumps of sugar on the side, a small pot of tea, and a tiny pitcher of milk.

"Oooh!" said Harry leaning forward. "Thank you!"

He quickly made a cup of tea, milk and two sugars, and then lifted the cup and saucer away to sit back and enjoy it; pretty much gulping it down.

"Ahhh..." he said after his first mouthful.

Moments later, the tray was removed and replaced with another bearing a plate with two sandwiches cut into quarters and a bit of garnishing on the side.

"Oooh!" he said again. "Thank you!"

Then he leaned forward, placed the saucer on the tray and grabbed the plate of sandwiches.

Sitting back and placing the plate balanced on one thigh, he grabbed a couple of the small sandwiches and gobbled them down.

Watching him eat for a bit from where she sat on Dan's other side, Emma slowly started to frown. Dan appeared a little amused.

'At least all three of them are slowly getting over their nervousness,' he thought.

"Young man," called Emma. "Please try to remember where you are!"

Swallowing as fast as he could what he had in his mouth, Harry innocently asked, "Sitting in a chair eating lunch?" Then immediately stuffed more sandwich into his mouth.

Dan snorted and tried not to laugh. He was mostly successful.

Emma, however, frowned at him even deeper.

Swallowing again, Harry said to Emma, "Doctor Granger, I really haven't eaten anything since early this morning. And I may not get another

opportunity until this evening. I'm a growing lad, I need to eat!" Then stuffed more sandwich in.

Snorting again, Dan was now quietly chuckling away, trying not to with the back of his hand over his mouth, and turning red in the face.

Hermione, grinning even more, asked him, "Can I have one?"

Harry looked at her for a moment, then stuck his hand in the air and got the attention of one of the waiters. When he noticed one looking at him, he said, "Would you please organise a similar plate for Lady Granger and her parents? Thanks!"

The waiter bowed in return before turning away to assemble a plate for her.

Shortly thereafter a small plate of sandwiches was placed before Hermione. She picked it up and was happily eating one of the quartered sections.

About a minute later, Susan came over, dragging Neville with her. They plopped into the last two seats, as children are wont to do, next to Harry.

"Hey Harry," asked Susan. "Can I have one?"

"Hmm?" asked Harry, mouth full of sandwich.

"Can I have one?" Susan asked again.

Carefully swallowing again, Harry looked up and, again getting the notice of one of the wait staff, gestured for the man to come over. "Yes, My Lord?"

"Could we have a plate for Susan here..."

"Me too, please, Harry," Neville cut in.

"... and for Neville?"

"Of course, My Lord," the man bowed slightly before moving away.

Harry, in the mean time, had drunk a few large mouthfuls of tea before haring in to another sandwich.

Then he leaned forward while chewing and placed his empty teacup on the coffee table and sat back again.

Things had begun to click for Dan, by this time, however.

"Son," he asked Harry directly, "how do you know who we are?"

Harry quickly swallowed what was in his mouth, polished off the last of his tea, and asked, "What do you mean, Sir?"

"You spoke to my wife by her title and name," said Dan.

To which Harry replied, " Because I'm the one who caused you to be brought here?"

Then, before Dan could ask any other question, Harry quickly stuffed another sandwich into his mouth.

Ignoring that fact Dan more directly asked anyway. "And, just why is that?"

Meanwhile, the wait person came back with plates of sandwiches for Susan and Neville placing them on the table in front of them.

Looking up, and deliberately ignoring Dan's question, Harry said to the wait person, "May I have another cup of tea, please? Oh, and I think the Grangers need their cups topped up."

"Certainly, Sir," the wait person said with the hint of a smile on his lips.

Without even thinking, both focused on Harry, Dan and Emma offered up their teacups and saucers.

"Now, young man," said Dan, "just why is it that you caused us to brought here?"

"Ah, Ah, Ahhh!" said Harry wagging a finger in the air. "That would be telling. I'll leave that for Her Majesty to decide when you know."

Dan just frowned, clearly not happy.

Tea was brought back for the Grangers and Harry, who set about making another cup for himself.

Harry, relenting a bit, sat more upright and said, "It's nothing bad, I promise. Hermione's going to love this."

Harry then looked at Hermione and said with a grin, "Get your Hogwarts letter yet, Hermione?"

Hermione suddenly sat bolt upright and exclaimed, "You, too?"

Her parents were quite startled with the question and nearly spilled their teas.

"Isn't it great? I had no..." Hermione began to gush.

Harry suddenly put his finger to his lips and said, "Shhh! Remember what Professor MacGonagall said to you. There are people in this room who do not know." And indicated the wait staff.

Hermione's mouth shut with an almost audible snap.

"But, perhaps I should at least introduce my two friends here," said Harry continuing. "Sitting next to me is Susan Bones, and next to her is Neville Longbottom. They, too, will be attending Hogwarts this year. All four of us will be First Years together."

Harry waited for that to sink in a little before continuing, "Susan and Nev; this is Hermione Granger and her parents Dr Daniel Granger and Dr Emma Granger. They are non-magicals but, as you've no doubt guessed, Hermione is not."

A round of hellos later, looking at Dan and Emma, Harry said, "Susan's aunt, Amelia Bones, and Neville's grandmother, Augusta Longbottom are old friends and having a chat with Colonel Benton behind you... and no doubt listening in."

"Sir!" they all heard Augusta say with indignation.

"Now, Hermione," Harry said turning to the little witch and ignoring the comments from behind, "I know you found it difficult to make friends at school, but that was only because you're scary-smart. You're so smart it

frightened the other children. However, I can assure you, you have three friends right here."

"Really?" the look on Hermione's face was almost heart-breaking.

"Really," replied Harry firmly.

Suddenly, Hermione jumped out her chair, ducked around the table, and just about jumped on Harry giving him in a tight hug. Luckily, his reflexes were quick enough to allow him to get the expensive palace crockery out of the way before she just about dive-tackled him.

"Oof!" exclaimed Harry.

"Thankyouthankyouthankyouthankyou!" was all he got out of the lass for a few moments.

Neville was almost openly laughing trying to hide behind his hands, and Susan was simply giggling. Even Augusta, Amelia and the colonel stood to look over the backs of the chairs to see what was going on.

Harry could just see the Granger's over Hermione's shoulder. Her parents, stunned by Hermione's... sudden move... were a bit slow to react.

"Hermione!" said her father firmly. "Don't crush the poor boy to death!"

"Hermione, dear. Please, sit down. Try to remember where you are," said her mother.

After a bit, Hermione climbed off Harry and contritely said, "Sorry." And quickly went back to sit on the edge of her chair.

Then she softly said, "I've just never really had a friend before."

Harry could see the Granger parents were trying to hold back tears; Emma, not so successfully. Their daughter, they knew, was without friends as she frightened the other kids in her school and neighbourhood with how smart she was.

"I think we're..." Harry said before he was interrupted by a soft chime coming from the ceiling high overhead.

"Ah!" said the colonel from where he was still standing over near the two older witches. "Her Majesty is ready for us."

# # #

## 6. The Three Heirs' Elevation

### Chapter Six - The Other Three Heirs' Elevation

# # #

Everybody not yet standing, stood setting aside their plates and cups. The colonel led the group over to a set of doors opposite to the ones in which they entered.

Just shy of the doors, the colonel turned around and said, "Can I have the Grangers in front, here," he said, indicating where he wanted them to stand, "then the Longbottoms; and then the Boneses."

Turning to Harry he said, "My Lord, please bring up the rear."

Harry nodded and helped sort the three groups out. "Children in front, please," he said.

Seeing everyone where he wanted them, the colonel turned and nodded to a Page who was holding a door handle.

The door was opened and the colonel, led by a Page who was standing just inside the door, led his little procession off and turned left just inside the door.

Inside was the Throne Room. There was no one there but the procession was led down the length of the room before coming to a door in the 'back' wall. The Page stopped here and knocked twice sharply on the door.

It was opened from the other side and the Page stepped aside to let everyone through. Harry felt the door closing again behind him.

Ahead, Harry could see the Queen seated on a large chair with a small table to one side. On the opposite side of the table, in a slightly smaller

chair, sat the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, watching the small procession with curiosity.

'No desk, this time,' thought Harry. 'And she was also dressed more... regally... with a small diamond tiara on her head. She looks more Queen-ish without overdoing it. Nice.'

The Queen's small retinue, this time, were standing either side of the room at the front away from where the group entered. The Queen sat alone and apart except for Charles. A very subtle power play.

Harry could also see the goblin's box sitting on a small table in the centre of the room about six feet in front of the Queen. He then noticed the two goblins standing off to one side against a wall.

'Yep,' Harry thought. 'I knew that guy at the fireplace was waiting for the goblins.'

Harry thought he should have warned the Grangers about the goblins.

But just hoped they'd handle it well, considering in whose presence they were.

The colonel led his little procession to stand in a line perpendicular to the Queen about six feet shy of the box on its little table.

Then, seeing his charges arranged, turned to face His Queen and formally said, "Your Majesty, please allow me to introduce; Miss Hermione Jean Granger; her parents, Doctor and Doctor Daniel and Emma Granger; Master Neville Longbottom; Madam Augusta Longbottom, his grandmother; Miss Susan Bones; and Madam Amelia Bones, her aunt."

Harry clearly didn't rate a second introduction.

"Thank you, Colonel," the Queen said. "We see you were successful in your task."

Hesitating a moment, She asked, "And did you carry out your task with the aplomb and dignity your office demanded as an envoy of Us?"

"No, Ma'am," bowing his head slightly the colonel replied. "I found the methods of... travel... used quite disconcerting and fell over at least once. I had to be helped to my feet on one occasion and held from falling twice."

"We see," the Queen said. Then, turning to look at Harry, She said, "We would have your opinion of Our Royal Summoner's performance, My Lord Potter."

"Certain..." Harry managed to say before he was interrupted by Hermione down the other end.

"Potter?... Harry Potter?..." she piped up before taking a step forward and looking back down the line. Her sudden outburst and movement shocked everyone else in the room.

"You're Harry Potter?... The Harry Potter?..." she continued with her voice rising in pitch and volume.

Meanwhile Dan, after his initial startlement, looked down at his daughter in horror before quickly glancing up at His Queen. He saw that, while She was a little surprised at Hermione's outburst, She was also a little amused.

"I've read aaaalllll about you..." Hermione continued, looking at Harry before her father's hands suddenly grabbed her by the shoulders.

"Hermione!" he hissed in a loud whisper.

"Huh?" she exclaimed, before she quickly glanced up at her father.

Seeing the look on consternation on his face, she snapped her head around to look at Her Queen and blushed furiously.

As her father half dragged, half guided, his daughter back into line she squeaked, "Oh!... Sorry, Y... Your Majesty!" And hung her head feeling thoroughly ashamed as her father tucked her in under his arm.

Down the other end of the line Harry had hung his head and was shaking

it backwards and forwards.

"Your Majesty," began Dan, "I apologise on behalf..."

Clearly trying not to smirk, the Queen simply raised Her hand in a stop gesture. Dan shut up immediately.

"Doctor Granger, it is quite alright," She said. "Charles, here, was just as... impetuous... as a child."

The Prince just grinned in response.

If Hermione could have blushed any deeper, she would have.

"It appears, My Lord Potter, you may be more famous than We," the Queen said, then obviously awaited a response.

"Your Majesty, I..." said Harry looking up and back at the Queen and squaring his shoulders. "I know of at least seven books supposedly written about my life by one author alone. It's all pure fantasy, of course."

Waiting a few moments the Queen said, "We see."

Hesitating a few moments the Queen said, "Now, My Lord Potter, We believe you were about to answer Our question."

"Yes, Ma'am," Harry said mentally preparing his answer. "Colonel Benton was, of course, completely inexperienced in both side-along apparating, the method used when we left here, and floo travel, the method we used travelling from the Longbottom Manor to the Bones Manor and back to here.

"Due only to his inexperience he stumbled a couple of times on exit.

However, I feel he represented the Crown with the dignity and aplomb you required, and quickly accepted the... unusual... experience the environment presented him."

The Queen nodded slightly and said, "Thank you, My Lord Potter, for your appraisal."

Harry just gave a slight bow in response.

Then, turning to the colonel, she said, "Colonel, We find Ourselves impressed with Lord Potter's report of you, and your own humility. We would discuss this more with you at a later time."

"Thank you, Ma'am," the colonel responded with a formal bow.

"Now," She said sitting up just a little straighter. "Just what do Our other guests understand of this matter?"

"Only that you have asked for their attendance, Ma'am," the colonel replied more easily.

The Queen simply nodded. Turning to scan her eyes on the others in the line, she said, "We have called you here to seek... clarification... of matters most important to Us and the realm.

"To that end," she continued, "we have asked the goblins to attend us to apply their magics. Through their magics we shall have Our answers."

Pausing for a moment she said, "Neville Francis Longbottom, Susan Charity Bones and Hermione Jean Granger..."

She hesitated slightly, glancing at Harry as she did, before saying more firmly, "By Our command as your Sovereign, We require you to undergo the Rite of Inheritance at this time."

Looking back down the line, Harry watched as the shock of the Queen's words hit Neville, Susan, Augusta and Amelia. The Grangers, however, simply looked quite puzzled.

It was Augusta who spoke up first, "But... But... Your Majesty!" she spluttered, "Such a thing is not done until the children..."

Again, the Queen held up her hand stopping the person speaking in mid sentence. Augusta appeared quite stunned that she couldn't speak with her mouth opening and closing.

"By Our command, Madam Longbottom," said the Queen firmly before then saying. "We have the right."

Harry was just grinning, watching the Queen assert her magical authority on the... event.

'Wow! Fast Learner!' he thought, with a grin.

Once the line had settled again, she turned to the goblins and said,

"Director Ragnock; Grunnark; if you would."

The two goblins bowed and then came walking up to the box. Grunnark opened it and removed two blank sheets of parchment and the small knife.

Once he was ready, he nodded to the Director who then nodded to the Queen.

"Neville Longbottom," she said. "Please, step forward and follow the instructions of the goblins."

Neville hesitated a bit and glanced up at his grandmother who was still standing there in shock not uttering a word. Then he squared his shoulders, lifted his head and stepped up to the box where the goblins awaited.

The Director, took the knife off the box and, offering it to Neville, said, "Mister Longbottom. You are to use this knife and prick the top of your ring finger on your right hand. You are then to allow one drop of blood to drop onto each piece of parchment before you."

Again, hesitating a moment, Neville took the knife with his right hand and, switching it to his left hand, used it to jab the tip of his right ring finger. He winced a little, handed the knife back to Ragnock, and watched as a drop of blood welled up on his finger before holding it above the first sheet of parchment.

When the first drop dropped, he quickly moved his hand over the second piece of parchment and watched as the second drop fell and landed. Then he pulled his hand away and pinched his finger.

He and the goblins then leaned forward to watch as the blood soaked in and swirled out to form words.

Neville gave a sharp intake of breath at what he saw appearing.

Once the document had stopped its magics, Ragnock picked them up side by side. He read over both to compare them before handing one off to Grunnark. Grunnark then walked over and handed it to the Queen bowing formally as he did so.

The Queen accepted the parchment and quickly read through it as Grunnark walked back to the box.

"My Lord Potter," said the Queen, glancing across at Harry. "It appears your... research... is correct."

Then she turned to look straight at Neville and said, "My Lord Longbottom. It appears this rite has identified you as the Heir Apparent to the Earldom of Gryffindor and the Heir Apparent of the House of Longbottom. As there is no one of your line before you to claim the title - by Our command, you, sir, are the Earl of Gryffindor."

When the Queen said 'Earldom of Gryffindor' the first time there was a short hesitation before there was an audible collection of gasps from Augusta and the Boneses. The Grangers still didn't seem to know what to make of it all but were watching intently everything that was happening. Even Hermione had recovered from her embarrassment by this time and was watching just as intently as everyone else.

The Queen, however, did not seem to notice as she was staring intently at the document before her.

After a few moments the Queen then turned Her attention to the two goblins and said, "Director Ragnock, the rings, if you would. And We require the same... protections of notification... that were applied to Lord Potter's rings."

Grunnark reached into the box once more and drew forth two ring boxes, offering one to Ragnock.

Taking it Ragnock opened it and cast the required spells upon it.

Then he turned to Neville offering it towards him and saying, "Yours is the ring on the left, take it out."

Neville reached in with a shaking left hand and took out the indicated ring.

"Place it on your right ring finger. The magics will do the rest," said the old goblin.

As soon as Neville had placed the ring on his finger it resized itself before it flashed once.

"The ring has accepted. You are now the Lord and Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Gryffindor. As such, you are also automatically emancipated. Congratulations, My Lord," Ragnock said giving the ring box back to Grunnark.

"I... I am?" asked Neville a bit querulously.

"But... that's impossible!" blurted Amelia. "There's no way the magics of the rings..."

"Madam Bones!" the Queen rode over the top of her in a firm voice. "You do not yet seem to understand the authority I bear. I have ordered it, so shall it be. The magics know Our authority."

'Oooh!' thought Harry. 'No Royal "We" in that statement. Amelia had best watch herself.'

Looking back down at the document for a moment the old goblin then accepted the second ring box and, ignoring Amelia's outburst and with a straight face, said, "Yes, My Lord."

Then opening the second box he, again, cast spells upon it before offering it to Neville.

"These are the rings for the Noble and Most Ancient House of Longbottom. Yours is the one on the left."

Neville looked at it for a moment before turning back to look at his grandmother. She was still looking on in shock. As was Amelia.

"Lord Longbottom," the Queen spoke up in a firm voice. "Take up your Head of House Longbottom ring."

Neville spun back around to face the goblin and looked up with a bit of shock, then reached in and removed the indicated ring.

Ragnock then said, handing the box back to Grunnark, "Place the ring on the same finger, the rings will combine to form one."

Neville did so, watching the second ring resize itself and merge with the first. Another flash and it was done.

"The ring has accepted," said Ragnock. "Congratulations, again, Lord Longbottom."

Augusta, still frozen to the spot, let out a little 'Eep' sound but otherwise didn't react.

"Lord Longbottom," said the Queen. "Congratulations. We will speak more of this shortly. For now; please step back in to line."

Neville just nodded, turned around and walked back to take his place in the line next to his grandmother, as instructed. While the Queen set the document on the table beside her. The Prince then picked it up and read it for himself, still quite curious.

"Susan Bones," the Queen then called. "Please step forward and follow the instructions of the goblins."

Amelia tried to reach out and stop her walking forward but she just couldn't seem to grab her.

Harry reached out and took the poor stunned women by the elbow and said softly to her, "Easy, Amelia. I swear to you, this had to be done. She

will be safe."

After Susan went through the same ritual, she stepped back in to line alongside her Aunt on the other side from Harry, wearing the combined rings of the Heads of Houses of Hufflepuff and Bones.

"Hermione Granger," the Queen then called. "Please step forward and follow the instructions of the goblins."

"Wha...?" her father quietly uttered. But he made no move to stop her. His military background wouldn't allow him to.

Hermione, practically ran to the box and, bouncing on the balls of her feet, reached out and almost snatched the knife out of Ragnock's hand before carrying out the same rite.

The Queen seemed quite amused.

Once completed Hermione jumped back in to line between the colonel and her father staring down at the ring of the Head of the House of Ravenclaw on her right ring finger.

'That's everyone,' Harry thought. 'Next, Myrrdin's message to them and the memory cubes.'

While Grunnark was packing the boxes up, Harry quietly stepped forward and quietly asked Ragnock, "The Will, Director Ragnock?"

"Her Majesty has it, My Lord," replied the old goblin equally quietly.

Harry nodded and stepped back.

"Director Ragnock," the Queen then said. "You have, again, performed a service for Us today. We thank you. Please be sure to invoice Us for your service and We shall ensure swift payment."

Then, after a quick glance at Harry, She said, "May your vaults overflow with gold. And may your enemies die by your hand."

Turning more fully to face the Queen the old goblin puffed up a bit, obviously pleased, and said, "May gold continue to flow into your vaults."

And your enemies taste the keen edge of your sword."

Then he bowed formally and deeply, nodded to Grunnark, who picked up the box, and led the way back out the door through which Harry and his friends had entered. They were met just inside the door by a Page who appeared to be leading them back to the fireplace in the Queen's Audience Room.

When Harry had turned back around he saw that the table had been removed and another Page was laying four low red velvet cushions with gold tassels fringing them on the floor. Another Page was standing just on the other side of the row of cushions sideways to them and holding what he recognised as the Queen's Sword of State. Her father's sword.

'Oh, crap!' he thought to himself. 'I haven't had a chance to warn the others who don't know what the sword means.'

Stepping forward slightly and turning his head back down the line he quickly gained the attention of the others and very quietly said, "This is just a ceremony, folks. No one is going to be hurt."

He could see that his words had, at least, calmed the two older witches. "She's just going to tap them on the shoulder with the flat of the blade," he quietly said again.

That calmed them a bit more. Dan had, at first, wondered what Harry was talking about. It didn't take him long to understand, though, once he looked at the faces of those between he and Harry.. And he nodded back at Harry, in understanding of why he said what he did.

Then the Queen and Prince Charles stood and stepped forward, waited a moment, and the Queen said, "Lady Hermione Jean Granger, come forward."

Hermione, still playing with her ring, looked up and said, "Huh?"

Dan snorted but gave his daughter a little push forward.

The colonel, recognising the young lass didn't understand what was going on, took hold of Hermione's shoulder and guided her forward to stand about eighteen inches shy of the cushion on her end.

Then he leaned forward and whispered into her ear. Hermione kneeled on the cushion and was about to sit back on her heels when the colonel, again, whispered in her ear and she straightened back up again while still kneeling.

The Queen calmly waited until the colonel stepped back in to line. Then she called, "Lord Neville Francis Longbottom, come forward."

Neville was no dummy. He immediately stepped up to the next cushion and kneeled assuming the same position as Hermione.

"Lady Susan Charity Bones, come forward."

Susan did the same.

"Lord Harry James Potter, come forward."

And Harry went and kneeled on the remaining cushion, glancing towards and grinning at the others as he did.

Then the Queen walked to stand about four feet in front of Hermione and simply said, "My sword."

The Page holding it took a few paces forward and offered the sword to the Queen with the flat of the blade resting on the palms of his gloved hands. When the Queen took it he then bowed, turned around, and went and stood just off to the side from Harry away from Susan.

Her Majesty then held the hilt of the sword in both Her own gloved hands with the tip pointed straight up.

"Lady Hermione Jean Granger, as your sovereign and liege, We hereby grant you the title of Countess Ravenclaw, both in the mundane world and wizarding. And recognise you as Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Ravenclaw."

'That's different,' Harry thought to himself.

Then She carefully lowered the sword to tap Hermione once on the left shoulder. Then lifted it over her head to tap once on her right shoulder. And back again to tap once on her left shoulder. And raised the sword to point straight up again.

Then She moved to stand in front of Neville and said, "Lord Neville Francis Longbottom, as your sovereign and liege, We hereby grant you the title of Earl Gryffindor, both in the mundane world and wizarding. And recognise you as Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Gryffindor."

Then She did the same thrice-tapping of shoulders.

Next, She moved to stand in front of Susan and said, "Lady Susan Charity Bones, as your sovereign and liege, We hereby grant you the title of Countess Hufflepuff, both in the mundane world and wizarding. And recognise you as Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Hufflepuff."

And the same thrice-tapping of shoulders.

Finally, She moved to stand in front of Harry and said, "Lord Harry James Potter, as your sovereign and liege, We hereby grant you the title of Earl Slytherin, both in the mundane world and wizarding. And recognise you as Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Slytherin."

Harry then heard a bit of a gasp coming from the others on mention of the name Slytherin, before he received the same thrice-tapping of his shoulders.

"You have done Us a great service today, Lord Slytherin," She added. "It will be remembered."

The Queen then handed the sword off to the same Page, who bowed again, before departing with it. And She went to stand back where She

first stood when calling them forward.

"Arise, Countess Ravenclaw; arise, Earl Gryffindor; arise, Countess Hufflepuff; and, arise, Earl Slytherin," She commanded.

Each stood as their titles were called.

"Congratulations, all of you," She said warmly. "Family members may now come forward and congratulate them."

It was Dan, leading Emma, who first came forward to hug Hermione. But Augusta and Amelia soon joined in the congratulations after giving their grandson and niece respectively a big hug. Plus, a lot of showing of rings around.

It was Dan who first approached Harry. "I don't know why you did it, My Lord," he said. "But, thank you."

"Call me Harry," replied Harry. "But don't thank me just yet. You may well find yourself hating me for what I've caused here. All will be explained to you soon."

After a few minutes with a few of the group carefully approaching the Queen and Prince to have a few words, the Queen then asked for their attention again.

"We think it best we now retire to the library for a more informal setting," She said. "We shall discuss matters further there."

The Queen and Prince Charles then left through a side door. But, before they could follow, the colonel came up and said, "It would be best we wait a few moments before following."

That's when Augusta turned on him and said, "Lord Potter, I would know what happened here, and why I felt so powerless to stop it."

Hearing Augusta confront Harry Amelia turned and said to him, "As would I."

"I told you Her Majesty was not a non-magical," said Harry a bit

defensively. "What you saw was Her exercising Royal Magic. As your Sovereign she has the power to act on magical matters within the wizarding world of the United Kingdom and beyond, as well as the mundane.

"Her Majesty vehemently disagrees with heirs apparent having to wait until they come of age, or are emancipated earlier. So, She acted. And the four earldoms are also peers within the mundane realm and can, conceivably, be accepted into the United Kingdom's Parliament through the House of Lords. It was Her authority over such matters, Her command, that pretty much ordered the Rites of Inheritance and rings to accept.

"That's why there was two Rite of Inheritance documents for each of the others, as there was for me earlier today, and why She and the goblins were watching the documents very closely as She spoke. They were watching the words on the documents alter to conform to Her commands."

"And what was that with the casting upon the rings?" asked Amelia.

Before Harry had a chance to answer the colonel stepped forward,

"Before you get into that, My Lord, Her Majesty will be expecting you."

Nodding to the colonel Harry said a bit cheekily but very formally, "Yes, Oh, Royal Summoner."

The colonel just snorted in response and took the lead out of the room.

Harry made sure the rest of the group were tagging along and took up the rear, except for two Pages following him.

Another long corridor and the colonel led them into a large library. As soon as Hermione saw the books she said, "Ooooh..." and peeled off from the group to browse shelves. Harry had to grab and drag her away before she ended up losing herself reading the bindings.

In the middle of the room was a somewhat pentagon shaped setting of couches and an armchair. In the middle stood a small round table that, for now, was clear of anything upon it. Another Page was standing by to guide them into seats.

The large single-seat armchair was left clear. Dan and Emma were guided into a large double seat couch closest to the armchair. Amelia and Augusta into the same style couch on the opposite side of the arm chair. Harry and Hermione, with Hermione dragging him now, were led to the one next to Dan and Emma. And Neville and Susan went into the one between Harry and Amelia.

Hearing a noise coming from the side Harry turned to see a tea service trolley being wheeled in. A wait person came up and asked, "Tea or juice, anyone?"

Hearing no one order first, he said, "Yes, please; tea... white with two sugars."

Then the orders came from the others.

As they waited, Dan turned to Harry and said, "I don't understand. How is it that Hermione is the Duchess of Ravenclaw, when both Emma and I are still alive?"

"You are the direct descendant of Rowena Ravenclaw, one of the four founders of Hogwarts. However, the Heir to her... holdings... can only be passed on to someone with a sufficiently powerful enough magical core to be accepted into Hogwarts as a witch or a wizard," replied Harry.

"Neither you, nor your parents, nor as far back as we can find in recent history, has had such a core. Hermione is the first in many generations. So, she's the Heir Apparent; or, actual Heir, now."

"And Neville?" asked Augusta from the other side.

"As his parents have been... incapacitated... for a decade now, the Heir

passes to him," replied Harry.

"His father was magical. Why not him before...? Or his grandfather before him?" Augusta further asked.

"Because all four Heirs have to be able to attend Hogwarts at the same time, and the Heir to Ravenclaw would have been missing. That also applies to Susan," explained Harry. "You see, the four founders, before the fighting broke out and they parted ways, wanted to ensure their Heirs would all, equally, own Hogwarts, as they did. So, they set things up so that their heirs had to be of similar age. They forced a level playing field to be in place so that no one or more could assert their ownership over the others."

"Wait," said Neville, interrupting. "Did you say 'own Hogwarts'?"

Harry grinned back and replied, "Yeah, Nev; 'own'."

"We own a castle?" asked Neville wonderingly.

"No, we all own, at a quarter each, the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the Hogwarts Castle in which it is housed, and all the land around it, including the land on which Hogsmeade sits," said Harry matter-of-factly.

"Lord Potter," said Amelia, speaking up. "The Ministry owns Hogwarts."

"No, Ma'am, they do not," Harry firmly replied. "Think about it this way. Hogwarts has been around since late in the ninth century. That means just over a thousand years. Yet the Ministry has only been around for a few hundred years. I know this because Government in its current form with Ministries has only been around for a few hundred years. If the Ministry is supposed to own it, how did they get it hundreds of years after it was built? If they bought it, from whom did they purchase it?"

"The only possible explanation is that, over time, they've claimed it as their own. However, they've had no legal right to do so. The school has

been running continuously since the time of the founders, so they can't claim it under the laws of abandoned property. And if they do claim to have purchased it then they've been defrauded."

Everybody was listening intently to what Harry was saying so no one noticed when Her Majesty walked into the room. It wasn't until she was almost at the side of what was clearly her chair before Harry noticed.

Harry, noticing her at the last moment, leapt to his feet. "Your Majesty! I apologise..." he said as everyone else suddenly realised she was there and rose to their feet. "...We did not see you approach."

"We understand, considering how rapt your audience was in your talk," she said gracefully sitting down in the remaining armchair. "Please, be seated everyone."

Everyone resumed their seats, but now were sitting up a little straighter. Her Majesty was now dressed in an expensive canary yellow dress to mid calf, long gloves and carrying a matching purse, and no tiara.

"Ma'am, I was just explaining to the others how we, together, own Hogwarts and the land upon which it sits for many miles around," Harry explained. "Madam Bones believes it is the Ministry who owns it. I was taking her through the logic of how they could not."

"We heard, My Lord," She said with a slight smile. "We would hear more."

"Of course, Ma'am," replied Harry.

Thinking a bit to get his talk back on track Harry then said, "Now, I don't know how it came to be that the Ministry, or those who work within it and without, came to believe the Ministry own Hogwarts, but I have my suspicions.

"I think, a long time ago someone once asked someone else 'Who owns Hogwarts since the founders left?'. That someone, not knowing themselves, then probably said something along the lines of 'The Ministry

must own it, who else could it be?'. The first person then would have seen the logic in that and said to others 'The Ministry owns Hogwarts'. And word spread. When word would have made its way back to the person who, first guessed, that the Ministry owns Hogwarts he would have felt validated. He would think to himself, 'See? I was right when I said I thought the Ministry owns Hogwarts'.

"Now, here's a question for you all. I don't want you to just answer it, I want you to think about it," said Harry said before pausing for a moment.

"If everyone believes a lie to be the truth; does it make it the truth?"

The Queen just smiled, as did the Grangers, but the others were frowning.

"Very nicely done, My Lord," said the Queen. "It is something of which We are plagued on an almost daily basis. Our publicity staff in their employment spend a lot of their time denouncing rumours about Us that Our subjects believe to be true. And new rumours arise on an almost daily basis.

"As for ownership of the lands of Hogwarts and all therein, the lands form the four Earldoms. They cannot be sold as you cannot sell your peerage," She explained.

With a nod to Harry She went on, "The conditions of that were in those documents you provided Us concerning the formation of the Earldoms."

"The Hogwarts train, however," Harry went on, "I don't yet know about."

After a short pause the Queen then said, "My Lord Potter, I have something for you."

She gestured to one of her people standing well away, they must have come in when she did, and a silver tray was brought over.

The tray was offered to Harry who saw upon it a large folded piece of parchment with a red seal.

Frowning Harry reached out and picked it up. Holding it before him he saw it was his parent's Will. He broke the seal and read through it. As he read, the others in the circle could see him getting angrier and angrier before he then blinked in astonishment.

After he finished he then stood and leaned over offering it to the Queen. She took it and began to read it while Harry plonked himself back down in his chair muttering sulphurously.

The Queen glanced up to look at both Amelia and Augusta at one point before continuing. And when She was done She offered it back to Harry, who stood again and accepted it from Her.

"Do you mind if I give them the highlights, Your Majesty?" he asked.

"We believe that would be for the best," she replied.

"Okay," said Harry. "This is my parent's Will. It was sealed by the Wizengamot under the direction of Albus Dumbledore, who also claimed to be my magical guardian."

Opening it back up he then said, "The salient points are; on my parents death it was to be asked if certain people would be willing to raise me. They are, in order, Frank and Alice Longbottom, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, Edgar and Marjorie Bones, and Marlene McKinnon. If any of those people remained alive but were unable or unwilling to take me; then, together, they were to discover a home for me within the wizarding world.

"Under no circumstances... and it's in capitals and underlined here... is Harry to be left with Vernon and Petunia Dursley," he said. "Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia are non-magicals. They believe anyone from the magical world, or anyone who displays a talent for magic, is a freak. Yet, that is precisely where Dumbledore left me."

"What?!" blurted both Amelia and Augusta. Harry thought it almost

sounded like stereo.

"That's Will tampering!" said Amelia in shock.

"But wait," said Harry, holding up a finger. "There's more.

"The Will was witnessed by Frank and Alice Longbottom, Sirius Black... and Albus Dumbledore."

"WHAT?!"

Harry didn't know exactly who said that but he knew he had a reaction from both older witches and the Grangers. It was almost a wall of sound. That brought a couple of the Queen's retinue scurrying over with watchful gazes flicking among the people there. Hands were being held in a way it looked like they could suddenly duck under frock coats for a weapon.

"Is everything alright, Ma'am?" one of them asked still looking with suspicion at the gathering arranged before their Queen.

"It's fine, thank you, Peter," she said holding up her hand and tapping the man on his arm. "They have just received a big shock. I'm sure they will calm themselves down, immediately."

Everyone understood the implied message. And the circle was again quiet.

"According to that," said Augusta with anger in her voice. "You should have been placed with me. Frank and dear Alice may have already been in Saint Mungo's, but no one knew at that time they would not recover."

"And, even if Frank and Alice were ruled unable to care for you, Harry, then the Will clearly states you were never to go to your Aunt and Uncle," Amelia continued on, and then said exasperatedly, "What in Merlin's name is Dumbledore playing at?"

"Well," said Harry. "There's more I think you should know."

Amelia and Augusta both nodded.

"It also says here," Harry went on, "That I seem to have inherited Potter Manor. I didn't even know my family had one. And that a large trust fund was set aside for me at Gringotts, that the money therein be used by my guardian to raise me, and that I be raised to understand my place within society."

Lowering the document for a moment, Harry then said, "I had no idea about any trust fund, and know that my aunt and uncle do not receive any funds from it, so where is the money? If Dumbledore has... unlawfully... claimed guardianship over me, then is he stealing it?"

"I will be investigating the matter, personally, on my return to the Ministry!" Amelia said.

"And I will be raising the matter with the Wizengamot!" declared Augusta.

"And I, as the person so aggrieved, ask you not to do anything just yet," said Harry firmly.

"Lord Potter, if the law has been broken then it is my duty to investigate!" replied Amelia just as firmly.

"I understand," said Harry. "However, there are matters here of which you are unaware that will make Will tampering seem like small potatoes.

Dumbles has not just committed that minor illegal act; he has committed much, much more."

"Oh?" asked Amelia ominously.

Harry sighed and looking at the Queen said, "Your Majesty. Before I and the colonel departed to... collect... the Longbottoms and Boneses, I was relating to you what happened on the night of 31st October 1981."

"Oh, that was the night your parents were killed, right?" Hermione cut in.

"And you defeated Voldemort."

"Hermione!" her mother gasped in shock while the Boneses and

Longbottom recoiled in shock at mention of the name.

"It's okay, Doctor Granger, I'm not offended," said Harry placatingly.

"Please do not use that name, dear," said Augusta with a pained look. "It's He-who-must-not-be-named."

"It was the night my parents were killed," said Harry to Hermione, "But I did not kill Voldemort."

"And it's just a name," he went on, speaking to Augusta, "It has no power, I assure you."

"Yes, My Lord Potter," the Queen smoothly cut in. "You were."

"Thank you, Ma'am," he said. "May I relate what the wizarding world believes happened? And why I'm so famous?"

"We would like to hear that," the Queen replied.

Nodding, Harry gathered his thoughts and then began. "The wizarding world believes that my parents, James and Lily Potter, and I were hidden under a Fidelius Charm cast by Albus Dumbledore. That Sirius Black was the Secret Keeper and, therefore, the only one able to give the information to Voldemort as to the location of my parents. That Voldemort... His real name is Tom Riddle, by the way... was led to the cottage the Potters were hidden within by Sirius Black, who was also supposed to be in his inner circle, a Death Eater, in secret.

"That Voldemort killed my parents and, in the act of trying to kill me, I somehow managed to kill him first. That Peter Pettigrew turned up and Sirius Black chased him. That Sirius Black managed to catch Pettigrew in a street full of non-magicals, and in the process of killing Pettigrew, or otherwise, blew up him and thirteen non-magical citizens of Britain leaving a big crater in the street.

"That Black was then quickly captured, given a quick trial, and dumped in the wizarding prison on Azkaban. That I was taken from the remains

of the Potter's cottage, given a health check where it was discovered my injury, my forehead, could not be healed without a scar, and then spirited away into hiding where I lived in a big castle where I grew up happy and safe but led an exciting life.

"That's it in a nutshell, right?" he looked around asking the others there.

The Queen, of course, had already heard part of what happened and knew the truth. She, however, just sat there, listened and watched, with a small smile.

Harry got a few head nods and 'Yes'es in return. "Everybody believe this to be true? This is what the entire wizarding world believes is the truth?" he asked in general. "Except, of course, Mister and Missus Granger, who probably have no idea what I'm talking about. And Hermione's probably read all about it in those books she has."

More nods with rapid head nodding from Hermione. Dan and Emma just had slight frowns of not understanding.

"Okay, then," said Harry. "Well, almost all of what I told you happens to be a load of... rubbish. It's pure fiction. It. Is. Not. True!"

Harry waited for that to sink in before he went on.

"Okay, then," he said. "Here's what really happened, in a nutshell.

"My parents, James and Lily Potter, and I were hidden under a Fidelius Charm cast by Albus Dumbledore. That much is correct," he began.

"However, Sirius knew that pretty much everyone knew that he was the Potters' best friend. So, at the last moment, he convinced James and Lily to switch Secret Keepers. He convinced them to switch to their other school friend, Peter Pettigrew. That means Dumbledore knew who the real Secret Keeper was. Peter Pettigrew had been Riddle's spy within the Order of the Phoenix, the vigilante group battling Riddle from in secret.

"What Riddle did not know was that my mother, Lily, had been spending

years studying old and ancient magics. This included rune magics. My mother had cast upon and around my crib multiple layers of spells and wards, as well as some upon me. Lily had discovered a way to block the killing curse. However, it required her to sacrifice her life to fully charge the magical protection. So, when she died, she had one hand on the ring of runes and, in giving her life, her magical energy was directed into the wards.

"When Riddle then aimed his wand at me and... cast... the runes, fully charged, activated. The curse was not just blocked... except for giving this scar on my head... but, together with the runic magics, bounced back at Riddle killing him instantly by obliterating his corporeal self.

"That means it is Lily Potter who is the hero of the wizarding world; it was Lily Potter who killed Voldemort; it was Lily Potter, through her studies and skills with magic, and not a fifteen month old baby, who richly deserves the praise. Not me."

Harry gave that a moment to sink in before continuing.

"Now, as soon as the cottage's wards were breached the alarm went out to the rest of the Order, what was left of them. The first one to arrive was Sirius. He arrived moments after Voldemort was blown up. He knew, immediately, what had happened and expected us all to be dead. In a fit of rage he charged, on his own, the remaining Death Eaters that didn't go the same way as Riddle. All but one quickly apparated out of there. The only one left behind was Pettigrew, who couldn't apparate because he was panicking too much over the death of his master.

"Pettigrew then fled with Sirius in hot pursuit. However, that's also when other members of the Order arrived, some of which were Aurors. Magical police who now work for Amelia here," Harry said indicating Amelia where she was sitting in confused silence on the couch next to Augusta.

"The Aurors, thinking Sirius was both the Secret Keeper and was trying to flee, gave chase. When Sirius finally caught up to Pettigrew, Pettigrew screamed that it was Sirius who betrayed the Potters and cast a blasting charm to blow a hole in the street, a piece of which severed his left finger on his left hand. The blast killed thirteen non-magicals and knocked Sirius flying. Pettigrew seized the moment, changed into his animagus form - a rat - and fled down through the now opened sewers."

"When the Aurors finally caught up they arrived moments after Pettigrew disappeared. They seized Sirius and manacled him. As he was led away he was saying in deep shock and grief 'I killed James and Lily, I killed James and Lily'.

Harry paused a few moments before saying, "That is what really happened up to that point, that night."

Then Harry shut up and sat back to allow the others to mentally digest what he had just said.

"But... but... everyone knows Black killed the Potters!" exclaimed Augusta, the first to recover. "He admitted it!"

Harry then leaned forward again and said, "Yes, quite curious that, isn't it?" Then, turning to Dan he said, "I believe you would have an explanation as to why he said it; wouldn't you... Captain?"

Dan and Emma's faces immediately changed from ones of contemplation to ones of shock. Hermione just looked confused.

"I...I..." stuttered Dan, before glaring back at Harry and flatly saying, "How on Earth would you know that?"

"That will be explained soon," replied Harry. "For now, though, could you explain what I meant?"

Dan just glared at Harry for a moment before he looked at his Queen with a questioning look.

The Queen, knowing what Dan was asking of Her, replied, "Just give the concepts of what Lord Potter is speaking, Captain."

Dan nodded and said, "Yes, Ma'am." Turning back to face Augusta, he huffed a bit and said, "What Harry, Lord Potter, is talking about is the emotion of guilt, not the reality of it."

After thinking for a bit, he said, "Let's say an army corporal orders a private, a close friend, to check a car for a bomb. The corporal then goes to another car, away from the first, to check that one for a bomb. While the private is checking the car he has been ordered to check, it blows up, killing him. The corporal is, of course, shocked by it. He may have even been severely injured in the explosion, but lives.

"However, as far as he is concerned, he killed his friend, the private. He figures, if he hadn't ordered his friend to check the car, his friend wouldn't have been killed. Therefore, he killed him.

"What Lord Potter is referring to is that Mister Black believes he killed his friends, the Potters, because Mister Black told them to use this Pettigrew man as their... Secret Keeper. Who then betrayed them. Mister Black feels responsible. It was his guilt of that, which drove him to say he killed them."

"Precisely," said Harry. "And, thank you."

"But Pettigrew wasn't an animagus," said Amelia. "Animaguses are very rare, and they have to register their forms with the Improper Use of Magic Office within the Ministry. We would have known."

"Animaguses are only rare because witches and wizards believe them to be. Therefore, they do not bother to find out if they, themselves, are one. Every witch and wizard with enough magic to get into Hogwarts has the inherent ability to be an animagus. All it requires is the practice of meditation; first, to seek what their animagus form would take, and then

to begin to practice to change.

"It's yet another of those 'Everyone knows it to be true; therefore, it must be. Yet it's not.' situations," replied Harry.

"Even if he was an animagus he would still need to be registered with the Ministry," Amelia retorted.

"Really?" asked Harry. "The wizarding world was in a state of chaos, pretty much in a wizarding war. If you had a skill like that, would you make it public by informing the Ministry?"

"But it's the law!" snapped Amelia.

Harry turned to the Queen and asked, "Everyone in here is cleared for knowing about this, Your Majesty?"

The Queen knowing what Harry was about to do, quickly glanced to where her retinue and the wait staff were still waiting, and said, "Yes, Lord Potter. You may proceed."

Harry just nodded, rose and walked outside of the circle of chairs and a little away. He jumped and changed into his phoenix animagus before flying up and circling the room once. He circled in tighter to lightly hover over the middle of the circle. Then, he moved just off the centre table in front of his chair, and changed back, lightly dropping to the floor in human form.

He calmly sat down and waited. Everyone, except the Queen who knew what to expect, were flat-out astonished; jaws wide open in some cases, eyes bugging out.

"Thank you, Lord Potter," the Queen calmly said.

From where he was sitting Harry bowed slightly to her in response.

"What was that?!" asked Dan.

"An earth phoenix," replied Harry calmly.

"Now, Madam Bones, I am an animagus. I am not registered with the

Ministry," said Harry. "My father was also an animagus. His form was a stag. And, as I said, it is a skill any witch or wizard can learn. It just takes dedication."

He then said, "That would be another of those beliefs 'Everybody knows to be true' just proven false."

"Yes, well," said Amelia, with not a little shock.

"However," Harry then spoke up, "about the events of that night. Let's hit the salient points. First, Dumbledore cast the Fidelius Charm, which means he knows Peter Pettigrew was not the Secret Keeper. Yet, he has not spoken about that with anyone. Second, Sirius Black is innocent of all charges against him. Third is the matter I haven't raised - and this is the one I'm really annoyed about - Bartemius Crouch Senior, then Head of the DMLE, had him thrown directly into Azkaban on the orders of Minister Millicent Bagnold, without even giving him a trial."

"WHAT?!"

Harry, getting bombarded with the sound of the adult's rage and shock, winced.

Her Majesty, first to regain her composure, simply raised her hand. And received total silence.

"Are we to understand, My Lord Potter," She said, "that one of Our subjects has been incarcerated in this wizard's prison, without a trial?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "And he has been there for nine and a half years. About eight years longer than most people live."

"There's no way he would have been incarcerated without a trial, let alone sent to Azkaban," stated Amelia. "No one would have stood for it!"

"Another belief I need to shoot down in flames?" asked Harry, not without a little gentle ribbing.

"Okay," he went on, "Where's the trial transcript? The record of evidence?"

The record of interview of the supposed culprit? Witness statements?"

"They'll all be in the files at the Ministry," replied Amelia.

"Then I'll ask you, come Monday, to go and look for them," said Harry.

"And, if you can't find them, get him the hell out of there. Veritaserum him. Hell, Veritaserum Crouch and Bagnold, too, while you're at it."

"However," he went on, "I still need you to leave Dumbledore, and his part in all this, alone."

"Lord Potter," said Amelia exasperatedly, "if all this turned out to be true, Dumbledore is a criminal and needs to be brought to justice."

"And I agree," said Harry with a sigh. "But, there is still far, far more to this than you've so far heard."

"Your Majesty," he said turning to the Queen, "I have another message from my mentor. This time it's for the other heirs. However, I think their guardians and you may be very interested in what he has to say."

"Then by all means, My Lord Potter," she replied. "Let us watch it."

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## 7. The Heirs' Discovery

### Chapter Seven - The Heirs' Discovery

# # #

Harry reached into his satchel and drew forth another memory cube. He leaned forward and placed it in the centre of the table before him. And activated it.

As before, up popped an image of Myrrdin.

"Greetings, My Lords and Ladies, their families, and of course, Your Majesty, if you're watching this," said Myrrdin with a formal bow.

"My name is Myrrdin Emrys, or Merlin Ambrosius, if you prefer..." he began just as Harry heard a sharp intake of breath from the wizarding folk, "... and I have been Harry's mentor, teacher and friend for the past

fifteen years.

"Yes, yes; I know he's not reached his eleventh birthday yet; but Harry can vouch for it. Harry lived it and Her Majesty heard me explain it to Her. Ask Harry how it was possible later.

"What I am going to talk to you about is time and prophecy. And your places within both. I'm going to talk to you about three different timelines. Specifically three different futures. What was supposed to happen, what would have happened if I hadn't taken a hand in it, and what I did to start to get things back on track. With your help, we'll succeed.

"First, the original timeline; what was supposed to happen.

"Harry was supposed to have originally gone and lived with Augusta and Neville; first as a guest, then as a more permanent family member due to Frank and Alice's health. Susan, your life would have been the same. The same goes for Hermione.

"Then all four of you would have entered Hogwarts as normal students, and completed your studies. You would have, all four of you, been close friends. Harry and Neville would have been sorted into Gryffindor, Hermione into Ravenclaw and Susan into Hufflepuff. Yes, I know Harry is the Earl of Slytherin, but the reputation of the house at present meant the friendship would have been... damaged if he was sorted there.

"Then, except for Hermione, you would have all discovered your true inheritance as you reached your majority. Hermione would have discovered hers when a letter would have been sent to her inviting her into Gringotts. And she would have undertaken the rite of inheritance.

"After Hermione, the first to reach majority but the last to receive her title, did receive hers, all four of you would have soon afterwards been together in the Great Hall. At that point Hogwarts would have recognised

you all as you really are. And you would have then been in a place to radically change the curriculum to bring the school up to a decent standard of education, rather than the shadow of its former self it has become.

"You would all, also, start changing the wizarding world in other ways, especially through your seats on the Wizengamot. Neville would have championed equality, as a true Gryffindor would. Susan would, at the same time, forged to unite the wizarding world as one and championed better laws regarding magical creatures. Hermione was destined to be the smartest witch in Hogwarts history, she would even be Head Girl in her final year, and she would have been the one leading both changes to wizarding law, revitalising the whole system, and challenged even her ancestor, Rowena Ravenclaw, for knowledge and development of new magics.

"And then there's Harry. Voldemort... Riddle... will return. Harry knows how. He was going to return in about four years from now, but Harry was finally going to face him in a one-on-one duel to the death in your final year just before his majority. Harry would be successful and, after taking up his titles, go on to be the hero of the wizarding world and beyond. He would also be the linchpin holding all four of you together and, if anyone threatened you, dealt with them," Myrrdin paused for a moment before continuing.

"However, all that was... interfered with... by a stupid, old, manipulative man who thinks he's God's gift to wizardry; Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore. He who thinks he's better than everyone else and only he can fix things. He who has no problem sacrificing people if he believes it's for what he calls 'The Greater Good'. If you ever hear him say, 'It's for the greater good', he's about to or has already broken the law. And there's

a possibility someone's going to die, or did die, as a result of his manipulations.

"When Dumbledore messed with the timeline he messed with destiny. Through his acts, Harry would have lost to Riddle in that duel. And Riddle would have gone on to first, destroy wizarding Britain, then the wizarding world, and then the mundane world. The eventual result would have, likely, led to the end of the entire world as we know it; as you know it.

"So, I had to step in. And when I have to step in I make sure about what I'm doing. I leave nothing to chance, as I won't get a second chance. I secreted Harry out of the home in which Dumbledore dumped him the night after his parent's death. A mundane household. A household where he would not have known love, nor learned of his wizarding heritage until he received his letter from Hogwarts shortly before his eleventh birthday. It was Dumbledore's plan to soon after... rescue... him. This way, Dumbledore would appear to be Harry's knight in shining armour and Harry would adore him. Of course, it was all about Dumbledore being able to control Harry.

"Harry would have entered the wizarding world smaller and weaker physically, and his magical core would have been irreparably damaged. It's that damage that would have led to his eventual loss at Riddle's hands. Dumbledore's plan was for Harry to fight Voldemort, lose, and then Dumbledore would come in and kill Voldemort making him, once more, the hero of the wizarding world. He would, of course, have failed.

"I took Harry out of that abusive home on his fourth birthday. And, I did it in such a way that Dumbledore, who has magical monitors on the household where he dumped Harry, does not know he's missing. As far as Dumbledore knows, Harry is there right now. And Harry and I need him

to keep thinking that until the 1st of September when Harry leaves for Hogwarts. And there, Dumbledore believes he will have even more control over Harry. Yes, he's that manipulative.

"Yes, I took Harry out of the Dursleys' on his fourth birthday, and for the next close-to-fifteen years I trained him. That's right, fifteen years. Harry may be an eleven year old, nearly, but I took him to a place where time ran slower. He has the most advanced training I could provide him. I trained him in the way that druids, mages and magicians of my day were trained. Then, due to his aptitude, I carried on with further training. In for a penny, in for a pound; as I believe they say in your day.

"At the moment young Harry has so much knowledge crammed into his brain he could start writing it all down and not be finished before he died of advanced old age. I trained him to Journeyman level, as it is known... sorry, as it was known... in my day. And that's well beyond what the wizarding world is capable of in your day.

"You must not allow others in the wizarding world to know what is going on until the four Heirs make their move. That especially includes Dumbledore, his so-called Order of the Phoenix, the Ministry and the Wizengamot. If others learn of what is being planned it would place the Heirs in danger. Some would attempt to stop them as they will see what they will do as a threat to their way of life. They would be wrong, but they don't understand that yet.

"I also do not want the Heirs to be recognised by Hogwarts until after your first year. I want you to have the time to just be students, watch and learn about the curriculum, and plan how to fix it. That will also give others, such as Her Majesty, the chance to do their own preparations. Then, on the day of the Leaving Feast at the end of the year, you can pounce!

"At the moment, only Her Majesty and some of her people, the goblins, and you... eight... know of your elevation if Harry was successful in having the signals from the rings blocked from alerting the wizarding world the Heirs have taken up their rings. You should all at least get another almost year of your childhoods before you're thrust into the thick of it.

"Now for the prophecy..."

Again, with the split image. And, again, the first part of the prophecy.

"Dumbledore knows that part, he was there when he heard that part of the prophecy uttered. Oh, and he didn't capture the memory of it and give it to the Department of Mysteries, either. Yet another thing he's done wrong.

"Riddle also knew the first two lines. This is the part Dumbledore and Riddle don't know..." And he recited the second part of the prophecy he'd done earlier.

"Now to break it down for you so you can understand what a pivotal role you'll play.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches. Could be anyone. Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies. This could be Harry or Neville. Yes, Neville, you're what Dumbledore thinks of as 'the alternate'. And the Dark Lord will mark him as equal. That's Harry, it's the scar on his head. But he will have power the Dark Lord knows not. Dumbledore thinks it's love, which Harry abounds with. And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives. That's the duel, unless Harry can stop him before that. Before two hands of full turnings shall pass. Less than ten years. The one with the power will come forth from whence he has been lost. Harry coming out of hiding, where I took him.

"He shall be joined by loyalty. That's Susan. He shall be joined by wit. That's Hermione. He shall be joined by resolve. That's Neville. The four are rejoined! That happens at Hogwarts. They shall defeat evil and restore order to magical kind. As I've explained.

"When the four founders first split, it was Salazaar Slytherin who first walked away. He caused what was to follow. That means it was up to his Heir to get them all back together. Which is what Harry managed to accomplish, since you are all here watching me ramble on. However, it won't be recognised until you all stand together in the Great Hall. And that's the 1st of September.

"Now, why are we doing things early? It's because Dumbledore has already done so much damage to the time balance, the scales of time needs an extra... nudge... to get things back to rights. By you four taking control earlier, you will give the nudge needed.

"But, you're eleven year olds. You do not have the knowledge or wisdom to carry out what you need to do. Only Harry has it, at the moment. So we can fix that. We can bring your knowledge up and give your wisdom a boost.

"Oh, you'll still be eleven year olds. But your knowledge will be astounding. It will compensate you against your lack of years.

"Harry has specialist memory cubes that will, as he puts it, download the knowledge into your minds. The memory cubes were designed and created for each of you and are designed to not cause you harm. Harry calls this safety feature... circuit breakers.

"It will take many days to run through all the cubes. Harry knows what to do. At the end of it you will have the same level of knowledge as he does."

While Myrrdin continued to talk Harry withdrew from his satchel a

wooden case. Opening the lid he set the case upon the coffee table next to the cube. Inside the case were three rows of fourteen near identical cubes. Plus, a fifteenth.

Myrrdin continued, "So that it will not disrupt your normal lives the cubes are designed to be used at night during the course of a normal night's sleep. Each will be placed on your forehead once you're lying down. Harry will activate them. Then they'll do their work for about eight hours each. At the end of that time you will simply wake up feeling quite refreshed but with new knowledge.

"The only difference to that routine is the first one. It's designed to allow and give you the knowledge and understanding of how to order your mind. It will teach you Occlumency. This is to protect you from Dumbledore trying to manipulate you. Dumbledore is a trained Legilimens and has no compulsion against mind-raping his students or anyone else. This is something he does often. If he discovers who you are, he will no doubt attempt it upon you."

Harry heard both Amelia and Augusta gasp in shock.

"It will also give you an eidetic memory, perfect recall. So that all the information in the rest of the cubes will remain in your minds and you can then order it in such a way the information will come to your forethoughts immediately.

"The other cubes will cover wizarding and mundane law, the history and traditions of both worlds, how to live in both worlds, the laws of logic, mathematics, physics, mundane and magical medicine and healing, herbology, technology, technomancy, arithmancy, runes, ley lines, potions, charms, hexes, and even curses with a focus on defence against the dark arts. They will teach wandless, druidic and oriental magics; business principles, public relations and leadership. And they will teach

how to expand on what they have learned, experiment with safety protocols in place, mundane weaponry, security systems; and even more.

"In other words, everything Harry and I could conceive someone in their positions could need to be safe.

"I would wish you luck, children, but I happen to know you don't need it. So I will say instead, I will enjoy watching your successes.

"Oh, and by the way, Harry. You've got a piece of one of the sandwiches you scoffed earlier stuck to your tie."

"What?" said Harry then quickly looked down at his front trying to brush away... nothing.

Suddenly, Myrrdin said, "Pranked you back!"

And the cube shut itself off.

Harry looked at the now dead cube stunned for a moment before he looked up and said, "Myrrdin! You just had to get the last one in, didn't you!"

Looking back down again he saw everyone else staring at him. "What?" he asked. "He wanted to get me back because one of the last pranks I played on him turned all his hair pink."

"You pranked Merlin?" asked Neville in awe.

"Well, yeah, Nev," replied Harry. "In that place we didn't study and work the whole time. We had a lot of fun together, too."

"But how did you learn about pranking?" asked Hermione. "Did you study it?"

"No," replied Harry. "In my down times I'd sometimes sit and watch through Myrrdin's time viewer what my Mum and Dad got up to at Hogwarts. Dad and Sirius were best friends since well before Hogwarts and, once there, they made friends with Peter Pettigrew and Remus Lupin. The four of them called themselves the Marauders and, my Dad

and Sirius mainly, used to prank the other students and, sometimes, the staff. Some of them were funny but most were just... cruel. I was disappointed with my father for that, and it's also something I won't do."

"But, if Myrrdin and you could see through time, wouldn't he have been able to see if you were going to play a prank on him?" asked Hermione.

Harry stared back utterly stunned as Hermione's words made him realise the truth of it. Then he started to chuckle. Then laugh. He'd almost reached the point of it being full-on uncontrollable laughter before Augusta spoke up.

"Lord Potter!" she admonished him. "Try to remember you're a Head of House, and where you are!"

Harry struggled but it still took him quite a while to get himself back to a point he could speak.

"Don't you get it?" he chortled. "Hermione's right! He knew! He knew, and he still let me do it!" Then he broke out into laughter again. And it was a little while before he again managed control of himself. Hermione and Susan got it and were also giggling a little.

"He... let me do it," said Harry, still calming down and somewhat amazed.

"He let me do it, so I had fun on one of my last days there! Oh, Myrrdin; you sly old fox!"

"Then why didn't you know he knew?" asked Hermione again.

"Because I didn't think to go looking for if he did," replied Harry. "You can't see everything. There wasn't enough time or you'd spend all your time just watching instead of learning and studying."

Suddenly remembering where he was he looked up at the Queen and said, "Sorry, Your Majesty. That... was rude."

"No need to apologise, My Lord Potter," the Queen smiled back. "We, too, were amused."

Finally calming right down Harry leaned forward, sighed a little, and asked, "Now that you've seen Myrrdin's message. Are there any questions?"

It was Dan who spoke first, "That was a nice bit of holographic... whatever it was... but how do we know it was true? Or even that that man was Merlin? And these memory cubes of which he spoke, how do we know they won't harm our children?"

As he asked, Harry was nodding his head. "We were expecting these sorts of questions, so I'm going to do something Amelia and Augusta, and Susan and Neville, know means this is no joke.

"I do not have a wand yet, as I won't be going to purchase it until my birthday," Harry continued. "So, Madam Longbottom, may I borrow yours?"

Augusta drew her wand from her sleeve and handed it to Susan without a word. Susan then leaned over Neville and handed it to Harry. Clearly Augusta knew what Harry was about to do; and it looked, so did Amelia. Holding the wand out in front of him Harry stated in a solemn voice, "I, Harry James Potter, Earl of Slytherin, Head of House Slytherin, Head of House Potter and Heir to the House of Black, do solemnly swear on my magics and my life, that the message I played before this gathering, was of Myrrdin Emrys, also known as Merlin Ambrosius. And do also swear that what was relayed by him to this gathering in his message was and is true as I know it to be. I further swear that I will not knowingly lie, and have not knowingly lied, on any matter we gathered here have discussed this day. However, I reserve the right to not answer any question; but, if I do, then that answer will be the truth as I know it. So mote it be! So mote it be!"

A flash of light appeared to radiate from Harry, just once.

No one said a word as Harry then held the wand by its grip and said, "Lumos!" and the tip brightly lit up. "Nox!" and the light extinguished. Harry handed the wand back to Susan then reached his right hand, first showing one of his rings, out towards the cube. And willed it to float gently over to his palm.

"Madam Longbottom," asked Harry quietly. "Could you relate to Her Majesty and the Grangers just what it meant when I did that?"

Still completely stunned by what Harry did, Augusta haltingly said, "Yes... Of course... My Lord."

Then, gathering herself, she explained, "Lord Potter just made an unbreakable vow. As an emancipated minor he is now an adult in the eyes of magical law. So, he could do it and be bound by it. He then demonstrated that what has been discussed here, and with Her Majesty earlier, was true by lighting the tip of his... my... wand with his magics. And he is clearly not now dead.

"However, I have no idea how he managed to make that crystal float over to his hand."

"Thank you, Madam Longbottom," said Harry. "In answer to that, I used wandless magic. You will recall Myrrdin said one of the teaching cubes can teach Neville, Susan and Hermione how to use it."

"And if I do not allow Hermione to go to Hogwarts, now that I know of this?" asked Dan.

"If us four Heirs do not stand together in the Great Hall, then the world, as we know it, will probably end," said Harry, flatly.

Giving that a few moments to sink in, he then said more calmly, "If Riddle wins against me, he will take over the wizarding world in Britain. There is no one that we know of likely to stop him. Not just magical folk will die either, just as it did in the 70s right through to late 1980, many

non-magical folk will also die. The rest of the magical world will then shut itself off from Britain.

"Riddle, unstopped, will then work to take over the mundane world of the United Kingdom and Ireland. He will then attempt to enslave everyone. Those he can't enslave he will kill. This will then lead to involvement from Europe in self-preservation. Then, even more nations will become involved. And there is then every likelihood of global war."

Dan went white; Emma was not far behind him.

"If the four Heirs unite in the Great Hall at Hogwarts, the prophecy states, 'They shall defeat evil and restore order to magical kind'. 'They shall defeat...'. That's pretty cut and dried," said Harry.

"M... Merlin was understating things when he said he only takes a hand if he feels it's necessary, didn't he?" asked Dan.

Harry smiled and said, "I found him to be quite modest, yes."

"And these... magical... cubes of yours?" asked Amelia.

"Will give Susan, Neville and Hermione," said Harry as he indicated them,

"The greatest arsenal of knowledge, across many disciplines, we could devise in the time Myrrdin and I had to aid them in their endeavours with me in this."

"How long will it take?" she asked.

"I don't know for sure but it's speed will depend of the capability of the mind to which it is applied," replied Harry. "The first cube will take about eight hours to do its job. That is, give them the knowledge and ability to... reorder, for wont of a better word... their conscious memories. And the knowledge of how to shield their minds, Occlumency. By the time we reach the 1st of September they will be skilled Occlumens and have their mental walls up."

"Though the cube will take about eight hours, it is then up to them to put

the knowledge it's given them into practice. That should take at least two full days. I plan on giving them two and a half, meaning I would return three nights later with the next cube. After that it's pretty much a new one each night.

"The scariest ones for you, watching your loved ones, is the first one. When someone is reordering their memories and knowledge, they're going to appear to be... staring off into space... for long periods of time. But you can easily grab their attention if you need or want to, even if it's just to check on them. Think of them as someone who has focussed all their attention on solving a problem, or reading a good book, and you'll have a pretty good idea.

"I can also stop at any time, as requested by them or by you, their guardians, and they will retain what they've already... absorbed. But each new cube after the first will have no effect on their day-to-day activities. They will simply have all this new knowledge they didn't have the day before.

"If we're able to run through all the cubes in quick succession, without a break after the first, it's going to take just over two weeks to reach the end."

"How do they work, My Lord?" asked Amelia.

"Essentially, they're a... different form of a pensieve," replied Harry.

Before he could continue Emma interrupted. "A pensieve?" she asked.

"A wizard is able to extract from their minds a copy of different memories," replied Harry. "These memories can then be put into a device called a pensieve, which will allow another, or others, to see the memories for themselves. They are very useful in law enforcement when questioning witnesses; or for showing someone something you saw and want them to see.

"The cubes have certain of my memories stored in them," he continued.

"They are of what Myrrdin taught me and I learned for myself. And they're ordered in such a way that the subject matter is...

compartmentalised... to make it easier for those using them to absorb the information in a logical form."

"But a pensieve of memories only works if you're awake and you actively watch the memories. It's almost as if you're there as the memory is being developed," explained Amelia.

"If you watch a memory," she continued, "Then time within it flows normally. That would mean it would take years to learn from your memories what you've learned."

"Yes," said Harry. "And that's where these cubes differ from a pensieve.

"You see, the subconscious mind is able to absorb information at an incredibly fast rate; far faster than your five senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste - can detect the information. So, Myrrdin spent years developing that magical technology to what we would need. Each cube stores years of learning and training - my learning and training - compresses it and speeds the time up. Then, when activated, sends the information into the mind of the recipient at an incredibly rapid rate but slow enough for the subconscious to accept it while the body is in sleep state.

"Think of it as watching a one and a half hour video... or pensieve memory... in only a few seconds. But, when you then think about it, you'll be able to recall the entire video.. or memory... in great detail and clarity at normal speed, slow speed, high speed and even paused."

"So, Merlin is going to be teaching us?" asked Susan excitedly.

"You would be receiving the memories of me being taught by Merlin," replied Harry. "So, in effect, it'll seem as if he was teaching you."

"A.. and these cubes will help keep my daughter safe?" asked Emma.

"Ma'am, I cannot guarantee anyone's safety; especially not my own. No one can promise that in any situation. Life, itself, is inherently dangerous," said Harry solemnly. "However, with the four of us working together, we stand to be the safest we can be given the situation confronting us."

Emma sighed and slumped her shoulders, then looked at Dan who looked back and nodded in resignation with his head bowed.

"Madam Longbottom, Madam Bones; how say you?" Harry asked them.

Both witches looked at each other for a few moments. Then both looked at Harry and nodded. Maybe, reluctantly, but they nodded.

"And that leaves the other Heirs," said Harry.

"Hermione?" he asked, looking at her.

"Oh, yes! Yes, please!" she said, with glee and anticipation.

Looking at Susan he then asked, "Susan?"

"Yes," she firmly said.

"And, Neville?" he asked Neville.

"Yeah, I guess," he said.

"No, Nev," Harry firmly replied. "If you're not sure then I won't go ahead.

I will not force you to do anything you would not want to do."

Neville then looked back at Harry for moment before taking a deep breath, squaring his shoulders, and saying firmly, "Then, Yes; I'm in."

Harry smiled back before then turning to look at the Queen.

"Your Majesty," Harry said formally. "You are our Queen. As this is a matter of national importance, at least, the ultimate decision lies with you. Without your consent, I would not proceed."

Harry then watched the Queen be a little surprised Harry had placed this on her. He could also see from her expression She quickly knew why he

did it; and knew he was right.

She sat just a tiny bit straighter and said, "My Lord Harry James Potter; you are, without a doubt, the most astonishing young man We have ever met. We believe you are more than capable of carrying out the task you have before you.

"However, if you believe at any time you believe you may fail, We would hear of it immediately. At which time, We will act."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Harry formally. "I am your humble servant."

"Then, as you have the agreement of the Heirs and their families, you may proceed," She said. "However, We will not make it a command. They all must be allowed to make their own choices."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said Harry, and bowed where he was sitting.

"As of right now, this is a matter of security of the realm," the Queen said. "We would not have any of you discuss it with anyone outside of this group. The exception will be to only explain enough to people who need to know something to be able to do their job; nothing more. We command it."

"Madam Bones and Madam Longbottom," She said, turning to the two witches. "We understand your homes are magically protected?"

Both witches said, "Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then We would ask you to... strengthen... those protections," The Queen said. "You now have within your care two of Our Peers and We would have them safe."

"I can have teams of Aurors trained in personal protection providing security at both the Longbottom and our manors," said Amelia. "I will also arrange for Aurors trained in warding magic to strengthen the wards at both."

Turning to the Grangers, the Queen said, "Captain and Mrs Granger; We

understand your home is not able to be warded in the same manner as the Bones' and Longbottoms' manors."

"Errr... Your Majesty," said Dan, tentatively, "I'm retired. I'm a dentist now."

"Are you attempting to correct Us... Major?" asked the Queen with a frown.

"Ahhh... No, Ma'am! Of course not, Ma'am!" he spluttered.

"We thought not," She said. "Your commission is, as of this moment, reactivated."

Then, raising her voice a little, she called out, "Colonel!"

Colonel Benton came over from where he was sitting with other members of the Queens retinue. "Yes, Ma'am?" he asked.

"I have reactivated Major Granger's commission," She said. "His primary tasking is to provide security for one of Our Peers, his daughter. We would have him prepared for that task, and assisted."

"Yes, Ma'am," the colonel replied. "I can have him assigned to detached duties in the Diplomatic Protection Detail on covert operations."

"Excellent suggestion, Colonel," She said. "We would see it done."

"Yes, Ma'am," he said before turning to Dan. "Major, upon finishing here we shall proceed down to the armoury of the Home Guard whereupon you shall receive your load out. I shall also have MI5 come to your home. They shall be dressed as tradespeople, and they shall fit your home with advanced security systems."

"Yes, Sir," said Dan, a bit stunned by the speed things were being arranged.

"As threats would probably come from the wizarding world I can also have an Auror detail assigned to watch the Grangers' property, Your Majesty," said Amelia.

"We think that would be wise," replied the Queen, with approval.

"Colonel?"

"I would never refuse an offer of assistance from a trained security force if it improves the safety of my Queen and her peers, Your Majesty," he said, before turning to Amelia. "I believe a way can be worked out where we can co-ordinate our efforts, and I thank you for the offer."

Bowing to the Queen, the colonel headed off.

"My Lord Potter," the Queen said, looking at Harry. "As you only arrived back in this... reality this morning, and your little house elf has assumed your place in the Dursley household, you would have no home, at present."

"Ummm... Your Majesty," said Harry, "I was going to go check out the Potter Manor and sort things to rights there. If it's currently uninhabitable, I was just going to get a hotel room so I could quickly come and go as needed. Then return there during the days and work towards repairing it."

"We will not have you staying at a hotel, My Lord Potter," the Queen disagreed. "There is guest rooms within the palace here. We do understand you need to visit the Bones, Longbottom and Granger residences often while those cubes of yours are... being utilised. So, We will arrange for you to have immediate access so you may come and go at any time."

Knowing he would lose the argument if he tried, Harry relented. "Thank you, Your Majesty," he said instead.

Augusta, who'd been quiet for quite some time, asked Harry, "Where have you been, if I may ask, My Lord?"

"As Myrrdin said, he cannot take a hands-on role in what's going on here without causing a time paradox," explained Harry. "So, he created a, as I

called it, pocket reality outside of normal time and space. He could go there and he was able to pull me there. That's how he could also adjust time.

"He then sent me back to this, the... normal reality... at just after 9.00am this morning. I arrived back here in amongst the trees in St James Park across from the western end of Downing Street."

Sitting bolt upright and staring at him, Amelia exclaimed, "That was you?"

Harry nodded.

"I had a frustrating day, today, trying to discover what that was," she said. "I sent a team of Aurors with Obliviators to the spot, expecting a child with great power to have caused a major accidental magic event. They found nothing. Not even a blade of grass out of place."

"Yeah," said a sheepish Harry. "I'd figured someone would come along pretty quickly. As soon as I arrived I simply walked away and across the road. I didn't even look back. Sorry to have caused you so much work."

Amelia just snorted and grumbled.

"Okay, then," said Harry. "What to do now. If I may be so bold as to set this going?"

"One moment, My Lord Potter," Her Majesty said.

"Oh, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "Of course."

"You were telling Us about the night your parents died before We sent you away with the colonel," she said. "We would hear more."

"Of course, Your Majesty," replied Harry. "I just figured we had already... taken of your time enough for one day."

"It is Our time to do as We will," she replied. "And We do not consider We are done just yet."

"Err... Yes, Ma'am," said Harry, with contrition.

"I believe I was up to the point where Sirius had been grabbed by the Aurors, who thought he had killed the Potters, including me, and then went on to kill thirteen mundanes and Peter Pettigrew.

"I also explained earlier how Sirius was thrown into Azkaban under orders by Barty Crouch and Minister Bagnold without a trial," he said.

"And, Madam Bones, I really do want you to get Sirius out of there as quick as you can," he said. "Say... you decided to review matters of those frantic couple of months and noticed a discrepancy in the records of that night. Then get him his trial and Veritaserum Potions him on the stand.

Then, go ask Dumbledore why he didn't come forward with the information about Pettigrew being the Secret-Keeper. That should keep Dumbles on his toes while us Heirs get on with things before the 1st of September. Then I would want you at Hogwarts on the 2nd of September to pick up Pettigrew; he will be there."

"Yes, My Lord," she replied. "I can do that."

"That way, Madam Bones," he went on, "In capturing Peter Pettigrew there, you will have an excuse to post Aurors at the school."

"Ah!" said Amelia, understanding. "Yes, that can be arranged. Definitely."

"Next, I know Her Majesty would like a complete copy of the Magical Laws of wizarding Britain," Harry stated, before turning to the Queen and saying, "I know you have not asked for them yet, but I know you will want trusted members of your legal staff to go over them and review them. This will give your people time to review and advise before us four Heirs go into the Wizengamot and start kicking a few well deserving... behinds."

"That, My Lord, is an excellent suggestion," said the Queen, approvingly.

"Well, with that, I cheated, Your Majesty," replied Harry with a smile. "I already knew you were going to be asking for them sooner or later."

The Queen smiled a little in response.

"Next," said Harry, turning to look at Augusta. "We will need trustworthy Proxies found for the four Earldoms and the House of Potter. Madam Longbottom, I like you and trust you. Would you be willing to lead the search to find suitable candidates for each? Of course, Susan, Neville and Hermione may want someone else to do it, such as Madam Bones for Susan, but I'm putting my two bob's worth in first to ask. I reserve the right to make my own decision on it when the time comes, but recommendations would be gratefully accepted."

"I..." said Augusta a little surprised at the request. "I would be deeply honoured, Lord Potter."

"Yeah, for me, too!" said Hermione. "I wouldn't know who to pick."

"You'll need to find one for me, too, Gran," said Neville. "Errr... Grandmother."

"Ummm... What's a Proxy?" asked Hermione.

"A Proxy is someone who will represent you as Head of House on the Wizengamot if you believe you cannot take up your seat at that time," replied Augusta. "As you will be attending school and fixing problems there for a while, a Proxy would be a good idea."

"Oh," Hermione replied understanding. "Then, yes, definitely."

"I also ask that you consider Arthur Weasley and Remus Lupin for the roles of my Proxies, but that doesn't mean I will end up selecting them," said Harry.

"Of course, My Lord," replied Augusta.

"Now," said Harry, returning back to his talk, "While all that mess with Sirius was going on, Rubeus Hagrid had arrived at the Potter Cottage. He claimed Dumbledore had sent him to collect me. Which makes you then wonder how Dumbledore knew I was alive, let alone that both my

parents were dead. Hagrid took me back to Hogwarts on Sirius's flying motorcycle and into the school's hospital ward. Dumbledore met Hagrid, and me of course, as we arrived.

"On examination, Poppy Pomfrey, the school medi-witch, discovered a piece of dark magic associated with the wound on my forehead. She discovered it was a piece of Riddle's soul stuck to me as a soul-leech..." said Harry, but was interrupted by gasps from Amelia and Augusta.

"My Lord," said Augusta. "Please do not speak of such things!"

"Madam Longbottom, that is not the worst of it," said Harry firmly.

"Dumbledore ordered Poppy to heal my wound as best she could. But Poppy did not have the skills to remove the leech. Dumbledore should have immediately ordered me to be taken to St Mungo's to get it removed. Instead, he had me kept there for about the next twenty four hours to make sure I was otherwise okay."

"What?!" both Augusta and Amelia exclaimed.

"But that... that's... reprehensible!" Augusta further exclaimed.

"Don't worry too much about it," said Harry. "Myrrdin removed it very soon after I arrived in... that other place."

"And it's yet another law he's broken," growled Amelia.

"It's yet another thing he did that would have led to the loss of everything we hold dear," said Harry.

"The next morning," Harry continued, "he sent Minerva McGonagall, Hogwarts' Deputy Headmistress, to the Dursley residence and to spy on the house. As she was an animagus with the form of a tabby cat, she could easily hide in plain sight and watch.

"That night, after nothing else could be found wrong with me, Dumbledore called Hagrid back to the hospital wing. And had him take me to the Dursley house on Sirius's motorcycle. Shortly after Hagrid left,

he obliviated Poppy of all knowledge of the soul leech still attached to me. Yes, another broken law.

"When Hagrid arrived at the Dursley residence, Dumbledore and McGonagall were waiting for him. Dumbledore then took me from Hagrid's arms and pinned a note to the blanket in which I was wrapped. Then he left me on the doorstep, pushed the doorbell and walked away. That's child abandonment.

"He knew how the Dursleys felt about magic and how bitter my... relative... was about my mother being a witch when she wasn't. And the monitoring charms he placed upon the house kept him apprised of what was really going on.

"And that is about it for my tale," finished Harry.

"Thank you, My Lord Potter," said the Queen. "But you could have told them about how you were treated, and would have been treated, at the hands of the Dursleys. Myrrdin was right when he said you have nothing of which to be ashamed or embarrassed."

"Lord Potter," said Emma quietly, drawing Harry's attention.

'Oh, ohhh!' thought Harry.

"What happened to you while you were at the Durleys?" Emma continued in a voice dripping with venom.

"It's the Dursleys, Ma'am," said Harry trying to make himself disappear.

"And I would rather you and the others here not know."

"Why not?" she flatly asked.

"Uhhhh... Because, including Her Majesty, there are five parents or guardians here," he meekly replied. "A...And I know how you would react. And I can't afford you, any of you, to 'lose it' and end up with Dumbledore knowing things had changed at the Dursleys when we are sooooo close to the 1st September."

"Tell. Me. Now!" she said in a very quiet and low tone.

"Tell her, Lord Potter," the Queen quietly said. "Tell them all."

'Oh, God!' Harry thought. 'The Royal Magic of command.'

"I was... verbally and... physically... abused," said Harry, struggling against the magic. "Wh... when Myrrdin... rescued me... I had... a concussion from a beating..."

Harry knew he wasn't going to resist the magic, so gave in.

Sighing, he went on to say, "I was severely malnourished. I was only allowed to eat table scraps. I had poison within the skin of my hands from pulling weeds all day, every day, making my hands red raw and swollen. My bedroom was the cupboard under the stairs, my bed was an old dog's basket, and I would often be locked in there for days at a time. I had poorly healed fractures in my arms, one leg and some ribs. I have scarring on my body from my time there. I would be forced to do all the housework. I thought my name was 'Freak' until Myrrdin rescued me because that was the only thing my... relative... would call me. I received no love and was despised by them all because my parents were a wizard and a witch. They intended to beat the magic out of me if I showed any signs I had it."

Once Harry wound down he sat with his head bowed and waited...

Surprisingly, the first one to react was Hermione. She shifted across into his lap and hugged him.

But her moving triggered the reaction he was expecting.

"WHAT?!" And the wall of sound hit him. He heard snatches of 'The hero of the wizarding world', 'under four years old', 'trying to beat magic out?', 'I think I may take my load out now' from Dan, and a few others.

Hermione didn't move. She just hugged him even tighter and held on.

Harry didn't know if it was the Queen wielding her magic again as he had

his eyes closed, but the noise subsided very quickly after about ten seconds.

"There's more," said the Queen quietly. "From what Myrrdin said earlier today in his message to Us, Dumbledore knew all about how Harry was being treated. He has magical monitoring on the Dursley home."

Again, stunned silence.

"To hell with a trial," said Amelia coldly. "I'm going to kill him myself."

"No, you will not," the Queen stated matter-of-factly. "We have been considering this matter carefully, and Lord Potter is correct. Mister Dumbledore and the Dursleys will be punished in due course, but it is going to have to be put on abeyance."

"Your Majesty," said Amelia, "he has broken the law and I am charged with upholding it. I am required to arrest him."

"And We are the final arbiter of law," responded the Queen. "It is Our decision that this wait. Mister Dumbledore is not going anywhere as he believes his plans are in place. The Dursleys are not going anywhere as they believe Harry is still with them. Knowing what our enemy is going to do in advance means We have control. If We move too soon against the Dursleys and Dumbledore those plans collapse."

"We shall also not be moving against Our Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge, as Myrrdin and Lord Potter have asked us not to."

Amelia sighed and nodded her head.

"We still do not understand why you need that first year, Lord Potter," said the Queen turning to Harry.

"Because the problem of widespread passive sedition begins at Hogwarts."

It is the core of how the wizarding world in Britain thinks as it does,"

replied Harry.

"Explain, please," the Queen instructed.

Harry nodded and, asked Hermione to hop off before he began.

"The attitudes of wizards and witches to, well, just about everything that is wrong with the wizarding world, starts there," he said. "From birth to their eleventh year, those born within the wizarding world have magic all around them all the time. So, they grow up knowing about magic. And they grow up learning a fair bit about the wizarding world's traditions.

"Mundane borns, however, have no idea about the wizarding world until they receive their letter inviting them to Hogwarts hand-delivered by the person who is the current Deputy Head at Hogwarts. Then they learn of their... heritage... but nothing else. They have no idea about traditions, or right and wrongs relating only to the wizarding world.

"Then they attend Hogwarts. At Hogwarts they're ridiculed for not knowing things magical-raised children already know. And the pure bloods despise them because they, the pure bloods and other magical raised, see mundane-raised children as just stomping all over their traditions. That is just plain stupid.

"Now, at Hogwarts the children attend classes that average out to about four-to-five hours a day, five days a week. A select few will have the extracurricular activity of this sport called Quidditch. For the rest, and the rest of the time, there is nothing to do but some homework. That leaves a lot of children with nothing to do, and idle hands are the devil's work.

"You would also think there would be a class for mundane-raised children to be able to attend to learn about the culture and traditions of the magical world. After all, the school has them for approximately nine months of the year during their formative years of eleven or twelve to seventeen or eighteen depending on what month of the year they were born.

"Further, I would expect a class on mundane culture and traditions for the magically-raised. However, all they get is a short weekly class on what is called 'muggle studies'. And even then it's pretty much optional. Even calling it by that name means the magical community are... conditioned... to use that offensive term. And, worse, the class material is so horribly out of date or just plain wrong as to be worthless in its current form.

"Magical-raised children, in general, are led to believe that 'muggles' are silly, not as intelligent or wise as magicals, but have some clever toys. The mundane-raised, in general, think the magical-raised, especially the pure bloods, are just plain daft. Especially, as they give all the appearance of living in the Victorian era.

"Let's look at the example of the Hogwarts Express. All children attending Hogwarts are required to board the train at Kings Cross station on the 1st of September. They then endure a seven hour train ride to the western Scottish lowlands. For magical-raised children this is a tradition that allows them to catch up with friends across Houses, and otherwise network. To get to Kings Cross they can be side-along apparated, floo'ed or portkeyed to get there in just a few moments from anywhere in the United Kingdom or Ireland.

"However, let's look at a mundane-raised by mundane parents. A family lives in northern Ireland has to fly and drive all the way down to London, negotiate London's notorious traffic snarls, and get their children to the station. That will often require an overnight stop somewhere, usually just outside of London. Once at the station, only their child going off to Hogwarts can get onto the correct platform as mundanes cannot get through the barrier.

"Also, the trip for the children would have been much simpler, faster and

less draining if they had simply travelled to Hogwarts directly. And they know it. So, you now have the mundane-raised children on the train whining about how stupid it was to ride the Hogwarts Express, and the magically-raised retorting that mundane-raised were trampling on their traditions. And they've not even reached Hogwarts yet."

"It's that sort of issue, Your Majesty," Harry said to the Queen, "That has led to the current passive sedition by the majority of wizarding Britain's populace."

The Queen nodded and said, "We understand."

"Now here we have a bit of break," Harry went on. "Except for a very few, all magicals in Britain attend Hogwarts. Only if they attend another school overseas are they excused from attending. It is a requirement under the existing laws to attend school or have your wand snapped, your magical core bound and pretty much eviction from the community. There are no exceptions.

"This is why Myrrdin and I planned for us four Heirs to start early. We are in a position to do something about changing attitudes and the conditions at Hogwarts; get them while they're young. That way we begin to change the attitudes of the community as a whole.

"As for the other end of that chain, the Ministry and the Wizengamot, most who work there hold their positions through old money and connections. When Riddle was supposed to be resurrected, a lot of those people would side with him and show their true colours. In the ensuing short war Riddle would lose, and a lot of the pure blood families who came out in support of him, get wiped out. That would have included families such as Crabbe, Goyle, MacNair, Malfoy, Mulciber, Nott and Yaxley, to name a few.

"Families that survive included Bones, Longbottom, Potter, Weasley and -

funnily enough - Black, due specifically to Sirius allying himself with the 'light' families against Riddle. But a lot of his family joined Riddle and died or were imprisoned.

"It's this massive blow to a lot of the pure blood families that would have allowed the four Heirs to start forcing changes to law within the wizarding world to bring things back on balance after being weighed towards the dark by Riddle and his followers.

"As I will be working towards stopping Riddle's resurrection by hunting down and destroying his soul-anchors - thereby releasing his soul to the afterlife, and effectively 'killing him' in the process as required by the prophecy - a lot of those families are not going to be lost. And their votes on the Wizengamot will be against us.

"This is where we'll also be working as the four Earldoms to force them to comply. If they try to use threats and intimidation the four Heirs will have power to spare to smack them down... hard. One will be the training and knowledge the cubes will give them. Another will be Her Majesty's authority over them. And the third will be their own laws as they currently stand."

Harry gave that a moment to be digested before continuing.

"Another reason I want the year is for your people, Your Majesty," Harry said looking to the Queen. "Many mundane-borns were unable to secure employment, or otherwise make a life for themselves, within the wizarding world and have returned to the mundane world, sometimes quite bitter. I now understand your Royal Wizard, Sir Kingston, has proven to be one of these. And this has gone on for quite some time.

"Give MI5 the writ to go through old school records right across the nation. Tell them they're looking for children who attended schools until their eleventh year of age then disappeared from records. Then, look for

them to resurface six, seven or even eight years later appearing to be uneducated and requiring education, or are working in menial jobs.

There will be at least hundreds of them, if not thousands. Especially, start with your militaries and police forces; mundane-born magicals tend to drift towards that occupation.

"Track them down and you'll find a great many of them willing to come work for Your Government within the existing military, intelligence or police, if they don't already; or just be attached to them to deal with the trouble. If I fail against Riddle, or the four of us otherwise fail, you will have the forces necessary to go into the wizarding world and force your will upon them.

"So, there you have it. That is the core of what Myrrdin and I have been planning for many years," Harry finished.

"Any suggestions or comments?" he asked.

"Merlin!" said Amelia. "As Her Majesty said, you really are the most astonishing person I've ever met. They're not going to know what hit them!"

"I wondered why you wanted the year," mused Dan. "Now, I understand."

"I'm not happy with the idea of Her Majesty having to come in with her own forces," said Augusta. "But, I can see why it would become necessary, if you fail."

"Now, for why I don't want Dumbledore touched until we're ready," Harry went on. "Dumbledore is still seen as a hero in the eyes of the wizarding world. He is Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, holder of the Order of Merlin First Class, long-term respected Headmaster of Hogwarts, leader of the Order of the Phoenix, the only person its known Riddle fears, and so-called leader of the light. Plus, he has a fire phoenix as a familiar, so

people automatically think that must make him a 'good guy'.

"As such many people could not conceive of him possibly doing any wrong. And he can tell people to do something, even when they know it to be illegal, because its Dumbledore who told them to do it. And, they believe Dumbledore can do no wrong.

"People like Minerva McGonagall, Rubeus Hagrid, Arabella Figg, Poppy Pomfrey, have all believed Dumbledore when they've taken concerns to him and he told them he would sort it out. But, not one of them then followed it up with him, which makes me wonder if they've been obliviated or similar.

"So, we need to destroy that reputation before, or in the process of, taking him down. We need to show the wizarding world the man he truly is. Otherwise, he'll never serve time for his crimes.

"A lot of the evidence against him is easily found. And you, Madam Bones," said Harry, turning to Amelia, "are in an excellent position to gather it."

"However, I know that at least two of your senior Aurors, Alastor Moody definitely and possibly Kingsley Shacklebolt, report on everything straight to him. And there are others who report to the dark families. So, you're going to need to come up with a way to identify those who will expose to others what you're doing - what we're doing - before you give any of your Aurors a task associated with this."

"Also, you weren't here when I identified another matter of importance for Her Majesty. That of the actions of the so-called Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge. Old Fudge knows it's his duty to report what's going on in the magical world to the Prime Minister. Instead, he enters the Prime Minister's Office and obliviates him telling him that they had a meeting and it was wide-ranging and productive; before he then leaves. We know

he's done this on at least four occasions, so far."

"He what?!" said Amelia, shocked.

"Second on that," Harry continued not answering, "Fudge had also bugged the Prime Minister's Office, so he could listen in on meetings the Prime Minister had within his office with anyone on any matter. I have already rendered the device useless and it now provides Fudge with false information. And we know it was Fudge who did it because he entered the office only a few minutes after I destroyed the original device, and he was carrying an exact duplicate replacement for it in his pocket.

"Fudge is fomenting sedition and is a traitor to the Crown. He is also taking a great many bribes from the rich families and from Dumbledore. If you check his financials the evidence will be there in plain sight.

"But Fudge is Her Majesty's to deal with. So, once you have the evidence, please hand it off to Her people. He is Her Minister, and will feel Her... wrath... first," said Harry smiling to the Queen.

The Queen nodded her head firmly in return.

"As for The Daily Prophet, the wizarding world newspaper, they've also an important part to play. So far they've aided, knowingly or unknowingly, the sedition that's occurring. In the original timeline they actively spoke out against what the four Heirs were doing, and did. In Dumbledore's interference timeline they called me a spoiled, attention-seeking brat who did nothing but lie.

"In this timeline, if they print just one lie about us," said Harry holding an index finger up "So help me God, I'll buy the bloody paper lock, stock and barrel; and put in staff who understand the meaning of the word 'truth'.

"Too many magical folk take what is written within that rag as the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I will not allow it to subvert what needs to be done."

"And, believe it or not, I'm done with what I need to say today," said

Harry, just about slumping in his seat. "Phew!"

"Any questions?" he asked.

Lots of shaking of heads before Hermione spoke up excitedly, "When can we start with the cubes?"

"That's up to your parents and you, 'Mione," replied Harry.

"As soon as you're ready," said Dan.

"I think that would be best," said Augusta.

Amelia just nodded.

Susan and Neville had big grins of excitement on their faces matching the one on Hermione's.

"Between nine and ten, then?" asked Harry.

"Earlier, please," replied Augusta. "It's been a long day."

Amelia, Dan and Emma all nodded in agreement.

"Okay," said Harry. "I'll turn up at 8.30pm at the Longbottoms, then the Boneses, and finally Hermione, as she's the oldest."

Another four nods from the adults and it was settled.

The meeting broke up almost immediately afterwards. The Queen left first after telling Harry a Page would escort him to his rooms. The Grangers joined the colonel, and a Page led the Longbottoms and the Boneses back to the fireplace in the Queen's Audience Room.

# # #

Harry's suite was huge. He was told this was the suite offered to visiting overseas guests. He even had his own maid and butler - who both assured him they knew of the magical world. They introduced themselves as Michael, the butler, and Samantha, the maid.

When Michael asked where his luggage was being stored Harry pulled out a tiny trunk from within his satchel, put it on the floor and cast the

minor cantrip that expanded it back to original size. Though the maid and butler said they knew of the magical world they clearly had not seen such a thing. Thankfully, both recovered fast enough.

Michael simply walked forward, opened it and started unloading the contents into a wardrobe and chest of drawers in the bedroom.

Samantha led Harry through the small suite - a sitting room, a bedroom and an ensuite - and identified how Michael could be summoned if he needed anything.

She then departed saying she would have the evening meal brought in for him soon.

Harry flopped into a large couch within the room, laid his head back and groaned.

'Day one's tasks complete, Myrrdin,' he thought. 'And we're more advanced in the planning stage than either of us expected to be. Tonight, we start on the cubes.'

# # #

## 8. The Cubes' Magic

### Chapter Eight - The Cubes' Magic

# # #

After Michael left, but not before once more showing Harry his rooms and how to summon him, Harry spent his time waiting for dinner by looking out the windows across the parade ground and watching events out there unfold. It amused him.

Then he sat on the couch, turned the television on and watched some TV; real TV.

'It's nothing like Myrrdin's time viewer, but it'll do,' he thought.

# # #

After a very delicious dinner Harry waited until about 8.00pm. He

changed into a light mundane business suit without a tie. Then grabbed the box of cubes off the top of the chest of drawers where Michael put them, and dropped them into his satchel. He turned off the television and left a note saying he'd be back at about 9.30pm on the coffee table in front of the couch in case someone came looking for him.

Changing momentarily into his animagus form he used the powers of the phoenix to flash to the same spot within the park where he first arrived. And changed his appearance back to that of a young man of about twenty.

A quick apparate later and he was in the same spot where he arrived earlier in the day with the colonel outside the Longbottom Manor.

He walked up to the door and knocked.

Once again, the little house elf, Penny, opened the door. "Yes, mister?" she asked.

"Could you inform Mistress Longbottom that the most astonishing young man she had ever met was here for his appointment?" asked Harry.

"Yessir," said Penny. "You be waiting in the parlour, please."

Harry entered and walked into the Longbottom Manor parlour just as he did earlier that day. The little elf popped away to alert Augusta.

A few moments later Augusta walked in with her wand at the ready.

"Yes?" she asked suspiciously.

"One moment, Madam Longbottom," replied Harry, and dropped his glamour.

Augusta watched him do it and blinked at what she saw before her. "Lord Potter?" she asked. "How did you do that?"

"A minor Glamour Charm with a bit of wandless magic," replied Harry.

"What you saw is the young adult I will grow to become, just without the scar.

"I thought it best to use the glamour so no one who was watching with magical eyes would be able to see 'the Great Harry Potter' approach and enter your home," he said, with a bit of a disgust on 'the Great Harry Potter'.

"I also think it would be best to begin employing passwords," he went on.

"So that later, someone employing a similar charm or Polyjuice Potion, will not be able to impersonate me and come in."

"A wise precaution, My Lord," she said, 'resleeving' her wand.

"Neville's getting ready for bed," she continued. "We can go up to his bedroom, shortly. However, I must warn you, I don't think he'll be able to go to sleep. He's too excited."

"That won't be a problem, Ma'am," replied Harry. "The cube will put him to sleep very quickly. And you won't hear a peep out him before tomorrow morning."

"Will the cube wake him once it's finished?" she asked. "I don't want him to wake at 5.00am and not be able to sleep."

"If he needs it he'll stay asleep until he wakes as he normally does. He'll just change from an induced sleep into a normal sleep. The only difference is that he may then shift around in bed and knock the cube off his forehead. But, by then, it will have done its job and become inert."

Augusta nodded and called the elf back, "Penny!"

\*pop\* "Yes, Mistress?"

"Is Master Neville ready for bed?"

"Yes, Mistress! Master Neville be sitting on bed and waiting."

"Good. Thank you, Penny," said Augusta.

The little elf popped away again. To... wherever it was the little house elves went.

"This way, My Lord," said Augusta, before turning on her heels and

leading the way.

Harry followed her up the stairs and down a short hallway before coming to a closed door. She knocked a couple times and, after hearing a hesitant 'Come in!', opened the door and walked in.

Neville was sitting on his bed in a pair of pyjamas, fidgeting.

"Hiya, Nev!" called Harry cheerfully.

"Hi... Harry," replied Neville nervously.

"Nervous?" asked Harry.

"Errr... Yeah," replied Neville a bit sheepishly.

Helping his friend out, Harry said, "Well, I've got a confession to make.

So was I, the first time Merlin tried one of these on me."

"Really?"

"Really!"

"Lord Potter cannot give you the cube if you're sitting on the bed,

Neville," Augusta chided the young lad. "Come on; into bed."

Neville took a deep breath, stood up and flicked the covers back before climbing in. Then he pulled the blankets up and lay in the bed as stiff as a board.

While he was doing that Harry had brought his satchel around the front and removed the case of crystals.

Opening the case he removed the first one next to the letter 'N' and sat on the edge of Neville's bed twisted towards the clearly frightened boy. And, closing the case, put it back in his satchel. He held the first cube in the palm of his hand.

"Before we begin, Nev, I know something about you that you don't know yet," said Harry.

"Oh?" the boy asked.

"Yeah," replied Harry. "I know that you happen to be one of the bravest

people I have ever, and will ever, meet. Inside you beats the heart of courage of the lion of Gryffindor."

"Really?"

"Really!"

"Okay... Okay," the boy said in wonder, relaxing a bit.

"Now," said Harry. "Say goodnight to your grandmother."

Augusta walked across and bent to give Neville a kiss on his forehead.

"See you in the morning, dear," she said.

"Goodnight, Gran," he replied.

"Oh, and before I forget - as if that is ever going to happen - if someone turns up on your door step and uses the word 'astonishing' in a sentence, it's probably me or someone sent by the Queen. I figured we can use a... seeecret paaaassword... between us," said Harry sounding all mysterious on 'secret password'.

Neville grinned in response.

Harry reached out and placed the cube on Neville's forehead. And, before the boy had a chance to tense back up again, tapped the top of the cube while saying, "Goodnight!"

And Neville was near-instantly asleep.

Getting up, Harry said to Augusta, "Okay. Are you going to be home during the day, tomorrow?"

"Yes," she said still staring at Neville, now with the cube on his forehead.

"He just looks like he's asleep," said Augusta with a frown.

"He is," replied Harry. "It's just a very deep sleep."

"Would you like me to come around and check on him?" he asked.

"Yes, please, My Lord," she said with what Harry heard to be a bit of gratefulness in her voice. "I want you to make sure he's okay."

"No, problem," said Harry. "I want to drop by Gringotts in the morning

and find out more about my inheritance. Plus, see about Potter Manor. I can drop by after that?"

"Thank you, My Lord," she replied. Shaking herself out of her thoughts she then said, "Well, we best leave him to it. He needs his sleep."

Augusta then led Harry back downstairs and into the parlour. She walked right across to the fireplace and called the Ossuary.

"Amelia?" she asked.

"Hello, Gus," heard Harry.

"Are you ready for... your guest to come through?" she asked.

"We're ready," replied Amelia.

Harry then stepped up to the fireplace and, turning back for a moment, said, "See you tomorrow, Ma'am," before stepping through.

# # #

Stepping out of the fireplace, Harry was again greeted by a drawn wand.

He smiled and said, "I like that you're always ready, Ma'am. No matter how trustworthy you feel your friends are."

Smiling, nodding and resleeving her wand, Amelia said, "We of the DMLE need to be, My Lord."

And Susan walked into the room dressed in pyjamas with a fluffy dressing gown belted at the waist.

"Of course," said Harry to Amelia before glancing at Susan. "Oh, and before I forget to tell both of you, we need to put in place a password that identifies people in the know. I told Neville and Madam Longbottom to use the word 'astonishing' in a sentence. Because I don't want to be recognised, I often use a glamour of a man in his very early twenties with the same hair and eye colour. Just no scar."

Twitching an eyebrow just a little, Amelia replied, "A clever idea, My Lord."

"It's actually what I'll look like when I've actually become that age," said Harry. "There's less chance of someone being able to see through it. I'll have to change before I head off to the Grangers so you'll see it then."

Amelia nodded for a moment, turned to her young niece and said, "And it's off to bed with you, young lady. Hop in and pull the blankets up tight."

Susan said, "Okay!" and ran from the room.

"How were things at the Longbottoms'?" asked Amelia turning to Harry.

"Neville was a bit nervous, but he had every right to be," replied Harry. "I promised Madam Longbottom I'd come by and check on him late tomorrow morning. I know it's a Saturday, but would you like me to do the same for Susan?"

"Yes, please, My Lord," she replied. "I've already planned not to go into the office tomorrow. Just in case, you understand."

"Of course, I do," said Harry. "While Susan's setting her memories into a semblance of order, and then building her Occlumency shields, she's going to be 'off with the fairies' as the non-magicals say. Better to have you around to remind her to eat."

"Off with the fairies?" asked Amelia quite shocked.

"It's just an expression, Madam Bones," said Harry calmly. "It means... daydreaming."

"Oh," said Amelia understanding. "What a funny way to put it."

Harry just smiled.

"Well," said Amelia shaking herself out of it. "We'd best go see how Susan is getting on."

Amelia led Harry down the hall to Susan's room, holding Harry back with a hand while she looked into the girl's room. When she saw that Susan was definitely in bed with the blankets drawn up tight, she motioned

Harry to enter.

"Okay," said Harry walking over to Susan's bed and sitting on the edge of it like he did with Neville. "Susan, if you don't want me to do this, just say so and I won't. If it frightens you, then I won't."

"No," replied Susan excitedly. "I mean, I want you to do it!"

Harry nodded and brought out the cube case from his satchel. And removed the first one alongside the letter 'S', palming it in his hand while he closed the case and dropped it back into his satchel.

"You'll need to say goodnight to each other, you two, because as soon as I activate this Susan will be fast asleep," explained Harry.

Amelia nodded and stepped forward planting a kiss on Susan's forehead.

As she stepped back she said, "Goodnight, dear."

"Goodnight, Aunt Amelia," replied Susan with a big grin.

Harry then reached out and placed the cube high on the excited girl's forehead, and promptly tapped it saying, "Goodnight."

Susan was, as with Neville, near-instantly asleep.

Amelia looked at her sound asleep niece and just shook her head in wonder.

"Now for the Grangers," said Harry.

Amelia nodded and led Harry back out to the lounge where the fireplace was located.

"What time may I expect you tomorrow, My Lord?" she asked.

"Well, I have to go to Gringotts first to find out about my properties and financial status - I promised the goblins - then Madam Longbottom will expect to see me. I expect to be here... about midday or shortly thereafter?" he replied.

"Then I shall expect you then," she replied.

Nodding, Harry asked, "Can I apparate out through your shields? The

Grangers aren't connected to the floo network."

"Sorry, no, My Lord," she replied. "However, I'll see about having your apparation signature keyed in to the wards so you may in future."

"Thank you, Ma'am," he said. "In that case I'll walk out to the street after first casting my glamour and a Notice-Me-Not Charm, and apparate from there."

"Thank you, My Lord," said Amelia. "Goodnight."

Harry walked to the door. Stopped to recast his usual glamour and smiled at Amelia who appeared to be shocked, yet again, at Harry's casual use of wandless magic. A quick Notice-Me-Not and Harry walked out the door and onto the footpath. Then disappeared.

# # #

With barely a sound Harry apparated on the Grangers' front footpath and allowed the Notice-Me-Not Charm to fade away. He walked up to the door and knocked.

A few moments later the door opened part way with Dan Granger standing just off to the side behind the door.

"Hello, Major," said Harry with a smile. "You wouldn't happen to be holding an MP5, or something, behind your back, would you?"

"Who are you?" asked Dan with a frown.

"I'm someone whom today the Queen called the most astonishing young man she'd ever met. I'm wearing a disguise so no one in the street will recognise me, just in case," calmly replied Harry.

A look of recognition of what Harry said crossed Dan's face. He hesitated a moment and then backed up the hallway about ten feet before saying... ordering, really, "Come in and close the door."

Keeping his hands in plain sight, Harry calmly stepped through the door and closed it behind him. Reaching up with his right hand he then caused

the glamour to fall away. And stood there in his normal self smiling.

Dan just grunted and brought the weapon he was holding behind his back, as Harry suspected, around to his front. It was a service automatic.

Dan popped out the magazine, dropped it into his pocket and recocked the weapon causing the round that was loaded in the chamber to pop out the port. He caught it deftly with his off-hand when he let the slide run forward. At all times the weapon was pointing down and away. Very professionally done.

"I see you've retained your weapon instincts, Sir," said Harry.

"Yeah, it surprised me, too," replied Dan before calling out, "It's safe, Emma!"

Emma came walking in from the kitchen and said, "Hello,... My Lord"

"Good evening, Ma'am," replied Harry. "As I explained to the Longbottoms and the Boneses I think we need a password to let each other know we're the real people when we talk to each other, or those Her Majesty or the colonel send. I told them if someone uses the word 'astonishing' in a sentence then that should do, for now, to identify them."

"Come in to the lounge, My Lord," said Dan, leading the way.

Harry followed him in with Emma right behind.

"Take a seat," instructed Dan indicating an armchair. He and Emma sat on a two-seater couch facing him.

"That password idea is a good idea, My Lord," said Dan. "And it's not like very many people actually use it in a sentence, so it's a good choice. We may want to come up with a better idea later, though."

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "Please also understand that I don't like to stand on formalities so calling me 'My Lord' is uncomfortable. However, calling me Harry, which is what I'd prefer, also isn't safe just yet."

Dan and Emma both nodded.

"So, please call me 'Lad' until after the 1st of September, at least," said Harry. "It's what Myrrdin called me most of the time."

Both parents relaxed a bit on hearing that. "Thank you... lad," replied Dan.

Harry smiled and said, "You're the parents of one of my peers. You, at least, have the right not to follow any sort of courtly protocol. Besides, I'm not comfortable with the title yet, either."

Both parents relaxed even further with smiles of obvious relief.

"Thank you," said Emma. "I don't know how I'm ever going to cope with having a daughter who is a... Countess."

"She's your daughter. That'll never change," said Harry. "But, you're going to have to hold off telling anybody until Her Majesty says it can be made public. The four Earldoms are listed in the old Peerage lists, but most such public lists don't even include them as the titles are so old. She's going to have the devil of a time correcting that."

"Just how old are the titles?" asked Emma.

"Nine hundred and ninety-one years, seven months and five days as of today," he replied. "They were created at the turn of the millennium by the combined wishes of the Kings of England and Scotland, King Ethelred the Second and King Kenneth the Third, in recognition of the four founders' work in creating the first school for magic users in the known world. They also provided them with the lands, and much of the surrounding countryside, on which Hogwarts sits.

"The only fiat placed upon them was that the magic users of the day who were taught there could be called upon by either Monarch in defence of either realm. If England and Scotland waged war upon each other, it was agreed the magic users could not take part. That ability to form military units on behalf of the realm remains, as no one has thought to have it

removed."

"Oh, my God," said Dan. "If their Earldoms are that old, that makes them four of the highest ranking in the Life Peerage."

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "That is the problem that currently faces Her Majesty.

"I'll be talking to Her Majesty, however," he continued, "and begging her to hold off as long as she can on the Writs of Summons; the requirement to attend the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor. I think we've all enough on our collective plates, as it is, than have to deal with that particular 'hot potato'."

After Harry finished explaining Emma looked up and said, "Oh, where have my manners gone? Would anyone like some tea?"

Harry smiled and replied, "Yes, please."

Emma rose and went into the kitchen.

"And I'll see if I can drag Hermione down from her books," said Dan, rising and walking into the entry hall to the foot of the stairs.

"Pumpkin!" he called up. "Our guest is here!"

Harry heard a bit of a girlish squeal, followed by the sound of running footsteps on carpet. Hermione then came running down the stairs and burst into the lounge.

"Harry!" she blurted before she suddenly skidded to a stop, flushed with embarrassment and said, "Oh... errr... Good evening, My Lord," with a quick little curtsy.

Harry just grinned back, stood and, with a courtly sweeping bow, said with deep formality, "My Lady Granger."

He came out of the bow, grinned, walked over and gave her a hug, saying, "Hiya, 'Mione!" and laughed while she stood there with her mouth gaping open.

When he let her go and stood back she stared at him for a moment, before she gave him a little slap to the chest and said, "Oh, You!" "That's better," said Harry with approval. "Hermione, we're friends, remember? As I told you in the Green Waiting Room at the palace before Her Majesty pulled that stunt of hers, us four are going to be close friends. And, quite frankly, I'll be damned if we stand on protocol with each other, other than that required on formal occasions. Okay?"

She looked at him for a moment with a grin of her own and said, "Okay." Emma came walking in and saw the two pre-teens standing facing each other and stopped. "What did I miss?" she asked.

Dan answered with as straight a face as he could muster, "A formal accord."

"That's nice," said Emma, coming forward again to set a tea service on the coffee table. "Help yourself," she said.

After Emma sat, Harry waited for Hermione to sit in the final available armchair before resuming his own seat.

Then he leaned forward and began to make a cup of tea for Hermione first, before making one for himself.

Once everyone was settled back with a cup, Dan asked, "Now, about these cubes..."

"Yes, Sir?" asked Harry.

"How do they work, and what is on them?" asked Dan.

"The first one is different to all the rest. But, that's only because it has to help Hermione get her mind ready for the others," Harry said. "The first one teaches Hermione how to order her memories and thoughts giving her an eidetic memory... perfect recall... teaches meditation, and Occlumency, the ability to shield the mind from those skilled in Legilimency, reading your mind.

"Myrrdin and I argued over teaching Legilimency since it's hand-in-glove with Occlumency, but I convinced him otherwise. I don't agree with anyone having Legilimency skills as, if anyone then finds out, they'll never be trusted again.

"That one... cube... will take a normal night's sleep to run, but will then take Hermione over two days to sort her memories and thoughts out. It'll probably be way quicker for Hermione to figure out how to do it, but longer for her to sort, because she's an avid... devourer... of information. As such she'll have more to sort than either Neville or Susan but start earlier.

"The meditation part is there because it's faster for the mind to do what it needs to do when you're meditating."

Harry paused for a moment to take a sip of his tea.

"The second cube is mundane law. Effectively, it's going to give Hermione the complete works of United Kingdom laws and a smattering of International law. This one will simply be a large library. Hermione, once she has her mind ordered, will simply accept the contents and file it away in whatever visual mental representation she has set aside for it.

"For myself, I created within my mind a Disney cartoon-style small town. And in that town I put two law courts side-by-side with an atrium between the two. In one I've set up a library that has the contents of the second cube with an automatic index allowing me to call to my... foremind... whatever law I need to review.

"The third cube is magical law, with the largest majority component being British wizarding law. That I put in the second law court building with the same style of automatic indexing.

"In the atrium I put a combined indexing system that allows me to cross-reference the two sets of laws.

"The tail end of the third cube contains information and teaching on logic and philosophy. In my mind township I built a small university and I put logic and philosophy into one of the buildings there.

"The fourth cube is traditions and courtly behaviour of both realms, ethics and morality. The first two have gone into a Manor House with two wings. One side of mundane traditions and courtly behaviour; the other is wizarding. Ethics and morality I put in with philosophy on a different floor within my university.

"The fifth cube is mathematics and physics. They also went into my university in their own building of two wings. And, well, you get the idea of how I set things out within my own mind.

"The sixth cube is magical medicine, potions and herbology. The seventh is mundane medicine. The eighth is technology and technomancy, and limits of the magical core and how to understand it. The ninth is arithmancy, runes and ley line magics. The tenth is cantrips, charms, curses, hexes, conjuration and transfiguration. The eleventh is wandless, druidic and other forms of magic. The twelfth is mundane weaponry and security systems, both magical and mundane. The thirteenth is business principles, leadership, tactics and strategy. And the last one is politics, diplomacy, languages and speaking with other races.

"The first, sixth and tenth cubes - with a smattering of the last cube - is about all Wizarding Britain bother to learn. And Hermione and the others are going to be masters at those.

"What the cubes won't teach, because they can't, is muscle memory. And, as you know Dan, muscle memory is developed through repetition.

Practice, practice, practice."

Harry calmly sat back and took another sip of his tea and waited to see how they'd react.

"Wow!" exclaimed Hermione.

"How on Earth can you fit all that in to a human mind?" asked Emma.

"I have all that, plus much more, within mine now. And there's plenty of room to spare. And I'm not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed, either.

These cubes are formed from my own memories of my learning under Myrrdin. To Hermione, as it does to the others, it will seem as if she is being taught by Merlin, himself."

Dan sat stunned. He looked at Hermione and asked, "Are you sure you want to do this, Pumpkin?"

"Definitely, Dad," said Hermione emphatically.

He sighed and said, "Well; you'd best go get ready for bed."

Hermione set her teacup down, just about spilling what was left in it, and bolted up the stairs.

Dan looked at Harry and said, "The only reason I'm letting this happen is because I know my daughter. If I don't let this happen here, she'll just bug you until you let her do it once you reach Hogwarts."

"She could bug me all she liked; she would not succeed. There's no possible way I'd let her talk me into doing it without your consent. My personal ethics would not allow me to do it," replied Harry, looking straight back. "And I'm still under magical oath."

"I'm ready!" they heard, floating down the stairs.

Dan nodded and rising said, "Well, come on, then."

Leading the way up the stairs the Grangers walked to one of the doors opening to a room at the rear of the house. Emma went in first and called Dan and Harry in.

Hermione was in bed almost vibrating with excitement with the bedding pulled up to her chin and her hands gripping the top edge of the blanket and top sheet together.

Harry said, "You'll need to say good night now because, as soon as I activate the cube, she'll be deeply asleep."

Both parents went over and kissed their daughter good night. Then Harry walked over and sat on the edge of the bed as he did with Neville and Susan and removed the cube from the case next to the letter 'H'.

Placing the cube high in the middle of her forehead he said, "I'll come by after lunch tomorrow to see how you're doing."

"Okay," replied Hermione.

Harry then reached out and tapped the top of the cube saying,

"Goodnight!"

As with the others, Hermione was near-instantly into a deep sleep and Harry dropped the case back into his satchel.

"Done," said Harry, standing back up and walking towards where Dan and Emma were standing at the door. "In about eight hours she'll either wake up or transition into a normal REM state of sleep. They she'll awaken normally as she does every morning."

"How will we know when it's finished?" asked Emma.

"If she doesn't move a muscle then it's likely she's still under its effects. If you look at her eyelids and you can see the eyeballs under them are moving in REM state movements it's finished and she's asleep just like normal. If she's moved, such as rolled to her side, she's in normal sleep. If she's awake but staring off into space or meditating, then she's awake."

Dan said, "Okay, got it." As Emma nodded.

He then headed back downstairs and Harry followed. Emma stayed to take one last look before she turned off the light and followed Harry down.

Once downstairs and in the foyer Harry said, "I'd best be going. I have another busy day tomorrow. As I said, I'll come by tomorrow but I have

to visit Gringotts, the Longbottoms and the Boneses first."

"I look forward to it," said Emma. "Be safe."

"Thank you, Ma'am," said Harry. "Good night."

Then switched into his phoenix form and phoenix-flashed back to his suite in the palace.

# # #

The next morning Harry was up at 6.00am and dived straight in for a shower. He had already jumped in, though, before he realised he hadn't grabbed his bathing gear. But a look around identified his soaps and shampoo on the shelves under the shower head. A large, fluffy towel hung on a drying rail just outside the shower screen door.

When Harry had returned, last night, he found his note gone and replaced with a small pad and biro. So, at least someone got the message. And the bed was turned down with his pyjamas laid out on it. It was only a few minutes later Harry was in bed and fast asleep.

Things were set up similar to how he had things back at Myrrdin's Keep, so he wasn't going to have a problem adjusting to this.

After his shower, his first ever to the best of his recollection, he dressed in light tan coloured slacks and shirt, open collar, a blue v-neck pullover, and brown loafers.

He called for a butler - he didn't expect Michael to have arrived for work yet - but Michael entered. "Good morning, My Lord," he said, before asking, "How may I be of service?"

"Good morning," replied Harry cheerfully. "Ummm... What's on the menu for breakfast?"

"There is no menu, My Lord," replied Michael. "You just inform me of your desires and I see towards meeting them."

"Okay... Ummm," Harry thought. "How about... a small bowl of cereal, for

the bran, a couple of those little breakfast fish the English like..."

"Kippers, My Lord?" prompted Michael.

"Yep. Those!" replied Harry with a snap of his fingers. "For brain food. A couple of slices of toast, a glass of orange juice, and tea, please."

"Certainly, My Lord," said Michael, with a bow before departing.

Harry walked over to television and turned it on to watch the morning news. And waited for breakfast.

# # #

After breakfast Harry headed for Gringotts Bank. He phoenix-flashed to the park, glamoured up and apparated to the apparation point in Diagon Alley in a matter of seconds. He figured, this was clearly going to be his normal way of leaving the palace and returning. So, when he had a little time available to do it, he was going to set a See-Me-Not Charm locked with a rune to the spot. Better that than have a mundane, who had decided to picnic in amongst the trees, see him and freak out.

Walking down through Diagon he noticed no children except those his age and younger. Of course, the older kids still had nearly a month to go in their studies and Hogwarts would hold the end of year feast before sending them home. But a few kids who looked his biological age were being taken shopping.

He could see new school robes, cauldrons, telescopes and books being carried by kids and parents from one end of the alley to the other. Harry realised Hagrid would be dragging him through this same alley to collect the same items in just under a month.

Halfway down the Alley rose Gringotts. Harry simply walked in and up to an available teller. Flashing his Potter Head of House ring only to the goblin that was about to snarl something inane at him, Harry quietly said in the goblin tongue, \*Greetings, goblin. I'm here to see the Keeper of the

Potter Accounts. Do not address me by name while we are in public.\*

\*Of course, My Lord\*, the goblin replied. \*Director Ragnock advised us you would likely be coming in, and that the matters you would raise with us would be delicate. We are to provide you with every courtesy and do business in private.\*

The goblin then reached down and pressed something just out of sight.

Another goblin arrived on Harry's side of the teller partition.

"Yes?" the goblin asked, looking up at the teller.

"Griphook, this is the one of which Director Ragnock advised. Provide him every courtesy and take him to one of the private business rooms for our largest account holders," the teller goblin instructed.

Looking up at Harry with interest, Griphook said, "Follow me, My Lord."

Griphook led Harry through a security checkpoint and then towards the rear of the bank. He was led into one of the rooms near the far end and invited to sit.

Harry dropped his glamour and looked around the room. They were in a large business meeting room with an oval shaped table surrounded by comfortable chairs. He chose one near the door but on the other side of the table from it so he could see the door, and sat.

A few moments later a much older goblin walked in carrying a number of thick ledgers. He walked over and dropped the ledgers onto the desk and took a chair right alongside where the ledgers were now sitting.

He did something with the chair that Harry couldn't recognise and, a few seconds later, rose to a point where he was pretty close to looking Harry in the eye.

Reaching over, the goblin picked up the first ledger and brought it to be in front of himself. He opened it and began to peruse.

"Lord Potter," the goblin said looking across at Harry, "I am the Potter

Accounts Keeper, Blockrig. It is my responsibility to manage your accounts on your behalf here at the bank."

Harry just nodded in return.

"I hold for you the accounts of both your trust vault containing your trust fund, and a second vault containing the Potter fortune. The trust fund had ten thousand galleons placed within it on the death of your parents. Each of your birthdays, thereafter, it had a further ten thousand galleons placed within it. In total one hundred thousand galleons have been placed within your trust fund. On your eleventh birthday the funds going into it from the Potter fortune were to increase to fifteen thousand galleons.

"Also placed within the trust vault were a number of books, grimoires, family records, art works, jewellery and the like. There were also placed within it a number of magical items."

Looking down at the ledger the goblin then related, "Since the time of the creation of the trust fund some eighty thousand galleons have been removed, leaving some twenty thousand galleons within the vault.

Further, all books, grimoires, family records and jewellery have been removed from the vault leaving only some art works that are specifically marked as belonging to the Potter estate. These are mainly paintings of family members."

Once he'd finished relating that bit of bad news the goblin went on, "We at Gringotts have long suspected this was not authorised by you or as part of the wishes of your parents, James and Lily Potter. We have sent you much correspondence concerning this. However, our correspondence has remained unanswered."

Harry was about to respond when the old goblin went on. "Director Ragnock informs us our correspondence to you has been... intercepted..."

before it has reached you. This, too, we have suspected. As such we have maintained a very close watch on what has been taken, by whom and when; and where it has been going. For some of the gold, just over fifty thousand galleons, we only know it has been taken as galleons out of the bank, not simply transferred to another account.

"We placed tracking charms on the other items that were within the vault at the time we suspected inconsistencies. We know where those items are currently located. All of the grimoires and magical items, and some of the art and jewellery, we are unable to locate as they were removed before the tracking charms were placed upon them.

"We were unable to stop the removal of your property and gold as the Ministry ordered that Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore was your magical guardian and, as such, had guardian status on your trust account. This gave him authority to remove funds and items from the trust vault in your name.

"Mister Dumbledore has also sought to gain access to the vault containing the Potter fortune, other grimoires, records, art, keys and access to the Potter Manor and investment portfolios. However, even with Ministry approval, we have not granted him such. We goblins know your true magical guardian is Sirius Orion Black, Heir Apparent of House Black, who is currently in Azkaban. As he has not yet received a trial, irrespective of where he currently resides, he did not lose status as your magical guardian.

"I was informed directly by Director Ragnock, after he had spoken with you in the palace of your Queen, that I was not to remove Mister Dumbledore's access to your trust vault until such time as I had spoken with you. And I have been further informed that you have not allowed the magics of the ring and rite of inheritance to announce you as taking

up your Heads of Houses rings.

"As such you are still viewed as a non-emancipated minor and Sirius Black is still your magical guardian, though the Ministry have forced the issue with Albus Dumbledore," said the goblin before frowning and saying, "I would know why."

Harry thought about that for a little while. He wanted to make sure he could get this old goblin, obviously trusted by his parents, to understand what was going on. He knew the goblin felt his honour had been greatly harmed by what Dumbledick was doing.

"There are things happening of great import, Blockrig," said Harry. "Albus Dumbledore is guilty of far, far more than just theft from my account against me. He is also well-connected and respected throughout the wizarding world. If we move too quickly against him he will use his status as the so-called leader of the light, his status as the Chief Warlock on the Wizengamot, his status as a long term headmaster at Hogwarts, and his status as Supreme Mugwump of the ICW, to have the charges against him dismissed at worse, or rendered extremely lenient at best.

"Vengeance is a dish best served cold. I intend to utterly destroy his reputation. I intend to have taken from him everything he values. And when I am finished he will have left not a knut, not a possession, not a stitch of clothing he can call his own. And the disgraced name of Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore will be met with derision and contempt. No, I do not intend for Dumbledore to feel the cold kiss of the edge of my blade. That sweet release will not be allowed him.

"There are worse things than dying, Blockrig. And you have done me and my family great service by keeping accurate records of what has been taken from my trust vault; and recording where much of what has been taken is currently located. I know you feel your honour has been harmed

in this. But, it has not. And the world will know and your honour will be redeemed when it all comes to light what has actually happened, and you will be richly rewarded in compensation.

"Evidence is already being gathered against Dumbledore regarding his crimes. It will all come to light soon enough. For now, I want him kept in the dark. I want him believing his crimes are undiscovered. I want to keep a close eye on him. And, when we are ready, we will destroy him. Are you with me on this, Account Keeper Blockrig?"

"My Lord, you do me great honour," the goblin said with a bow. "I will do as you ask. I am but your servant."

Harry then leaned forward and said, "I will need a copy of everything taken from my trust vault and what it currently contains today. I will also need you to send a copy of that under seal to Madam Amelia Bones at the DMLE, her eyes only, with your compliments. Send with it a note that says, 'Someone astonishing thought you should have this'.

"And, when the time comes, know that you have played an active part in his descent from grace, into the gutter of poverty."

"I will have it done immediately, My Lord," the old goblin eagerly replied.

"Now," said Harry, changing the subject, "I will also need a personal copy of records of what is in the main vault, about two thousand galleons in a purse of magical holding, and records of the property the family owns. And I want the key and details on the Potter Manor."

"I shall get it done, My Lord," said Blockrig.

He pushed a rune button on the top of a slate he had beside him and, shortly thereafter, another goblin walked in with a stack of ledgers.

"Good morning, My Lord," he said dumping his ledgers on the table, taking a chair alongside Blockrig, and similarly adjusting it. "My name is

Cavepick. I have with me the accounts of the House of Slytherin, and for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. May I ask why you have not allowed your ring to emancipate you and notify the relevant authorities you have taken the Head of House position?"

"My reasons are my own, for now, Cavepick," Harry replied. "Blockrig knows why, as does the Director. I do not need for others to know just yet."

"I see," said the new goblin. "Very well. Though the ring has not announced you as Head of House, we goblins know exactly who you are. Therefore, you have access to the accounts of House Slytherin.

"First, you should know that House Slytherin does not have a vault. Gringotts did not exist when we last saw House Slytherin active," he said. Harry nodded, understanding.

"However, there have been funds going in to the accounts automatically from the Hogwarts account. Originally, this was about ten percent of the income derived from the operation of the school, divided equally across the four Houses. Over the years this was whittled down to less than one half of one percent; so, your House received one eighth of one percent. However, we also add twenty five percent of the net rent on the lands under Hogsmeade.

"With interest accruing, each account now holds approximately 9.5 million galleons," said Cavepick.

Harry just snorted. 'At least the four of us have some decent seed money to revamp the school, now,' he thought. 'I had planned on using part of the Potter fortune to fund it.'

"And the Hogwarts account? Is there anything there that shows signs of gold being syphoned off from within the school?" asked Harry.

"No, My Lord," answered Cavepick. "However, I shall dig further and

cross check against receipts. Do you have suspicions there is account tampering occurring?"

"Yes, I do," replied Harry. "But, for now, I just want the books of the school quietly checked. I don't want suspicions raised until us four Heirs are ready to move."

"Very good, My Lord," the goblin responded.

"Now, about the accounts of House Black," said Blockrig.

"No," Harry firmly replied. "I know I'm the Heir but it's Sirius's money. If he wants me to know he'll tell me soon. In the mean time, leave things as they are."

"Yes, My Lord."

"If that's it," said Harry standing, "I'll want the key to the Potter Manor and see what else is in the main vault. And make sure Dumbledore is not aware I've been anywhere near the bank."

"Of course, My Lord," said Blockrig also standing. "If you'll come this way, Cavepick can return the ledgers of House Potter to my desk."

Harry nodded, bowed to Cavepick, and followed after Blockrig.

Down at the vault, after a very... thrilling... ride, Harry went inside and took a look around. He quickly found the papers concerning Potter Manor, together with the keys, and placed them inside his ever-present satchel. Looking at his watch he saw he still had plenty of time to explore before he had to visit the Longbottom Manor.

He hadn't noticed it when he first walked in, but he saw what he now recognised to be the Potter crest up on the wall of the vault. He felt pride in himself and his heritage while he stared at it.

"Myrrdin's helped me see what's really going on, Mum and Dad," he softly said to the crest. "And I'm going to make those who have wronged us, pay!"

Just before stepping back into the public area of the bank, and with his bag of galleons, Harry gave Blockrig a goblin parting and quickly redonned his glamour. He strode out into the street as if he had not a care in the world. He went to the apparation point and disappeared away.

# # #

Harry apparated just inside the Great Wood some five miles northwest of Hastings on the south coast. The Potter Manor was located about here, somewhere.

He cast a few Charms, as the instructions within the vault told him, upon his key. And gently he began to see a very large house appear off to his right.

He trudged over and through the gate. Outside it had the appearance of being run down and in serious disrepair. He cast detection charms for as far as he could see either side, and didn't find a sort of monitoring charm or other type of alarm.

He stepped through the gates to walk up to the Manor but, once through the gates, the place looked quite pristine.

He cast even more detection charms about the place and only detected the usual wards. Some of them were still in excellent working condition after all this time. Carefully walking up to the door he cast further detection charms and found nothing.

Taking a deep breath he then inserted the key in the lock. And the door swung open.

Just about to cast further charms he was startled by the appearance of a house elf who glared at him with its arms crossed.

"What you want?" it demanded.

"Errr... I'm visiting to see if anyone is here?" replied Harry tentatively.

"No one here. Go!" it ordered.

'A house elf guard?' thought Harry.

Moving carefully he brought his right hand forward with the Potter Head of House ring prominent. The little elf, seeing the ring, stepped forward and grabbed Harry by the hand to look closely at the ring.

The elf suddenly dragged Harry forward by the hand, gestured the door shut and was suddenly dancing from foot to foot in excitement. "I be Pixie! Who be you, Master?"

"I'm... Harry Potter," replied Harry carefully, and dropped his glamour.

"This house belonged to my parents, James and Lily Potter."

"You were the baby in Missy Lily?" asked the elf.

"Yeah, I was," replied Harry. "Pixie, right?"

"I be Pixie! You be Master Harry!" said Pixie excitedly. "Missy Lily said you'd come. She said you'd come a long time ago. Where you been? Pixie couldn't find you! Pixie couldn't find Master James or Missy Lily, either."

"I've been in hiding, Pixie," replied Harry. "I had to be in hiding because of a very bad man."

"Pixie happy you here now!" said the elf. "Where's Master James and Missy Lily?"

'Oh, crap,' thought Harry.

"They're both dead, Pixie. They died almost ten years ago," explained Harry.

The little elf suddenly stopped dancing about and stood flat-footed. "Oh," she said hanging her head. "Pixie knew. But Pixie think maybe Pixie wrong. So, Pixie wait until someone come tell her."

"It's okay, little one," said Harry kindly. "But, I'm here now. How about you show me around?"

"O-Kay! Pixie happy to help!" said the little elf back to being excited.

What followed was Harry being half dragged, half cajoled, from one side of the manor to the other on both floors. Then he was taken down to the basement and shown the set up of a potions lab on one side and an experiments lab on the other. There was quite a lot of dust down here and equipment that was, in some cases, rusted.

The little elf explained Harry's mother had forbid her to clean in there when she wasn't there to supervise, as Pixie had accidentally caused a minor explosion at one time. Harry told the elf she could clean it after he left so he wasn't there to suffer the consequences of all the dust.

However, there was one room Pixie had not yet taken him to see. It was on the ground floor, not far from the study. She took him to that room last. It was sealed by a heavy oaken door with the Potter crest upon it, and a metal plate with the outline of a right handprint where a lock would be.

Pixie indicated it and said, "Master Harry must place his hand upon the blood lock, sir."

Harry glanced down at Pixie. She was looking back with a sad look on her face. Turning to the door he reached out and placed his hand upon the plate. He felt a slight tingle, and heard a click. The door swung open away from him.

It was the portrait room. Pixie did not enter herself. She stood outside the door and simply waited with sad eyes.

Harry had no idea such a room existed. He didn't know that, because portraits could move and talk to both each other and the people in the room, wizards often had a portrait room so the portraits could converse. But, also wouldn't constantly be watching what was happening in other rooms.

'Hello,' said one of the paintings on the wall to Harry's left. "Who have

we here?"

Harry turned to the speaker and saw a painting of a stern man with a rather stoic visage. He looked back with quite the curious expression. The painting turned to look behind Harry and called, "James! Lily! Come out of there!"

Turning about Harry saw a painting on the opposite wall of a room with a door at the rear. The door opened and two young adults not far past their teens came into view of the painting from the door.

"Quit your griping, granddad. We..." the male of the pair, a man bearing a striking resemblance to Harry, even to the glasses Harry used to wear, stopped and gawked back at Harry.

The red haired, fair skinned lady entering the 'room' of the painting behind the young man was... vexatious. "What on Earth are you babbling about now, Charlus. I..." she stopped in shock as soon as she saw Harry.

"Harry?" she plaintively asked.

When he had first spun around, Harry had been frozen in shock himself.

He saw his father enter the room in the painting, followed by his mother.

"Mum?" he croaked. "Dad?"

"HARRY!?" his Mum cried.

His Dad, or at least the portrait of him, was shaken out of his shock by his wife's outburst. "Harry? Is that you, son?"

Harry was in turmoil. He knew about the magic of the portraits. He just didn't know his parents had commissioned one before they died.

"Mum? Dad?" he replied in shock himself. "Yeah. It's me, Harry."

"Good, God!" his father replied. "We always knew how old you'd be by now... but... this..."

"I...", his mother started, "I... oh, Harry!"

"Yeah, Mum," said Harry, coming out of his shock. "It's me. How are you

both?"

"Prongslet!" cried his father with happiness. "We expected you ages ago.

Why hasn't Sirius brought you around before now? Bring him here. I

want words with that mangy dog!"

Harry sighed and said, "Things did not go as you planned with my life

if... when... you passed away."

"What do you mean?" asked Lily with a scowl.

Harry sighed again and conjured an armchair behind himself. "That's a

very long story..." he began, sitting down.

# # #

After talking to them for almost an hour, his father suddenly exclaimed,

"Lord Slytherin? My son is the Earl of Slytherin?!"

"Hey! It wasn't my fault!" exclaimed Harry right back. "Mum did it!"

Harry could hear one of his fraternal grandmothers cackling with glee!

He expected it was Dorea nee Black.

The portrait of his father looked right back in shock. James said, "I don't

know whether to be... outraged... jubilant... or somewhere in between! I

also happen to think it just may be the greatest prank ever!"

Then James began roaring with laughter. Lily, however, looked...

affronted. "James!" she admonished the man. "Really!"

James was, by then, rolling on the floor with laughter. He even had tears

in his eyes.

"Hey!" said James looking up at his wife while still laughing. "You did it!

Not me!" That set him off again. His father was almost howling.

Even Harry had begun chuckling a little at the response of his mother

and father. He turned to where the sound of Dorea laughing had come

from and could see the old lady still giggling like a school girl while

dabbing her eyes with a lace handkerchief. Many of the other portraits

were either grinning with happiness or looking a little affronted themselves. "Congratulations, Harry!" she said.

"Thanks. I think," he replied.

The sound of his mother calling his name drew Harry's attention back to the portrait of his parents. "Harry," she said, "Can you please continue your story?"

So, Harry continued with bringing the portrait of his parents up to date with what had been going on in his life. And where he was heading."

# # #

After the tour, and the couple of hours he spent within the portrait room promising to return when he could, Harry asked the elf if anyone had been there after Lily and James had left. The elf said a couple of bad looking men had been around outside the wards but didn't come in. But there was a man Pixie knew was Remus who came around every now and then to see if Harry had arrived yet. Pixie said he always left disappointed.

Harry said, "Well, if he comes again, I don't want you to tell him I've been here. Okay?"

The little elf nodded it's head vigorously and said, "Yes, Sir, Master Harry."

"I'll let you know when you can tell anyone that someone's been here, but that's not likely for quite some time," said Harry.

The little elf again nodded it's head vigorously and said, "Yes, Sir, Master Harry."

"Okay, then," said Harry. "I only came to see how much damage there was to the house because I didn't know there was such a good house elf still here. Now that I know there is, I can leave again and be happy to know you're here looking after the place."

The little elf just about threw herself around Harry's left leg and bawled, "Oh, you are such a good master, Master Harry Sir. Pixie very happy to have you as her master. Pixie will clean even better for you, Master Harry Sir."

Harry was just about to leave when a thought occurred to him. "Pixie, how are you managing to survive here? How are you getting anything to eat?"

"Oh! Oh!" she said. "Pixie not show you. Come! Come!"

And Harry found himself half dragged out to the back of the little property.

"See?" she asked. "Missy Lily show Pixie how to be 'self suffy shent'."

Harry looked towards the back of the property and saw four perfectly arranged square plots side-by-side. In the first was a chook pen with a couple of chooks in it. The next lay fallow. And the last two had perfect little rows of vegetables growing in them. A little self-sufficient garden for the household to have their own vegetables, eggs and the occasional chicken.

Harry was amazed. 'Way to go, Mum!' he thought.

"Pixie grow her own food for Pixie and hens. What Pixie not eat, Pixie take down to school at night and leave at food place there. Pixie sometimes give food to Master Remus. Pixie not waste food."

Harry didn't know whether to laugh out loud or just cry. From everything he'd heard of his Mum. This was a clear indication before his eyes of the type of witch she was.

He just looked down at the little elf and said, "Pixie you have done Miss Lily, you have done me, proud. Very well done."

Again the little elf threw herself at Harry's leg. "Oh, Pixie so happy Master be so happy with Pixie!"

"Okay, Pixie," said Harry placatingly. "I have to leave now. I have things to do."

"Yes, Master Harry, Sir!" she said letting go.

"I'll be back when I can," he said.

Harry walked around the manor and out the front gate. Once outside he turned to look back at the spot where the manor stood fixing it in his mind. He rebuilt his glamour and apparated away.

# # #

Arriving at the Longbottom Manor he knocked on the door.

The little house elf opened, took one look at him and indicated he come in. Harry dropped his glamour.

"Oh!" the little elf said. "I tell Mistress you here." And popped away

A few moments passed and Augusta came into the room with wand drawn.

"It's quite astonishing how you always enter a room like that, Ma'am," said Harry.

Augusta, paused for just a bit and suddenly resleeved her wand. "Hello, My Lord," she said.

"Hello, Ma'am," he replied. "How's Neville getting on?"

"You'd best come see," she replied.

Augusta led Harry back up the stairs to Neville's room. When Harry walked in he saw Neville sitting crossed-legged on his bed in a full meditation pose, wrists on his knees, hands hanging over and down.

Augusta looked with concern between Neville and Harry. So Harry called out, "Hey, Nev!"

Startled, Neville, still looking straight ahead, said, "Huh?" Blinked a few times, and then looked over at Harry. "Oh, Hi Harry!"

"Hiya Nev," replied Harry. "Have you been sitting like that all day?"

"Yeah, I guess," replied Neville.

"Nev. Mate," said Harry reprovngly, "You need to bathe, eat and get some exercise during the day, too! Sit like that for too long and people will think yer dead!"

Neville grinned, blushed and said, "Yeah, I do feel kind of hungry."

"Then eat something, lad!" ordered Harry, mimicking the sentiments of his own mentor during his own time meditating and building his mind.

"And get some fresh air!"

"Yeah, okay," said Neville a bit shyly.

"Nev, you've got this," said Harry more seriously. "Relax. There's plenty of time. Oh, and far more will happen tonight while you're sleeping towards getting your mind resorted."

"Oh?" asked Neville brightening up.

"Yes, it's easier when you're asleep," replied Harry. "And, oh yeah! What did you think of... Merlin?"

"He's amazing!" gushed Neville with enthusiasm. "He's such a great teacher. Is he like that all the time?"

"Yeah, he is," replied Harry. "Now, eat, think about how you want to set up your mind palace, and play a little bit. You've still got almost two and a half days before I come back on Monday night with the next cube.

You've got plenty of time."

"Thanks, Harry!" said Neville gleefully.

Turning to Augusta, Harry said, "Okay, I've now got to check on Susan."

Augusta nodded and led Harry back downstairs to the parlour.

"That's all it takes to get him to pay attention to me? Just raise my voice and call his name?" asked Augusta.

"Anything that grabs his attention, really," replied Harry. "He's just very focussed on what he's doing."

"Thank you," said Augusta gratefully. "I was worried."

"I know," said Harry. "That's why I offered to come over."

Augusta nodded and took a pinch of floo powder. Tossing it into the fireplace she called, "Ossuary!"

# # #

Stepping through Harry saw Amelia where he expected her to be, and said, "I still find it astonishing to use floo travel."

Amelia nodded once and resleeved her wand.

"Thank you for coming, My Lord," she said.

"I promised to come and check up on Susan, so..." he replied with a shrug.

"Well, she's sitting on her bed with her legs crossed and staring at the wall," replied Amelia with a frown.

"And you haven't snapped her out of it yet," said Harry, knowing the response.

"No," she said. "And I'm worried."

"No problem," said Harry. "Is she at least dressed?"

"Well, yes," she replied. "I did at least get her to get dressed this morning."

"Then you'd best lead the way and I'll show you how easy this is," he said.

Harry followed Amelia to Susan's bedroom and saw the young girl sitting on the bed in the same fashion as Neville earlier.

'Funny', he thought. 'That's the same meditation pose I used. And Neville.

The cubes must have carried more across than just my memories of the lessons, but also my memories of how I posed.'

"Hey, Susan!" called Harry from the doorway.

"Huh?" Susan startled, blinking a bit. Then she looked at Harry standing in the doorway.

"Have you been at that all morning?" asked Harry.

"I don't know. What time is it?" she asked.

"If you need to ask then you've gone at it too long. How hungry are you?"

he asked back.

"A bit, actually," she replied with a frown.

"Well, don't you think you should take a break?" he asked. "You've got plenty of time, Suze. You don't have to get everything done on the first day."

"Okay," she said, thinking about it. "Something to eat sounds good."

"And spend a little time getting some physical exercise, too" ordered Harry. "Going outside and playing for a little while will help you to stay alert."

"Okay," she said climbing off the bed.

Amelia led the way back downstairs. On the way down Harry asked

Susan, "And what did you think of Merlin?"

"Oh, he's really nice!" the girl replied. "I hope the teachers at Hogwarts are like him."

As Susan headed for the dining room, Harry turned to Amelia and said,

"That's all there is to it, Madam Bones. If she meditates for too long just raise your voice a little and call her by name. She'll respond."

"Is this how she's going to be for all those cubes of yours?" asked Amelia.

"No," he replied shaking his head. "Just this first one. However, she may stare off into the distance for a few seconds every now and then when she's going over what the rest of the cubes give her. And even that will pass in time."

"Good," said Amelia with feeling. "I don't want to seem rude concerning this... gift... of yours, but it's rather disconcerting."

"I know," replied Harry. "That's why I offered to come. It wasn't for her

benefit; it was for yours."

Amelia snorted and gave a light chuckle in response.

"Now, I'm off to the Grangers," said Harry changing the subject. "Being mundane folk they're even more nervous about this than you and Madam Longbottom."

"Okay, then," said Amelia heading for the door. "Thank you for coming."

Harry followed her to the door, redonned his usual glamour, and said.

"You're welcome, Ma'am," and stepped outside.

Just outside the door he cast a Notice-Me-Not Charm and phoenix-flashed to just outside the Grangers where he walked up to the door and dropped the Notice-Me-Not Charm as he walked.

Knocking on the door he was, again, greeted by Dan in the same manner.

"Yes?" asked Dan.

"I would find it astonishing if you weren't holding a weapon on me right now, Sir," said Harry blandly.

"Get in here," Dan said stepping out of the way as Harry walked in before the door was closed behind him.

"Hermione's sitting on her bed..." he began.

"...With her legs crossed and her wrists on her knees staring at the wall at the foot of her bed," finished Harry. "And you don't know what to do."

"Well... yes!" said Dan.

"Is she dressed?" asked Harry.

"Yes, come on," said Dan, leading the way up the stairs.

With the door opened Dan stepped to one side and said, "She's been sitting like that all day. It's not natural."

Hermione was sitting in exactly the same pose he, Neville and Susan adopted.

"Let me ask you this," asked Harry. "If she was sitting on her bed focussed

on reading a book, what would you do?"

"Well, I'd call her a couple of times and, if she didn't answer, come up to her door and call louder," replied Dan thinking about it.

"Do that," said Harry.

Frowning, Dan turned to look at his daughter and called, "Hermione!"

"Huh?" started Hermione, coming out of her meditation. "Oh, Hi, Dad. Hi, Harry!" she said jumping off her bed and taking a couple of steps before tripping and falling on to the floor.

"Ow! Ow! Tingles!" she said rubbing her legs.

Dan walked over to make sure his little girl was okay.

"Mione, you've been at it for too long," scolded Harry. "You need to remember to come out of the meditation to eat and move around for a little while. Merlin told you that, didn't he?"

Rising a bit more steadily to her feet with her Dad's assistance, Hermione replied, "Well, yes."

"Then do it. Your Mum and Dad were worried about you," ordered Harry.

"And, if they worry about you much more, they're likely to tell me you can't have any more cubes!"

"Nooo," Hermione said just a little worried. "I promise I'll be good. I'll remember to take breaks."

Dan snorted.

Harry nodded and said, "Good."

"That's all, there is to it?" asked Dan.

"That's all," said Harry in response.

After making sure Hermione was going to get herself something to eat and rest a bit, Dan led Harry back downstairs and into the lounge.

Hermione followed them downstairs, but headed for the kitchen.

# # #

## 9. Hermione's Rant

### Chapter Nine - Harry's Bright Idea

# # #

In the lounge of the Granger family home, Dan decided he needed to talk to Harry about matters important to his role in protecting his daughter, the Countess Ravenclaw. But he didn't know how to broach the subject.

"So," he began. "Do... you... watch football?"

Harry looked back for moment, then snorted and started to chuckle.

Abashed by Harry's reaction, Dan said, "That... was a silly question, wasn't it?"

Still chuckling a little Harry just nodded and said, "What do you need, Sir?"

Thinking carefully, Dan asked, "Would those cubes work on anyone else?"

I mean, I know the ones you've got for Hermione and the others are geared for them. It's just..."

"...You want to know if they can be made for others, and whether they'll only work on wizards and witches," Harry finished.

"Yeah," replied Dan.

Harry grinned and said, "Already anticipated, Sir." He reached into his ever-present satchel and drew forth another of the cubes. This one with an inscribed letter 'D' upon it.

Holding it forth and offering it to Dan, he said, "This one's for you."

Sitting back he said, "I didn't expect you to be asking about it just yet, though. Myrrdin and I figured you wouldn't be asking for about another four days. Which is yet another example of 'the knowing of something changes it' principle."

Looking over the innocuous cube of crystal Dan asked, "What's on it?"

"It has a general overview of the structure of the wizarding world, both

political and social, and the players involved including photo-images of them. It specifically identifies the known Death Eaters, others known to side with Riddle, and those who we consider on our side, or can be convinced to be on our side. It also has images and information on known Aurors, who may be called upon by Madam Bones to protect you and yours. And it has the same sort of information on the teaching staff at Hogwarts.

"It has an overview of what sort of spells there are, what probable killing curses can be thrown your way by Riddle's supporters, what their tactics are likely to be from previous examples and what you can do to block them or counteract them. It'll also give you some idea of how they may be able to block your bullets being shot their way and what to do in those situations.

"It will also provide you information on magical forms of travel, especially emergency portkeys, which I'm going to prepare for the three of you. This will all be placed into your subconscious and will be readily accessible when you need it.

"And, though it's on the cube, I'm also going to reiterate this point," said Harry, leaning forward. "If you can separate a wizard from their wand, you've effectively rendered them unable to fight. They have no other skills bar wand magics. If you can get their wand in your hands, and they're an unfriendly, snap the damned thing. Now, if I'd said that last bit to a wizard or witch, they'd be absolutely horrified. But, damn it, this is war; screw their sensibilities. Besides, snapping their wand means they'll be unable to come back at you and yours until they find a way to replace it."

Dan looked back with quite the curious expression. "That... was exactly the information I was going to ask for."

Harry smiled and said, "Being able to look through time has its advantages, Sir. But, as I said earlier, I didn't expect you to be asking for that information for another four days."

"Huh!" humphed Dan in response.

"You'll need Emma to activate it for you, though. They're specially made so the person using it cannot do it for themselves. That's just an added security feature.

"When you're ready to receive the information, do as I did for Hermione last night. Lay down, have Emma put it on your forehead with the letter 'D' pointing up. When you're ready, all she needs to do is tap the top of the cube and say, 'Goodnight'. You'll fall asleep straight away. The knowledge will be there in the morning simply by thinking about it. Now, you won't have the perfect recollection the others and I have, but it's not a lot you need to store, either," explained Harry.

As an afterthought, Harry said, "Later, you might want to consider Emma having the same information. You just do the same for her. But I suggest you review what will be supplied to you, and then you and her can make that decision together."

Dan nodded just as Emma came in through the front door.

"Hi, honey," she said seeing Dan. But, on seeing Harry, she said, "Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't see you there... My... lad."

"That's okay, Ma'am," replied Harry. "I just dropped by, as promised, to make sure Hermione was okay."

When he saw the woman looking a little worried, he said, "There's no problems, I assure you."

"Well, that's good," said Emma nodding firmly. "I was a bit worried when I saw her this morning sitting on her bed in her pyjamas just staring at the wall. I had a devil of a time getting her to take a shower, and get

dressed."

"She may be like that for at least tomorrow, too, Ma'am," said Harry. "It'll just be a bit more difficult to get her attention than usual. It'll stop by Monday, if not before."

"Good. I'm worried she won't take care of herself if there's no one here to watch her," said Emma.

Looking at Dan, she said, "And I've already put the word out to find someone to fill in for you for the next few months. Her Majesty was quite explicit about the role you play."

Dan looked a bit abashed and said, "Yeah, probably a good idea. If I'm to guard Countess Ravenclaw... and I still haven't gotten my head around that yet... then I'll need to either be here or close by. At least until the 1st of September, at any rate."

"It's Hermione, Sir," said Harry. "She's still your... 'Pumpkin'. I very much doubt that'll ever change. And she'll need you to stay her Dad to help keep her grounded."

Dan nodded with his head bent, while Emma smiled and headed for the kitchen.

"I can tell you this, irrespective of the timeline, you're her Dad, always. And she is a much loved friend and companion of mine," said Harry firmly.

Before Dan could respond Hermione walked in with a small plate of sandwiches and plonked herself on the couch.

Harry looked over and said with a voice of mock hurt, "Where's mine?"

Hermione just looked back and said, "Well, you didn't share yours at the palace; so..." and stuck one in her mouth.

"Hermione!" said her Dad, a little shocked.

"Oh, touché, mademoiselle; touché!" replied Harry, laughing.

Swallowing what she had in her mouth, Hermione said, "Mum's making some for everyone."

Looking back at Harry she said, wagging a finger at him, "And don't think I didn't figure out why you did that at the palace, either."

"Did what?" asked Harry, acting innocent but knowing she knew.

"When you arrived while we were there," replied Hermione. "You behaved like a beast to shock my Mum and Dad."

"And why would I do such a thing? If it was true, of course," asked Harry.

"Because you saw how nervous they were... we all were... and you wanted to do something that made them forget how nervous they were; take their minds off it," replied Hermione with the somewhat smug air of someone who'd figured something out.

Emma came back in carrying a large server with a plate of sandwiches on it and the tea service. "Take who's mind off what?" she asked.

Ignoring the question Harry just grinned at Hermione before turning to the Grangers and saying, "I told you she was the smartest witch I know."

Emma was frowning trying to work out what was going on, while Dan just looked between his daughter and Harry. He started to chuckle, before it evolved into full-on laughter.

"Daniel!" said Emma, scolding her husband. "What's so funny?"

"We've been conned, Em!" he chortled. "Remember yesterday afternoon when we first met the lad, here?" gesturing to Harry.

"Yes, of course," she said, still wondering what was going on.

"His behaviour with the sandwiches?" Dan asked wiping tears from his eyes. "He did it deliberately. So we'd be horrified."

"Close," said Harry. "I did it so your 'guardian of children' senses kicked in. I bet on both of you being worried I might get in trouble so you were thinking, as parents, of ways to save me from myself."

"My word!" said Emma, with wonder. "Here we thought we'd have to help you. And all the time you were helping us."

"All part of the services provided by the House of Slytherin. We hope you enjoyed the experience and will join us again soon," said Harry with an airy voice and wave of his hand.

"Besides," he went on to say, "As a Slytherin it's a trait of my house to use cunning and guile." He leaned forward and began to make himself a cup of tea.

"Trait?" asked Emma, already sitting back from making her own.

Nodding, Harry replied, "Yes. Students at Hogwarts are supposed to be sorted in to the four Houses based on their own dominant traits.

However, the sorting hat has a tendency to sort them into a House the student wants to go in, if the student wants it bad enough.

"In the original timeline Hermione went in to Ravenclaw. In Dumbles's mangled timeline she went into Gryffindor, as did I. But I was supposed to go into Hufflepuff."

"What are the traits?" asked Emma again, clearly curious.

It was Hermione who answered. "Let's see," she said. "Supposedly Gryffindor stood for bravery and against discrimination. Ravenclaw stood for intelligence and wit. Hufflepuff stood for loyalty and against cruelty of the lesser races. And Slytherin stood for cunning and a certain disregard for the rules.

"What it now looks like is; Gryffindor stands for bravery and helping your friends. Ravenclaw still has the intelligence. Hufflepuff is wrongly seen as duffers and friends, and they just want everyone to get along. And Slytherin is about power and blood purity."

"And that's one of the things we're going to fix," added Harry. "Getting the houses back on track but with improvements. Getting them back to

the way they were will only lead to the original infighting that forced Salazaar Slytherin to flee."

Everyone thought about that while they enjoyed their tea and sandwiches.

Remembering something, Harry spoke up. "Oh, and Hermione. The next time you go to Diagon Alley be sure to visit Gringotts. Do it quietly and flash your House ring to the first teller you come to, otherwise keep it hidden at all other times, lest you let the cat out of the bag early. Ask the teller to let you speak to the Account Manager for House Ravenclaw.

"When you speak with him you'll find you have an account with about nine and a half million galleons in it," said Harry. "That translates into mundane money somewhere between forty-five and fifty million pounds..."

Dan, who'd been taking a sip of his tea at the time, suddenly coughed a spray of tea over himself.

"Forty-five to fifty million pounds?!" he blurted in shock. "British pounds?"

"Uh-hmm!" nodded Harry. "You didn't think she'd pick up an Earldom and a pretty ring with no money to show for it, did you?"

"The goblins transfer one eighth of one percent per galleon paid in student fees into the account of each of the four Houses. It used to be higher but, over the years, the amount transferring across has been whittled down. I know it doesn't sound like much, but we're talking almost a thousand years of money going in, and earning interest, with none going out. On top of that is the money coming in from one quarter of the net rent on the properties of Hogsmeade. It's built up."

"Our daughter's a multi-millionaire?" asked Emma.

"As Head of the Most Noble and Most Ancient House of Ravenclaw; yes,"

replied Harry.

"You said not to show the ring when I'm in Diagon Alley, Harry. But, I can't take it off," said Hermione.

"Oh, of course," replied Harry. "You just 'will' it not to show, and it won't. Sorry, I should have mentioned it to you."

Hermione looked down at her ring, frowned a moment, and it disappeared. A few seconds later it reappeared.

"Huh," she said in surprise. "I was wondering how I was going to take it off."

"You can't," said Harry. "It's part of you now. Willing it away will mean you can still wash where the ring is without it getting in your way."

"So, don't show it in the Alley, but just show it to the goblin teller?" she asked.

"Yep," said Harry. "People interested in status know to look for the ring. And showing it may draw the eyes of someone we don't want knowing just yet you're a Head of House."

"The goblins are very discreet about this sort of thing. So, they won't say a word about it. They'll just take you into one of their private interview rooms to discuss the accounts with you."

"When you do, ask about what you need to do to create the Magical House of Granger. And also think about setting up a House vault. If you want extra to do that, ask me. I'll transfer across some galleons from my Head of House Potter vaults."

"Nine and half million galleons and you're asking if she'd need any from you to transfer across?" asked Dan. "Just how rich are you?"

"Well, excluding the Potter Manor, and a number of priceless artworks and jewellery; and excluding the Slytherin account equal to the Ravenclaw one; about forty million galleons or two hundred million

pounds," Harry shrugged.

"Combined, that's over a quarter of a billion pounds!" gasped Emma.

Shrugging again, Harry said, "Yeah."

"How can you be so blasé, about it?" she asked.

"The money will make life easier once we get everything else out of the way. But it's not going to do me any good if I'm... if we're... dead," said Harry. "However, if I can make use of it in what we need to accomplish well before then, then I'm going to use it."

After chatting for a little while longer Harry took his leave. He might not have much to do until Sirius could be sprung from Azkaban but he could collect at least one, if not two, of the horcruxes.

# # #

Apparating at the old Gaunt Shack in the woods just outside of Little Hangleton, Harry made his way to the shack. Outside, he summoned the ring belonging to Marvolo Gaunt, Tom's maternal grandfather, to his hand. Quickly, he bound it with spells to suppress the effects of the horcrux, and dropped it into his pocket. He didn't want Dumbledore finding it.

Once done he moved to the graveyard where Riddle's father, Thomas Riddle, was buried. He removed the bones from the grave and moved them to sit atop a gravesite on the other side of the graveyard. Then he ground the bones into dust by causing the molecules within them to release their grip upon one another.

Looking around, Harry could see his work there was done. He flamed away, back to the palace. Once back, he placed the ring in a special compartment within his trunk hidden from those without magic. Once inside, the ring was sealed off from anyone finding it. Harry planned on taking it to the goblins later to remove and destroy the piece of soul

within it.

# # #

Waking early again the next morning and enjoying another excellent English breakfast, Harry thought he'd visit Hogsmeade and get a feel for the wards around Hogwarts. He wanted to learn what he could of them, without Dumbledore being any the wiser.

For that he needed to be alert and pay careful attention to what he was doing. Dumbledore might discover someone was testing the wards but, if Harry was careful, the manipulating old fool would not know who it was. For this trip, Harry left his satchel behind in his suite within the palace. He phoenix-flashed out of the palace and reappeared in the skies above the Hogsmeade train station and quickly sought a thermal. A thermal was one of those spiralling columns of warm air flowing upwards from the ground below.

Once he'd played in his form for a while just spiralling upwards, he allowed himself to float gently towards the borders of Hogwarts' wards. Glancing off just the very outer edge he could sense what was there. Harry found magics laid upon old magics laid upon very old magics. But a lot of the wards were inactive. And there were wards that really shouldn't have been there. One, however, answered a question Harry and Myrrdin were puzzled about; why did the wizarding world believe magic and technology could not exist side by side.

What Harry found was a magic 'field' that caused anything powered by electricity to eventually fail, and the more electronic - the more sensitive the device - the quicker it failed. Someone almost a century ago, had created as part of the wards the field that caused the problem. Someone believed magical folk should not interact with electricity, and took steps to ensure they didn't.

So, that answered the question of why magical folk won't at least come into the twentieth century. Remove that and the castle could be modified.

That would then allow teaching aids such as projectors, computers, printing equipment... hell, just adding electric lights will be a boon.

After a leisurely but full circuit of the wards Harry had an idea of what needed to be done, security-wise, in getting the wards rebuilt. Some, he knew, he'd be better off stripping them out completely and replacing them. And there were others he could add that weren't that difficult.

However, what bothered him the most was the almost living presence he felt from the school. The eagerness he felt from the presence that felt like it was telling him he should stop mucking about and just go straight to the castle. He didn't realise that such a collection in one place of magical folk over a millennium could generate that. But, if it was the presence of that many magicals together, then he should have felt the same thing when he went to Diagon Alley. However, within Diagon Alley, he felt nothing.

'The only thing it can be,' he thought, 'was that it has something to do with my animagus form. Maybe that was why phoenixes were so rare as familiars.'

Giving a phoenix-like shrug, Harry headed away from the wards and gently flew over Hogsmeade proper. Once well past the little village he flamed away.

The rest of the day he spent wandering the streets of London enjoying the sights, before returning to the palace.

# # #

Monday morning and Harry headed out to London and bought himself a small cassette tape walkman and a cheap audio tape of some American group called Kiss. Adding a packet of batteries Harry took his purchases

in amongst the trees in a quiet area of St James Park.

In the park he followed the instructions and loaded the batteries, as directed. Then he put the cassette in to the little tray and, still following the instructions, pushed the play button until it clicked down.

Looking in through the little window on top he could see the two little cogs of the cassette slowly turning. He held one of the ear buds up to his ear and he could hear the god-awful sound of whatever music the Kiss band played. He wasn't surprised the little cassette in its plastic box was one of the cheaper ones.

Now that he'd confirmed it worked he started casting charms on it. And after about ten minutes the little wheels were still turning. Checking the sound from it he could still hear the thumping and tinny sound of electric guitars and drums.

More casting and he finally figured out one area where magic did affect it. The device did not like being transfigured into something and back again. However, once he replaced the batteries it worked again. So, the device was fine; it was the batteries that were the problem. And batteries were where the device stored it's electricity.

He then tried just transforming a bit of wood into a battery and trying that. But the battery was dead. And he tried transforming an existing battery while it was not in use to a block of wood and back again. But it, too, turned up dead.

Experimenting done, Harry now had a much clearer idea about the interaction of magic and electricity. The devices were fine. However, if they had a battery within them, the battery could not handle certain aspects of magic. Especially those related to transfiguration.

He began to wonder if he could create an electrical device, but bring the batteries with him. There was no reason why it wouldn't work.

He suddenly realised the answer was a lot simpler than that. Generators! Generators didn't store electricity. Instead, they converted liquid fossil fuel into electricity to be used immediately. And, the bigger the generator, the more power it could provide. That meant he could use equipment that ran on 250v; normal household power. As for the noise of the generator, a simple silencing charm would fix that.

His problem then became fuel. He had to figure a way to get fuel to the generator. That bore more thought.

# # #

That evening Harry met with the Queen for dinner. Michel had approached him soon after he'd returned from his experimenting to inform him the Queen invited him. When asked, he was informed the dress for the evening was semi-formal.

"I don't think I own anything semi-formal," he said to Michael. "Do you have anything where I can see what it looks like?"

Michael went out for a short while before returning with a photo album. Flicking through it he showed Harry a few where a man was dressed in how Harry was expected to look.

Harry, now with an idea as to the standard of dress, grabbed some clothes that looked similar and transfigured them to match.

"How's that?" he asked Michael.

"That's... it, My Lord," replied Michael. "But, if I may make a few suggestions?"

Harry, with Michael's help, set about improving on Harry's original design into something with which Michael was satisfied.

"I think that will be perfect, My Lord," said Michael, walking around the outfit as it hung on... nothing.

"You'll need to change soon, too," said Michael. "A page will attend soon

to take you to Her Majesty's private dining room."

After changing, Harry did not have long to wait before one of the Queen's pages collected him and led him down to Her Majesty's private apartments. Inside he immediately saw a large table covered in a snowy white tablecloth covered in glittering silverware and crystal glasses.

Around the room were some of the Queen's personal household attendants standing at attention against the walls. Just taking a seat were two gentlemen Harry had not yet met. Both about the same age as the 'Royal Summoner'. Both wore similar outfits to Harry's with one wearing a set of service ribbons above his right breast.

Just after Harry walked in one of the attendants stepped forward to a chair opposite the two gentlemen and pulled it out. Clearly he was expected to sit there.

After he was seated another attendant offered a decanter of orange juice. Harry nodded and the juice was poured into a glass tumbler before his right hand.

Harry hadn't even had a chance to say hello to the two gentlemen opposite him when the Queen entered the room. Both men immediately stood with Harry half a beat behind them.

The Queen sat and said, "Please, sit."

And they were all seated.

"Before we begin," the Queen said and turned to acknowledge Harry, "This, gentlemen, is Lord Harry James Potter, Earl of Slytherin, Head of the House of Potter, Heir to the House of Black."

Then turning to acknowledge the other two, the Queen said, "And this, My Lord, is Sir David Smythe-Umpton of MI5, and Sir Anthony Barringer of New Scotland Yard."

Harry smiled and nodded at the two men seated opposite while both

looked back with undisguised looks of curiosity.

"So," began Sir David, "you're the young man who dropped such a bombshell on my offices on Friday afternoon. And, again, later that evening."

"And the young man who had four of my constables scratching their heads in confusion trying to find manor houses that didn't exist," said Sir Anthony. "But, we now know actually do exist but we just can't see them."

"Yes," replied Harry. "I'm sorry about that. And about what's to come for both your people. Hopefully, it won't be as bad as feared but best to be prepared in case it does."

"Before you gentlemen start talking shop," said Her Majesty. "Perhaps, we shall have the first course."

Immediately, the first course of a light but very tasty vegetable soup was brought forth. Harry found it very nice and wished for more. However, he had no idea how many courses there'd be and knew he needed to leave room for it.

He'd barely finished his bowl before it was whisked away and a plate of veal with a red wine jus and steamed vegetables on the side was placed before him. Some of the vegetables were not ones of which he was fond, but he actually found them to be deliciously prepared and did not want to offend by leaving anything behind.

After his plate was whisked away there clearly followed a break; as Sir David said to him, "Her Majesty has informed us we need to search for folks who disappeared as children who were eleven years old as of the 1st of September on that date or a little earlier, but return some six years later, or a little later."

"That is correct, Sir," replied Harry. "You will also expect them to be exceedingly secretive of where they've been, lacking in a normal

education and seeking a new education, and or seeking employment within the police service or the military forces. Some may have sought adult apprenticeships or just taken menial jobs where a lack of education does not matter."

"And you suspect these people to have been students at your wizard school?" asked Sir Anthony.

"Some of them, yes; the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry up near the west coast of Scotland," answered Harry. "And something else has just occurred to me and I kick myself for not thinking of it earlier."

"Oh?" asked Sir David.

"Yes," replied Harry. "I've been thinking big picture these past few days and haven't thought of the little details. But I'm pretty sure the Ministry of Magic... sorry, the Ministry for Magic... will have a record of the students who have attended for at least the last century. They would have to, as they need to consult their files when checking for children who use underage magic.

"I'm sure I can ask Madam Bones, the lady who heads the police force for magical Britain, the Department of Magical Law Enforcement - DMLE - to give you a copy of that. You know, as cooperation between law enforcement agencies. And, once you're able to track down some of the folks, they should be able to point you towards others."

"That would make life a lot easier, yes," said Sir David.

"I'll need to visit her later this evening," said Harry, taking a sip of his juice. "I'll ask her then."

"Another of those cubes of yours, My Lord Potter?" asked the Queen.

"Yes, Your Majesty," Harry confirmed. "This will be the second one and the first of the ones that just hold information."

"And what information are you providing them, tonight?" She asked.

"This is the complete works of mundane law for the United Kingdom," replied Harry. "By tomorrow morning, as can I, the three other Heirs would be able to sit for the bar for the United Kingdom justice system and pass it with a one hundred percent score."

"That's... that's... astonishing!" spluttered Sir Anthony.

Harry just shrugged and said, "That's magic, Sir Anthony."

The third course was delivered. A lovely crème caramel with a scorched sugar coating. Once he'd tasted it, Harry decided it was one of his favourite dishes.

Once he'd finished Harry said, "Let me ask you both. Are either of you aware of magicals within your own organisations?"

Sir Anthony looked back with a slightly puzzled expression and replied, "No, My Lord. Not that I'm aware of."

But, Sir David looked uncomfortable and hesitated for a while before he said, "We have two that I know of. But I won't get into details of what they do for us."

"That's okay, Sir," replied Harry. "I don't need to know. But, have you considered asking them for the names of others they know?"

"Errr...," hemmed Sir David.

Harry held up his hand and said, "Again, I don't need to know. It was more in the form of a suggestion than a question."

Seeing the man who was obviously his friend being a bit uncomfortable, Sir Anthony asked, "Would you mind showing me a bit of real magic? I'm just curious to see what it actually looks like."

Harry grinned back and answered, "Of course."

Holding out his hand Harry levitated the carafe of orange juice that was sitting on a side board across to himself, and refilled his glass. Then he levitated it back. Next he transfigured Sir Anthony's dessert bowl into a

little white kitten, which 'Meow'ed at him before Harry changed it back. And finally, he created a glowing ball of blue white light about six inches in diameter and had it hover about three feet above the table, leaving it there.

"That, of course, is only a very tiny bit of what magic can do and on a small scale," said Harry. "It can also be used to heal and to harm, do things on a grand scale or small, be used to relocate yourself or something else from one location to another across the globe in mere moments, just about anything, really."

"Sir David," asked Harry, turning to the other man. "Have you sent your people to the Granger residence yet?"

"Not yet, My Lord. That's due within the next couple of days," he replied.

"Good," Harry nodded. "When they do visit, I suggest they use the word 'astonishing' in a sentence when greeting the Major at the door. He knows that to be a code word that tells him the person saying it is in the know."

Sir David twitched an eyebrow and said, "That's very clever, My Lord. It's a rare enough word in the English language that it's rarely used in normal speech, but still easy enough to use in a normal sentence."

"Thank you, I thought so too," grinned Harry.

After a little more chatting Harry reminded the Queen he had to visit the other three Heirs. He knew it was a breach of propriety to leave before Her Majesty, but She also understood he needed to go.

Before leaving both Sir David and Sir Anthony asked him to stop by MI5 and Scotland Yard respectively soon, as they both wanted further information. Harry promised to do both and said he'd use the word 'astonishing' with the receptionist to let them know he was there.

As a last demonstration of his magic to them both, Harry stepped a little away from the table, said goodnight, and phoenix-flashed back to his

room.

'Let them think on that,' he thought.

# # #

After stopping only long enough to get changed and collect his satchel

Harry donned his glamour and phoenix-flashed and apparated to the Longbottom Manor.

Greeting Augusta he asked, "How's Neville?"

"He's fine, thank you," she said. "He stopped staring at the walls about lunch time."

"Good," said Harry nodding. "He must be done with both the sorting and his shields, then."

Augusta nodded. "I take it that means he's now protected against Legilimency?"

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Harry.

"Then it's on to the next cube tonight, as planned?" she asked.

"Definitely," replied Harry. "I take it he's in his room? Ready for bed?"

Augusta nodded and said, "Yes, My Lord. He's ready."

Leading the way again, Augusta headed upstairs with Harry behind.

Entering the room Harry saw Neville sitting and thinking.

"Hiya, Nev," he said.

"Hi, Harry," replied Neville. "That's a very cool thing you did for me with that cube."

"Glad it helped, mate," said Harry. "What form did you give your visual representation of your mind?"

"A castle," the lad replied grinning. "I've got rooms set up for the information and, just as Merlin said, I've got a nice little trap room for anyone who tries to use Legilimency on me."

"Mine's a small mundane town," said Harry. "It has a fountain, and

everything."

"Nice," said Neville nodding. "So, I'm ready for the next one, then?"

"Did Merlin say you were ready?" Harry asked back instead.

"Yeah, he did," replied Neville. "He danced a funny little dance when we reached that part."

"A jig, I know," said Harry grinning. "Then you're ready for the next one. But you're going to have to lie down like last time."

Neville quickly lay down and smiled with excitement, and Augusta came forward and kissed him goodnight.

Having already removed it from its case, Harry placed the second cube on Neville's forehead and said, "Don't forget to let your shields down to let the information in. This one's on mundane law."

Neville simply nodded, and Harry tapped the cube and said, "Goodnight!" and Neville was asleep.

Rising, Harry said to Augusta, "This one won't be anything like the first.

There'll be no staring at walls, or anything like that. It is simply information on mundane law that he'll be able to retrieve as needed.

Then he headed for the Bones Manor through the floo.

# # #

Amelia also told Harry that Susan had stopped staring at the walls all the time just before lunch, and had told her that Merlin had said she was ready.

After going to Susan's bedroom to ensure she was ready for bed, Amelia came back out and called Harry to follow her.

Entering Susan's room, Harry could see the young girl was lying in bed with the blankets pulled up to her chin, waiting.

As he sat upon the edge of the girl's bed, Harry said, "Hi, Susan." And brought forth Susan's second cube showing it to her.

"What form did you decide for your mind palace?" asked Harry.

"Ummm... It's like Diagon Alley but bigger," she replied. "I hope that's okay."

"Of course it is," replied Harry gently. "Mine is somewhat similar. I have a mundane village."

"And since you're ready for the next cube, the question is, do you want it?" he went on to say.

"Yes. Definitely," she replied.

"Madam Bones?" Harry asked Amelia.

She nodded, stepped forward and kissed her young niece goodnight.

Harry placed the cube on the Susan's forehead as he did with the first and, tapping it, said, "Goodnight!"

Rising from the bed he said to Amelia, "This one is mundane law of the United Kingdom. She won't be meditating for this one when she awakens. But she might spend a bit of time reviewing what's available to her. However, I doubt she'll find it all that interesting to spend long periods of time on it."

Amelia led Harry back down to the parlour and asked, "How many more are there after this one, again?"

"Twelve," replied Harry. "There'll be one per night from now until completion."

"Oh," said Harry, remembering. "The Heads of MI5 and Scotland Yard would like to know if you can provide them with a list of mundane born or raised wizards and witches. They're looking for those who attended Hogwarts and returned to the mundane world. It would aid them greatly if they had names they could then investigate. I think they're also looking to see if the names may provide them with an answer to disappearances they may have on their books."

"The names will not be made public as this is a security of the realm matter. The whole business, you can expect, is locked behind some pretty high security safeguards."

Amelia thought about it for a while and said, "I'll see what I can do. But my main focus will be first freeing your godfather from Azkaban. I know a Royal Command when I hear it."

"I couldn't ask for more, thank you," replied Harry. "Now, I need to head for the Grangers."

Saying good night to Amelia he once more donned his glamour and phoenix-flashed to a secluded spot just around the corner from the Grangers.

# # #

Knocking on the door he gave the password and walked in, once Dan had backed away and gestured for him to enter.

"How's Hermione doing?" Harry asked.

"She stopped doing that staring at the walls thing early this morning," replied Dan. "Since then she's been bouncing off the walls waiting for you to come by with the next cube."

Harry grinned and said, "I figured as much. That girl is just an information sponge."

Dan just smiled in response.

"Well," he said. "She already in bed and waiting. I guess we should head up."

Harry nodded and followed Dan up the stairs to Hermione's room. The door was already open, so they went right in.

Harry sat on the edge of the bed and drew out the second cube for Hermione before turning to her and saying, "This one's mundane law.

Tomorrow morning you will have the complete works of mundane law at

your disposal. Don't forget you need to keep your shields open for you to be able to absorb the information."

"Yeah, Merlin told me that," she replied.

"And what form did you choose for your mind palace?" asked Harry.

"It's a big library broken into separate rooms," she replied enthusiastically.

"I guess I shouldn't be surprised," Harry said. "As long as it works for you, that's fine."

Turning to Dan he asked, "Have you said your good nights?"

Dan nodded.

"In that case..." Harry said, leaning forward and placing the cube on Hermione's forehead. He then tapped the cube and said, "Goodnight!"

Dan said, "So, no staring off into space with this one?"

"No, Sir," replied Harry, rising from the edge of the bed. "This is just information. However, she may spend periods reviewing what's there. Just remind her it's not going to go away and it'll always be available to recall at will. She doesn't need to attempt to read every volume."

Dan nodded and led the way back downstairs to the lounge.

"I take it we're now going to see you every night, now," he said.

"For tonight and the next twelve nights, yes," replied Harry. "After that, we'll see. I've still a lot of other tasks I need to complete before the 1st of September, so I need time to do those."

Dan nodded and said, then I guess I'll see you tomorrow night about... the same time?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "Goodnight."

And flashed back to his room in the palace.

# # #

Harry wished that technology had caught up to what he saw in the time

viewer and things had progressed another couple of years. A mobile phone would make an excellent tool he could carry, he hoped, for the others to be able to contact him; especially the Grangers. However, mobile phone technology was still a couple of years off being worthwhile.

He also still hadn't solved the issue with batteries yet, so mobile phones would still prove to be a problem until he could test the theory that just apparating or floo travel wouldn't kill them.

Still with nothing much to do he decided to spend his morning wandering through Diagon Alley under his glamour. He was just enjoying spending the morning around other magicals.

After a bit to eat for lunch he decided to head over to the MI5 building.

He apparated to St Johns Gardens about two blocks north of the building on Millbank and walked the rest of the way. Just before he arrived, he dropped his glamour.

Once inside he found his way to the MI5 offices and approached the receptionist.

"Could you inform Sir David that the astonishing young man he had dinner with last night was here to see him?" he asked the lady.

"Is he expecting you?" she asked.

"I believe so, yes," replied Harry.

"One moment," she said before making the call via her headset.

A few moments later the receptionist looked up at Harry and said,

"Someone will be down to collect you shortly. You may take a seat if you like."

Harry just smiled and said, "Thank you, Ma'am," but remained standing.

He knew he wasn't going to be waiting long.

A few minutes later a young man came down, approached Harry and

asked, "My Lord?"

Harry smiled and said, "Yes."

"This way, please, My Lord," the man said and led Harry to a bank of elevators behind the security screening area.

Exiting a couple of floors later, the man had not said anything further to Harry. He just led him through a set of office cubicles and into an office. Inside, Harry found Sir David sitting behind a desk. As soon as Sir David saw him he smiled and said to Harry's escort, "Thank you, Thomas. Please shut the door behind you."

Sir David said, "Please, My Lord, take a seat," as the young man, Thomas, closed the door on his way out of the office.

"Thank you," said Harry taking the offered chair. "I'm sorry I didn't call first, but... well... I don't have a phone as yet."

"Think nothing of it, My Lord," said Sir David, waving a hand dismissively. "I'm glad you came."

"I spoke to Madam Bones, last night," said Harry. "And she's going to see what she can do to get you a copy of that list of past Hogwarts students. However, she's focussed, at the moment, on getting my godfather out of the wizard world's prison he was dumped in without a trial. She recognises she's under direct orders from Her Majesty to... expedite matters relating to that."

"That's also my focus. But I believe she will make the effort to collect the list soon. Her problem will be in getting the list together without raising suspicions within the Ministry as to why she wants it."

"That is excellent news, My Lord," beamed Sir David. "And, yes, I do understand the need for discretion."

"Now, I also believe you wanted to talk to me about other matters," prompted Harry.

"Yes," replied Sir David. "I wanted to hear more about this terrorist that was running around in the late 70s. What can you tell me about him?"

Harry nodded and said, "His name was... is... Tom Marvolo Riddle, but he went by the name of Lord Voldemort."

And Harry went on to describe Riddle's history and his time rampaging across Britain with his Death Eaters and other followers. He described the killing curses and how they didn't leave a mark on their victims. And that the deaths were usually across family groups, or clusters. As he talked Sir David took notes.

When he was finished Sir David looked up at him and asked, "How do we apprehend such people?"

Harry sighed and said, "Without magical support, you can't. You can kill them, or even knock them out cold. But as soon as they revive, they'll be gone."

"So I need to have people with magic ability in each of the teams I send against these people who call themselves Death Eaters?" asked Sir David.

"Yep; but not just magicals. They need to be trained in fighting such an adversary," replied Harry. "And that requires people trained to be Aurors. Else, any magical sent into battle will simply be targeted first, once the bad guys learn magicals are involved on your side."

"It's this reason, above all else, that drives me to deal with the problem from within the magical world. After that, I can in my position as Earl of Slytherin, together with the other three Earldoms, force the Wizengamot, the ruling body of the magical world in Britain, to toe the bloody line."

"Once we have control of the Wizengamot we can force the changes from within. And that'll allow us to have trained Aurors working side by side with their mundane counterparts; MI5 and Scotland Yard."

"But we have time. Our own research and studies have discovered Riddle

won't be resurrected until around May of 1994. By then we'll have regained control of the Wizengamot and the Ministry."

"Resurrected, My Lord?" asked Sir David with some surprise.

"Yep. Resurrected," replied Harry. "At least, that's the closest term to what he's up to."

"What Riddle has done," he continued, "is managed to use a magical way of locking pieces of his soul to the mortal plane. Until his soul is freed from those locks there is at least one ritual I'm aware of, that'll allow him to return in physical form. Besides freeing my godfather from prison for a crime he didn't commit, I'm focussed on hunting those anchors, those locks, down and having them destroyed.

"And, by then, I'll be in a position to be able to get the Ministry for Magic back working with the rest of the government as they should be. And that means the Department of Magical Law Enforcement will be working with MI5 and Scotland Yard as equals, working together for the betterment of all the United Kingdom."

"A lofty goal, My Lord," said Sir David.

"Perhaps," sighed Harry. "But I know I'm going to have to bang quite a number of pretty thick skulls together to accomplish anywhere near such lofty heights."

"No matter how lofty the height," said the head of MI5, "One step at a time will get you closer to the peak."

Harry snorted and said, "That, and some Chinese biscuit dough, will make you a fortune cookie."

Sir David laughed and said, "Clever."

"Anyway, Sir David," Harry said rising to his feet. "I must be off. Places to be, worlds to save, you know how it is."

Sir David grinned, offered his hand and said, "Pay my respects to Sir

Anthony when next you see him."

Shaking his hand, Harry replied, "Of course, Sir."

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I intend to skip the whole travel down to the ground floor and exit that way, thing," said Harry. "Time for you to see something else magic is capable of, apparating."

Before Sir David could even ask what he meant, Harry popped away.

# # #

Wondering how things were going with his three charges, Harry decided to pay an early visit to the Grangers.

Having redonned his glamour, he arrived outside the Granger home to see an electrician's van outside.

He walked up to the front door and knocked. 'Hmm, a suitable sentence to use,' he thought.

Dan opened the door and Harry began to say, "A particularly astonish...Oikk!" as Dan grabbed him by a fistful of his shirt and dragged him inside.

Pinning him up against the wall in the entry hall a rather frazzled looking

Dan snarled, "You've got to make her stop!"

"Errr..." said Harry. "A... female electrician... giving you a hard time?"

"No, you idiot!" snarled Dan, "Hermione!"

Dan, still holding on to a fistful of Harry's shirt, pulled him off the wall and shoved him into the lounge room. "You did it; you fix it!" he half barked.

Harry, wondering what the hell was going on, soon figured it out.

Harry found Hermione in the kitchen scolding the, clearly MI5, electronic surveillance systems installers on subjects ranging from building code violations, to flat out criminal trespass laws regarding surveillance, to laws regarding the safe installation of cabling.

The two electronic security experts were taking turns saying, "We're just following orders, My Lady," "It's for your protection, My Lady" and similar empty responses.

To which she blustered, "That excuse didn't work at Nuremburg, and it isn't going to work here!"

"Hermione!" Harry called to her.

Getting no response he tried again. "Hermione!"

Finally recognising someone was trying to get her attention, Hermione turned and said, "What?"

Harry dropped his glamour and said, "Come in to the lounge room for a minute."

"But, Harry," she said exasperatedly. "Do you know how many laws they're breaking?"

"Of course you do," she said, answering her own question. "They're your lessons!"

Harry again said, "Come in to the lounge room for a minute."

Hermione huffed and followed Harry in to the lounge.

"Now, if you promise to let the security teams do the work that they..." he began.

"But, Harry..." she interrupted.

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry, holding up a finger. "If you promise to let the security teams do the work they need to do... to help keep you and your parents alive... I'm going to show you something else exciting to learn."

That grabbed Hermione's attention, just as Harry knew it would.

"What?" Hermione eagerly asked.

"First, though," said Harry calmly. "They're operating under instructions passed down to them from the Crown. And it's being done without the proper paperwork because..."

"Oh," said Hermione suddenly understanding. "The Crown has the right to take such actions as necessary to protect Her peerage, and does not require the normal requirements of much of the law to carry out such protective action."

"Correct!" replied Harry. "So, that means these people..."

"Aren't doing anything wrong under the law," huffed Hermione.

"That's right," said Harry. "So, stop picking on them!"

"Okay, okay," sighed Hermione just a little sulkily. "But, just because it's not unlawful does not mean they can violate the codes. That's a safety..."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry, again holding up a finger. "I told you, if you promise to let the security teams do the work they need to do, I'm going to show you something else exciting to learn."

"Okay, I'll leave them alone and not point out the glaringly egregious..."

she said before Harry interrupted her again with his finger in the air.

"You will leave them, and any other people tasked with protecting you and your family, alone," commanded Harry. "They have a job to do and they're going to be allowed to do it! Understand?"

"Yes, Harry," she said in a bit of a huff.

Harry waited to make sure she didn't launch, once more, into a rant.

When he saw she was calmer, he said, "Now for the lesson... Do you remember how I said any wand waver can transform into an animagus form?"

"Yes?" she asked, quite interested.

"Well, you currently have the skill to discover what your form is going to take," said Harry.

"I do?" she asked.

"You do," he said. "All it takes is meditation. The same sort of meditation you used to develop your eidetic memory and Occlumency shields. The

difference is, you want to meditate and let your mind float free. Let it come to you."

"But," she said, "how can you focus through meditation, but not focus to let the animagus form develop?"

"Meditate and ask Merlin," replied Harry. "He can help guide you."

"Okay, thanks Harry," Hermione rapidly said. And, before Harry could even say she was welcome, she'd already dashed for the stairs, heading to her bedroom.

Watching Hermione's feet as they disappeared at the top of the stairs, he sighed.

He was broken out of his musings when he heard from the kitchen,

"Thank God!"

Dan, who had come up behind him, tapped him on the elbow and offered him a tumbler with about a half inch of an amber liquid and ice blocks.

"What's this?" asked Harry.

"Scotch"

"Sir, I'm only eleven."

"Bullsh... pucky!" stated Dan. "You may look it, lad; but, you sure as hell aren't."

"Major?" they both turned to the door in the kitchen, where one of the electronics boffins had poked his head through the door.

"Sir," the tech said plaintively. "Has she gone? Please, say she's gone."

"She's up in her room, meditating," said Dan. "She should be busy for hours."

"Thank you, Sir!" the tech said. "And, if I may ask, do you have the young Sir's number on speed dial?"

Harry just snorted in amusement.

"Oh, Gods, man!" said Dan back. "She's an eleven year old girl. What's

wrong with you?"

"Sir, they taught us how to deal with all sorts of hazards in all sorts of risky situations. But they never gave us a class on how to deal with eleven year old girls on a rampage."

Dan just grinned, looked at Harry and said, "He's got a point, you know. How do we contact you if we need you?"

"I've been thinking on that, Sir," said Harry. "And I think I may have an answer. I'll just have to figure out how to make it work, first."

"Please, do," replied Dan, taking a sip of his scotch. "And how long, really, is this latest thing going to take her?"

Thinking deeply Harry replied, "It depends on the person. If she can get past the not focussing while focussing thing it can happen in a matter of days. However, Hermione's going to try and push it. That means she's going to take longer. I'm really hoping she still won't manage it by the 1st of September, but I doubt that very much.

"However, if she does, she'll only be able to discover her animagus form, not necessarily change into it.

"And, if she gets past that hurdle, I'm sure I'll think of something else for her to do that'll challenge her and keep her busy."

"I hope so, lad," the older man said. "I hope so."

Taking his leave, Harry changed back into his glamour and left on foot.

He decided to walk down to the local shops to see if he could make a purchase there. A dozen or so little foldaway mirrors, a permanent marker, a three foot length of five millimetre thick dowel, a roll of thin cord and some paper and pens.

With his purchases in hand, Harry walked into a laneway and phoenix-flashed back to the palace. What he wanted to do would take some study.

# # #

Back in his suite, Harry unpacked all his purchases on the coffee table in his little lounge room. And laid them all out to ensure he had everything. Then, using pen and paper, he set about designing the runes he would need to make the law of contagion work with quantum entanglement, the protean charm and the magic of the mirrors.

He knew he would need one each for himself and the three other heirs.

He would also need one each for Amelia, Augusta and the elder Grangers.

He then thought he could provide one for Sir Anthony, Sir David and the Queen. That made ten. He could then make the others as spares, doing the setup work but not configuring, what he called, the dialling runes.

Next he removed the mirrors from their little flip open hinged metallic cases. On the back of each he laid a near identical rune with the permanent marker. He called this the user's rune. Unhappy with the image provided by each mirror - it made the person looking into it too close - he slightly convexed each; so, when holding the mirror up in front of you at about eighteen inches, it showed his whole head and a little of his shoulders. Then did the same with each of the others.

Then, he placed each mirror back into its case and caused the original glue that was holding them in to rebond the mirror into the back of the lid of the case.

Next on his list was to use the permanent marker to lay down twelve runes in a four line three row tic-tac-toe arrangement on the flat surface within the case opposite the mirror. Each of the first ten runes was linked to a different mirror using, for the most part, a permanent protean charm. He even included the rune for the mirror in which the rune was put. He thought of this as the off button, meaning the mirror was only linking to itself.

He then added two tiny runes, one to the bottom half along the edge that

touched the top half, and one to the top half so it would touch the one on the bottom half. To these he made it so the device would vibrate and hum if a connection came in. But would stop as soon as the two runes were drawn apart, as in, the mirror was opened.

His original problem with the idea of runes was that it needed someone with a magical core to activate one. But his fiddling with batteries earlier reminded him that wands could store magical energy, like a magical battery. So, he would make tiny wands that could store enough magical energy so a mundane could use the device.

He picked up the cord and cut off five pieces of about twelve inches in length, and set them aside.

He picked up his length of thin dowel and caused five pieces to shear off at four inch, ten centimetre, lengths. He then pulled five individual reasonably long hairs from his own head. Laying a piece of dowel and a single strand of hair side-by side he caused the two to merge, with the single strand of hair running down the centre core of the wood.

He then reshaped the wood into an imitation wand in the same manner as bonsai pruners or those who carve, he simply shaved off what he didn't want until the shape he wanted appeared. Next he caused a small hole to appear almost through to the core into the end where the handle would be and poked one end of one of the cut lengths of cord into the hole. Holding it in place he willed the hole to close, sealing the cord and mini wand together.

He repeated the process on the other four 'mini' wands. A simple spell and he caused the wood of all five to harden. Then he tied the other end of each of the cords of the mini wands to the hinge of each of five of the mirror cases.

Thinking a bit he then etched a tiny rune into the tip of each of his mini

wands that allowed the wand to store magical energy and to only release a tiny pulse each time the tip was pressed to any of the runes. This would activate the rune causing the protean charm to link the mirror to its counterpart runed mirror.

Finally he used his own magic to charge each of the five wands.

Knowing he was running out of time before he had to go visit the three other heirs he hurried to test them. Using the ones without wands he tested each to ensure they linked to the other nine. Then, suppressing his magical core, he tested each of the five using the wands to activate them to connect to each of the other nine.

It was a bit time consuming but he was done. He now had his own magical radio network with an individual 'channel' for each person in possession of one of the mirrors. And it would work through his change to animagus form and back without ending up with flat batteries as he suspected would happen if he was carrying batteries at the time.

After he was finished he realised he could have also set up groups where a mirror could connect to a group of other mirrors. He mentally head-smacked himself for not thinking of it before he started and put the thought of doing that aside for another day.

But now he had to head back to the three heirs with the next cube for each.

# # #

## 10. Harry's Admission

### Chapter Ten - Harry's Admission

# # #

Before leaving for Longbottom Manor, Harry wrote down which rune would link their mirror to which mirror.

He also wrote a tiny number into the top of the case corresponding to the

rune on the back of the mirror within it. Now he wouldn't get them mixed up.

He left the last five behind in his trunk, dropped the first one into his pocket for his own use, and put the other six into his satchel with the cubes.

Checking to make sure he had everything he needed, and that the time was flying past, he knew he only had a short while to enjoy a meal before he needed to be at Longbottom Manor. So, he flashed to a laneway near a restaurant he wanted to try and went in for a quick meal.

At 8.20pm, he left the restaurant and went back to the laneway. He apparated to just outside the Longbottom Manor and was knocking on the door very close to 8.30pm sharp.

After giving mirror #2 to Neville and mirror #5 to Augusta he showed them how to use them. He also said how it would save their long distance conversations being overheard by other parties. He also handed over a copy of the list that had whose mirror was linked to which rune. When asked about who Sir David and who Sir Anthony were he told them they were Madam Boneses counterparts in law enforcement in the mundane world. And that they shouldn't contact either of them, nor the Queen, unless in the most direst of emergencies.

Neville was happy as it now allowed him to talk to the others about their experiences with the cubes, and it allowed him to talk to Harry and ask him questions whenever he needed to. And Augusta was happy as it allowed he to talk securely with Amelia and with Neville while he was away at Hogwarts.

After applying the third cube, wizarding law and the laws of logic, to Neville, Harry headed to the Ossuary.

# # #

At Bones Manor Harry gave mirror #3 to Susan and mirror #6 to Amelia. He gave them both the same list and ran through the same spiel he'd given the Longbottoms.

While waiting for Susan to get ready for bed, Harry broached the subject of his godfather's release.

"How's the research into the paperwork related to Sirius Black's incarceration coming along?" he asked Amelia.

"Well, you're right about me not being able to find any records relating to his arrest, trial or conviction," she began. "I've now started interviewing the Aurors who are still alive who were at Godric's Hollow that night.

They remember him saying he killed your parents but none of them remember conducting a record of interview once he was brought back to the Ministry.

"I've also found out which Aurors took him from the Ministry to Azkaban. Both believed he'd already been tried and convicted. Both believed the other had the paperwork that was his conviction record that sent him to Azkaban.

"I think I'm going to be able to start the ball rolling tomorrow on getting him a proper trial."

"Do I need to retain a lawyer for him?" he asked.

"I think it would be a very good idea, if you did," she replied. "Would you like me to give you the details of a good, and honest, criminal case solicitor?"

"Yes, please," said Harry. "One that is very discreet but knows how to use the media to further the benefits of his client. But is also local to the Ministry."

"I'll use the mirror to contact you first thing in the morning with the details," she said.

"Thank you, Ma'am," said Harry gratefully.

"Come on, then," she said, changing the subject. "We'd best get you moving on to the Grangers."

She led Harry in to Susan's room. And, after applying the third cube to Susan, he headed to the Grangers.

# # #

Arriving at the Grangers he found the household a lot calmer than it was earlier in the day.

After letting him in Dan led him into the lounge where Emma was already waiting.

"How was Hermione after I left?" he asked Dan.

"She meditated for the rest of the day, only coming down for dinner before returning to her room," said Dan.

"I'm not sure what I prefer," said Emma. "Having Hermione around and annoying the boys from MI5, or up in her room meditating."

"What did she used to do before the mediation?" asked Harry.

Emma thought for a bit before replying, "She used to sit down here in one of the armchairs and read, mostly. But she also used to help me with the meals."

"Okay," said Harry, thinking. "If she's still awake, call her down; and tell her to bring a book with her."

Emma headed off to collect Hermione while Harry turned to Dan and asked, "How was everything with the MI5 boys? They got everything in place yet?"

"They've got the internal sensors and alarms all installed," said Dan.

"Another crew will be around tomorrow to do the outside ones and connect them through."

Emma then returned with Hermione, carrying a book.

With everyone sitting, Harry turned to Hermione and said, "You need to do me and your parents a favour."

"What sort of favour?" she asked.

"We need you to behave as you did before I started with the cubes," replied Harry. "That is, we need you to come down here and sit in your favourite chair and look like you're reading a book."

"But what about my meditation?" she asked puzzled.

"I said look like you're reading a book," explained Harry. "You can meditate anywhere at any time. I'm asking you to do it while sitting in your favourite chair looking like you're reading a book."

"But, secondly; in just over seven weeks you're leaving home for the west coast of Scotland and won't be returning until Christmas. Your parents are going to miss you. You need to spend time not in a meditative state with them. The search for your animagus form can wait."

"Oh," said Hermione crestfallen. "I didn't think of that. But, you're right."

"Besides," said Harry. "I won't give you another present if you don't promise me you'll spend time in the evenings, at least, and weekends, with your parents in a communicative state."

"A present?" asked Hermione perking up.

"Yup," replied Harry. "And it's a biggie."

"You do realise, My Lord," she said, ominously, "that what you're doing is extortion and is a chargeable offence under United Kingdom law."

"As a Peer of the realm I'm protected from such matters and have the right to have matters heard by my Peers," responded Harry.

"That's rubbish and you know it," she shot back. "Peers are not protected from criminal prosecution and, as such, the matter would be heard in the criminal courts."

"And what you refer to as extortion, I call incentive," responded Harry.

"It's my Slytherin ways manifesting themselves. I guess you could say, I can't really help it. It's a magical imperative."

Dan snorted trying not to laugh at the byplay.

"Fine!" pouted Hermione. "Have it your way then. I'll be good and not meditate so much."

"In that case," said Harry. "I'll give you, and your parents, your presents."

Harry reached into his satchel and drew out mirror #4 and mirror #7. He handed them to Hermione and the Grangers respectively.

He then explained how they worked and handed to each of them the same list of runes as he'd given to the Boneses and the Longbottoms.

"So, Dan," explained Harry. "Yours and Emma's has the little charged mini-wand, for want of a better term, to allow you to use the device.

Though you don't have the magical core to use these sort of devices normally, the wand has sufficient charge within it to allow you to use it many, many times before it needs recharging. And, to do that, all you need to do is stay within a magical field for a little while, such as Diagon Alley.

"However, I'm also expecting that once Amelia has had your home warded, you'll be able to draw the magical energy off that to recharge the wand. So, you'll never need to recharge it if you return home occasionally. But I expect you'll stay living here so it'll never be a problem."

Dan asked, "So, what you're telling me is that we'll be able to talk directly with Hermione while she's away at Hogwarts?"

"Well, yes," replied Harry. "There's no distance limit on the devices that I can conceive, there will be no delay in the signal as you would get on a telephone, and the wards surrounding Hogwarts won't block the signal, either."

Suddenly Emma shot off the couch, grabbed a fistful of Harry's shirt and dragged him out of his own chair to give him a big hug.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" she cried squeezing him to her body.

Harry next felt the arms of Dan around them both. "Lad," he said with a strain to his voice. "No matter what drama you've brought to our family, nothing can compare with the gift you've given us tonight."

Not knowing his gift meant that much to the Grangers, Harry didn't know what to say, so he went with humour.

"You know this suit's Armani, right?" he said a bit embarrassed by the sudden show of affection. "This is the third time I've been manhandled today."

Dan let them go with a snort and Emma backed off only to plant a big kiss in the middle of his forehead. "I'll believe that suit's Armani if you'll believe my dress is a Vera Wang," she said smiling with tears running down her cheeks.

"I'll go make some tea," she said suddenly. And took off for the kitchen.

Everyone else returned to their chairs. Looking across at Hermione, Harry could see she, too, had been crying a little.

Harry, still embarrassed, muttered, "I actually only made them as a way you could contact me, Amelia or Augusta if you were in trouble. And the one for Hermione so she could talk to the other heirs. But, once I'd conceived the idea, I just built upon it. The idea you could also contact Hermione while she was away was pretty much an afterthought."

"It was a very, very nice afterthought, My Lord," said Dan quietly.

"Yeah, Harry," said Hermione, getting up to walk over and sit in his lap.

"That was a very nice thing to do." Then she kissed him on the cheek.

Harry blushed. He blushed a lot.

"Ummm..." was all he managed to say.

Emma came back in carrying the usual tea service with four cups and saucers.

"Well, it wasn't really my idea," stammered Harry. "It was that guy from MI5 earlier today. He wanted to know if Dan had my number on speed dial, and then I remembered what could be done with mirrors, and then, welllll..."

"And then you took the idea and ran with it," said Dan. "So you did all this since you were here, earlier."

"Yeah, I picked the mirrors and other equipment up on the way back to the palace from here and spent the rest of the day building them," said Harry. "Mione, do you mind? I'd like a cup of tea."

Hermione, reluctantly it seemed, returned to her own chair while Harry leant forward and focussed on making a cup of tea.

"I'm sorry it upset you," said Harry softly to the Grangers. "I just thought it was an easier way for everyone to be able to talk to each other without me having to run around all day checking on folks. I was being a tad lazy."

"We're not upset, Harry," said Emma. "It was just a very unexpected, but very welcome, gift."

"Harry," mused Hermione. "Would you not have given us the mirrors if I hadn't agreed to spend more time in the evening with Mum and Dad?"

"Of course, I would have," said Harry airily. "But as a true Slytherin why give you something for nothing when I could use it to get you to comply with something I wanted?"

Hermione didn't say a word. She just rose out of her chair, walked over to Harry, smacked him on the back of the head, and walked back to sit in her own chair.

"That's for tricking me!" she declared. "You're not allowed to do that,

anymore."

"Awww..." faux-sulked Harry. "Now you're just taking the fun out of it."

After a bit more polite chit chat, Hermione was sent off to get changed for bed. While they waited, Harry felt Dan studying him with a thoughtful expression on his face.

Harry just sipped the last of his tea and waited.

"Harry," said Dan, and for the first time speaking to him by name, "you and Merlin watched a fair bit of the future on the other timelines, right?"

"Yes, Sir," said Harry carefully.

"In the original timeline, the one where the four of you went on to fix the issues in the wizarding world, what else happened besides that?" asked Dan.

Harry just focussed on the bottom of his cup through the remainder of the tea and said, "Lots of things, of course."

"You're being evasive, Lord Potter," said Dan.

"Perhaps it would help if you told me what, specifically, you wanted to know?"

"Okay, then," he said. "Just how close were you and our daughter?"

"What happened in that timeline is irrelevant to this one, Sir," responded Harry. "But, we were close."

Before Dan could ask his next question, Harry went on. "There are certain events I know are going to happen because the people involved, irrespective of what else is going on at the time, will still make them happen.

"For instance, I know that a red-headed boy our age named Ron Weasley, is going to come looking for us on the train. And that, once in the same compartment as us, is going to try to convince me that I should really want to go into Gryffindor House, and that those who go into Slytherin

are all evil. I also know that a boy our age named Draco Malfoy will have been sent by his father to find me and try to get me to go into Slytherin, and that Ron will insult him.

"I know that Dumbledore will come across as the kindly old man who calls me 'Harry-my-boy' but, while talking to everyone else, will refer to them as Mister Weasley or Miss Granger. Another one of his little subtleties of getting me to adore him as the grandfather I never had.

"But, things that haven't been put into play, specifically, are more likely to not occur than to actually occur, since I've already made such a major change to the timeline, just by getting all the heirs together and 'ringed' early. Things that happened in either of the other two timelines, unless they're major events, especially the further ahead in time from when I first visited the Prime Minister, are very unlikely to happen this time."

"Well, I'm talking about a major event," pursued Dan. "What ended up happening between you and our daughter after what you told us happened while we were all at the palace?"

Harry sat for quite a while just looking between Dan and Emma and his tea cup. He hoped for something to happen that would derail the conversation. It didn't. And both Grangers were well prepared to wait him out. He could see it in their expressions and in their eyes.

Eventually, Harry sighed and softly said, "We were married."

After what felt like an eternity to Harry, Dan spoke again.

"When?" he quietly asked.

"Sunday, 12th June 2005, at 2.00pm."

"So, Hermione was twenty five and you were twenty four," said Emma, equally quietly. "Was it a beautiful wedding?"

Harry nodded and said, "All the more so because of the beauty of the bride."

"We thought there was something more," said Emma. "The way you cut off your story, that way at the palace. The way you call Hermione, 'Mione. The way you've gone out of your way to make us happy and relaxed, far more than could be expected of you. The way you treat us like very old friends. Just all the little things you do."

"For me, as well as those points," said Dan, "it was how you knew Hermione had no friends at her public school - and don't tell me you didn't know that, how she can lose herself into a book, how she was - as you called her - an information sponge, and just tonight how you knew she had a favourite chair in which she'd sit and read."

"But, I think it was the gift of these magic mirrors you gave us tonight, that cinched it for us," continued Emma. "You knew you didn't have to do that, you knew we'd have never known it could be done, yet you also knew we'd miss our daughter very much while she was away, and that she'd miss us. So, you made it seem like what you created was an... accidental by-product. And I don't... we don't... believe for a second it was."

"While all that may be true," said Harry quietly, "and I'm not admitting for one second it is, this is still a whole new timeline. Too much has already changed between and to us four heirs, let alone any other characters, for things to turn out the same as they originally did."

"No. She is never to know. If we find ourselves becoming romantically close again, it will be because she didn't know it's what we were fated to be. She must have free agency that's not... corrupted... by the knowledge of what should have been; the right to make her own choices; the right to decide her own path. This bloody prophecy has stolen enough choice from us all. I... we... will not take that one, too."

"Harry; you're not seeing it, because you don't want to see it," replied

Emma with a sigh. "You already love her. We know that. It's reflected in everything you do relating to her, and everything you say to her. It's what started us thinking about and finding the clues.

"But, she's also already falling in love with you. Her hopping into your lap and cuddling, her playful slaps, and that she's willing to lose an argument to you so readily. These are not things she would do with anyone else, even her parents, or favourite uncle."

"Face it, Harry," said Dan. "You are going to be our son-in-law. And probably much earlier than 2005, this time around."

With her eyes sparkling, Emma sat up straight and, changing the subject, said, "Well. I think we've embarrassed the boy enough, Daniel. If you don't get upstairs soon, Hermione is going to come back down here looking for you both."

Setting his cup down Dan said, "Well, come on, lad." And headed for the stairs.

Harry quickly drained the cold dregs of tea from his cup and followed.

# # #

Now that he had implemented a way for all the major players involved in getting things up and running to communicate with each other, Harry felt he didn't have to spend so much time running from place to place to coordinate things.

Last night, after returning to the palace, he phoenix-flashed to Sir David's office and left him on his desk mirror #8, together with instructions on how it worked and how to use it. This morning he left mirror #10 with Michael with the same instructions. He'd have Michael hold it until he moved out, and then have Michael give it to the Queen's personal secretary.

This morning he was headed to New Scotland Yard to see Sir Anthony.

Harry apparated under a Disillusionment Charm with his glamour on about a block and a half away from the building and, as he walked towards Broadway, he allowed the Disillusionment Charm to fade away. Entering the building he approached the receptionist and used the same guise to be escorted by a young Woman Constable up to Sir Anthony's office.

On entering, Harry closed the door and dropped his glamour.

Sir Anthony, surprised at first at not knowing his guest, was further surprised when the young adult man in front of him suddenly changed to the boy he met at the palace.

"Damn!" exclaimed Sir Anthony. "I've never seen anything like that!"

"Just one of the things magicals can do," said Harry with a little shrug.

Reaching into his satchel he then drew out the last mirror, except for the two spares, mirror #9.

Offering it to Sir Anthony, he said, "This will allow you to contact me directly, plus the people on this list," and offered the slip of parchment with same list as he'd given the others.

He went on to explain how the device worked, and that the wand was fully charged for many, many uses. He also explained how to have it recharged.

Holding the device in his hands, Sir Anthony said, "This will make things a hell of a lot easier. And, you're saying the connection between them is secure?"

"Yes," replied Harry. "They're linked in a way no one else can intercept the signal. That's mainly because there isn't actually a signal to intercept. It has to do with what's known as the law of contagion and the theory of quantum entanglement. Physicists of today have not yet reached the stage where they know such things exist, only the theory behind it."

"Damn!" said Sir Anthony again.

Harry then asked, "Now, you wanted to see me?"

Putting the device aside, the head of the Metropolitan Police Service said,

"Yes. I wanted to see if there was a way my people could deal with your witches and wizards, if they need to."

Shaking his head Harry said, "Sorry, no. Using the same sort of magics I showed you at the palace and here, wizarding folk can easily evade or escape capture by non-magicals. Non-magicals simply don't have the ability to hold them.

"What I recommend is that, if you strongly suspect a magical is involved in or committed a crime, you contact Madam Bones on mirror number six. Her people know what they're doing and how to deal with them."

"But you believe I probably have wizards and witches serving within the service?" asked Sir Anthony.

"Yes, Sir," replied Harry. "It's the sort of occupation magicals, who cannot find employment within the wizarding community, gravitate towards when they re-enter the mundane world. I'm in the process of working with Madam Bones to get a list of names and ages of magical folk who entered Hogwarts, graduated and have since been suspected of leaving the wizarding world. When she has it, she'll be sending a copy to Sir David."

"That would make the search that much easier," mused Sir Anthony. "It'll also make talking to them and getting them to admit they're qualified witches or wizards that much easier."

"Just be aware, Sir," said Harry, "that they won't be schooled in magical combat or policing. The two are significantly different to their mundane counterparts."

"Noted," said Sir Anthony.

"However," furthered Harry. "Once I've managed to smack around the leadership within the wizarding world, I believe Madam Bones and her Aurors will be able to play both a supporting role in your policing, and train those magicals within your own service up to Auror standard. That should then have your people knowing what to look for, and a method of dealing with magical criminals."

"Thank you, My Lord," replied Sir Anthony. "That would be a huge help."

"Is there anything else where I may be of assistance?" asked Harry.

"No," the older man replied. "You've been a great help."

"Excellent," stated Harry. "If you can think of anything else where I may be able to help, you now have a way of contacting me, direct."

Harry, changing the subject, said, "Now, Sir, I have a favour to ask."

"Oh?" replied Sir Anthony.

"I would like you to pass on to me the name of any of the magicals you manage to track down who is a qualified electrician, and another who is a qualified plumber," explained Harry. "I own a manor house about six miles northwest of Hastings down near the south coast. It doesn't have electricity nor is it connected to the water scheme. I'd like to rectify that."

"However, I also don't want them to know my name. I just need the work done quietly so no one in the magical community knows where I'm located. It's my safe house and I want to keep its location secret under operational security."

Sir Anthony thought on that for a moment before saying, "If we cannot find such people, I'm sure Sir David and I can figure out a way to get it done for you," he said. "And I understand the need for operational security on this."

"Thank you, Sir," replied Harry. "Then, if there's nothing else, I have an appointment elsewhere."

Sir Anthony rose and walked around his desk while Harry stood.

"Thank you, once again, My Lord," said Sir Anthony, offering his hand.

Harry took it and said, "My pleasure."

Harry then walked a little apart from the man, redonned his glamour and disappeared away.

He left behind a thoroughly gobsmacked head of New Scotland Yard.

# # #

Harry appeared in Diagon Alley at the apparation point and headed down the alley towards a set of offices. Amelia had contacted him and let him know the name and address of a reputable and trustworthy solicitor. He was heading to the man's office now to make an appointment in person. Climbing the stairs to the offices above the shop fronts he entered the door marked Tobias Oswald Doge, Solicitor. He was the younger brother of Elphias Doge who sat upon the Wizengamot.

Entering, he was greeted by a receptionist he also knew to be Doge's apprentice and paralegal.

"Good morning," he said to her. "I wonder if I may be able to have a few minutes of Mr Doge's time on a legal matter."

"Certainly, Sir," she replied. "I'll see if he can take visitors at the moment."

She rose from behind her desk and, knocking once, walked in to the office off to the side.

A moment later she returned and, holding the door open, said, "Mr Doge will see you now, Sir."

Harry walked in to be greeted by a slight man with laugh wrinkles around his eyes, a ready smile, and eyes that bored into you.

"Good morning, Sir," he said, offering Harry a chair facing his desk. "How may I assist you today?"

"Your name was recommended to me, Sir," Harry began, "by a lady whom

I hold in the utmost respect, who said I should secure your legal services on a matter that may bring great embarrassment to the Ministry and Wizengamot. It will be a very public issue and will, I've no doubt, garner much press and publicity. Do you feel yourself capable of such an undertaking?"

Doge looked back, obviously contemplating the matter, and said, "I would relish such an undertaking. You're no doubt aware my older brother sits upon the Wizengamot and are concerned I may be... uncomfortable... in being involved in a matter that may make him uncomfortable."

"That, Sir, is a major concern, yes," replied Harry. "But there's also the matter of media attention."

"I've dealt with those carrion before, Sir," he said. "I look forward to another opportunity to... pin their feathers back."

Harry smiled. He could see this man was both no one to trifle with and obviously very confident in his own skills.

"I'm happy to hear that, Sir," said Harry. "And in that case, I need your services to ensure a man, whom I know to be innocent of a crime, is properly represented in court."

"And who might this man be?" asked Doge.

"Sirius Orion Black," replied Harry.

Doge sat back in surprise.

"As you would no doubt know he is currently residing in Azkaban prison. What you do not know, because I don't believe you would have stood for it if you did, is that he never received a trial."

"He what?" Doge exclaimed in a near bellow.

"He did not receive a trial, Sir," Harry said flatly. "The then head of the DMLE, Barty Crouch Senior, under the orders of the then Minister,

Millicent Bagnold, just threw him into Azkaban. There was no questioning, let alone under Veritaserum, no interviewing of witnesses, no record of evidence, not even a notice of conviction."

"That's... that's... abominable!" blurted Doge. "How dare they! It's... criminal!"

"Indeed, Sir," replied Harry. "The man deserves a trial, with Veritaserum to confirm his innocence, and I want it done as quickly as possible."

"Yes, yes," Doge sat musingly. Harry could see the man's mind already planning his case.

"Further, Sir," continued Harry. "You may find the current Head of the DMLE, Madam Amelia Bones, very... amenable... in providing the records to assist you in defending the case."

"Oh?" asked Doge. But before Harry could respond, Doge suddenly said, "Ah!" Harry could see he got it.

"It's been almost ten years since Black was locked away," said Harry firmly. "The Ministry and Wizengamot have no excuse, no excuse, for not rectifying the situation before now."

"No, Sir, they do not!" said Doge equally firmly.

"Then can I rely on you, Mr Doge, to ensure this matter is brought before the Wizengamot with all haste?" asked Harry. "And that Mr Black, or Lord Black as he should be by now since the death of his grandfather, is quickly given the trial he deserves?"

"Yes, Sir. You may," said Doge.

"In that case, Mr Doge, allow me to provide you with a retainer for your services," said Harry drawing out a stack of galleons from his satchel and placing them upon the desk. "I hope this will be suitable for now?"

"That is more than sufficient, Sir," replied Doge nodding firmly.

"For now," Harry went on, "I wish to remain anonymous in this matter.

However, you may inform the presumptive Lord Black, Sirius Orion Black, that his... benefactor... is Prong's Son; and that he knows he's innocent. He'll understand."

"And if I need to contact you, Sir?" asked Doge.

"You may do so through Madam Augusta Longbottom. She'll be able to contact me quite quickly. However, at the moment, I'm constantly on the move," replied Harry.

"Understood, Sir," said Doge.

"Thank you for your time, Mr Doge," said Harry rising. "And good hunting."

Also rising, and offering his hand, Doge said, "It will be my pleasure, Sir. It will be my honour to free a man unjustly imprisoned in that hell hole." Harry shook the man's hand and quickly left.

'Okay, Sirius,' thought Harry, walking towards Gringotts. 'I hope you're ready for this.'

# # #

In Gringotts, Harry awaited a free teller. Once one became available he quickly flashed his ring and asked to speak with Account Manager Blockrig.

Once in a private interview room he waited only a few moments before Blockrig came in with the account book for the Potter accounts.

\*Greetings, Blockrig,\* said Harry in gobbledegook. \*I trust your enemies still run in fear of your presence?\*

\*Those not yet suitably dealt with, yes, My Lord,\* the old goblin said with a shark-like smile.

Switching to English he continued, "How may I be of service today?"

"I have retained a solicitor to assist in the release of Sirius Orion Black, Mr Tobias Oswald Doge, solicitor at law here in the Alley," said Harry.

"Things are moving apace and I would like of you to create a method by which Mr Doge may be paid for his services without such payment being traced back to me."

"This can easily be done, My Lord," replied the old goblin. "We shall send a goblin from the bank to Mr Doge's offices to act as your representative in providing him payment for his services. He will not be aware of who is providing such payment."

Nodding, Harry said, "Excellent. You may also inform the Account Keeper for the Black fortune that the Lord Apparent of the House of Black will soon, finally, have his day in court. I anticipate his exoneration on all charges."

"That is kind of you to allow me to do that, my Lord," said Blockrig. "We goblins may be able to add our own authority to your cause in this. It will bear some thought."

Hesitating a moment, the old goblin asked, "I mean no disrespect with my presumptuousness, My Lord; but if I may, I take it this is part of your destruction of Albus Dumbledore?"

"I don't mind you asking any question of me, Blockrig. I, of course, will reserve the right to answer," replied Harry, and the old goblin acknowledged with a bow. "However, you are, indeed, correct. Albus Dumbledore was the one who cast the Fidelius Charm on the Potter cottage in Godric's Hollow. As such he knows the Secret Keeper was Peter Pettigrew, not Sirius Black. As such, he knows Black could not have led Voldemort to the Potter cottage.

"I believe there will be a fair number of questions asked of Dumbledore as to why he has not come forward with that information over the past nine and a half years. Information which would have meant Black would not have been incarcerated. Information which would have meant

Pettigrew would not have been posthumously awarded the Order of Merlin.

"Albus Dumbledore is going to have to do a lot of legal dancing and calling in of favours to escape from this sticky situation. His reputation will have suffered its first blow."

Blockrig thought carefully on what to say next. He eventually said, "I believe I will enjoy watching the slow destruction of Albus Dumbledore. I thank you for allowing me to be a part."

"You are quite welcome, friend goblin," said Harry smiling. "And when his destruction is complete, I hope you will join me in a small glass of firewhiskey to celebrate the event."

"It would be my honour, My Lord," the goblin replied with a nasty smile.

"Now, I'd also like to set up an account in a mundane, muggle, bank under a false name - say, Harry Black - and I want to transfer about fifty thousand pounds into that account. On the account I'd also like a credit card attached to it. Can this be done?" asked Harry.

"Certainly, My Lord," replied Blockrig. "We've done this in the past for other clients. I will have the credit card and account details available for you tomorrow afternoon, if this is suitable?"

"Perfectly suitable," said Harry.

The goblin made a few notes.

"Then, until next time, Blockrig," said Harry before switching to gobbledegook. \*May your vaults overflow with gold taken from your enemies; and your enemies beg for their lives as they taste the edge of your blade.\*

\*And may our business see much profit for us both; and our enemies be no more,\* responded Blockrig, before escorting Harry back to the main floor.

# # #

After Harry left, Blockrig went up to see the Director.

Knocking on the door he was bid to enter. He waited on his feet before Director Ragnock's desk.

\*Yes, Blockrig?\* Ragnock asked the old goblin.

\*Young Lord Potter has just been in to see me. He has began his plan to bring down wizard Dumbledore,\* replied Blockrig.

\*Ah!\* said Ragnock. \*So, the 'Bringer of Goblin Salvation' has begun his work earlier than expected. That is good news, indeed.\*

\*He has also asked me to convey a message to the Account Keeper of the Black accounts informing him the new Lord Black will soon be free,\* said Blockrig.

\*Interesting,\* said Ragnock. \*Is that all?\*

\*Yes, Director,\* replied Blockrig.

\*Then do it,\* instructed Ragnock. \*You may go.\*

Blockrig bowed and left the office. He was pleased he would live to see, and be allowed to play a part in, seeing the goblin nation raised to a status equal to the human witches and wizards.

# # #

Harry then went back out through the Leaky Cauldron into mundane London to do a bit more shopping.

He bought a nice ladies broach, a girl's hair clip and a men's lapel pin.

These would make excellent emergency portkeys for the Grangers. And he bought a little statue of an Irish Wolfhound for Sirius that he'd also be setting up as a portkey.

He also bought a collection of a dozen various key chains. These he'd make into portkeys for certain people to allow them to enter Potter Manor.

On returning to Diagon Alley, Harry returned to just outside the gate of Potter Manor via the apparation point as he wanted to fix the wards on the property. He worked hard to sort them out, removing ones he felt no longer applied, and replacing them with his own choices.

One of the changes he made was to remove the floo block and set it to have a new floo address installed. He made note of the address for later addition to the floo network. He also adjusted the wards so any inbound portkey he made would be able to pass through them. Any inbound portkeys that he didn't make would immediately 'bounce' the portkey users into the ocean about seven miles to the south. However, he left them open for anyone to portkey out, no matter who made it.

He then set the apparation wards to allow anyone to apparate out but only he could apparate directly into the manor, including if he had someone side-along with him. Anyone else would have to apparate to a certain point just outside of the gate to the property or find themselves also in the ocean.

Next, he set about planting runes carved into stone in a circle well outside the wards that rendered temporary Anti-Apparation and Anti-Portkey Charms ineffective. He had learned from the last war that the Death Eaters had a nasty habit of setting them up just before they attacked a building. He would not allow himself, or anyone under his care, to be so trapped if the bag guys ever came at Potter Manor.

Once he'd done that he entered the house and began the process of setting up the Grangers' emergency portkeys. They would bring them here, to the manor. He also explained what he was doing to Pixie, as he didn't want her to worry if people suddenly arrived in the parlour via portkey.

And he wanted her to make anyone who arrived by such a method

welcome in his home. They would be his honoured guests.

He then dropped the portkeys for entering the manor into his satchel, to be handed out later.

And, finally, he left hundreds of Pounds in currency, so that Pixie could 'shop' for other groceries if guests did arrive. He knew that the elves actually entered the shops and removed the groceries they needed but would leave the money as payment. They actually had a pretty good grasp of the currency of the United Kingdom and knew how to pay for what they took. Most owners of house elves didn't know that.

"Okay, Pixie," said Harry, calling the little elf to him. "I have to head out again. And, again, I don't know when I'll be able to come back. In a few days I'm expecting to send someone in using a portkey. His name is Sirius, and I'm pretty sure you'll know him from when Master James and Miss Lily lived here. Please make him welcome and treat him as an honoured guest. Okay?"

"Okay, Master Harry, Sir!" replied Pixie. "Pixie like Mister Sirius. He nice."

"Thank you, Pixie," he said.

Now Sirius had a safe house and somewhere to recuperate.

# # #

Harry headed back to the palace to recuperate after a busy morning and early afternoon.

Though he was late for lunch, Michael organised an afternoon tea for him of quarter-cut sandwiches and tea.

But, before Michael left again, Harry showed him mirror #10 and how it worked.

"You can use it to contact me, if I'm needed back here at any time," explained Harry. "Once I depart for other digs, I'll ask you to hand it off to one of Her Majesty's personal staff who can hold it for Her. That way,

if Her Majesty needs to see me, she'll quickly be able to contact me."

"Very good, My Lord," said Michael. "And, might I say, what a clever little invention. I only wish we mundanes had technology that could match this."

"You will, in a couple of years," replied Harry. "Mobile telephones you can carry in your pocket will become all the rage over the next few years. However, they're going to be voice only for at least the next couple of decades."

Michael took his leave, leaving the mirror communications device within the room for when he'd need it. Outside, he chuckled over the imagination of boys. 'Mobile telephones, indeed,' he thought.

Harry sat back and enjoyed his sandwiches and tea while watching some more news on the television. After sating the hunger beast he laid his head back, just thinking of what he'd accomplished and what he still had to do, when his own mirror started vibrating and buzzing.

Taking it out of his pocket and flipping it open he was met by the somewhat frazzled appearance of Amelia.

"Come to the Ossuary, now!" she half-begged, half-ordered.

"Okay, I'll be there in a few minutes," replied Harry.

Flipping the mirror shut, he looked around to make sure he had everything he needed. With a shrug he picked up the two spare communication mirrors and stuffed them into his satchel. He flashed out of the palace directly to the path outside the Ossuary and changed back to his normal form. Looking around with wizard eyes he saw the rune that allowed the Bones Manor to be visible, activated it and walked up to the door.

He knocked on the door and, as soon as it opened, Amelia grabbed him and dragged him inside.

"You've got to talk to her and make her stop!" she pleaded.

"Make who stop what?" asked Harry, quite confused.

"Susan!" begged Amelia. "She keeps floeing and mirroring me to tell me I'm not doing my job right, that I should arrest this person or that, and other stuff. It's driving me insane!"

"Okay, Ma'am," sighed Harry. "Call her into the parlour and I'll have a talk with her."

Amelia almost ran to find Susan and send her to talk to Harry.

He should have realised, he thought. The third cube had wizarding law and the rules of logic on it. Susan was accessing her new knowledge and, because she was such a good kid, was trying to help her aunt with it.

Harry walked into the parlour and sat in one of the chairs near the fireplace.

When Susan entered the room, followed by her aunt, Harry pointed to the chair opposite his own and said, "Sit!"

Susan stood just inside the room, huffed, crossed her arms with a pout, and said, "That's not how you should address me, My Lord!"

"Susan, we're friends. Friends don't stand on formal protocols. I need to talk to you in a comfortable setting," he explained, before again pointing to the indicated seat. "Now, please, sit."

Susan walked across the room and plonked herself into the indicated chair and, once again, folded her arms and pouted.

"Thank you," said Harry patiently.

"Now, what's this I hear from your aunt about you harassing her at work?"

Susan launched into a rant about all the problems she saw with wizarding law and the injustices of it all, and about laws that had been broken by various members of the wizarding community and they should

be dealt with.

Harry let her go on for a while before he held up his hand and said,

"Okay, enough."

Susan's rant petered off and she glared back with her arms, once more, folded.

"I know there are problems, and I know there are people who have managed to escape justice," explained Harry. "I know what you're talking about because they're my memories, remember?"

"Yeah, I know," she said in that manner all young girls knew.

"Well, your aunt is currently doing very important work to help get my godfather out of Azkaban, she's also probably already had my godfather's lawyer already knocking on her door," explained Harry before glancing at Amelia.

Amelia nodded.

Turning back to Susan, he went on to say, "And part of that means your aunt needs to tread very carefully between the requirements of the law and keeping certain other people unaware of what's going on so that they don't try and stop her. She needs to be able to concentrate because it's not just a matter of law she has to deal with, it's also politics.

Understand?"

Susan grudgingly nodded.

"Plus, your aunt is trying to ensure Dumbledore, her previous boss and the previous Minister don't skate away free from the charges that'll be filed against them for their part in my godfather's incarceration. The resulting political storm that is about to descend upon the wizarding world, and the embarrassment it'll cause to the Ministry and the Wizengamot, will need to be handled very carefully. Understand?"

Again, Susan grudgingly nodded.

"Good. Because you're currently distracting your aunt from being able to do her job to the best of her ability, while also avoiding allowing anyone to escape being fingered for the crimes actually committed. We need you to stop distracting her."

"But there's just so much wrong that needs to be fixed!" Susan shot back. "I know," replied Harry. "And all four of us are going to fix them, just not now."

"So, I'm just supposed to keep my mouth shut until then?" she demanded.

"No," Harry patiently answered. "Instead, what I want you to do is go through that knowledge of the law you now have; get a stack of parchment, a couple of quills and some ink; and start making a list of what needs to be changed. Use the rules of logic that you also received last night to put them in some semblance of order that we can then send to Her Majesty's legal team she's assembling to deal with them.

Harry thought for a bit and said, "Anyone want to come with?"

"Actually, scratch that," he said, suddenly coming up with another idea.

"It's pointless us having to rewrite everything just so it can be rewritten properly. I'm going to the Ministry and demanding a copy of every wizarding world law. It'll make it easier, I bet. Then, go through them and ready them for sending to Her Majesty's legal boffins for their review. I'm sure Her Majesty will want her people going over them as soon as possible.

"In the meantime, start looking through your magical law library and find when the Wizengamot began to stop sending the laws to Her Majesty for ratification. That'll be your chronological starting point. But, also remember, she wants the discrimination in the laws removed first.

"If you need to talk to someone about it, mirror Hermione and Neville. They have the same knowledge, remember? And you can bounce ideas

off each other."

"Yeah, I guess," replied a much subdued Susan.

"Good. And if you promise me, now, you won't bother your aunt unless it's an actual emergency - because I know she doesn't mind you contacting her for that - then I'll tell you something you can learn that's really fun," said Harry, baiting the hook.

"Fun?" asked Susan, now quite interested.

"Uh-hmm," said Harry.

"Okay, okay! I promise!" said Susan in that rolling-the-eyes manner young girls had the world over.

"Good. And I'm going to hold you to that," he said.

Then, leaning back, he asked her, "You remember at the palace how I changed into my animagus form?"

"Yeah..." she said carefully.

"Well, you can learn to do that to," he said brightly.

"I can?" she asked, perking up. "How?"

"All it takes to learn what form your animagus will take is to meditate on it," he explained. "You need to go into a meditative state and let your mind run free and seek it. Merlin will help.

"However, it can take some time. You may or may not discover it before we go to Hogwarts, and it doesn't mean anything if you discover it sooner or later. Each person is different.

"However," Harry said, leaning forward again and holding up a finger, "don't let me hear you've also spent too long meditating at one time and haven't looked after yourself by not eating or caring for yourself. Okay?"

"Okay, Harry," Susan answered with a bit of eagerness.

"Thank you," said Harry with graciousness. "Now I need to talk with your aunt."

"Okay, bye!" said Susan hurrying out of the room.

Amelia then came forward from where she was standing over by the door and sat in the chair just vacated by her niece.

She sighed and said, "Thank you."

Harry chuckled and said, "You're welcome, Ma'am. I had a similar issue with Hermione yesterday about mundane law. She went off at the specialists from MI5 about building code violations and breaches of privacy and a few others while they were trying to install the mundane security systems into the Granger house."

Amelia lightly laughed and said, "I bet that must have been fun for them."

Harry grinned back and said, "These are highly trained men who go into highly dangerous situations, and are trained to deal with things that go bump in the night that normal folks don't want to know about, and would probably give them nightmares if they did. She had them absolutely cowering.

"Think of someone like Alistor Moody and Kingsley Shacklebolt cringing and pleading to you, 'Please, Ma'am; make her stop!'" he explained.

Amelia couldn't help it. She burst out laughing.

"Now, as the Head of the DMLE, I think you should know what sort of man Dan Granger is. And I hope you'll keep what I tell you in the strictest confidence," said Harry.

Amelia had calmed down and nodded in response.

"Dan was... is again, now.. a member of a very elite force of men in Her Majesty's British Army called the SAS. It stands for Special Air Service. Even more, he's a high ranking officer in that service," he explained. "The SAS are normally tasked with dealing with situations where the normal army or the police are ill-equipped or trained to handle.

"They are often inserted deep into hostile territory behind enemy lines.

Once there they are like black ghosts. They move through the enemy leaving death and destruction behind them. More often than not whole units will be taken out by them and barely a sound will indicate their presence, if any at all. And it is very rare that one of their own numbers will be lost in the process.

"They are also the go-to men in hostage situations. They know how to get in, free the hostages and kill all the bad guys with as minimal a loss to life, except the bad guys, as possible. They will do all that calmly, efficiently and expeditiously. They are that good.

"However, even Dan was frazzled when Hermione went on her rant at the MI5 boys. When I turned up there on a hunch yesterday afternoon, Dan grabbed me before I could even give the password - just as you did today - pinned me up against the wall, and barked at me, 'You broke it, you fix it', before flinging me into their lounge room."

Amelia just about roared with laughter.

Harry waited until she'd calmed down a bit and said, "For grown adult men, pre-teen girls on a rant are the most terrifying of things. No one has ever taught them how to deal with them. They'd rather face in battle a highly trained squad of enemy than face off against an angry little girl."

Amelia couldn't help it. As Harry talked she just laughed harder and harder. By the time she managed to get herself back under control she had a ruddy complexion and tears running down her cheeks.

"Now," said Harry gleefully, "think about what's going to happen when Susan and Hermione - armed with the extensive and intensive knowledge they'll have of law, traditions, strategy, politics and diplomacy - get together on the Wizengamot, and tag team those old men who are nothing more than arrogant, overweening cretins who think they know, and are above, the law. Those two girls are going to send them

whimpering for their mummies. And, if the old fools try and insult them or belittle them, they'll have Neville and me - armed with masteries in wandless and wand based magic, duelling expertise, strategy, tactics and traditions - to call them onto the duelling piste for their arrogance, insufferability and insulting behaviour."

"Oh, Merlin!" exclaimed Amelia, still calming down from laughing so hard. "They don't stand a chance!"

"That's the whole idea, Ma'am," Harry quietly responded. "As best as Merlin and I could do in the time we had, all four of us will be as much an unopposable and unassailable force, as we could make it. I intend for us four to save the wizarding world in Britain, Ma'am. Whether the wizarding world likes it or not."

"And I'm going to be there watching it happen," said Amelia with wonder.

"Mmmm. Changing the subject," said Harry. "I take it Mr Doge has already been in to see you?"

Sitting up straighter and leaning forward, Amelia replied, "Yes. He was in my office just before I had to come back here. That man is positively relishing the idea of giving his brother a legal black eye, and making life interesting for the other members of the Wizengamot and the Ministry."

Harry nodded and said, "We'll need to prepare Madam Longbottom to keep going after the issue of why Dumbles didn't speak up about who the real Secret Keeper was these past nine and a half years. The more she can do that, the more she can keep him on his toes, the less time he has to worry about... other matters."

"Gus... Madam Longbottom... knows her role only too well," she replied with a smirk.

Harry nodded and said, "I really didn't expect any less of her. I don't expect anyone to be charged over the matter, except maybe Millicent

Bagnold and Barty Crouch Senior if we're lucky. But, as long as Dumbledore is off balance and he receives a black mark in the papers against his name, that should give you the opening to get Aurors into Hogwarts when we call for them. Dumbledore won't be able to oppose it."

"You really want to destroy the man, don't you?" she asked.

"It's the only way, Ma'am," he replied. "We've got to get the people to lose complete faith in him, to get them to stop blindly following him."

"Yes, well," she said changing the subject again and preparing to rise.

"I've got to get back to work if I'm to get everything else sorted out before your godfather's trial."

Harry rose and asked, "Any idea when that's likely to be?"

"The way things are moving, either tomorrow afternoon or the next morning," she answered.

"Thank you, Ma'am," said Harry sincerely. "This means the world to me."

After a few more minutes of idle chat, he walked to the fireplace, activated his Henry Black persona disguise and activated the floo. "The Ministry!" he cried. Then stepped into the green flame and was gone.

# # #

Moments later he appeared in the atrium in the Ministry. He quickly made his way to the office containing a copy of all the laws of wizarding Britain.

Walking up to the counter, he said to the bored looking witch, "Hello, I need a copy of the laws, please."

She looked up and asked, "Which ones?"

"All of them!"

She blinked, hesitated a moment, and asked, "No, I mean which set of laws?"

Harry replied, "And I said, all of them."

Shocked, she carefully asked, "Ummm... You want a copy of... all... the laws of magical Britain?"

"Yes, please," said Harry.

"Ummm..." she stuttered. "To... How far back?"

Harry sighed and said, "I said... All of them!"

"Y... Yes... Sir," the young lady replied. "It... It's going to take a while."

Harry said, "I know. I'll be back tomorrow morning for them. I have other business to attend."

She replied, "Y.. Yes, Sir. It'll be... I don't know how many galleons... to have all that printed for you."

"That's quite all right," said Harry. "Just get it done... fast."

# # #

Returning back to the palace, Harry sighed and relaxed back on the couch in his quarters. He wondered what the next mini-catastrophe was going to be that would bite him on the butt.

He mentally reviewed the next few cubes to see if they triggered the sort of behaviour he now had from, first Hermione yesterday, and now Susan today. Traditions, ceremonies, courtly behaviour, ethics and morality tonight. Then three days of the sciences and medicine. There shouldn't be anything there that'll cause a similar reaction in any of the other three.

Sighing, he thought he might be able to enjoy a day of leisure tomorrow if Sirius's trial was the next morning.

After an evening meal from the palace kitchens alone in his suite, Harry thought to take a stroll outside. To save returning to his suite he took his ever-present satchel with him.

Once more donning his glamour, this time in a more relaxed dress of a polo shirt and light slacks with casual dress shoes, and his satchel looking like a tourist's bag, Harry flashed over to St James Park. Walking out

from amongst the trees he just strolled along the walking trail path, as did many Londoners, enjoying the summer weather.

Later in the evening he visited the other Heirs and gave them the next cube. And, once more stopping with the Grangers, he gave them the emergency portkeys that would take them straight to Potter Manor.

"They're the ultimate safe room," said Harry. "You just grip it in either hand and say, 'Activate!' It'll take you straight there depositing you in the parlour. Once there, you'll be behind the strongest wards I could devise.

"However, its only one-way. Once you go, you can't be brought back using the same item. And you can contact me on the mirrors to let me know you've had to use them. You'll get a rough ride and it means sacrificing your home, temporarily at least, until an attack is repelled.

But you'll be safe.

"I haven't told anyone else you have them, not even Madam Bones, who should be coming around soon to set up the magical wards for this place.

"In the meantime, you can handle them to put them on and take them off. Just don't think of the activation phrase while you're handling them."

"This is amazing," said Emma, looking down at the brooch in her hand.

Handling it gently, she pinned it to her blouse above her left breast where she could easily grab it with her right hand.

Dan already had his pin adorning his left lapel, and Hermione had her hair clip in her hair.

"Well, you're now safe so long as you have a couple of seconds warning," explained Harry. "Once Madam Bones sets up her wards, you'll definitely have at least that much time."

Emma stepped forward and, holding Harry's cheeks between her hands, leaned forward and kissed him on the forehead. "You're a good boy, Harry," she said.

# # #

Albus Dumbledore had awoken that morning to a normal day. The letters to those students who were not muggle born and raised were about to start going out. And Hogwarts' owls were all given a clean bill of health by owl experts from the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, so they were all healthy and ready to start delivering the Hogwarts letters.

He already had the Philosopher's Stone from Nicholas Flamel and it was now in his vault at Gringotts. He'd arrange to have it brought to Hogwarts later in the month.

His staff had all already provided him with the curricula for the coming year, and he had signed off on them all, barely even bothering to go over them.

Then, suddenly, that afternoon he had a floo call from that idiot, Fudge, demanding he, the great Albus Dumbledore, see him in his office the next morning; as if he was some common wizard or one of his lackeys.

According to Fudge, someone had discovered Sirius Black had not received a trial before being sent to Azkaban and demanded an immediate trial for the man to rectify the error.

Dumbledore began to make his plans to ensure Black was found guilty and sent straight back there. If he played it right he might even manage to get Black immediately kissed by the dementors. Bribes would need to be paid and favours called in.

# # #

11. Sirius's Good Day

Chapter Eleven - Sirius's Day

# # #

The next morning, Harry was up reasonably early and made his way

direct to the Ministry to collect the copy he purchased of all the laws of magical Britain in written form.

Walking in, there was quite a few witches and wizards who gave him funny looks from the other side of the counter. The witch he spoke to yesterday lifted a clearly shrunken package from under the counter and placed it on top.

"This is all the laws, sir," she said. "They've been put in chronological order and shrunk for your convenience."

"Thank you," said Harry. "How much do I owe you?"

The witch looked a little surprised but said, "That's one hundred and forty two galleons and eleven sickles, Sir."

Harry reached into his money pouch and easily pulled that much out. He placed it on the counter, between them. in stacks of ten; with the 'loose' coins set to the ends of the row.

"Receipt, please," he said.

The witch quickly created a receipt for him as he dropped the package into his satchel. Then, with the receipt following the laws into the satchel, he thanked the witch and left.

He took them back to the palace.

# # #

Late the next morning, Thursday, Harry received word via mirror from Amelia that Mister Doge had been busy. He'd paid for a major advertisement, together with an article, that appeared in that morning's copy of the Daily Prophet. It provided details, at length, of how Sirius never received a trial, how he was the Heir Apparent of perhaps the largest pure blood family in wizarding Britain, and how the Wizengamot and the Ministry had more than enough time to send him to the trial he should have had.

Harry headed straight for Diagon Alley to collect a copy of the Prophet for himself. He took it to the Leaky Cauldron and, sitting down, enjoyed reading both the advertisement and the article over a cup of tea.

The whole matter was the main talk, if not the only talk, up and down the Alley. Journalists were portkeying in from across Europe and from as far afield as the Americas and Africa. There were already as many journalists in the Alley as there were shopkeepers and shoppers combined. Tobias O. Doge was having an absolute field day holding court and regaling journalists with the injustice of it all.

Seeing the size of the media contingent, Harry feared he'd not be able to get in to see the trial for himself. He mirrored Augusta and asked her to arrange a reserved seat for him. He would be attending under the guise of a freelance journalist, not his normal glamour, and he gave Augusta the name 'Joe White' to use.

The trial, though originally scheduled for the next morning, was re-scheduled for that night on the Minister's orders. The Minister claimed he would not allow just one more day to pass before justice was rightfully served. He had also ordered the court room in which the trial was to be held, enlarged to accommodate as many members of the press and public as they could fit in.

Obviously, the Minister was attempting to make the best of a bad situation. If he could, he would try and curry favour of the public through the press.

That made Harry chuckle.

As he had expected, the Minister and the Wizengamot wanted the matter done with. They did not want yet another copy of the Daily Prophet slamming the actions of either before it could be resolved.

'Good,' he thought. 'The less time the Minister and others had in building

a case against Sirius, the better.'

He already knew Doge had everything he needed to win the case. Though she was supposed to be trying the case, Amelia also had her arguments prepared to aid Doge in the matter. And she and Augusta had spent quite some time going over their strategy for seeing Sirius freed.

# # #

Dumbledore was furious. No matter how much he paid in bribes to those idiots on the Wizengamot, and the Minister himself, he was being frustrated at just about every turn.

That morning Fudge demanded he, yet again, come straight to his office. As soon as he'd stepped through the floo Fudge rounded on him immediately.

"Have you see this?" demanded Fudge, waving a copy of that morning's Daily Prophet.

"Of course I've seen it," said Dumbledore calmly, even though he had not. He didn't expect media coverage to occur quite so quickly. This would make it even more difficult to line the pockets of those he knew he could bribe.

"I've already been forced to move the trial from tomorrow morning to tonight!" bellowed the Minister. "I need this ended! This bad press coverage is causing great harm to my plans for re-election, and I won't have it!"

"Calm down, Minister," soothed Dumbledore. "This is the fault of your predecessor, not you. You just need to hold true to ensuring Black is sent back to Azkaban and you'll come out of this as a 'just' Minister. The people will adore you for it."

The Minister grumbled about it but he couldn't fault Dumbledore's logic. If he played it right he'd come out a hero to the people.

"Now," said Dumbledore, "since I'm already here I have people I need to see. So, I'll take my leave."

Without given leave, Dumbledore left the Minister's office in search of those he needed to bribe. He'd brought with him his secret stash of galleons from the Potter boy's vault to make sure the right hands were well and truly greased.

# # #

By late afternoon, early evening, Harry had tried to get in to see Tobias Doge in private, but that was just not possible.

He heard a rumour that Doge had disappeared into the Ministry and was, at that very moment, down in the holding cells talking with his client. He had tried to contact Amelia via mirror but, when she answered, she just said, 'Not now!' and terminated the connection.

He also found out the entire membership of the Wizengamot, except for Dumbledore, was in lockdown where they each found a sanctuary, as they'd all been harassed by the press and interested citizens in trying to find out more information.

Unusually, an evening edition of the Prophet, called the Evening Prophet, was released. Such a thing only ever occurred on matters of great importance to the wizarding world, not a simple trial.

This time there were no advertisements or paid stories appearing from Doge. They were almost all concerning the imminent trial of one Sirius Orion Black. Many of the articles claimed 'unnamed sources' and 'sources who did not want to be named'. And many were based on letters the Prophet had received via owl post from the populace with most decrying the Minister, the Ministry and the Wizengamot for not giving Black a fair trial. Some, however, came out in support of the then Minister and Head of the DMLE for not wasting the court's time for a trial as 'everyone knew

he was guilty'.

# # #

Dumbledore was quite livid. As soon as he left the Minister's office he was besieged by members of the press, both local and international, demanding answers to their questions. He could barely move, due to the crush of bodies around him.

"Out of my way!" he bellowed. "I have important business to conduct!"

But the press just howled louder.

"As the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, our readers want to know how it is possible for this to happen?" he heard.

"Our readers are frightened they may be the next to be thrown in to Azkaban without the right to defend themselves. What assurances can you give them they won't be?" came from another.

"Why wasn't Black questioned about the details of other Death Eaters before he was thrown into Azkaban?" yet another called out.

Frustrated at every turn, he fled the building back to Hogwarts. He needed to get to the other members of the Wizengamot before the trial. But, he couldn't get through to them.

He tried to contact them through the floo network but his calls went unanswered; or were answered only by their underlings who, also, could not get through to their bosses.

'There has to be a way!' he thought.

In anger he hurled a book across the office, smashing a couple of his little monitoring charmed items. He did not even see the official document from the courts that had been left by owl on his desk but was partly obscured under other parchments.

# # #

Returning from the Alley, where he wandered around for a while, Harry

was back at the Leaky Cauldron and trying to enjoy an evening meal before the trial. However, quite a number of the members of the press were trying to do the same thing. And his stomach felt as if it was tied in knots.

Instead, he patiently waited using shallow meditation techniques.

While in the Alley he had been approached no less than five times by journalists who wanted to know his views on the trial. As Harry was still under his glamour and didn't want anyone to know he was there, he simply gave the comment, "I really don't have any views on the trial. I'm only very concerned that our citizens can be hauled off to Azkaban so unjustly."

When asked for his details he said, "I don't want to be threatened for my views, so I don't want you printing that."

Then would say, conspiratorially, "There are suspected Death Eaters on the Wizengamot who might try to do me harm, if they find out who I am."

'Why throw one cat amongst the pigeons when you could almost as easily throw half a dozen?' he thought with a quiet chuckle.

Many of the shops had closed up early for the day. One even had a small sign in the window that read, 'Closed due to being hounded by the press.'

A photographer was outside it taking a photograph of the sign.

# # #

About half an hour before the trial was due to start, Harry ducked in to a quiet spot out of sight and altered his glamour to someone indistinguishable but looking like a journalist.

Then he used the public floo to cross to the atrium in the Wizengamot where he joined hundreds of others. The work day was hours past but the place was still very busy.

Going up to the security gate he gave his name as Joe White and that he was a VIP guest of Madam Augusta Longbottom.

Considering a long list before him, the guard said, "Yes, Sir. May I have your wand, please?"

"Knowing it would likely be confiscated. I did not bring it," replied Harry.

The guard then stepped around his podium and waved a wand around Harry. Satisfied, the guard said, "No wand, but I notice you have a couple of minor magical items in your bag."

"Oh, of course," said Harry, and he held up his bag for inspection.

The guard searched Harry's satchel but, not finding any item he thought of as being offensive weaponry, he handed it back to Harry.

"Thank you for your patience, Sir," the guard said and let Harry through the checkpoint.

As he stepped through he was asked if he was attending the trial by another Ministry employee. Nodding in the affirmative, the employee gave him directions to the courtroom.

On entering through the public entry doors of the enlarged room, he was asked for his details. Giving his name as Joe White, he was immediately guided to a seat one row back from the front in the Visitor's Gallery.

A journalist sitting alongside him asked with a slightly French accent,

"Which paper are you from?"

"I'm a freelancer," replied Harry. "I'm currently here for the The Quibbler."

The journalist looked back in surprise and asked, "That rag? I thought it only covered nonsense."

"Everybody wants an article for their paper on this story," replied Harry with a smile.

Harry could see the man now thought of him as 'no one of importance', so had turned to the person on his other side. Harry was left alone, as he

preferred.

Having dismissed the man he looked out across the floor with its chair with chains already sitting in the middle. Then right across the floor to where the entire Wizengamot would be sitting. There was no one there, yet.

He also knew there were five elaborate chairs currently hiding under the floor outside of detection directly underneath the back row and in the middle of the Wizengamot seats. Directly under where Madam Bones would be sitting as she tried the case.

Looking back down at the chained chair he could also see the wooden disk in the floor that hid the little pedestal and orb with the blood print for the right hand upon it. He and the other three Heirs would be using that to show their authority upon the Wizengamot, and make their oaths. He wondered how long it had been since it was last used. He doubted anyone on the current Wizengamot had ever given their oath before taking their seat, nor even knew the existence of the podium or the five chairs.

The noise inside the courtroom was quite loud as journalists and guests talked amongst themselves. Harry hardly noticed. He was deep in thought.

# # #

Dumbledore was close to mental exhaustion with the amount of concentration and thought he had put into finding a way of getting to certain members of the Wizengamot.

He had discovered nothing. His only option was to get them when they were all together before they entered the courtroom.

Suddenly, the fireplace erupted with the message informing him his presence was immediately required in the Wizengamot antechamber to

hear the case of Sirius Orion Black.

He quickly jumped through.

As he arrived he tried to get the attention of the others he needed to bribe but, as soon as they arrived, they were all called immediately to the courtroom. He had no opportunity to talk to anyone. Except to say, 'Good evening.'

Damn them! His efforts were being blocked at every step, and he didn't even know who was doing it.

# # #

While in the midst of reviewing what he needed to do over the coming days with his head bowed, and what he'd already ticked off his mental to-do list, Harry brought himself out of his contemplative state when the room suddenly hushed.

Looking up, he saw a functionary of the Wizengamot walk out onto the floor.

"Hear ye!" the young man called with a bit of a tremulous voice. "This emergency session of the Wizengamot has been called to hear the case of wizarding Britain versus Sirius Orion Black, relating to events that occurred on the night of the 31st of October 1981, and the days surrounding it, in the village of Godric's Hollow! Please stand and be silent!"

As the young man walked away between the public gallery and the Wizengamot seats, the full Wizengamot entered the chamber and took their seats.

Harry noticed both Amelia and Augusta had stacks of files tucked under their arms. And it also appeared only one member was missing.

He also had his first opportunity to see Dumbledore in the flesh as the old man took his seat in the senior chair of the warlock section. He didn't

look happy. And Harry couldn't have been happier to see it.

He was surprised, however, to see the Minister was quite calm and smiling. The Minister even took the opportunity to wave to those gathered in the visitor section. A couple of photographers took photos before they were immediately ordered to stop or have their cameras confiscated.

'Hmm, interesting,' thought Harry.

As the members settled into place, Amelia's voice was heard clearly through magical amplification. "The Wizengamot has been summoned to emergency session to hear the case of wizarding Britain versus Sirius Orion Black, relating to events that occurred on the night of the 31st of October 1981, and the days surrounding it, in the village of Godric's Hollow. Excused from attending is Lord Mulciber, who has taken ill and is currently under protected care at Saint Mungo's.

"Bring in the accused!" she called.

Before Sirius could be brought into the room Dumbledore rose and said, "Madam Bones, I cannot..."

Riding over the top of him, Amelia said, "Chief Warlock Dumbledore, you will have opportunity to speak in due course. Please be seated and hold your tongue!"

Harry heard mutters of surprise erupting around him.

Again, speaking out loud, Amelia said, "Those in the gallery will remain silent or they will be evicted from these proceedings!"

Immediately, silence descended.

Escorted by four Aurors and Tobias Doge, also carrying a stack of parchments, Sirius was brought into the chamber in chains. And was told to sit in the chair. Sirius looked around the room, clearly looking for someone. Harry suspected it was he.

To Harry, Sirius looked haggard and ill. But his eyes were alert and the expression on his face was alive with a mix of curiosity, satisfaction and... smugness.

Before anyone else could say anything, Tobias said, "Madam Bones, I must protest. Mister Black has not been found guilty of any crime and yet he is treated as a criminal by being chained like a beast!"

"Your protest is noted, Mister Doge," she intoned. "However, as Mister Black has been incarcerated almost ten years before being brought to trial, we fear harm to his mental state. To protect him and those around him, we would have him remained secured for now for everyone's safety including his own."

At first, Harry was annoyed they'd leave him chained. But he quickly worked out that Sirius could not be thought a threat if he was chained. No one could suddenly hit him with a curse if it was proven he could not harm anyone.

"Very well," Mister Doge huffed. "Mister Tobias Oswald Doge, solicitor at law, standing for the accused, Ma'am!"

A tall somewhat-elderly man standing off to the side stepped towards the centre of the room and, looking up at Amelia, said, "Master Auror Rufus Scrimgeour standing for the prosecution, Ma'am!"

Harry wondered how much of this was staged. He guessed pretty much all of it was, so far. The comment from Tobias of 'not been found guilty of any charge' and Amelia's 'before being brought to trial' were nice touches.

Looking sternly down upon Sirius, Amelia said, "Sirius Orion Black. You are charged with twelve counts of murder of various muggles, the murder of Peter Pettigrew, conspiracy to commit murder in the murders of James Charlus Potter and Lily Evans-Potter, conspiracy to commit murder in the

attempted murder of Harry James Potter, and being a member of the unlawful organisation known as Death Eaters. How do you plead?"

Harry was a little startled to hear his name mentioned across the floor like that.

Sirius straightened himself up in his chair, chains and all, and said clearly and firmly, "Not guilty of all charges!"

Even louder mutters of surprise erupting around Harry than before.

"Silence!" bellowed Amelia.

'Wow!' thought Harry. 'She's a scary woman, when she wants to be.'

"Aurors!" called Amelia, looking across at the Aurors who were standing at each end of the visitor's gallery. "You are to silence and immediately remove anyone within the visitor's gallery who interrupts the rest of this session!"

Once she had complete silence and control of the courtroom once again, she looked down at Scrimgeour and said, "Very well, Master Scrimgeour, you may start your prosecution."

What followed was Scrimgeour presenting evidence of various witnesses of the event, especially from the only living Auror left who heard Sirius say he'd killed James and Lily.

In response Doge brought in an expert from St Mungo's hospital who had experience with guilt trauma.

Scrimgeour gave a believable account of what he believed happened that night. And Doge tore a lot of it apart.

Arguments and evidence flew back and forth.

Then Scrimgeour said, "I believe I have proven all charges. I now rest my case."

'Proven, my butt,' thought Harry.

"Mister Doge," called Amelia. "You may now start your defence!"

Then came the first very surprising twist.

"Madam," he intoned. "I would have, at this time, called Mister Harry James Potter as my first witness. However, he has not responded to the summons from your office. I would know why."

Harry was shocked to hear that. He didn't expect to hear his own name called to the defence. He suspected his cover was blown.

Sitting back in what looked like feigned surprise, Amelia then got the attention of one of the Aurors on the floor.

"Find out what happened to it," she commanded the young woman.

The young woman bobbed her head and quickly left the room.

'What are they playing at?' wondered Harry.

"In the meantime, Mister Doge," said Amelia. "Perhaps you could move on to the next piece of evidence?"

"Certainly, Madam," he said. "While Mister Potter's testimony may not not have helped my defence of Mister Black, he may have shed light on certain events of that night."

Tobias then had his next two witnesses brought in, Millicent Bagnold and Barty Crouch Snr. Both denied the allegations of that night; and both were dosed with Veritaserum. And the truth was discovered about how Sirius was sent to Azkaban without a trial. Both were led away to cells to have charges laid against both of them after Sirius's trial.

As they each admitted their complicity under Veritaserum a couple of journalists or others had to be led from the gallery, magically bound and gagged by Aurors.

Other journalists were scribbling madly with quills on parchments or had auto-quills running full tilt.

During Barty Crouch Snr's interrogation, and the suppressing of the eruption of noise from the visitors' gallery, the young woman Auror

returned to the room and, ascending the stairs to the top of the Wizengamot seats, made her way to Amelia's side. She handed Amelia a slip of parchment and whispered in her ear before departing.

After Crouch's ignominious departure and silence had, once more, descended upon the courtroom, Amelia looked down at Tobias and said, "You have further evidence to present, Sir?"

"Certainly, Madam," stated Tobias firmly. "At this time I call Sirius Orion Black to the stand."

"He may give evidence from where he is," replied Amelia. "Mister Black, you are aware you may be given Veritaserum?"

"Yes, Madam," replied Sirius. "I welcome it."

Looking surprised, though Harry knew she wasn't, Amelia said, "Very well. Master Scrimgeour, you may proceed."

Scrimgeour stepped forward and Sirius tilted his head back and stuck out his tongue. Scrimgeour dripped three large drops onto Sirius's tongue and stepped back.

After a few moments, he nodded to Amelia.

Tobias then stepped forward and asked, "What is your name?"

"Sirius Orion Black," said Sirius in a whimsical voice.

"Were you friends of James Charlus Potter and Lily Evans-Potter?"

"Yes."

"Was a Fidelius Charm cast upon their home at Godric's Hollow before the night of the 31st of October 1981?"

"Yes."

"Was that Fidelius Charm still active as of the night of the 31st of October 1981?"

"Yes."

"Who cast the Fidelius Charm?"

Dumbledore suddenly jumped to his feet and bellowed, "I object to this line of questioning. I fail to see..."

No one could hear Sirius's response.

Again riding over the top of him, Amelia said, "Chief Warlock Dumbledore, I have already told you, you will have opportunity to speak in due course. Be seated and hold your tongue!"

"I will not be..." tried Dumbledore again.

Yet again riding over the top of him, Amelia bellowed back, "Silence!"

Once Amelia regained control of the room yet again, she looked down at Tobias and said, "You may continue, Mister Doge."

Nodding towards Amelia, Dog then turned back to Sirius and said,

"Again, Mister Black; who cast the Fidelius Charm?"

"Albus Dumbledore."

"Were you the Secret Keeper?"

"No."

"Do you know who the Secret Keeper was?"

"Yes, Peter Pettigrew."

Harry heard a couple more murmurs from the assembled guests and journalists in the visitors' gallery, but it was not enough to see yet more people evicted.

"Did you betray the Potters by bringing the Death Eaters to their cottage in Godric's Hollow?" continued Tobias.

"No."

"Did you kill Peter Pettigrew?"

"No."

Harry heard yet more murmurs from the assembled, but it still wasn't enough to see yet more people evicted.

"Did you kill the muggles of which you have been accused?" continued

Tobias.

"No."

"Do you know who did?"

"Yes, Peter Pettigrew."

Tobias paused for a bit, looking for all the world like he was thinking.

Harry didn't believe it for a minute. He knew the man was using theatrics.

"Do you know what happened to Peter Pettigrew when you last saw him in that street where the muggles were killed?" he continued.

"Yes."

"What happened to him?"

"He changed into his animagus form of a common brown rat and disappeared down the sewers."

"And what of his finger found at the scene?"

"He lost it in the explosion before changing into his animagus form of a rat and disappearing down the sewers."

"Mister Pettigrew was not registered as an animagus with the Ministry.

Do you know why?"

"He didn't want anyone to know and wanted to keep it a secret."

Tobias then turned towards Amelia and said, "I have no further questions of this witness at this time, Madam."

"Very well," said Amelia. Turning to Scrimgeour, she asked, "Do you have any questions of the accused, Master Scrimgeour?"

"No, Madam; I do not," the Master Auror replied.

"Very well, Master Scrimgeour. You may give the antidote," she said.

Turning toward Dumbledore she then said, "Chief Warlock Dumbledore, you will take the stand."

"What?" spluttered Dumbledore. "I will not!"

There were noises in both amongst the Wizengamot and the visitor's gallery.

"Silence!" bellowed Amelia again.

When she once more had silence, she again turned to Dumbles and firmly stated, "Chief Warlock Dumbledore, you will take the stand or I will have you dragged there!"

Dumbledore huffed and spluttered but still rose to his feet.

More, but softer, murmurs were heard while Dumbledore tried to look as dignified as possible. He slowly stepped down and approached the stand.

Sitting, he glared back up at Amelia and grouched, "Well, I'm here!"

"Chief Warlock Dumbledore," intoned Amelia with a glare of her own.

"You will explain to this gathering why the summons for Mister Harry James Potter is currently sitting on your desk in the Headmaster's office at Hogwarts."

"What?" spluttered Dumbledore again. "I don't know what you mean."

"Chief Warlock," said Amelia. "My office places tracking charms on all summons to ensure the people who are supposed to receive them, actually receive them! You will explain how it has come to be in your possession!"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Amelia," said Dumbledore. "I assure you..."

Again, riding over the top of him, Amelia said, "Chief Warlock Dumbledore, we are not interested in your assurances. We are interested in the facts. If you do not provide us the information we need, we will send Aurors to your office in Hogwarts. They will locate the summons meant for young Mister Potter, and they will return with it here.

"Now, are you intercepting mail meant for Harry James Potter?"

"What?" spluttered Dumbledore yet again. "Now see here, Amelia, I will not..."

Again, riding over the top of him, Amelia said, "You will answer the question, Mister Dumbledore; or I will have you declared a hostile witness, and have Master Scrimgeour dose you with Veritaserum by force. We will have our answers!"

Still spluttering and grumbling Dumbledore said, "Very well!"

"Good!" said Amelia. "Now, are you intercepting mail meant for Harry James Potter?"

"Yes," grumbled Dumbledore. "But, I'm his magical guardian and I need to check it for items that may harm him!"

"Are your forwarding any of it on to him?"

"I need to check all his mail..." said Dumbledore, before he was again interrupted by Amelia.

"That was not my question, Mister Dumbledore," Amelia bored on. "Are your forwarding any of Harry James Potter's mail on to him?"

"As I said, I need to check..." said Dumbledore before he was yet again interrupted by Amelia.

"Master Scrimgeour, you..." began Amelia

"No! Wait!" shouted Dumbledore. "I'll answer your questions!"

"Then, again; are your forwarding any of Harry James Potter's mail on to him?"

"No."

"So, Harry James Potter has not received any of the mail ever sent to him from people within the magical community since the events that happened on the 31st of October 1981?"

"No."

Once again, both sides of the chamber were rocked with the shock of the people, both in the visitor's gallery and the Wizengamot itself.

"Silence!" bellowed Amelia for a third time.

When she once more had silence she again turned to Dumbledore, "Where is Harry James Potter's mail?"

"As I said, I need..." said Dumbledore.

"Master Scrimgeour..." began Amelia

"No!" shouted Dumbledore, before he grumbled, "I sent any gifts sent to Harry to the orphanages throughout Britain!"

"And the rest of the mail?" demanded Amelia.

"I did not have the time to go through it, so I burned it," grumbled Dumbledore.

Yet again, both sides of the chamber were rocked with the shock of the people, both in the visitor's gallery and the Wizengamot itself.

"Silence!" bellowed Amelia yet again.

"Albus Dumbledore, at the conclusion of the business currently before us, you will be taken away and charged with mail tampering," snarled Amelia.

"I have no doubt members of the press, present here in the visitor's gallery this evening; will be reporting far and wide what you have admitted to, this evening.

"I, for one, will be filing my own complaint against you, on behalf of my niece, who I know has been sending Mister Potter a small gift and a card on each of his birthdays. She has continued to do this every year since she was five years old, and she is now ten! She has done this, even though she has never received a letter in return from Mister Potter. I expect my office will be flooded by others also coming in to file their own complaints!

"It is now quite clear that the reason Mister Potter has not sent her, or anyone else, a return letter or a thank you note, is because you have been intercepting his mail and he has no idea what you have been doing.

Those of us who have thought ill of young Mister Harry James Potter for

his... rudeness... owe him an apology!

"Further, we wonder what Mister Potter must think of us all, considering he and his parents are responsible for saving the wizarding world, and he has never received one letter or message of thanks for the sacrifice of him and his family!"

Letting her temper subside while angry murmurs swirled about within the gallery and the Wizengamot seats, Amelia also knew Harry was there, in the gallery, listening to it all.

Harry was focussed on Amelia while the woman had her eyes closed.

When she opened them Harry saw her look across towards him in the visitor's gallery. He saw her count off the seats and, when she reached him, her eyes locked with his.

Harry smiled back and winked. He saw the corner of her lip twitch a little in response.

Gathering her notes, Amelia again went on the attack.

"However, there is another matter before us this day. That is the trial of Sirius Orion Black," she said. "The second reason you are now sitting before us is to confirm something Mister Black said while under the effects of Veritaserum.

"Mister Dumbledore, did you cast the Fidelius Charm on the cottage where the Potters were staying shortly before the events of the night of the 31st of October 1981?"

"Yes."

"Who did you make the Secret Keeper?"

Another round of murmurs were heard as those listening in suddenly realised the reason for the questioning.

"Peter Pettigrew," grumbled Dumbledore.

"Why was it not Sirius Black?"

"Black begged the Potters at the last minute not to use him, because he believed everyone knew he was their best friend and that everyone would believe he was the Secret Keeper."

"Did you agree with this?"

"Yes."

Amelia's voice dropped to a low growl, "Since you knew, and have known, Sirius Black was not the Secret Keeper, and you knew the Secret Keeper was Peter Pettigrew, why have you not come forward with this information already?"

"I've been busy!" Dumbledore half-snarled.

"Then, perhaps this body can assist you with that workload you are apparently struggling under," said Amelia with a flat monotone. "It appears you have not had the time to report important facts concerning a mass murder of both magicals and muggles, and you have been too busy to properly deal with Mister Potter's mail.

"You are currently the Chief Warlock on this body, you are the Supreme Mugwump and represent magical Britain on the ICW, you are the Headmaster at Hogwarts, and you claim magical guardianship of Harry James Potter, and we are left wondering how lax you have been in properly training Mister Potter in his role in our community. Clearly, this is too much work for you to do.

"I believe this body should meet in the not too distant future, and discuss removing you from some of those roles under which you are struggling."

"No!" bleated Dumbledore. "I have earned my place in this society! You will not do such a thing to me!"

"You are currently very lucky that this body will soon have to deal with the trials of Millicent Bagnold and Bartemius Crouch Senior, before we can move on to your own," snapped Amelia. "I suggest you consider what

actions you will take before that time comes!"

Waiting a moment for that to sink in, she addressed Scrimgeour and Doge.

"Mister Doge," she asked. "Do you have any questions for this witness?"

"No, Madam," replied Tobias.

"Master Scrimgeour," she asked turning to the Master Auror. "Do you have any questions for this witness?"

"No, Ma'am," replied Scrimgeour.

"Mister Dumbledore," she stated. "Return to your seat, as it is still your seat... for now."

Dumbledore stomped off across the room and re-ascended to his seat amongst the warlocks.

Turning back to Tobias, she asked, "Do you rest your case, Mister Doge?"

"I do, Madam," said Tobias with a small bow.

Glancing then to each side, Amelia asked, "Are there questions from the Wizengamot relating to the matters before us here this evening?"

No one moved.

"In that case," she said, sitting back. "I call for the vote. All those who vote Sirius Orion Black guilty on all charges indicate by holding up and lighting the tips of their wands."

Five did so. Harry knew them all to be Death Eaters.

"All those who vote Sirius Orion Black innocent on all charges indicate by holding up and lighting the tips of their wands."

All the rest, but her own.

"Sirius Orion Black," intoned Amelia, "the Wizengamot finds you innocent on all charges. You are..."

"Madam Bones," interrupted Augusta, standing.

"Madam Longbottom?" asked Amelia, quite genially.

"Madam Bones, after investigations, it has come to our attention that Sirius Orion Black, on the death of his paternal grandfather only a few short months ago, has inherited the Head of House position for the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black. While he has not been able to claim his seat, he is still a Lord."

"What?" blurted Sirius. "No!"

Augusta sat down. Others on the Wizengamot, knowing Augusta Longbottom's dedication to the proper regards of its members and Lords, echoed a few 'Hear, hear's in response. They seemed to think Sirius's outburst was a result of learning about the death of his grandfather.

Harry knew different.

"My apologies, Lord Black," said Amelia solemnly.

"No!" spluttered Sirius. "You can't do this!"

"Poor man," said Amelia with much pity. "The Wizengamot finds you innocent on all charges. However, as you are clearly suffering from the effects of your incarceration..."

"I'm not Lord Black!" Sirius half-cried. "You can't make me..."

Sounds of pity came from all side of the courtroom.

"...you are to be taken from here to Saint Mungo's hospital by our Aurors," continued Amelia as if she hadn't heard a thing. "There, you will remain until you are well."

"You can't do this to me!"

"Aurors!" called Amelia, still not listening. "Take the poor man to Saint Mungo's and set up a twenty-four hour protection detail for him. And strip him of those chains!"

"Wait! Wait!" Sirius was calling "I'm completely sane, I tell you! I do not accept the Lordship!"

As they were removing all the chains from Sirius, one of the Aurors said

with a heavy, caring voice, "Yes, My Lord. We understand, My Lord."

"It's my choice! You can't force it on me!"

He was still demanding he not take up the Lordship as he was freed of the chains and suddenly side-along apparated out of the courtroom.

Harry was struggling mightily not to laugh. The man who had taken the seat on the other side of him said, "Are you alright? You look like you may be having a heart attack or something."

"No, I'm fine," said Harry, half-choking. "I'm just sooo proud of our justice system today."

"If you're sure," the man said, clearly thinking Harry was unwell.

"Yes, thank you," said Harry calming down.

Nodding back the man then turned away. Possibly, because he thought whatever it was Harry had, may have been contagious.

# # #

After Sirius was whisked away to Saint Mungo's, Harry knew the time was getting late. The court case had gone on even longer than he felt it might. He left the Ministry building and headed for the quiet section of street outside Longbottom Manor, stepped through the wards and dropped his glamour.

Penny let him in, now clearly recognising him; and he waited in the parlour. Madam Longbottom hadn't arrived back yet from the Wizengamot meeting, so he asked Penny to see if Neville was still awake. The lad was; he was waiting to hear what had happened at the trial. He, too, was just as nervous about Sirius, but for Harry's sake.

Harry told Neville what had happened at the trial and how his grandmother stood up and basically forced the court to recognise Sirius as Head of House Black. He described how Sirius had tried to turn it down, but everyone thought it was because he was probably a little

'unhinged' and didn't understand.

And he described how Sirius was still protesting when they side-along apparated him direct to the wards at Saint Mungo's.

By the end, Neville was practically rolling on the floor with laughter.

When Augusta came through the floo, Harry and Neville were sitting enjoying a glass of milk and a small plate of cookies each.

"What are you still doing up, young man?" Augusta asked Neville.

"Harry was telling me how you ambushed Sirius at the end of the trial, Gran," said Neville gleefully.

"I most certainly did not," huffed Augusta. "It is Lord Black's responsibility to accept the role whether he likes it or not."

"And, by all accounts, he definitely does not like it," giggled Harry. "He hated his family and ran away from it in his fifth year at Hogwarts."

"Be that as it may," said Augusta. "He will come to appreciate the role. Clearly, his grandfather wanted him to have it."

"I bet he's probably still arguing with the Aurors and the medical staff at Saint Mungo's, if they haven't already hit him with a calming or sleeping potion," said Harry with a chuckle. "I just hope Saint Mungo's are wise enough to put him somewhere where he can't escape for a while."

"They have, My Lord," said Augusta.

She turned to Neville and commanded, "Right, you. Off to bed. Lord Potter still has to visit Susan and to give her the next cube, too. And it's not polite for you to keep a young lady waiting."

"Okay, grandmother," said Neville, scurrying off to get changed for bed.

After he'd gone, Harry said, "I wonder if I may ask a favour."

"Ask, and I'll let you know, My Lord," replied Augusta.

"When is the next time you think you'll visit with Frank and Alice?" he asked.

"We plan on visiting them either tomorrow or Saturday," she answered.

"Why?"

"I think Saint Mungo's will put Sirius in the same, or a similar ward, based on his behaviour when he was side-along apparated away from the courtroom," explained Harry. "If that is the case, and that you're a respected member of the Wizengamot, I ask to join you on your visit so I may drop in on my godfather."

"You don't think you should go alone, My Lord?" Augusta asked curious.

"No, Ma'am," he replied. "Madam Bones gave orders Sirius was to be protected twenty four hours a day. I doubt very much the Aurors will let me in to see him if I'm alone. I have to maintain my glamour when out and about, remember?"

"Ah, yes," she replied nodding. "You believe, with me there, we should be able to get past the Aurors because I'm both on the Wizengamot and I'm not considered to be someone who would harm your godfather."

"Yes, Ma'am," he replied.

"Then we shall go tomorrow afternoon," said Augusta. "There will be less people attending during the early afternoon as it's a work day."

"Thank you, Ma'am," he said. "I know how difficult it is for you to visit Saint Mungo's at the best of times. So, I'm even more thankful you would allow me to tag along."

"Yes, well," she replied. "Now, I believe Neville will be ready for us. Shall we?" she gestured towards the stairs.

# # #

After setting Neville up with his next cube, Harry floo'ed through to the Ossuary and checked with their house elf, Eva, if Madam Bones had returned yet.

The little elf told him no but he could make himself at home while he

waited. He also asked if Susan was still awake and the little elf popped away for a few seconds before returning and saying she wasn't.

Harry decided to try to contact Amelia again and see if she could pop home for the few moments it took him to activate the cube.

Tapping the sixth rune he waited for Amelia to answer. And hoped she wouldn't just cut him off, this time.

"Hello," she said.

"Madam Bones, are you alone to chat for a moment?" asked Harry.

"Yes, I am," she replied. "I'm in my office doing paperwork that probably going to take me the greater part of the night."

"I wonder if I can impose upon you to drop back here to the Ossuary for the few seconds I need to... do what I need to do," he asked.

Amelia nodded in understanding. "I shall be there momentarily," she replied. "I want to make sure Susan's safely in bed, anyway."

"Thank you, Ma'am," he said, terminating the connection.

Amelia stepped through just as Harry removed Susan's next cube from its case.

"You're ready?" she asked.

"Yes, Ma'am," he answered. "I didn't want to enter her room without you here. It just wouldn't be right."

"Certainly not!" she stated before saying, "Come on, then, My Lord."

Harry followed behind and waited for Amelia to check in Susan's room before she called him forward.

"She's asleep but decent," she whispered.

Harry nodded and went in. He immediately walked up to the bed, placed the cube softly on Susan's forehead so as not to wake her, and activated the cube in a soft voice.

He left and followed Amelia from the room.

In the parlour, Harry said, "That was a nice bit of theatrics you, Doge and Madam Bones engineered for this evening."

"My Lord, I'm sure I have no idea what you mean," she replied piously.

"And don't forget Rufus Scrimgeour."

"Of course not, Ma'am. How could I?" chuckled Harry.

"Now I must be back to the office. You've created a lot of work for me, My Lord," she said with a smile. "But I'm relishing the legal punch to the nose I gave Albus Dumbledore."

"Just before you go," said Harry, reaching into his ever-present satchel.

He pulled out the package he'd picked up that morning from the Ministry of all the laws, and placed it on the occasional table near to his hand.

Tapping nit, he said, "This is a copy of all the laws on the books I picked up from the Ministry. Susan's going to need them. Can you please make sure she gets them?"

"I'll ensure it," she said, rising from her chair.

"In that case," said Harry, also rising to his feet. "I bid you good night, Ma'am. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Good night, Harry," she said. "I trust you to let yourself out?"

"Of course," he answered.

And Amelia went back through the floo.

Harry walked out to the street and apparated to the Grangers. No gift for them tonight, though. They'll be surprised.

# # #

In his office at Hogwarts, Dumbledore was fuming. How could things have gone wrong, so fast?

Clearly the Bones woman had it in for him. He had no idea how she'd worked out he'd been redirecting the Potter boy's mail but her line of questioning was no accident. Of that he was sure.

He thought himself lucky that Bagnold and Crouch were going to be tried before his, so called, actions were brought before the Wizengamot. That gave him time to grease the right palms and protest he was acting for The Greater Good with the boy's welfare solely what he was protecting, with those he knew were his strongest supporters.

Thankfully, Black's release and Bagnold and Crouch's arrest meant the articles about him would be way down the list of what held the interest of the public.

Also, thankfully, he hadn't been forced to take Veritaserum. And the questioning did not delve into where he was keeping the boy. That would have been a disaster.

All he had to do was keep people from asking where the boy was until the 1st of September, and the boy would be safely within the walls of Hogwarts where he would have full control of him.

# # #

## 12. Dumbledore's Bad Day

### Chapter Twelve - Dumbledore's Bad Day

# # #

Harry crashed out when he returned to the palace after giving Hermione her next cube. He even allowed himself a bit of a lie-in when he awoke.

Climbing out of bed he took a long shower before finally dressing. He wanted to go and see his godfather but knew he needed to wait until he received a call from Madam Longbottom to meet her and Neville.

He also wanted to head to Diagon Alley to pick up that morning's copy of the Daily Prophet, just to see how much trouble he'd stirred up.

Before he left the suite, though, he waylaid Michael to ask him to pass on a note to Her Majesty. Harry had written a short message to the Queen informing her his godfather had been released from prison and found not

guilty of all charges the night before, and was currently under twenty four hour protective guard at the wizarding world's hospital recuperating from the ravages of his long stay in the prison.

# # #

In Diagon Alley, Harry quickly sought a copy of the Prophet and returned with it to the Leaky Cauldron. He specifically didn't have his morning cup of tea at the palace, preferring to enjoy having one while reading the wizarding world's newspaper.

The main headline, of course, related to his godfather's release. **BLACK FREE**, the banner headline proclaimed. It went on to detail how his godfather was proven not to have betrayed the Potters or killed the muggles, after all. And even included a quote from the Minister where he said, "A great injustice was rectified [last night]. An innocent man, wrongly imprisoned, was finally given the justice he deserved."

The Minister made it sound like he was almost solely responsible for giving Sirius his freedom. It was his leadership of the Ministry that saw 'his' hardworking auror department make good what was wrong.

Snorting, Harry thought the man would make a gas explosion accident sound like a beautification project if no one was hurt.

The next story, 'over the fold' as the newsies put it, was **DUMBLEDORE STEALS HARRY'S MAIL**. It covered how he'd been intercepting mail directed to Harry. And how Amelia, as Head of the DMLE, was expecting people to make formal complaints through her office about any mail they had sent him, Harry, not being sent through. The article went on to say how the journalist who wrote it thought Amelia had made valid points about how Dumbledore 'obviously' had too many responsibilities and they should be cut back.

Harry hadn't planned on the mail interception thing becoming public yet,

he had planned that for the following week. But Amelia played the card with perfection and, as it was now wrapped up in Dumbles's role in Sirius's incarceration, the old man was going to have to dance a major political jig to hold on to any part of his reputation.

There was even a small article that implied Dumbledore may have Harry chained up in a dungeon at Hogwarts. And that Hogwarts should be searched immediately in case he was there.

That one really had Harry chuckling to himself.

Another article covered how Bagnold and Crouch were now facing charges for their part in imprisoning Sirius without a trial. And what part Dumbledore played in that by not coming forward with the true identity of the Secret Keeper.

Harry anticipated it would take him at least two weeks to get beyond it.

And that's when he'd start the next 'Dumbledore Scandal'.

He wondered whether he should go next. The unsealing of the Will, hiding Harry, the start of investigations into the missing funds. What?

In the mean time, he'd have Sirius playing the angry godfather searching for his godson and harassing old Dumbles for the information. If Sirius pushed hard enough, especially if he took his seat on the Wizengamot, he might be able to get the Will, supposedly, unsealed; and that would give Dumbles more headaches. But it would also mean Harry had to switch back with Dobby so he would be the one at Privet Drive when he was removed from there and taken to the reading. That could be risky.

Maybe he should begin by starting to write his book, Harry Potter: The Facts in His Own Words. He didn't have to publish it yet. But it was something he wanted to complete so he could use it later as yet another black mark against Dumbledore's, for now only slightly marred, sterling reputation. However, that was going to take quite some time. He wasn't

going to have it ready, and couldn't use it anyway, in two weeks. That was for something for later, once he was acknowledged by Hogwarts as the Head of House Slytherin.

Reading through further he didn't expect letters to the paper from readers covering the results of the trial itself as yet. People wouldn't have had an opportunity to process it themselves and still get their letters printed. That would have to wait until tomorrow.

For right now, though; he had to get to Gringotts. With all the running around over Sirius's trial yesterday, he did not return to the bank, as promised, to collect his details concerning his mundane bank account.

# # #

After a restless night in which he had to self administer a minor calming potion to get a much needed night's sleep, Dumbledore headed down to the Great Hall for breakfast. While the school was empty of students, the staff who remained at Hogwarts still engaged in the ritual of breakfast together.

Dumbledore sat in his high backed chair but, before he could begin his breakfast, a veritable deluge of owls entered the Great Hall through the openings at the top of the ceiling. Within moments he was buried under a pile of letters from people from all over wizarding Britain. Letters had spilled off the table top onto the floor, they flowed off his body onto the floor, they overflowed his chair onto the floor.

Staff either side of him quickly moved away from him as the pile built. Multiple howlers were mixed in with the pile and were smouldering in the way of such things.

Professor McGonagall managed to snag a copy of that morning's Daily Prophet from the tabletop, delivered to her by owl before it, too, was buried. Reading the front page, she began to frown.

"Albus," she said in her most stern voice, pointing to the main article.

"What is the meaning of this?"

Sending all the mail into a pile on the floor before the table Dumbledore replied in his most kindly grandfatherly voice, "It is all a misunderstanding, Minerva. I will have it all cleared up before too long, I assure you."

That's when the second deluge of owl mail hit him.

Waiting for the Headmaster to deal with the second pile of mail,

McGonagall read more of the article.

"Burning the boy's mail, Albus?" she asked. "And giving his gifts away to orphanages. How could you?"

"Now, Minerva," he said. "It's all for the boy's safety. The boy needs and deserves a normal childhood, free of the reminders of the death of his parents. As his magical guardian I did what was in the boy's best interests."

"We shall speak more on this, Albus," McGonagall said. "You went too far."

"If you wish, Minerva," he replied with a sigh of great patience. "But, it is for the greater good."

McGonagall just scowled at him and said, "And yet it appears a great many people disagree with you," indicating the growing piles of mail before the table.

Dumbledore did not have the time to deal with his Deputy. He knew he needed to get in to see Black at Saint Mungo's as soon as possible and convince the man he, Albus Dumbledore, needed to remain the Potter boy's magical guardian.

He'd try to convince Black his ten years within Azkaban had left him weak and currently unable to provide care for the boy. Black would see

reason.

# # #

Again shown to a private room within Gringotts, Harry waited only a few moments for Blockrig to enter with his ledgers and a small file. The goblin looked well pleased.

\*Good morning, friend goblin,\* said Harry in gobbledegook. \*May our business today bring great profits to us both.\*

\*Good morning, My Lord,\* said Blockrig. \*May our business today bring much despair to our enemies.\*

"I take it you are aware of, and pleased with, the events that transpired yester-evening?"

With one of those shark-like grins Blockrig said, "Indeed, on both counts, My Lord."

And, more seriously, said, "I hope you will allow me the opportunity to make amends if you ever believe I have wronged you so much, My Lord."

"Friend goblin," said Harry seriously. "I cannot perceive, and refuse to believe, you could ever do such a thing. Banish the thought from your mind."

Nodding, Blockrig said, "I thank you, My Lord, for your trust."

Changing the subject, Harry said, "Now, the reason I have returned is to receive news of your efforts towards the creation of an account in a mundane bank."

"Of course, My Lord," said Blockrig. "I have the details here."

Opening the small file before him, Blockrig withdrew two small plastic cards. Offering the first to Harry he said, "This is the credit card you requested."

Then offering the second card he said, "And this is the... ATM... card linked to the credit card. Both are in a false name, and both are also

linked back to your main Potter vault through a couple of... what we believe the human term to be... cut-outs."

Looking at both cards, Harry could see the name 'Frederick Smith' embossed in black under the same sort of embossing for the account details.

"Will you require instruction on how to use both, My Lord?" asked Blockrig.

"No, that is quite alright, Blockrig," replied Harry. "I'm familiar with the use of both."

"As you wish, My Lord," the goblin said, with a slight bow.

"Are the statements associated with the account sent back here, to you?" asked Harry.

"Yes, My Lord," replied Blockrig. "And I will be able to monitor the account to see it is continually stocked with... mundane money."

"Excellent," stated Harry. "Please add an extra ten percent to your service charge as a bonus for your dedication."

"My Lord is most generous," said Blockrig with a small bow.

"The next item," said Harry, moving on, "is I want to have Mister Doge placed on retainer. I trust his final payment for his role in freeing Lord Black from incarceration will soon find its way to him?"

"Yes, My Lord," said Blockrig. "We have already alerted him he is to send the bill to us, but we are yet to receive it. We will inform him of your wish to place him on retainer."

Nodding, Harry said, "Good. Please also add a bonus for him of a further five percent above his charge for his... alacrity... in securing Lord Black's freedom. Tell him I am well pleased with him and require he pursue, on behalf of Lord Black, the seeking of damages against Millicent Bagnold, Bartemius Crouch Senior and Albus Dumbledore for their roles in his

unlawful incarceration."

The old goblin was taking judicious notes, but glanced up when Harry mentioned Dumbledore's name.

Harry continued, "Further, he will receive much other work from me in the not too distant future."

When he finished taking notes, the old goblin looked up and said, "It will be done, My Lord."

"Another point," said Harry. "Though, I know it goes against the high standards of service provided by Gringotts to its many and varied customers, I beg that I not be addressed in a manner which acknowledges my Lordship while I am in the public areas."

The old goblin hesitated before answering, "We, at Gringotts, have already deduced this would be your desire when you asked for the magic of the rings to be suppressed, My Lord. Director Ragnock has already given that order to the staff."

Harry was a little surprised but said, "Please thank Director Ragnock for his... anticipation and thoughtfulness. It will save me from embarrassment when I attend the bank with staff or supporters of Dumbledore in the near future."

"One final point," said Harry. "It's more of a point to be aware of. I have advised Countess Ravenclaw, Hermione Jean Granger, to attend the bank to see to her responsibilities with her accounts.

"I have also asked her to investigate what is required to create a new Magical House, complete with the rings involved. Please advise the Account Holder for the Ravenclaw account I expect her to attend the bank regarding this matter soon."

"It will be done, My Lord," said the goblin taking yet more notes. "And I thank you, on behalf of the Account Holder for the Ravenclaw account,

for the warning. It will give him the opportunity to present a good showing to Lady Ravenclaw."

"You and he are most welcome," replied Harry. "Before I take my leave, is there any matter you wish to raise with me at this time?"

"No, My Lord; not at this time," replied the old goblin.

"In that case," said Harry, rising and switching to gobbledegook. \*May you see much profit in your coming days.\*

\*And may your enemies flee before the sight of you,\* the old goblin finished, also rising.

Harry then left the bank with his new, mundane, bank and credit cards safely in his satchel.

# # #

Amelia Bones was not having a good day. Nor were her aurors who had been called in for duty early.

Before her office was even due to open there were already bags of mail piled on the DMLE office floor. And, outside, people were already clamouring for entry. Her aurors were having the devil of a time getting through and shutting the door behind them.

She had already sent a message to the auror training facility demanding the current crop of trainee aurors be sent to her office prepared to check and open mail, and to take statements of complaints.

She had them set up tables and chairs within the currently empty Wizengamot chamber, and there they would go through the mail, out of the way and out of sight.

Before opening the doors, she had her people create a long bench across the room between the door and her aurors' desks, about ten feet in from the door. Upon the bench she had placed every auto-quill in the auror 'armoury' both within the office and from down in the interrogation cells.

It was there, the aurors - trainee and active, alike - would take the statements.

At 9.00am sharp, she had Kingsley Shacklebolt open the door. On opening it a crack he immediately jumped the bench to escape the crush of people who came flooding in.

She glared down at him, while he climbed back to his feet and brushed himself off.

"Those are angry mothers over there, Ma'am," he said. "I don't get paid enough to be on the other side of that bench."

Standing back from the bench a bit so she could be seen by all who were complainants, she said in a loud voice, "Okay, folks! Please form lines in front of the auto-quills. If there's no auto-quill at the head of your line, then you are not in a line.

"Our aurors have been instructed to evict anyone who is rowdy or otherwise breaking the peace. Those who resist will be arrested on the spot and find themselves in our holding cells, until we can get to them. That probably won't be until we have finished taking statements. You have been warned!

"Try to remember, this is not about you. This is about a ten year old orphan boy who has been denied his mail!"

Their day of unrelenting quill-hand cramp had begun.

"Damn that Dumbledore," she swore. "Damn the man to Hell!"

'At least I've been able to wring further funding out of Fudge to pay for it all', she thought. 'Even if the man will turn it to his advantage in the press.'

# # #

As soon as he had breakfasted Dumbledore headed directly to Saint Mungo's. He needed to be the first person to speak with Black, other than

the medical staff or the aurors guarding him.

Once at Saint Mungo's he was given directions and quickly climbed the stairs to the fourth floor, the Janus Thickey Ward. Black was being kept in a private room just apart from Ward 49, in room 49a.

He entered the main ward and saw an auror standing outside a door to a room off to the side.

Approaching the door he said, "Ah! Auror. Glad to see you here protecting Lord Black. Now if you'll excuse me..."

The auror stepped in front of the door and stopped Dumbledore with a hand to the chest.

"You may not pass, Mister Dumbledore," he said

"What?" spluttered Dumbledore. "I'm Albus Dumbledore, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot! You will stand aside!"

"No, Mister Dumbledore," flatly stated the auror. "You will leave!"

"I insist you stand aside, this instant!" blustered Dumbledore. "As a member of the Wizengamot, I am here on official business! I will not be hindered!"

"Madam Bones is also on the Wizengamot," replied the auror. "And it is by her order that you may not pass!"

"I protest!" blustered Dumbledore even more. "You will summon her at once, so we may get to the bottom of this... absurdity!"

"Madam Bones is currently in her office busy working, Mister Dumbledore," the auror replied. "She will likely not be free for quite some time. You are, of course, welcome to visit her directly and make your complaint to her. I believe she is receiving a great many, this morning."

"Fine!" huffed Dumbledore. "I will have your name for my complaint to Amelia."

"Robards, Sir," said the auror, "Gawain Robards."

Thoroughly embarrassed and rebuffed, Dumbledore spun about and stormed from the hospital in an even fouler mood. He couldn't afford to stay in one place for too long. He was still ducking owls.

He would head directly to the Ministry and demand, as the boy's magical guardian, access to the boy's godfather. He would claim he needed to speak with the man about the boy's welfare. They would not dare deny him.

# # #

Shortly after a lunch at the Leaky Cauldron, Harry received the expected mirror call from Augusta asking him to join her and Neville at Longbottom Manor for their visit to Saint Mungo's. He quickly checked he had the little pewter statuette of an Irish Wolfhound he made into a portkey to Potter Manor and made his way to the public floo fireplace to floo to Longbottom Manor.

Stepping through he saw both Augusta and Neville were dressed in their best for their visit. Harry transfigured his clothing to match.

Turning to Augusta he said, "If anyone asks who I am, Ma'am; could you please just say I'm Neville's god brother, Henry, who's been living in France?"

Augusta sighed and said, "I will not, but I will say nothing if you say you are to the aurors. I will be glad when you finally drop this 'staying hidden' nonsense."

"As will I, Ma'am" replied Harry quietly.

# # #

Not being able to contact Madam Bones directly through the floo, Dumbledore stepped into the Ministry atrium through one of the public fireplaces.

He stormed off and made his way through security to the lifts, riding one

to the second floor.

As soon as he exited the lift he was greeted by a long cue ahead of him, all waiting to get in the door of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

He, of course, was the great Albus Dumbledore. He waited for no one. So, he strode through the back of the line heading for the door.

He made it about six people in before he heard, "Hey, isn't that the mail thief, Dumbledore?"

"Dumbledore! My daughter is very unhappy and wants..."

"Hey, mail thief! I've spent over twenty galleons on gifts..."

"You burned my letters, you mongrel! I paid priority owl on those..."

Plus a great deal more, as more and more people suddenly realised the great Albus 'Mail Thief' Dumbledore was in their midst. It was only a few seconds before he was being shouted questions and abuse and had people hitting and hexing him.

Standing just outside the door, with the door open, was one of Amelia's newest aurors.

Amelia, hearing the commotion outside looked at new auror at the door and called, "What's that bloody racket?"

The new auror said, "It appears that... ALBUS DUMBLEDORE... has attempted to head this way to come into the office. It further appears that a few of our complainants, awaiting giving their own statements, OUT HERE IN THE CORRIDOR, have recognised him."

"Have they, Auror Savage?" asked Amelia with a twitch to her lips.

"Yes, Ma'am," the auror said in a slow drawl. "And they appear to wish to... remonstrate... with the man."

"Now, why ever would they want to do that?" asked Amelia, trying hard to hold back a smile.

"Perhaps they seek an explanation? They haven't asked yet if HE'S HERE TO PAY RESTITUTION."

"That very well may be the case, Auror Savage. Perhaps you should escort him here?"

"Ummm... I'm afraid it appears he has left, Madam Bones. Perhaps, HE'LL VERY SHORTLY BE IN THE ATRIUM and I can go there and bring him back."

"Of course, he'll be in the atrium, IT'S THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE BUILDING for the public. But, if he wishes to leave, we won't hold him for now."

"Yes, Ma'am!" said Auror Savage.

"Do let me know immediately if he returns?"

"Yes, Ma'am!"

# # #

Stepping through to Saint Mungo's Augusta led Neville and Harry up the stairs to the fourth floor and to ward 49. Harry followed as Augusta led him to the door guarded by the auror.

"Good afternoon, Auror. I'm Madam Augusta Longbottom. I believe you have been expecting me," said Augusta with great dignity.

Auror Robards replied, "Yes, Madam Longbottom, please go straight in."

"Not me, auror," replied Augusta. "Just this young man here," she said, indicating Harry.

"Yes, Ma'am," said Robards, then looking to Harry and holding the door for him.

Harry said, "Thank you, Ma'am; and thank you, Auror," as he walked in through the door.

Harry walked in and saw Sirius strapped to the bed. Another auror was standing in the corner with his wand drawn. He'd clearly just risen from a

chair he was sitting in.

"Who the bloody hell are you?" snarled Sirius glaring at him.

After the door closed behind him, Harry calmly looked back at his godfather and said, "Shut up, Padfoot!"

Staring back in shock Sirius said, "Huh?"

Turning to the auror, Harry said, "I need to discuss House business with Lord Black. You may remain in the room, but please set up a silencing shield upon yourself."

Sirius bellowed, "I will not be Lord Black!" While the auror said, "I'll remain, but I'll create the shield."

Harry watched the auror create the shield and waited for it to go into effect. Then he walked to the side of the bed where his back would be to the auror. He raised his right hand in front of his chest where Sirius could see it, palm inwards and with his ring finger showing. Then he made the Head of House Potter ring show.

"Do you recognise it, Sirius?" he asked.

Looking at the ring in shock, Sirius then looked up at Harry's face and asked, "Harry?"

Nodding, Harry then let the glamour slip from his face before putting it back up again. "Who else could wear the bloody ring. Yeah, it's me. Now I want you to call me Henry, okay?"

"Why?"

"Because I don't want people, especially Dumbledork, to know I'm not where he shoved me and expects me to still be," said Harry walking around to the other side of the bed and, grabbing a chair, sitting down.

"I have a lot to explain to you about what's going on," began Harry.

"You're not going to like it and you're going to get really angry hearing it.

But this is definitely not the place to tell it. However, I need you to do

three things for me. Okay?"

Sirius just stared back and nodded.

"First, I need you to pretend to believe I'm still in hiding, and that Dumbledore's the one that put me there. You need to harass the living hell out of the old man to get him to give me to you as my godfather. I want him constantly on the back foot, reacting instead of acting. He will fight you all the way, but he needs to keep on thinking he's winning the battle against you to keep me," said Harry.

Sirius again nodded and said, "Up until this moment I thought that to still be the truth."

"As far as he knows, it still is," replied Harry. "There's someone acting as me, using Polyjuice Potion to look like me, where he thinks he has me safely stashed. And, until the 1st of September, I need him to think that's where I still am. That's when I board the train to Hogwarts."

"Okay, I can see that. You have a plan going on to destroy that mongrel, pup?" asked Sirius.

"Oh, yes," replied Harry. "But I first need to destroy his reputation before I can destroy him. What you saw last night from Amelia Bones of her attack against Dumbledore during your trial, was a part of that. What you don't know is a lot of that was theatrics, arranged in advance, between Madam Bones, Rufus Scrimgeour, and Tobias Doge. You were never in danger of leaving that chamber anything but a free man."

"Well, I'm not a free man now, am I?" he snarled. "I'm still chained. It's just the conditions of my imprisonment that've changed."

"And, I'm sorry about that," replied Harry. "But Madam Bones wanted to put you on ice, and also ensure you were safe and receiving the best of medical care, until I could get in to see you."

"Huh!" said Sirius. "And you thought all this up?"

"Nope," replied Harry. "I just had Madam Bones check the records concerning your case and how you were thrown into Azkaban without a trial. She then sent me to Tobias Doge. Then she, Doge, Scrimgeour and Madam Augusta Longbottom organised the rest."

"So, you had Longbottom try and force me to take the Lordship?" he growled.

"Down, boy," grinned Harry. "And no, I didn't. That blind-sided me as much as it did you. And you will be respectful of Madam Longbottom because she's the one who got me in here to see you under the cover of being her 'long lost nephew'. She's on your side."

"Yet she's the one who's trying to force me to take the Lordship!" shot back Sirius.

"Yes, and for two very important reasons," said Harry before he was interrupted.

"Well, I don't bloody want it!" bellowed Sirius.

"Shut up and bloody listen to the reasons before yelling at me, Snuffles!" snarled back Harry.

"Uppity Pup!"

"Shoosh!"

Once Sirius had calmed down again, Harry said, "The first reason is because, if you pass on taking up the Lordship, it will pass to your cousinonce removed, Draco Malfoy, Narcissa and Lucius Malfoy's son. Do you really want that Death Eater-in-training, and bigoted get of Lucius Malfoy, to be the Head of your House?"

"Hell, no!" Sirius emphatically responded.

"You should also know, one of the reasons you're currently in here under guard, is because no one doubts for a moment Malfoy won't try to have you 'bumped off' so it automatically falls to Draco straight away.

"I know you want me to be your heir, but I can't be until you accept the Head of House position!" stated Harry.

"Okay, I can see that," said a much calmer Sirius. "But, what's the second reason."

"It's so I can get my hands on an artefact Voldemort's followers can use to resurrect him. I need you to claim the family heirloom contents of Bellatrix's vault and kick her butt out of the family. Kicking Narcissa's butt out of the family, too, will also give you another layer of protection from being assassinated by Malfoy."

"What?" asked Sirius quite shocked.

"There's a magical item in Bellatrix's vault that has a piece of Voldemort's soul locked within it. His followers can use it to resurrect him. You need to get to it first. And you can only do that if you're Head of the House of Black."

"Damn, Pup!" said Sirius sadly. "I never wanted the Lordship. I even begged my grandfather not to give it to me. It wasn't supposed to come to me."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Harry. "Life's a female wolfhound. But, it's you or Draco Malfoy. And a known Death Eater and supporter of Voldemort, by the name of Lucius Malfoy, gets his hands on the soul container if you don't claim the title first. I think your grandfather knew it would otherwise pass on to Malfoy; so, you were never kicked out of the family, no matter how much your mother demanded it."

Sirius sighed.

"Now, if you be a good boy and accept your medicine, and be nice for the doctors and nurses, then they'll release you from these bindings," said Harry. "And, once they do that, you can immediately get out of here."

Harry reached into his satchel and carefully drew out the pewter

statuette of the Irish wolfhound. "See the pretty statue? You like it. Smile for the auror and nod your head."

Sirius smiled and nodded.

"Now, it's a portkey that will immediately take you to, and within the wards at, Potter Manor," explained Harry. "All you need to do is take it in your hand and make a fist around it. It's already charged with enough magical energy to get you there quite comfortably." Harry put the statuette on Sirius's bedside table. "The Activation phrase is 'I'll see you later'."

"Pixie is still at the Manor and she is more than happy to take care of your needs and nurse you the rest of the way back to health," Harry went on. "At least there you will be in less danger of being attacked.

"So, remember: Be nice and accept you're the new Lord Black with all the doctors and nurses; pretend I'm still missing and Dumbledore has me stashed somewhere; harass the living hell out of Dumbledore to get me back, but be unsuccessful; take up your Head of House ring; Kick Bellatrix out of the family and seize her vault contents; and kick Narcissa and Draco out of the family denying him the Lordship on your death."

"Okay, Pup," said a much subdued Sirius. "I can do all that. Especially if the first one means I get to have these restraints removed."

"Well, if you're an extra good boy and can get those restraints removed by lunch time tomorrow - thereby allowing you to use that portkey - I'll tell you how I pranked the Queen!" said Harry with a smile.

Shocked, Sirius asked, "Damn, Pup! You pranked the Queen? The Queen of England?"

Not bothering to correct the error, Harry just said, "Big time! Plus, I managed to get myself a suite of rooms within the palace to stay in for as long as I want!"

"Oh, I've got to hear this story," said an eager Sirius.

"And you will, tomorrow afternoon, if you're good," replied Harry. "Now, remember, my name is Henry."

Harry stood and gestured to the auror, who then cast a Finite Charm to remove the Silencing Charm.

"Thank you, auror. That was much appreciated," said Harry.

"You're welcome, Sir," he replied.

Turning to Sirius, Harry said, "Thank you, My Lord. I appreciate you giving me your time."

"You're welcome... Henry," said Sirius calmly. "And, thank you, for setting me straight."

Harry bowed a little bow towards Sirius and left the room. Augusta and Neville were waiting outside.

Walking away together, Augusta asked, "How did it go?"

"He'll take the Lordship ring and behave himself," replied Harry. "Once I told him it will help protect him from being assassinated on the orders of Lucius Malfoy, he began to understand."

Augusta stopped dead in her tracks and stared in horror at Harry.

"What?" she asked.

"Madam Longbottom, really," said Harry. "Draco Malfoy is next in line for Head of House Black. If Sirius dies before he formally accepts his Lordship, it will fall to Draco Malfoy. It's why old Arcturus didn't kick Sirius out of the family no matter how much old Lady Walburga wanted it. I thought you'd know that."

"Errr... No. I didn't," said Augusta. Lifting her head, she said, "Come along. We need to return to Longbottom Manor, straight away."

# # #

As soon as Augusta, Neville and Harry stepped through into the parlour

of Longbottom Manor, Augusta immediately made a floo call to Amelia.

Not getting an answer, she pulled out the mirror Harry gave her and tried to mirror the woman. She answered.

""Melia? Harr... Lord P... just informed me of something quite astonishing and I'm kicking myself for not thinking of it myself," said an agitated Augusta.

"Gus? What's wrong?" echoed Amelia.

"Listen. If Sirius Black dies before he formally takes up his Lordship, it will pass to Draco Malfoy as the next in line," Augusta said in a bit of rush. "How long do you think it's going to take Lucius to figure that out for himself and... take steps?"

"Oh? Oh... Oh!" Harry heard Amelia understand. "Thank you for telling me this, 'Gus. I'll need to take steps immediately!"

Augusta sighed and slowly closed the mirror.

"My Lord Potter," she said in a strained voice turning to Harry. "In future, please do not assume we know something just because you do. I would appreciate you providing a little... warning in future."

"Certainly, Ma'am," said Harry. "I thought you knew, and that was why the aurors were placed inside and outside of Sirius's room."

"No, they were just there to keep Dumbledore and reporters away," she replied.

"Then I apologise, Madam Longbottom," said a somewhat contrite Harry.

"I'll endeavour to do better next time."

# # #

Dumbledore returned to his own office, scratched, bruised, hair torn out in hunks, bleeding in a few places, missing one of his favourite hats, and wearing torn clothing.

He was furious! Someone was playing games with the great Albus

Dumbledore, Leader of the Light, Holder of the Order of Merlin First Class, Long term Headmaster of Hogwarts. This could not be tolerated! But, the only person he now knew was actively working against him was Amelia Bones. Yet, there was no way she could have suspected the information against him, and yet she did. There had to be others, working behind the scenes.

He also suspected Augusta Longbottom to be assisting the Bones woman but, so far, he only suspected. Longbottom was well known for monitoring the Heirs and Heads of the other Houses, so it made sense she would know Black was the new Head of House for Black on the death of his grandfather. But why raise the matter there? And why was Black apparently so against taking the seat?

He needed answers but he didn't know to whom to turn for them.

Dumbledore took himself off to the hospital wing to see to his injuries.

His physical ones, at least.

# # #

Upon leaving Longbottom Manor, Harry headed to the Ministry. Under his glamour he went up to Level 6 to visit the Floo Regulation Panel within the Department of Magical Transportation. He wanted to get Potter Manor connected to the Floo Network.

He knew this would be tricky but he thought it needed to be done. It could be a way for the Grangers, if they ended up there, to be able to leave again for somewhere closer to their home.

The officious idiot wanted him to provide all sorts of proof as to his residence of the property, proof of age, whether someone could vouch for him and others. Harry, though he hated it, eventually used low level Legilimency against the man to get him to put through the papers without looking too closely at them. His home would have the address,

'The Pottery'.

The floo at Potter Manor would be connected by tomorrow afternoon. He was just thankful the Floo Regulation Panel and the Floo Network Authority rarely talked to one another, and that the persons installing the floo did not need to attend the property to connect it.

On leaving, he purchased a bag of floo powder and a nice little container to put it in. He might replace the container later, but the one he bought was good enough for now.

# # #

Floo'ing out of the Ministry, Harry headed to Diagon Alley, walked to the apparation point and apparated out to Potter Manor.

Walking in, Pixie greeted him at the door.

"Hello, Master Harry, Sir," she said.

"Hello, Pixie," replied Harry with a smile.

"Does Master Harry, need something?" she asked.

"No, I've just dropped by to leave a pot of floo powder above the fireplace," Harry said, showing Pixie the container of floo powder. "And to let you know you can expect, either tonight or tomorrow, Master Sirius to arrive via portkey."

"Ooooh, Pixie like Master Sirius," the little elf squeaked.

"I know you do," said Harry with a smile. "But he's not very well, even if he tries to tell you he is. So I want you to take special care of him for me, Okay?"

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir," she agreed. "Pixie understand how to help sick people."

"And when he comes, tell him I would be here as soon as I can, okay?"

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir," she replied again.

"Now, the floo is not connected yet, but I expect it to be connected by

tomorrow afternoon. If Sirius arrives before then, tell him it will be connected before tomorrow afternoon, too."

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir," she replied again.

"I should be back by tomorrow afternoon myself, just to make sure Sirius has arrived safe."

"Yes, Master Harry, Sir," she replied again.

Harry just shook his head and apparated out back to the Alley.

# # #

Back at the Alley, Harry went in search of and purchased a makeskin duffle bag.

Then he headed to Flourish and Blotts to purchase all the books about him, supposedly, that he could purchase. Plus, all the text books for all seven years at Hogwarts. Those all went into his new makeskin duffle bag.

Now that everything was humming along he had time to dedicate to writing his so-called biography. But he first needed to know what nonsense others had written about him. Hence, the need for the other books.

He headed out into mundane London with the idea of purchasing a laptop. But he still didn't know what to do about the battery flattening problem. It was while looking for something to counter that effect he spotted an old manual typewriter. It was perfect. No electricity or batteries needed. Add a ream of typing paper and spare ribbons and he was set.

# # #

Harry returned with his booty to the palace and stacked the books into two piles; those that were books supposedly about his life, and the other of all the text books.

His idea was to give the text books to Susan and Hermione once they reached Hogwarts. For now, he had to read through all the books written about him.

He set the first pile before himself and started to speed read through them.

# # #

That night he did the rounds of the Longbottom, Bones and Granger residences early with the cube on mathematics and physics. Like him, the heirs were about to be experts in both subjects.

Speaking with Neville first, he asked the lad if he had any questions.

"No, but I've been talking with Susan and Hermione," he replied. "They told me you've got them working on a project about comparing the two sets of laws and what we're going to need to fix once we allow the rings to be recognised. Do you have something for me?"

Surprised, Harry replied, "Two things, actually. The first is, I want you to go through last night's cube and think of ways we can smack down the Wizengamot when they try and block us from doing things. Think about who we need to alliance with in the Heads of Houses - and you can use your grandmother to help with that - and who will very probably alliance against us.

"In doing that, I want you to consider that some of the Heads that may normally align with the so-called 'light' families, will back Dumbledore. So, they're not really 'light'. If there's a block there that would alliance with Dumbledore because they've fallen for his 'Leader of the Light' rubbish, then we may need to speak to them, or have your grandmother speak to them, outside the Wizengamot. Your grandmother is no slouch when it comes to understanding what's going on there, so use her knowledge."

"Okay, I can do that," said Neville. "What's the other one?"

"I don't know if the girls have told you yet, but when you have time you should think about meditating to discover your animagus form," suggested Harry. "You need to focus on meditating but, once you're in a meditative state, you need to let your mind float free to seek the form. If you need help, ask Merlin."

"I can do that?" asked Neville with wonder.

"Of course!" replied Harry. "You forgot I mentioned it at the palace?"

"Yeah, I guess I did," replied Neville.

"Well, now I've reminded you. So, it's something you can work at discovering when you've nothing else to do," said Harry. "But don't try to push it. It will come when it comes and it's nothing to do with how intelligent or how much of a free thinker you are. It took me ages to discover mine."

"Okay, thanks Harry," the boy said.

Susan gave him a rundown of what she and Hermione had discovered through their comparison of both laws.

"There's so much wrong, Harry," she said with exasperation. "How are we going to get it all done?"

"A wise man once said to me, and I'm paraphrasing here, 'No matter the height of the peak you need to assail, every climb begins one step at a time'," replied Harry. "That's why I'm asking you to just go through them all, and then put them into some semblance of order we can tackle, 'One step at a time!'."

"Yeah... yeah," said Susan frowning in thought. "I can see that."

Harry smiled and said, "This is a job that's going to take decades, if not the rest of our lives, to complete. We don't need to get everything done in a matter of weeks. However, it's one of Her Majesty's priorities. She will

have teams of lawyers going through everything to rewrite them, anyway; so, just be prepared to explain specific wizarding reasons for some of the laws."

Hermione also wanted to discuss the law. She was furious about some of the laws regarding how magical beings were treated, especially the house elves.

"Did you know," she snapped, "there was even an attempt to have non-magicals classed as 'beasts'?"

"Yes, 'Mione. Of course I did," said Harry patiently.

"Well, that's just stupid!" she retorted.

"Think of it more as, they didn't know better. And that they're bigots," said Harry. "And then hold on to the knowledge we're going to smack them down when we take our seats.

"Trust me, Her Majesty is just as upset, if not more so, about this. So I know equal rights and opportunity are going to have to be one of the first things we fix.

"Anyways, time for you to get to bed, and for me to get back to the palace. I've had too many late nights this past week, as it is."

A few minutes later, Harry was off to the palace.

# # #

Up in the morning and, as he didn't need to be anywhere, he began to write the real story about Harry Potter. That is, the real story including how Dobby had been treated. He hadn't been able to check on the brave little house elf. And wouldn't even get a chance to meet him until he switched with him in a few days to receive his Hogwarts letter. He had to make sure Dobby knew to go to Potter Manor until the afternoon of the 31st of July. Then they could switch back again until the morning of the 1st of September.

Even then, he'd have to be careful during the switch so Dumbledore wouldn't suspect anything. It meant he'd be out of circulation for about ten days, but he could put up with the Dursleys again for that long. But, this time, he wouldn't be the meek little boy. While Dumbledore's little monitoring charms would tell he was there, it wouldn't be able to tell he had already been emancipated and, therefore, could already use magic. The Dursleys weren't going to be able to treat him the same as they've been treating him. Well, as they thought they'd been treating him.

# # #

At lunch he enjoyed the meal brought to him by Michael and packed away his typewriter and papers before he left the palace and headed for Saint Mungo's to see how his godfather was faring.

Walking into Ward 49 he noticed two aurors bracketing the door to Sirius's room.

'Interesting', he thought. 'I wonder how many of the visitors and patient's in this ward are aurors in hiding. A couple, at least, appeared to be quite alert for folks with permanent troubles of the mind.'

At the door, the one on the left recognised him and, telling the other he was cleared, held the door open for him.

Inside he saw another two aurors, one of them the young man he recognised from his last visit. He could see Sirius's restraints had been removed and he was now sitting up.

Stopping inside the door, Harry said, "Hello, My Lord."

"Henry," said Sirius, with a feral grin. "I'll see you later."

Sirius suddenly disappeared.

"What the..." exclaimed Harry.

"Where'd he go?" he heard from one of the aurors.

The other one said, "You! Down on the floor! Now!"

"Get in here," the first one shouted.

Harry suddenly found himself pushed to the floor with a wand tip to the back of his head.

'Sirius, you wanker!' he thought. Knowing exactly what happened.

About four other aurors ran into the room. Harry couldn't tell exactly how many as he was currently kissing the floor.

'When I get out of this, I'm coming for you, you mongrel,' he thought.

"Madam Bones will be here shortly," he heard one of the aurors say to someone else.

"You!" someone yelled in his ear. "What did you do with Lord Black!"

"How would I know?" exclaimed Harry. "I just got here!"

Harry felt his satchel stripped from his shoulder and was roughly searched.

"No wand," he heard a gruff voice say.

"Nothing out of the ordinary in his bag, either," he heard from another.

"How did you do it?" A voice in his ear demanded.

"Don't you people get it?" said Harry. "I'm being set up!"

Harry remained on the floor for some time. The aurors, and whoever else, had come and gone while he waited. Then he heard the voice he'd been expecting.

"Let him up," he heard Amelia's voice say with a sigh.

Hauled to his feet, he was roughly turned around. Amelia was standing before him with her arms crossed but wand drawn.

"I thought it was you," she said.

"Madam Bones," said Harry. "I had just walked in the room when Lord Black said 'Hello' and then said 'See you later'. Next thing I know, he was gone. Then I had a wand to the back of my head on the floor!"

"He said 'See you later'?" she asked.

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Harry.

"Well, it sounds like he initiated... whatever it was," she said.

"Ma'am, we have a portkey signature," said another auror.

"Any idea where it went?" she asked the auror.

"No, Ma'am," he replied. "The trace has somehow been scrambled."

"Portkey, eh?" she asked. "And this young man did not approach the bed?"

"No, Ma'am," one of the aurors replied.

"Then, as he doesn't have a wand on him he couldn't have been responsible," she said. "release him, and return his property."

"If you know where he is, young man," Amelia said to him. "I'll need to talk to him to make sure he's alright."

"If I can find him, Ma'am" replied Harry. "I'll be sure to ensure he contacts you to let you know he's safe."

Amelia nodded to Harry and said to the collected aurors, "Well, he's gone.

You lot are clearly no longer needed here so you can head back to the office and process complaints."

Someone groaned.

"Enough of that," she said. "The holiday's over. Back to the office."

After all the aurors bar Amelia had left, she turned to Harry and said,

"Okay, where is he?"

Harry smiled and said, "Potter Manor."

Amelia snorted and said, "I should have known. Just tell him to contact me. Loan him your mirror, if need be."

"I should have the floo connected to Potter Manor either by now or later this afternoon," said Harry. "I'm heading over there to check. If it is, I'll get him to contact you directly."

"Good," she said.

"Once it's connected, I'm locking it down to only receiving calls from Longbottom Manor, the Ossuary, your office, and the public floo in Diagon Alley, for now. But that last one is a temporary measure," said Harry. "I'm giving you and Madam Longbottom direct access."

"Is that safe?" asked Amelia.

"I trust you. I trust Augusta. That's enough for me," said Harry.

"Thank you... Harry," said Amelia sincerely.

Harry waved it off and said, "You're the Head of the DMLE. But, more than that, you're the only living relative of one of my fellow Heirs. If I can't trust you, I can't trust anyone. And, I don't want to live my life like that."

Amelia stepped closer to Harry, leaned in and kissed him on the cheek.

Without saying a word she then turned on her heel and walked out.

Harry was stunned. He didn't expect that at all. So he was almost a minute before he left the ward, himself.

# # #

### 13. Harry's Change of Plans

#### Chapter Thirteen - Harry's Change of Plans

# # #

Apparating into the parlour at Potter Manor, Harry dropped his glamour and bellowed, "Sirius!"

Pixie popped in alongside him, and said, "Hello Master Harry, Sir!"

"Hello, Pixie," he said courteously to the house elf. "Where's my so-called godfather?"

Sirius came walking in from the kitchen, munching on a sandwich. "Hey, Harry," he said.

Rounding on him, Harry snarled, "That wasn't bloody nice!"

Grinning impudently back, Sirius said, "Well, you had me tied to a bloody

bed in the insane asylum. That could not go unpunished."

"I did not!" shot back Harry. "The bloody wizard doctors ordered that because you were ranting so bloody much!"

"Well," replied Sirius with a grin. "Oops!"

"Oops?" grouched Harry. "Do you know how long I was face down on the floor in your room with a wand to the back of my head?"

"Well, given that you're here now..." began Sirius, clearly trying to figure it out.

"That was a rhetorical bloody question!" snapped Harry.

"Okay," said Sirius, raising his hands in surrender, but still smiling. "I still think it was funny."

"Now," he continued, holding his arms out wide, "Come over here and give your godfather a hug."

Harry slumped his shoulders, but went over and dutifully gave him a hug.

"It's finally good to meet you in person, godfather," Harry said.

"And you, after all these years, godson," said his godfather.

Harry sighed and said, "You need to talk to Amelia to let her know you're safe."

He walked over and tossed a bit of floo powder into the fireplace and called Amelia in her office. As promised, the floo was working.

"Madam Bones?" asked Harry. "It's me, as promised."

Sighing, Amelia said, "Put him on."

"Godfather?" asked Harry, stepping aside.

Sirius walked over and said, "Madam Bones, I'm sorry for what happened.

I didn't mean to panic anyone."

Amelia sighed again and said, "Next time, leave a note. My aurors thought you'd been taken."

"Yes, Ma'am," said a contrite Sirius.

"Well, get out of here now," she said. "Get to know your godson. He's got a lot to tell you."

Sirius cut the connection and, turning to Harry said, "Now, I'm dying to know how you managed to prank the muggle Queen of England. Tell me everything."

"First," Harry said seriously. "I don't like the muggle word. I believe it to be a derogatory term. Please use either non-magical or mundane. And, second, Her Majesty is no mundane. She has magics of her own, they're just not the wand waving kind."

"Okay, Pup," said Sirius a bit sheepishly. "You're like your mother that way. She didn't appreciate the term muggle either. For her and for you, I won't use it."

"Thank you," said Harry sincerely. "And, just so you know, I don't like the terms muggle-born, or mud blood, either. Use mundane-born."

"I can do that," said Sirius.

Harry nodded and said, "Now, you need to know what's going on."

He walked over and settled onto a couch, waiting for Sirius to do the same. He began by saying, "Besides Her Majesty and some of her people, there are only seven other people who know the full story of what I'm about to tell you..."

Harry went through the background of his life and how it would have otherwise turned out. Then he went through how Myrrdin had pulled him out of normal reality and trained him. And how he managed to get in to see the Queen.

Pixie brought them both snacks while Harry was talking, and Harry had a pot of tea.

"Hang on," said Sirius. "You claimed Privilege of Peerage. What in

Merlin's name is that?"

"That is when one of Her peers has the right to demand of Her, Her time, to discuss matters of importance," explained Harry.

"Her peers?" asked Sirius, quite confused. "How could you do that?"

Harry sighed and instead asked, "What do you know of what happened on the night my parents died?"

"That night is burned into my memory," replied Sirius with a sad scowl.

"I'll never forget it."

Harry nodded and said, "Did you know that Voldemort was the last remaining heir of Salazaar Slytherin?"

"No," replied Sirius. "I mean, I know he claimed to be. But we didn't believe him."

"Well, I've got news for you," said Harry. "He was."

"Really?" asked Sirius, surprised.

"Really," responded Harry. "And when Mum defeated and killed him with her magics with the spells and wards she placed upon me, she not only defeated Voldemort, she effectively defeated the entire House of Slytherin."

"But... that would mean..." spluttered Sirius.

"That she took over the House of Slytherin," finished Harry.

"However," he went on, "She defeated him posthumously. So, it immediately passed to me."

"So, you took over House Slytherin?" asked a shocked Sirius.

"More than that," replied Harry, holding forth his right hand and showing the ring of Slytherin. "I'm the Earl of Slytherin; Lord Slytherin."

"Damn, Pup!" said a very shocked Sirius, staring at the ring. "Damn! That would have to be the greatest prank of all time!"

"Now," Harry went on, ignoring the comment. "The reason I could claim

Privilege of Peerage, is because the Earl of Slytherin is recognised in the peerage of the realm. The entire realm; mundane and magical. Which means I have a position waiting for me in the House of Lords under hereditary peerage when I'm not going to be so busy elsewhere."

Sirius sat back in stunned silence and Harry waited for him to gather his thoughts.

"But, wasn't she upset you did that? I mean, you basically forced Her to give you audience," asked Sirius, once he'd collected himself.

"She was, until I gave her the names of the other three Heirs," said Harry calmly.

"You what?" exclaimed Sirius, shooting up straight in his chair and staring back in surprise.

"You heard me," replied Harry. "I gave her the names of the other three Heirs. Then she ordered they all be collected and brought before Her.

"In the course of everything that happened, I, and then the other three, were ordered by Her to take up our titles. Her magic overrode the magics of not being able to take up our Heads of House positions. The magic did the only thing it could do. It recognised Her Majesty's authority and immediately emancipated us.

"Because we were emancipated, we were then put in a position to take the rings of the Heads of Houses of our own Houses. And Her Majesty sealed it by ordering us to take those rings, as well. So, I'm now Lord Slytherin and Lord Potter," said Harry again showing his Head of House Potter ring.

"So, who are the others?" asked Sirius, still in a bit of shock.

"The new Earl of Gryffindor is Neville Longbottom, son of Frank and Alice Longbottom and grandson of Madam Augusta Longbottom. The new Countess of Hufflepuff is Susan Bones, the niece and ward of Madam

Amelia Bones. And, the new Countess of Ravenclaw is a supposed mundane-born witch named Hermione Granger. We are all starting our first year at Hogwarts this year," replied Harry.

"You're all eleven?" asked Sirius.

"Well, we'll all still be eleven on the 1st of September. Hermione turns twelve about two weeks later."

"What are the odds of that?" wondered Sirius.

"None, actually," stated Harry. "All four of us are the Children of Prophecy."

Harry went on to tell Sirius the prophecy and what they were tasked to do. He explained about the cubes, showing him the box, and what they were giving the other three Heirs. And he went on to tell him about what he had been up to since he'd been back.

He then told him about the mirrors and, withdrawing it from his satchel, offered Sirius mirror #11 together with the list of who had what mirror, and showed him how to use it.

"Please, take this serious, Sirius," he said and snorted. Sirius rolled his eyes. "And don't contact Sir Anthony, Sir David or Her Majesty. Those three are purely for emergencies only. Not even to prank them!"

"Okay, Pup," said Sirius. "I understand. I promise, I won't."

"Good," Harry nodded.

"Now comes the bad crap," said Harry continuing. "Voldemort's return and the horcruxes."

Harry explained how Voldemort was supposed to return and when. What the horcruxes were, and where they were. And what he needed Sirius to do.

"So, that's why you want me to kick Bellatrix out of the family. I get the heirloom contents of her vault and, with it, Hufflepuff's cup," said Sirius.

"And Regulus found the locket a decade ago and put it in Grimmauld Place."

"Yes," said Harry. "I've already collected the ring. I can get Rowena Ravenclaw's diadem, tiara, once I'm at Hogwarts. And I can kill Quirrell at any time. But I need to do it in such a way that old Voldy's spirit doesn't escape. The soul leech that was in my scar has already been removed by Myrrdin, so that just leaves the diary."

"Getting the diary off Malfoy, if all goes to plan, will occur when he slips it to Ginny Weasley, Arthur and Molly Weasley's youngest, when she goes to Flourish and Blotts to pick up her text books with her family shortly before the 1st of September next year. And I can take it off her then."

"The final horcrux, within Nagini, won't be made until the final piece of his soul is put into and possesses that baby. However, I think that possession is actually the same spirit that escapes when Quirrell is killed. So, none of that should happen. If I destroy the other horcruxes before he tries that, there will be no existing soul anchors. His spirit will, instead, 'pass on'. Final death. No monster baby; no monster snake."

"To meet the requirements of the prophecy, all that has to happen is the one who destroys the last horcrux has to be me. By my hand. It says he has to die by my hand, not that I have to kill him. It doesn't sound like they differ, but they can by the method I've covered."

"You've got this all worked out, don't you?" asked Sirius with wonder.

"Myrrdin and I have been working on this for almost fifteen years," replied Harry. "Plus, we've got backup plans out the whazoo for as many contingencies as possible."

"The other bit of a shock is that, as Earls," Harry went on, "We four outrank every other so-called Noble on the Wizengamot. And they can't deny it of us. There's four identical seats currently hidden below the

Chairperson's seat that will rise when we formally present ourselves as Lords at a Wizengamot meeting of our choice. A fifth is also there, for the Her Majesty's representative."

"You four are going to turn wizarding Britain on its head!" exclaimed Sirius.

"That's the idea," replied Harry. "We four are going to drag the wizarding world into the late twentieth century, whether it likes it or not. And we will have the full backing of the Crown while we do it.

"If the Wizengamot tries to physically stop us, Her Majesty's forces will, using the floo at the Palace, come through to the Ministry and take over by force."

"It sounds almost too much," said Sirius. "And all four of you are only eleven!"

"Well, we're only eleven now," replied Harry. "But I've got nineteen years of life under my belt. And all four of us will have knowledge way beyond anything any other wizard has had since, pretty much, the days of Merlin."

"In the process of saving magical Britain from itself, I'm going to destroy both the leader of the dark and the so-called leader of the light."

"Damn, Pup!" said Sirius, more than little awed. "With that much ambition, you really are a Slytherin!"

"You know," mused Harry, "I thought you'd have a hard time accepting I won't be a Gryffindor."

"I did, at first, I guess," admitted Sirius with a slight shrug of his shoulders. "But, you have your father's bravery and your mother's smarts. The two together, I guess, would best suit Slytherin. No matter how much I hate the idea."

"Slytherin House is not supposed to be the House of dark magic and

purity it is today. Slytherin was misunderstood. And history is written by the victor," replied Harry. "Slytherin was worried, and justifiably so, that non-magicals would fear wizards and witches. The burnings and drownings, the horrors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries especially, were proof enough of that.

"However, part of the permission both Kings of Scotland and England gave for the creation of Hogwarts, and the reason all four Houses are Earldoms, is because the four founders promised to use their trained witches and wizards in the defence of both realms. Now that it's all one realm, we still owe that debt."

Harry shook his head, "There's so much that's gone wrong over the years - and so much lost - and four kids, that haven't even reached their teen years, are going to lead the drive to fix it. It's a crazy world."

Sirius snorted. "A bit full of yourself, aren't you?"

Harry chuckled, "And that's what I need you to be for me. The slave in the chariot who constantly whispers in the ear of the triumphant Roman general, 'You are not a God, you are only a man'."

"I'm a slave?" asked Sirius with a frown.

"No, it's an analogy," laughed Harry. "You're the voice of conscience. The one who reminds me I'm only a man."

"Oh, that I can do," said Sirius with enthusiasm.

Harry snorted and looked at his watch, then said, "The time's getting late.

Pixie!"

\*Pop\* "Yes, Master Harry, Sir?"

"Pixie, it looks like we'll both be here for dinner tonight. Can you whip something up for the both of us?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Master Harry, Sir," the little elf replied. "Pixie already cooking!"

"Thank you, Pixie," said Harry with a smile.

When it was ready, Harry and Sirius talked about other matters while eating. One of which was Remus Lupin.

"You can trust him, Harry," said Sirius. "One of the reasons I managed to stay sane in that hell hole was the letters I'd receive from him."

"As far as I know, he never came looking for me, Sirius," replied Harry sadly.

"Oh, yes he did!" said Sirius emphatically. "He was constantly travelling right across the country trying to find you. Dumbledore refused to tell him where you were, but that didn't stop him looking."

Sirius sighed, "It's been hard for him. He had to keep going over to the continent to work in the magical community, because he couldn't find work here. Any work he did find here was in the muggle... err, mundane... world. As soon as he'd saved enough money, he'd be right back here searching again."

Harry said, "Well, Pixie tells me he sometimes comes past here, every now and then. If he comes again, the first thing he needs to know is NOT to contact Dumbledore and tell him where I am. Hell, don't tell anyone where I am."

"I think I can convince him of that, without a problem," replied Sirius.

"He's really not happy with Dumbledore for not letting him see you, or even giving news about you."

Harry nodded and said, "Okay, I can accept that."

Looking at his watch he said, "It's time for me to go visit the other Heirs with their next cubes. I want to be earlier tonight in case they have any questions.

"Take one of the guest rooms and I'll see you tomorrow. I still need to return to the palace, tonight. If only to pick up my trunk, books and papers. Otherwise, I'll probably be moving here semi-permanently

tomorrow."

"I'll see you tomorrow, then," said Sirius.

"Pixie!" called Harry.

\*Pop\* "Yes, Master Harry, Sir?"

"Excellent meal, Pixie," said Harry. "Especially, since you didn't know you'd have two to serve tonight."

"Thank you, Master Harry, Sir!"

"I'll also probably be moving in and staying here for a while as of tomorrow, okay?"

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir!"

Turning to Sirius, Harry said, "Oh, and Sirius?"

"Pup?"

"I have one more thing to show you," said Harry with a grin picking up his satchel.

"Oh?" asked Sirius with a quizzical look.

Still grinning, Harry crouched and leapt into the air, shifting to his earth phoenix animagus. He hovered there and watched Sirius's look of gobsmacked shock a few seconds before flashing to outside, redonning his glamour and apparating to the Longbottom Manor.

# # #

This cube was Magical Medicine, Potions & Herbology, He knew Neville, at least, would like it.

A quick run through the homes of the first two and he was at the Grangers. Dan sat him down in the lounge room.

"Lad," he began, "I used that cube last night."

Harry nodded and asked, "And, I take it you've been reviewing it through your mind today?"

"Yes. And I'm quite disturbed by it," replied Dan. "I understood those

Death Eater folks are bad people. But, that cube shows they truly are terrorists. The Crucio Curse, while painful, is survivable. And I can understand the Avada Kedavra killing curse. In war, people die. But that Imperious Curse is just disgusting.

"But I noticed there are a number of others that, while they don't say they're in the Unforgivable set, are just as deadly. The Confringo Blasting Hex, the Entrail-Expelling Curse, the Reductor Curse, and a few more just to name a few."

Harry nodded and said, "Yeah, I know. I think I even killed Riddle in the original time line with a well-aimed piercing curse, right between the eyes. But, it's like anything else in the mundane world. A hammer can be used to bang nails into a board, or stave someone's head in. The Unforgivables, though, they're only good for one thing, really."

"Yeah, I get that," said Dan. "But there are just so many ways to kill people with magic."

"Nowhere near as many as non-magical ways," replied Harry with a shrug.

Dan sighed, "Stopping their Avada Kedavra spell, though..."

"Dan, most of their spells will be stopped by three important factors," said Harry. "One, it takes a few seconds to cast and they don't travel all that fast; so you can duck and cover. Two, the Unforgivables cannot travel through solid objects; so use something as cover. And three, ALL spells have to be cast within the range of the spell caster; and that's usually about no more than thirty feet away, so don't let them get into that range.

"You have weaponry that kills well outside that range, you can hide behind barricades, and you've each got an emergency portkey that you should be carrying on your person at all times. And the trace that'll be

left will only show a scrambled destination. And, even if they know where you went, the wards I've now put on Potter Manor will redirect their butts about a mile out to sea off the south coast and about fifty feet in the air. They better know how to swim."

Dan snorted. "Yeah, and now that the MI5 security systems are operational I'll know they're coming well before they can come in and get to us. So they won't be catching us by surprise."

"That's right," replied Harry.

Dan thought about that for a while, then shook himself out of his... melancholy mood.

"Anyway," he said. "The other matter I wanted to discuss with you is your fitness levels."

"Errr... why?" asked Harry warily.

"If you're going to be doing a lot of jumping around to avoid being hit, and your magical stamina is linked quite a bit to your physical stamina, you're going to need to be fit to protect my daughter," said Dan.

'Oh, God,' thought Harry. 'I know where this is going.'

"So, now that the three heirs are all going great guns with the cubes without problems, you've got time to do something about your fitness levels," said Dan.

"Dan, I'm fine," said Harry a bit defensively.

"Fine and warrior fit are not the same thing," argued Dan. "So, starting tomorrow morning, you're going to be physically training with me...

Future son-in-law."

Harry sighed. He knew what was coming.

"Now, I don't expect you to do the same level of exercise as me. But, I expect you to begin training with, say, twenty push-ups, twenty sit-ups, and a one mile run, to start," said Dan, warming into his subject. "Then

we can see what we can do to get you a sidearm, and teach you to shoot it left-handed. Not a 45, mind; something more like a 25 calibre ACP round in a Baby Browning, will do for now. At least, until you can get strength built up in your wrist and shoulder.

"The Baby Browning is a small, lightweight weapon that doesn't have a lot of stopping power over any range. But, we're talking close range if you need to use it, anyway. Plus, it'll give you experience with a handgun before we move you up to a 32 calibre piece. Okay?"

Harry thought about it, and could see Dan's logic. Wizards know little about mundane weaponry, and have no idea how fast and lethal they could be in the right hands. Protego or solid object shield, or not, a good automatic can cause a lot of damage and get more shells down range than spells can be cast. Firing left-handed also had the bonus of leaving his 'spell hand' free to still be casting.

"Okay, I can see your arguments," replied Harry. "Plus, even if I don't hit them, the sound of the damned thing going off should cause them to break concentration for a second or two and allow me time to get a spell of at them."

"But," he went on, "what about the law regarding civilians carrying weaponry, especially concealed weaponry and handguns?"

Dan grinned and said, "I checked. There's an old law that states, as an earl, you're entitled to develop a military force in the name of Her Majesty. There's no minimal requirement for how many people that is. You can be a force of one."

"You've got your heart set on this, don't you?" asked Harry a bit sullenly.

"Yep!" replied Dan with great cheer. "So, tomorrow morning we'll start. You'll need to be here at about 8.00am. I'll then use your training as my cooling down phase from my morning workout. Sound good?"

"No," replied Harry. "But far be it for me to disappoint the father of Countess Ravenclaw. I'll see you tomorrow morning."

"Good lad!" said a grinning Dan.

# # #

Next morning, Michael came in to see him and Harry told him he'd be moving out that day.

"Do you need me to start packing your effects now, My Lord," he asked.

"No, a light breakfast first," replied Harry. "And then I have to disappear for about two hours. Major Granger is insisting I begin a physical fitness regime under his tutelage and I'm hoping it's not going to take longer than that. So, I should be back here directly after that to move everything to Potter Manor."

"Yes, My Lord," said Michael. "It has been a pleasure to aid you this past week, Sir."

"No, Michael, the thanks are all mine," replied Harry seriously. "You've been a godsend. Her Majesty was right. Staying in a hotel would not have been the best idea."

"Thank you, My Lord, for your kind words," he replied with a small bow and left the room.

Harry enjoyed a breakfast of a small bowl of bran cereal with a dollop of fresh fruit, a small orange juice, a cup of tea and a couple slices of fresh toast. Then headed off to the Grangers for a couple of hours of what he would soon come to believe was Hell.

# # #

When he returned two hours later he looked quite bedraggled. Michael was waiting for him.

"Michael?" he asked.

"Yes, My Lord?"

"I believe the Major is trying to kill me and humiliate me at the same time."

"Oh?" the butler asked.

"He had me run, Michael. Lots," said Harry with a bit of moan.

"Running is good for you, My Lord," said Michael.

"But he wouldn't let up! He kept pushing me and pushing me," whined Harry.

"That would get the heart pumping, My Lord."

"I tried to get him to include Hermione, his daughter, in our future training," said Harry. "But he wouldn't hear of it."

"Oh?" asked the butler. "And why is that, My Lord?"

"He said, quite unctuously mind, that 'Countesses do not run!'"

"That would seem to be a valid point, My Lord," said Michael, his voice beginning to sound a little strained.

"Yeah, maybe," sulked Harry. "But he didn't have to do it while running backwards in front of me! And, not even appearing to be out of breath while I was wheezing away like a leaky set of bellows!"

All Harry heard was a slight choking sound coming from his butler's direction.

"Michael? Are you laughing at me?" demanded Harry.

"No, Sir," choked the butler with a face that was beginning to flush.

"Well," Harry grumbled, a bit suspicious of his butler of this past week.

"When I suggested maybe there was someone else he could recommend to help me train, he mentioned someone he called 'Sar'Major'. He also seemed to think that was funny. Do you think that sounds funny?"

"Excuse me, Sir," said the butler with a very strained rapid voice, leaving the room quite rapidly for the bedroom. "I need to get a change of clothes out for you!"

Harry had the impression the man had actually fled!

# # #

After showering and getting changed, Harry took all his belongings and headed for Potter Manor. There, he found out from Pixie that 'Master Sirius' was still asleep.

"Best leave him, then," said Harry to the elf.

Indicating his bags, he said, "Can you please put the trunk in the master bedroom? The duffel is for the office."

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir!" chirped the elf.

She grabbed the trunk and popped with it out of the room, returning a few seconds later and popping out with the duffel.

Walking up stairs and entering the master bedroom, Harry called Pixie and asked, "What did you do with my parent's effects?"

"Pixie put them in a trunk up in the attic, Master Harry," she replied. "Did Pixie do good?"

"That's fine," said Harry nodding. "Does Master Sirius have any clothes to wear?"

"Oh, yes, Master Harry Sir!" said the elf excitedly. "Master Sirius used to live here before Master James and Missy Lily went away! He have clothes!"

Harry nodded again and said, "Good. But if he doesn't have enough, tell him he can have Master James's clothes."

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir!" chirped the elf.

Harry went down to the study and pulled out all his book purchases. He cleared some of his parent's books off one of the bookshelves in the room and placed his purchases there.

Then he set up his typewriter and typing paper onto the desk, and used the two, now dead, message cubes as paperweights to hold down the

typing paper. One for the blank sheets, and one for the sheets he'd already typed up for his book. He'd also come up with a better title for it, 'Harry Potter: In His Own Words'. It went straight to the truth.

He'd thought of starting to type where he'd left off, but changed his mind. He grabbed about a half dozen of the still blank sheets and a pen. And he began to write. He needed to know what teachers he'd need in the school when they were ready to restructure the entire curriculum.

He thought about how many classes for students to attend, and when. It was important to recognise that idle hands will lead to mischief. He needed to teach the mundane-raised about the wizarding world and the magical-raised about the mundane world. He needed to instill within them, the students, a strong sense of ethics and morality right from the start.

He thought about making the classes closer together with distances between classrooms arranged in a more logical and sensible fashion. He thought about separating the subjects where the students needed to use their wands so their magical cores weren't exhausted.

After an hour he had the subjects down, and what sort of teachers he'd need for each. He had started with what he knew was already there and built upon that. Some classes would be removed or moved to an elective. Some classes would need completely restructuring. But extra classes would definitely be added.

There would be:

Years Subjects

1 Ethics and Morality (new class)

1 Studies and Traditions of the Mundane World (class for magically raised students only)

1 Studies and Traditions of the Wizarding World (class for mundane raised

students only)

1-5 Transfiguration (unchanged)

1-5 Charms (unchanged)

1 Chemistry (new class)

2 Chemistry and Potions (new double class)

3-5 Potions (restructured double class)

3 Mathematics (new class)

3-4 Physics (new class)

1-5 Defence (restructured)

1-2 Mathematics and Accounting (New class)

1-2 History of Magic (restructured and updated)

1-4 Astronomy (restructured to use the ability of the magical sky in the Great Hall)

2 Law

2-5 Herbology (restructured)

3-4 Meditation and Occlumency (new class - elective)

3-5 Care of Magical Creatures (restructured)

3-5 Technology & Technomancy (new class - elective)

3-5 Divination (restructured - elective - conditional)

4-5 Ancient Runes & Ley Lines (restructured and updated - elective)

4-5 Arithmancy (unchanged - elective)

5 Wandless, Druidic, Other Forms of Magic (new class - elective)

5 Supervised Self Study and Research (new class - elective)

6-7 Advanced Transfiguration (unchanged)

6-7 Advanced Charms (unchanged)

6-7 Advanced Herbology (unchanged)

6-7 Advanced Potions 1

6-7 Advanced Potions 2

6-7 Advanced Defence

6-7 Advanced Care of Magical Creatures (restructured)

6-7 Advanced Ancient Runes & Ley Lines (restructured and updated)

6-7 Advanced Arithmancy (unchanged)

6-7 Advanced Technomancy (new class)

6-7 Politics and Diplomacy (new class)

6-7 Business Principles (new class)

6-7 Curse Breaking (new class)

6-7 First Aid

That was a hell of a lot more classes added than he'd originally expected.

Of course, some professors would cover multiple classes. But Harry knew he needed to bring in more teachers to fill all the slots. A lot more teachers. Many of them would need to be mundane-born, or at least raised and more-or-less living in the mundane world now.

He needed Sir David's help or he'd have to advertise. That was now a given. And he'd pay for the extra teaching staff out of his own funds, for now. Once the four heirs brought the school up to a decent standard, he could offer international students access. They could pay extra. But he was also going to get rid of the twenty-five percent discount offered pure-bloods. That, of course, would happen anyway when the laws were changed. But he could bring it in to the school early.

He made a list of what sort of mundane-knowledgeable teachers he'd need:

Ethics and Morality

Studies and Traditions of the Mundane World (Professor Babbage just didn't get it)

Chemistry

Mathematics

Accounting

Physics

Law (a foot in both camps?)

Politics and Diplomacy

Business Principles

And he made a list of magical knowledgeable teachers he'd need:

Studies and Traditions of the Wizarding World

Chemistry and Potions (someone with a foot in both camps?)

Defence (replace Quirrell)

History of Magic (replace Binns)

Meditation and Occlumency

Technology & Technomancy (overseas?)

Curse Breaking

First Aid and Basic Healing (Madam Pomfrey doubles?)

Wandless, Druidic, Other Forms of Magic

For those put on detention, a specific staff member for that with knowledge in:

Manners and Proper Behaviour

Equality and Respect

There would be no more useless detentions of cauldron scrubbing or the like. Detentions would be meaningful and suitable for the 'crime' committed.

Next, he set about rewriting the student's rulebook. He wanted ten rules that covered most major infractions. He'd ensure a copy was delivered to each student and their guardians.

1. Your wand is considered a deadly weapon. If you point it at someone, and that person has not given you prior permission to do so, it can be construed as an attempt to cause lethal harm. You may be treated accordingly by staff.

Magical paintball within the paintball arena is not construed as an attempt to cause harm.

2. The derogatory terms 'muggle', 'muggle-born', 'squib', 'mudblood' and 'blood traitor' are banned anywhere on the grounds of Hogwarts, within the town of Hogsmeade, aboard the Hogwarts Express or Kings Cross Station. Use of those terms from this moment forth will cause you the immediate loss of five points minimum. You may use the terms non-magical or mundane, or mundane born.

3. Each student will receive a set number of points at the beginning of each year. If your points drop to half, your guardians will be notified. If your points drop to ten percent remaining, your guardians will again be notified. If your points drop to zero you can, and probably will, be expelled. Point deductions may be appealed in the first instance to your House Counsellor. If you're unsatisfied with the decision, you may appeal to your Head of House. The Head of House's decision is final.

4. Points may be earned back through academic reward or through working for the school in specified tasks. Points allocated will be fair.

5. Having fun is allowed. Having fun at the expense of harm to another is not. Exception: Within the rules of the game of any recognised sport including on the Quidditch pitch.

6. Criminal activity will be reported to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE). If the DMLE find you guilty of committing a crime, you may be expelled irrespective of the number of points you hold.

7. Any student expelled from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry will have their name submitted to the DMLE as no longer attending the school. If you do not attend a school you may quickly find your wand snapped and your magic bound.

8. The Heirs want you to be safe during your stay at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. If you discover a situation within the school or

grounds you do not consider safe, report it to the nearest Professor, your Counsellor or one of the four Heirs immediately. A quick and accurate report may see you earn points.

9. The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Hogwarts Castle and the grounds, are the property of the four Heirs. It is they, and they alone, who make the final decision on all matters relating to the school, the castle, the grounds and the students.

10. Irrespective of the decision of the Sorting Hat, in extenuating circumstances you may be resorted into another House by the Heads of the Houses. Their decision is final.

Once he'd done that, Harry sat back and sighed.

From the side he heard Sirius, "What're you doing, Pup?"

Harry was startled. He didn't realise Sirius was even out of bed yet. A quick check of the time showed he'd been working almost nonstop for three hours.

Sighing, Harry replied, "Making a start on completely rewriting the school curriculum."

"Now, that's a lofty goal," said Sirius. "Why would you want to?"

"Because that's where the attitudes of magical Britain are first formed in the minds of the country's witches and wizards," replied Harry. "Their time at Hogwarts are their formative years. And it's there they learn the vast majority of life in the magical community. If I can shape the curriculum I can shape their minds.

"I need to shape how the graduating students think about their place in the world in order to get them to stop being unknowingly seditious. Once I've got that sorted, I'm most of the way to enacting major change across the whole community."

Sirius snorted, "This was Merlin's idea?"

"Both of us, actually," replied Harry. "I think it was the idea we both came to when we were trying to figure out where to start. I remember saying, 'We need to start at the beginning, of course. Where else would we start?' and that led us to realising what an opportunity Hogwarts, as the only serious magical school in the United Kingdom, offered us."

"Not the Ministry?" asked Sirius, quite curious.

"Oh, we'll be working that end, too, of course," replied Harry. "Her Majesty is really quite displeased with Her Minister and the Ministry for Magic. So, I know we have to make a start on that as soon as possible. I think she'll be... testy... if we don't."

Sirius snorted and shook his head. "Your father would be soooo proud of you, Harry," he said. "Here's you, about to pull the ultimate prank of all time, and you're just so calm and relaxed about it all."

"There's a non-magical saying, 'Prior preparation and planning prevents poor performance'," said Harry. "And there was one Hell of a lot of planning that went into this. Sure, I've hit a few bumps where things didn't go as expected, but they weren't anywhere near enough to rattle me or completely derail the plans."

"So, what's next in your grand plans?" asked Sirius.

"Getting you down to Gringotts, and then to Ollivander's," replied Harry.

"Have you had breakfast yet?"

"Yeah, while you were in here writing up a storm," said his godfather.

"Well," said Harry, rising from his chair. "There's no time like the present. And I don't like the target that's currently on your back while you haven't taken your ring."

"Actually, before we do that," said Sirius a bit carefully, "Do you want to tell me what all that was about last night?"

"Ah!" said Harry, understanding. "You mean my animagus form."

"So, you are an animagus, just like your father and me," he said. "What was it? And how did you disappear while in the form?"

Harry smiled and said a bit proudly, "I'm an earth phoenix. And I didn't disappear. I used the inherent ability of the phoenix to... flash... out of here."

Sirius was gobsmacked. "You're a phoenix?"

Nodding and chuckling, Harry said, "Yeah."

"I didn't know someone could have a magical creature as an animagus," said Sirius with wonder.

"Why not?" asked Harry. "You're halfway between an Irish wolfhound and grimm."

"A grimm?" asked Sirius.

"Yeah, didn't you know?" asked Harry back.

"No, it never occurred to me," replied Sirius with a smile.

"Well," said Harry, changing the subject, "The Animagus Mutual Admiration Society is going to need to adjourn, for now. We need to get you to Gringotts and Ollivanders."

Sirius nodded, and led the way back into the parlour and the fireplace.

"Let's get it over with," he sighed.

# # #

Coming out in the public fireplace in Diagon Alley, Sirius immediately headed for the bank. At all times he kept a wary eye out for anyone who might have had any intent to accost them. There were a lot of people quite upset he was no longer in Azkaban, and still thought him guilty. It didn't matter if the Veritaserum, and Dumbledore's confession, cleared him of all charges. They didn't want to be wrong in their original assumption, because it would make them look like idiots.

They made it to the bank without trouble and Sirius was soon on his way

to see his Account Manager. Harry used the opportunity to speak with Blockrig.

In a private room and pleasantries out of the way, Harry asked, "What did you find out about the ownership of the Daily Prophet?"

"It's owned in shares by a number of members on the Wizengamot and other wealthy people and, in large part, by the Ministry, My Lord," replied Blockrig. "However, the Ministry share, while substantial, is still under twenty-five per cent. I have begun to make enquiries of the share holders, or their representatives, to purchase their shares. Would you like me to go ahead with that?"

Harry didn't hesitate. "Yes, and see how much of the share owned by the Ministry you can also acquire. I'm not against using bribes to garner those shares, either. Do it quietly and, if necessary, do it slowly. I don't want my hand tipped. I also don't want the Daily Prophet, if it can be at all avoided, knowing who the real purchaser is, just yet."

"Very good, My Lord," said Blockrig. "You want to be the majority shareholder but remain silent, until you're ready."

"Precisely," replied Harry.

"If I may ask, My Lord," said Blockrig, cautiously, "Is this part of your... destruction of Albus Dumbledore's reputation?"

Nodding, Harry said, "That forms part of it. But it also deals with my reputation, for when I come out of hiding. He who holds the attention of the masses, controls the conversation."

"I see," said the old goblin nodding. "And if you control the conversation, you control what is talked about, and what is not."

"Exactly," said Harry firmly. "Sometimes the quill truly is mightier than the sword. Especially, when you're the one holding the quill... and you know how to use it."

After concluding his business, Harry waited for Sirius to meet him on the main floor of the bank. He had to wait a while, though. When Sirius finally walked onto the main floor, Harry could see him staring at the Head of House ring on his finger.

As Sirius walked up to him, Harry said, "Good. It looks good on you, Lord Black."

Startled, Sirius replied, "This is going to take some getting used to."

"You were born for the role," replied Harry. "Now, shall we head for Ollivanders?"

Looking up, Sirius replied, "Yes, I think that would be for the best. I think it's going to feel good finally having a wand in my hand again after all these years."

Leaving the bank, there was still no sign of anyone who might recognise them. And they made their way down to Ollivander's. Sirius also told him he'd kicked out Bellatrix, Narcissa and Draco from the family. And reclaimed the family heirlooms, including the Hufflepuff cup, from Bellatrix's vault. That was now safely in Sirius's vault.

"At least, once it becomes known, you're going to be safe from Malfoy trying to get you bumped off," said Harry. "Malfoy might try and argue the matter before the Wizengamot, but kicking them out of the family is not something so odd as to warrant attention."

Inside Ollivander's, there was no one else present. Sirius walked straight up to the counter and rang the little silver tabletop bell. Ollivander came sliding along the wall on a library shelf wheeled ladder, and hopped off.

Looking at Sirius, he said, "Ah, Sirius Black. I've been wondering when you'd be coming into my store. Ten and a quarter inch, oak, with a unicorn hair core."

Suddenly staring right at Harry, he said. "And you, Mister Potter. Are you

here to purchase your first?"

"Ahhh... No," replied Harry. "I'll be back at the end of the month for that.

Today is just for Lord Black."

"Of course," said the old wand maker, looking back at Sirius. "Let me see what I can do."

The old wand maker disappeared into his stacks before coming back with an old box. It was covered on top with a layer dust.

"Now that you've grown some," said Ollivander, "Perhaps a slightly longer wand, this time."

Opening the box and offering its contents to Sirius, Sirius removed the wand from the box and, holding it, he and Harry could both sense the power emanating from the match.

"Oak from the same tree, hair from the same unicorn. This time at ten and three quarter inches," said the old crafter. "Repeat customers are almost always much easier." Turning to Harry he asked, "Are you sure I can't fit you for a wand now, Mister Potter?"

"I'm sure. Thank you," said Harry.

After paying for the wand, Sirius was followed out of the store by Harry, who looked back wondering how the hell the old man had seen through his glamour.

"Now, Sirius," said Harry, shaking off the feeling. "How about some decent clothes? Madam Malkin's or Twilfitt and Tattings?"

Sirius nodded and said, "Definitely not Twilfitts. I'll pick up a couple of outfits at Malkin's, but I'm happy enough wearing your father's clothes.

We were very close to being the same size."

"Sirius, you're a Lord. You need to both dress the part and be seen to be dressing the part," said Harry. "Otherwise, other folks won't take you serious."

"Oh. Ha Ha," said Sirius with a straight face.

Grinning, Harry said, "Madam Malkin's, it is."

After buying some decent wizard wear, and including two top quality sets from Twilfitt and Tattings much to Sirius's disgust, Harry and Sirius went back to Potter Manor, The Pottery.

# # #

Once more back at The Pottery, and with lunch under their belts, Harry said to Sirius, "I had a long think about what you said last night about Remus."

"Yes, and?" prompted Sirius.

"I think you're right. We need to have, at least, a sit-down conversation with the man," said Harry.

"Good," replied Sirius.

"But I think you're going to need to be proactive in your search for him," explained Harry. "I think you're going to need to take out an advertisement in, at least, the Daily Prophet; and probably similar newspapers over on the continent. Just in case he's still over there."

Sirius nodded and said, "Yeah, that'd work. Where should he contact me?"

Thinking about it, Harry said, "Owls don't need to know where someone is to get mail through to them, right?"

"Right," replied Sirius. "So, just tell them to owl me at Grimmauld Place, and the owl will come here, anyway?"

"That's what I think will happen," replied Harry. "Unless, of course, you want to move back into Grimmauld Place. After all, it's your home."

"No, no, no," said Sirius waving his hands in a warding off gesture. "That may be the home of the Black family, but it's definitely not my home."

Hesitating, Sirius then asked, "Unless you're throwing me out, Pup?"

"Definitely not!" said Harry emphatically. "If this is where you want to

live, then this is your home. I know Dad wanted that, at least."

"Thanks, Harry," the older man said gratefully.

"But," said Harry, "I need to know I can trust Remus before he finds out I'm no longer stuffed away somewhere. So, when he does contact you, tell him to meet you at the Leaky Cauldron, or someplace similar. I'll wear my glamour and be a friend of yours, we can figure out what to do then."

"Not a bad idea, Pup," mused Sirius.

Nodding, Harry said, "Okay, we'll do that, then."

# # #

Later in the day Harry said, "I'm still very uncomfortable with Dobby portraying me in the Durlsey house. I'm thinking of pulling him out early."

"Won't that put a crimp in what you want to do?" asked Sirius.

Still thinking, Harry replied, "No, I don't think so. You see, my biggest problem is going to be switching with Dobby during the early morning of Saturday, the twenty-fourth of this month, that could set Dumbledore's monitors off he has on the wards. Plus, it's that night the other Heirs are supposed to receive their final cube. I can get their guardians to actually activate the last one, but I really wanted to be there for it.

"Then, I either have to stay there for the next eleven days until the whole drama of Hagrid collecting me from the Hut-on-the-Rock at midnight, the morning of my birthday, and then spend the whole day with him doing all the buying of my school supplies. That would put me out of circulation for twelve days, and I really don't want to go through the whole charade of that.

"Then I have to switch back with Dobby for the month of August, before switching back for the final time on the morning of the 1st of September

when Uncle Vernon drops me off at Kings Cross Station."

Sighing, Harry went on to say, "That's stupid. I want Dumbledore to be rattled and off his game, so let's really throw him off his game. I'll send Pixie to Dobby to tell him, as soon as he receives the Hogwarts letter on the 24th, he's to walk out the front door to the street, run away and elf-apparate straight here with it. If there's any tracking charms anywhere on Dobby or his... my... belongings, I'll remove the damned things right away.

"Dumbledork's alarms will go off, but so what? When he goes to the Dursleys to try and find out what happened to me, the only thing they'll be able to tell him is that they sent me to fetch the mail, and I just walked out the door and away. Dumbles will then be frantic trying to work out what happened to me."

Sirius said, "Well, that'll save the elf from further abuse, but what then?" Thinking a bit more, Harry said, "We'll set it up that I'll turn up a while later at Diagon Alley as Harry Potter. Say... about four to five hours later. I'll go to Gringotts - because that's where someone said I should go first - and then I'll come out and start buying my school supplies. I won't keep it a secret who I am; after all, I have no idea I'm supposed to be famous. Dumblebutt should, by then, have the Alley watched.

"He'll soon receive word from an informant Harry Potter's turned up in the Alley and will leg-it straight there to grab me. I'll scream bloody murder about 'the dirty old man who wants to drag me away and touch me in naughty places'. That will bring folks from everywhere to find out what's going on. Someone is sure to contact the aurors."

"You're currently looking for me and you... just happen... to also be in the Alley looking for information about me, when Dumblebum finds me. You run up to him and, not recognising me, you'll demand of him, 'Where's

my godson, old man; where's Harry Potter?'. "

"I'll say, 'I'm Harry Potter!' By then the aurors will either be there or very close. You know you're my magical guardian as you read the Potter Will before my parents died so, if Dumbles tries to take me away - which he will - you'll scream 'kidnapping'. I'll just happen to have a copy of the Will as the goblins gave it to me. I just won't say when they gave it to me.

"I'm sure I can coach Amelia to snatch the Will out of my hand as soon as I brandish it, thereby stopping old Dumbles from doing it first, and we can go from there."

Sirius snorted and then laughed. "Dumbledore won't know what hit him!" he said.

"Besides," said Harry, "if Remus hasn't read the advertisement in any of the papers, by then; then the articles of how Harry Potter suddenly turned up in Diagon Alley out of the blue will certainly grab his attention."

"Definitely!" said Sirius.

Sitting back and thinking a bit more, Harry then said, "Yeah, this will work much better. Once I'm supposedly under your care, as far as Dumbles knows, you can then... supposedly... take me back to Gringotts to accept my ring as Lord Potter. Because, after all, it would be my parent's wishes as the last remaining member of the Potter line.

"That would then allow an investigation of the Potter accounts... led, of course... by the goblins and Madam Bones. That will get Dumbles well and truly hopping. And will mean I no longer have the issue of Neville or Susan allowing their Head of Houses rings to become public."

"That was a neat trick of convincing the goblins to do that, by the way," said Sirius.

Suddenly sitting up, Harry exclaimed, "Arabella Figg!"

"Pardon?" asked Sirius, surprised.

"Arabella Figg," said Harry. "She's a non-magical born to magical parents. What you used to call a 'squib'. Dumbles has her watching the Dursley residence to keep an eye on me; and I suspect he's paying her from my trust fund to get her to stay there in a house just around the street from the Dursleys. I'll have Dobby not even bother to walk out into the street. He can come straight here very early on the morning of the 24th and I'll swap with him, clothes and all. The mail will arrive early enough.

"As soon as I have the letter, I'll run into the street and over to Arabella Figg's place. I'll be ranting and raving. And force her to tell me what the letter was all about. I won't give her a chance to think or to contact Dumbles until I get the information out of her. Then I'll say how 'Number four, Privet Drive, Little Whinging is not my home!' and do as big a burst of accidental magical energy as I can, and use it to cover my blowing the monitoring charms I'm sure Dumbles has placed on the clothes of 'Harry'. That should trigger the wards. I'll then run out of the house and flee down the street. As soon as she can no longer see me I apparate the Hell out of there.

"She, the dutiful spy she is, will immediately try to contact Dumbledore and let him know what's happened. As school is not in session I think she's going to have a hard time doing that. When he finally gets word, he'll come looking for me and won't find me, of course. Then I turn up four to five hours later, as planned."

Laughing, Sirius said, "Damn, Pup! I think you've got yourself a grand prank."

"Okay," said Harry and looked at his watch. "It's Friday today, so I'll tell the other three Heirs and their families, tonight, I want to get everyone together tomorrow here. Hell, it'll give us an opportunity to test the

emergency portkeys I made for the Grangers, while we're at it. I can apparate back here while they portkey here, straight after my training session with Dan."

"Then I'll lay out the new plan to everyone at once," continued Harry.

"We can brainstorm it a bit more, together. I don't want the others to keep thinking I'm the only one who gets to make the plans. They've got skin in this game, and it's as much their decision as it is mine.

"Besides, it's about time The Grangers, Neville and Susan also got to meet you. They need to know who else is part of this little 'Save the World from Dark Lords' group we've got going."

"Yeah, I get that," said Sirius. "I'd like to meet them, too."

"Then, I'll let them know tonight," said Harry.

For the rest of the day Harry and Sirius talked a bit while Harry also spent time writing his book. Now that he had, what he felt was, a better plan for getting Dobby out of the Dursley house, he was able to relax and really concentrate on writing.

He may not now need the book as soon as he thought he would, but getting it written was an important step in letting the wizarding world know what sort of home life Dumbledore had dumped him into at the Dursleys. And also show the wizarding world he didn't live the life as a spoiled brat.

Enjoying another excellent dinner with his godfather, the two of them designed the advertisement they'd put into the wizarding papers home and abroad.

At the usual time, and after packing up all the school text books to take with him, Harry left for Longbottom Manor.

# # #

Walking in through the door, Harry greeted Augusta and said, "I'm not

comfortable with leaving Dobby in the Dursley house any longer than necessary, so I want to pull him out early. Would you and Neville be able to floo to The Pottery, Potter Manor, at about 1.00pm tomorrow?"

Surprised, Augusta said, "Of course, My Lord. You've developed a new plan, I take it?"

"Yes," said Harry. "But I want everyone together to hash over it to see if they can find any holes in it. The Heirs should be a part of what we decide."

Nodding, Augusta said, "That would be wise. And I think it's the right thing to do, allowing the others to help plan."

A few more pleasantries and Harry activated the cube containing mundane medicine. The Heirs might not realise it, yet. But they'd have more than enough knowledge to sit the final year's medical exams for a university degree in the subject by tomorrow morning.

Harry then departed for The Ossuary, and invited them to the same meeting.

Leaving Susan with her cube of the same subject, he left for the Grangers.

At the Grangers he sat with the three and made the same invitation. He also gave the stack of school text books to Hermione.

Speaking to her, he said, "These are the current text books for all seven years at Hogwarts. I've already read them. Have a read through them, yourself... you can speed read now, of course... I'll pick them up tomorrow night or the next and then hand them off to Neville and Susan after that."

Turning to Dan and Emma he said, "Use the emergency portkeys to come to The Pottery, Potter Manor. It'll be an excellent practical test of the system. I'll bring you back after the meeting and reset them for you, so they're good to go again."

"A system test", said Dan. "Good idea, lad."

"Just, please be aware," said Harry, "the feeling of portkeying can be disconcerting. When you're not used to it, you can wind up on the floor at the arrival point sitting on your butt. You will, eventually, get used to it."

After a bit more talk about other matters, Harry gave Hermione her mundane medicine cube and headed back to The Pottery. Tomorrow was going to be... interesting.

# # #

#### 14. Dan and Emma's Shock

##### Chapter Fourteen - Dan and Emma's Shock

# # #

Harry and Sirius enjoyed an early lunch after Harry had spent a lot of the morning after his training session writing. Sirius spent some of it reading what Harry had written of both the redevelopment of the Hogwarts' curriculum and Harry's supposed life story.

After lunch they waited until the appointed hour. Harry made sure Pixie was aware they'd be having guests over, and she could prepare snacks. He also put more mundane monies aside for Pixie's household shopping fund.

Amelia and Susan stepped through from the floo first, and a couple minutes later Neville and Augusta came through. As Augusta was stepping through there was a sudden 'Pop-pop-pop' sound and, from the entry hall, came the sounds of folks not used to portkeying suddenly arriving.

Harry went in to make sure the Grangers were alright with Dan sitting on the floor muttering, "Oh, God!"

Hermione was giggling but said, "That was fun!"

While Emma moaned, "Ohhh... that was bad."

With Neville's help Harry had the two Grangers up on their feet, while Amelia helped Hermione up. Greetings and pleasantries were quickly exchanged while Harry led everyone back, or just into, the parlour. Harry had Pixie bring in some fresh juice and gave the Grangers time to get their portkey legs back under them.

Once everyone was settled down, and Sirius had joined them, Harry introduced Sirius to the Grangers, Neville and Susan; before taking a seat himself.

"Thanks for coming, everyone," he said. "Though I know it feels a great deal longer it's now been just over a week since all this started, and I felt we should all get together to discuss matters.

"Plus, as I explained to each of you last night, I want to change how soon I pull Dobby out of the Dursley House."

Emma said, "Good, because I have to admit I was very uncomfortable learning someone was being so ill-treated there. I don't care if they're not human; they still have feelings and can feel pain."

There were murmurs of agreement from quite a few others.

Nodding, Harry said, "And I couldn't agree more. That's why I've a better idea. One that will save Dobby from a further six weeks of that nonsense."

Harry went on to explain what he and Sirius had discussed the afternoon before. He outlined how it would send Dumbledore into a panic, at first, and then lead to his further embarrassment when he caught up with the real Harry in Diagon Alley.

He also put to them all how he was going to have the goblins remove the suppression on the Potter Head of House and Black Heir's rings

"So, Sirius will be alerted by the rings I've taken up my Black Heir's ring,

which will be the supposed trigger for him to race to Diagon Alley to look for me. Dumbledore will already have been alerted by his spies I'm in the Alley somewhere. I'll ensure he finds me in the middle of the Alley. He'll, of course, grab me with the intention of getting me out of there, and I'll scream bloomin' murder.

"Someone is sure to put a call in to the aurors about some kid screaming how 'some dirty old man was trying to drag him away to have his wicked ways with him'. That will alert Madam Bones to bring a team of aurors with her to the Alley. And we play it from there.

"Dumbledore will, again, be publicly embarrassed. Sirius will be able to claim me as his godson and heir to all and sundry. And I'll be able to come out of hiding."

The first to speak, Augusta said, "It's perfect!"

Frowning, Amelia said, "I can't find a fault with it, other than to point out you're relying on Arabella Figg to contact Dumbledore in time; for Dumbledore not to be in the Alley himself at the time and intercept you before you go into Gringotts; and for him to have spies in the Alley."

"That's why the four to five hour delay before I head there," said Harry.

"That's both more than enough time for Arabella to contact Dumbledore, but too long for him to spend the entire time wandering the Alley himself. There's still folks out there who want to... remonstrate with him about the owl interceptions. He won't want to be there too long. Hence, why I know he'll have spies there."

Thinking, Augusta then looked up and said, "How about I spend the middle of the day in the Alley to keep an eye out for Dumbledore. When he turns up, I'll know. And I'll also have a fair idea who he bribes, or pays, to alert him when Harry turns up. I'll let Harry know via mirror and he can then make sure the spy, or spies, see him and recognise him."

"That'll work," said Amelia.

"And if I wear a cap or similar, and keep it pulled down low, I should be able to get to Gringotts without being seen," said Harry. "Once I'm out of Gringotts it no longer matters how long it'll take Dumbledore's spies to spot me and alert him, and for Dumbledore to turn up. As soon as I leave Gringotts I'll take my cap off and make sure the scar is visible. Then I just wander from shop to shop collecting my school supplies and wait him out."

Augusta said, "And out in public you can brandish the Will. Dumbledore will be left to explain his 'will tampering'... which is yet another charge to lay against him... and it will also be discovered he wasn't your guardian, after all. So he had no excuse for stuffing you in the Dursley home."

"And no excuse for stuffing me back there later," finished Harry.

"You get your letter on the 24th," said Emma. "So, Dobby needs to remain for another week and a half."

"Better that than another seven weeks," said Amelia.

Emma nodded thoughtfully.

"Now," said Harry, taking the conversation again, "as I'm now going to come out of hiding, and will publicly have taken up my Potter and Black rings, that then gives Susan and Neville the opportunity to also show their rings; if you, Madam Bones; and you, Madam Longbottom, permit them to.

"If they come forward with their family House rings, the concept of having a Proxy comes into play. At the moment, Madam Longbottom, you're still carrying the role of Regent. Technically, that's not lawful. Madam Bones can always say she's only on the Wizengamot in her capacity as Head of the DMLE. But, it'll also mean another Proxy can be brought into play on 'our' side."

"I don't claim to be the Regent for the House of Longbottom, anymore," replied Augusta. "I now say I represent the House of Longbottom. People can make their own assumptions."

"Oh, how very Dumbledore-ish of you," chuckled Harry.

"As for Susan, since the goblins have already blocked the rings, I'd rather wait until just before she boards the Hogwarts Express," said Amelia before turning to her niece and asking, "Is that okay with you, Susan?"

Susan nodded and shrugged her shoulders, "Yeah, I don't mind."

"I think we should do the same with Neville. That way the Wizengamot will not be waiting for him to present himself," said Augusta.

"Yeah, sounds good," said Neville.

"But, I still want to keep the founders' heirs rings hidden until absolutely necessary," said Harry. "That would just raise too many questions until we're ready to deal with them."

"Yes," said Dan. "I'd like to keep my little girl, my little girl, for a while longer, if it's all the same to you folks."

"I think we're all in agreement with that," replied Harry, looking around the gathering. He saw nothing but nods.

"Anyone else have any questions or view on that matter?" he went on to ask.

"No, but I want to ask about the cubes," said Hermione.

"Go for it," replied Harry.

"When do we start on the ones on magic?" she asked eagerly.

Harry laughed and replied, "You start tonight, actually. You all now have the wealth of knowledge of pretty much doctorates in Physics including both theoretical and practical, Mathematics, Law... both mundane and magical, traditions in both worlds, courtly behaviour, ethics and morality... which would earn you a PhD in Philosophy, non-magical and

magical medicine, potions and herbology."

"Wait," said Emma. "Did you say doctorates?"

"Yep," replied Harry. "Six of them, I believe, right off the bat. Add potions to the mix, with chemistry, and they wouldn't have much problem adding another half dozen. They can't get their doctorates in medicine because that requires a certain level of practical work, which they don't have... yet. However, it wouldn't take them long to pass it, considering they have perfect recall of all the rest of the medical knowledge."

"My God!" she exclaimed. "That's about twenty to thirty years of tertiary level study, just there!"

"Yep, and we're only halfway through", said Harry.

Continuing, he said, "Tonight we have technology and technomancy plus information on how to monitor your magical cores. You need that last one to make the heirs realise their magical cores have a limit, before I then give them the rest on magics. That's arithmancy, astronomy, runes and ley line magic; cantrips, charms, curses, hexes, transfiguration and conjuration; and wandless, druidic and a smattering of other forms of magic. The last three will then be weaponry, security systems, business principles, leadership, tactics, strategy, politics, diplomacy, and languages and communicating with other races.

"In there are PhDs in business, political science and languages. And, once magic is recognised by the mundane world, they'd be able to pick up PhDs in magic."

"You've revolutionised the education system of the world," said Dan with wonder in his voice.

"But, we can't market it," said Harry firmly. "Can you imagine what it would do to both the education industry and the risk you take with young children having the knowledge to blow up the world?"

Amelia, who was drinking a tea at the time, suddenly spluttered, "Blow up the world?"

"Oh, yes," replied Harry. "Non-magicals already have the weaponry to blow up the planet. They've had it since the 1950s. Now, consider four eleven year olds running around with the knowledge to be able to do that, and add their ability to cast magic into the mix.

"With magic, you can easily develop and activate an atom bomb without really trying. Do that on a large enough scale, and you could set off a chain reaction that would annihilate the entire United Kingdom in one hit. That is the power witches and wizards have already. Giving them the knowledge of how to do that, add removing all sense of self preservation, and we'd all have been ash hundreds of years ago."

"And you want to give them," said Dan, indicating the other three heirs, "the ability to do that?"

"They already have it, Dan," replied Harry. "All witches and wizards do."

"That's one of the reasons why we have to get the wizarding world back under control," he continued. "Do you know what could happen if some idiot wizard gets it into his head to figure out why 'muggles' are so big on Einstein's 1905 formula  $E=mc^2$ , and reads a mundane book or two on the subject?"

"Oh. My. God!" he said with a look of horror.

"Now," said Harry, "think of how many mundane born witches and wizards have gone through Hogwarts, have then been unable to find a life for themselves inside the magical community, and have returned to the mundane world and re-entered the mundane education system? Hell, kids in the early years of high school learn this!

"The rather large section in the fourth cube that covered ethics and morality, enough to earn them a PhD in Philosophy, and the section on

logic in the third cube, means they now won't go off and try to do it for themselves. But that doesn't mean anyone else wouldn't. The fact it hasn't happened yet is more a miracle than anything else."

"I feel a little ill," said Emma.

"A witch or wizard, given the sort of knowledge a first or second year mundane high school student possesses, may get it in their head to decide to test Einstein's Theory. The resultant explosion can easily level a small house. And probably kill the witch or wizard who tried it, instantly. Now, have them build an atomic bomb on a much larger scale, and set it going as a chain reaction, and it would very quickly result in the total annihilation of the planet. Nothing left, anywhere, but free particles," explained Harry.

Dan groaned.

"Now give that knowledge to a witch or wizard who is insane," said Harry.

"Bloody hell!" groaned Dan.

"But here's some more examples to think of when I'm only talking about what students can learn to do at Hogwarts before they graduate," said Harry. "Apparate in to any nuclear weapon facility and make off with a nuclear warhead; or detonate it in situ. Apparate into any nuclear power plant and translocate the core, via a port key for example, direct and deep into the earth's mantle. Take a large body of seawater and compress it to the point where nuclear fission commences, and you've got yourself one hell of a large hydrogen bomb. Hell, create a massive amount of dynamite by transfiguring part of the earth's crust, and detonating it, or just wait until the damned thing heats up due to the molten core of the planet. In any of those situations you can crack the planet wide open. Boom! No more planet.

"Myrrdin and I know, giving the three heirs the knowledge to do it, does not mean they'll use it," said Harry. "Because, the lessons they received on logic, ethics and morality won't let them. And that's why the cubes don't start giving them any knowledge on magic except potion making until tonight. That's why Myrrdin and I organised the knowledge they're receiving and is given to them in a carefully orchestrated order. They have the knowledge but, at the moment, would have lacked the wisdom to use it wisely."

Turning to the other three Heirs, he said, "And when you get the knowledge on magic, remember, you're only eleven and your magical cores can't handle the drain much of the magic requires. If you attempt high level spells while your core is still quite underdeveloped, you'll quickly suffer magical exhaustion and end up falling down unconscious. It can take many days to recover from such an act. And I can't give you your next cube until you recover."

"I also know Hermione, for one," said Harry, looking at the young girl directly and smiling, "will try to figure out a way to use the magic in a way that won't cause so much drain on her magical energy reserves. She's welcome to try."

Hermione frowned but looked like she was taking the message to heart.

Brightening and straightening up, he said, "Anyone else have any questions?"

No one spoke.

"No?" asked "Then how about a report about our various projects we've been tasked with over the past week?"

And the gathering began discussing where they were up to in their tasks.

"On the matter of the mundane and magical laws, Harry," prompted Susan. "It's all just a giant mess. Where do we start?"

Harry thought for a few moments before replying, "Start with the ones that contradict, or are against, mundane law. And focus even further on the laws relating to equal opportunity and equality. Her Majesty is particularly miffed with those. Break them down, if you need to, into what doesn't need to be touched, what needs to be... altered, what needs to be removed from the books entirely, and what needs to be completely rewritten. Don't rewrite them yourself. That's for Her Majesty's legal boffins to do; and we don't need to get that specific just yet. "

"Grandmother and I have been listing who on the Wizengamot are dark families, who are neutral, who would support Dumbledore, and who would support us against Dumbledore," said Neville. "But, that's more Grandmother's knowledge than mine. And she's working through it now. Is there anything else I can do?"

"Well, I've been looking at the school curriculum and rewriting the damned thing from the ground up," replied Harry. "I'll get you to go through what I've done and suggest some changes. Then the two of us are going to start looking at general lesson ideas for some of the new classes. Plus, I want to look at ideas to keep the students busy throughout the school year with after-hour activities. I know the four Houses have an inter-house Quidditch competition, but that only keeps a very small select few busy except on match days. We need a whole raft of other activities. Start thinking of wizard games the students can be involved in that'll burn off physical energy, especially ones that involve inter-house competitions. Idle hands lead to mischief, and I want no student to have idle hands for too long."

Neville, musing, said, "There are books about other sports and games I can look at for some ideas."

Harry nodded and said, "And there are mundane sports you may be able

to adopt and give a magical twist to. I'll buy a few for you, and you can see if there are ways you can adopt any of them."

Sitting back, he said, "If that bores you after too long, you can also give Hermione and Susan a hand. Even between them, they're going to be busy for a long time with that job."

"Now," he said, leaning forward again. "How're you all coming along with your search for your animagus forms?"

Hesitantly, Hermione said, "I keep having visions of flying through storm clouds. But they tend to scare me, I'm afraid of heights."

"And I find myself running through the woods on four feet, really fast!" said Susan.

"What about you, Neville?" asked Harry. "I know you've been at it a lot less than the girls, but how's it coming along?"

Frowning, Neville said, "I just keep getting a sense of being low to the ground, and being really annoyed when something comes near me."

Surprised, Harry sat back and said, "Actually, that's pretty good, all of you. Myrrdin must be really helping."

"He's pretty boring on this subject, actually," said Susan.

"He's rather dry and... clinical," said Hermione.

"I actually like him," said Neville.

"Well, if you want to get help from another source, talk to Sirius, here," said Harry, indicating his godfather. "I think he'll be able to help."

Sirius sat up straighter and said, "Maybe... yeah, maybe I can at that."

After some more chatting about other matters, plus a decent afternoon tea provided by Pixie, the group broke up. Harry took Hermione back to the Granger home via apparation, Sirius took Dan, and Amelia took Emma. When Amelia left, Harry then reset their emergency port keys. Dan, watching him for a little bit, said, "Thanks for those, by the way,

Harry. And thanks for the test run. I was rather concerned about them, actually."

"Then you should have told me earlier, Sir," replied Harry.

Dan nodded and said, "You've been a busy lad. I knew you'd have time to do it eventually."

Harry sighed and said, "Dan, you and your family's welfare is my number one priority. If something concerns you, tell me!"

"Thanks, lad," said Dan. "But I'm still having trouble wrapping my head around the fact you're actually a lot older mentally than you look. I'm getting there, though."

Harry and Sirius left a few minutes later with Harry saying he'd see them again that evening soon after 8.30pm.

# # #

Back at the Manor, Sirius said, "I wish you wouldn't be so casual about leaving hints I'm an animagus, Pup. I don't want it bandied about."

"With this group, I can't afford to be anything but entirely open with them," said Harry. "I need them to trust me, implicitly. Besides, you have nothing to fear from any of them, they're on your side, remember?"

"But, still," sighed Sirius, "I'm an unregistered animagus and Amelia Bones is the Head of the DMLE."

"So am I, Padfoot," replied Harry. "So am I. And, soon, so are those three kids."

"Plus," he went on, "don't you think Amelia and Augusta would like to know how to find their own animagus forms? That's something you can help with, if they want to know. They can't use the cubes like the other three."

Surprised, Sirius rocked back. "I hadn't thought of that," he said.

"Well, it's something to consider," said Harry.

# # #

That evening, Harry did the rounds with the Technomancy, technology and discovering your magical core cube. He was back home after one of the fastest pass-throughs he had yet.

Once home he decided to have a chat with Pixie.

"Pixie!"

\*Pop!\* "Yes, Master Harry, Sir?"

I need to know if you know how to find a non-magical... muggle... street address. Or if you can find another house elf for me, even though he's taking Polyjuice."

"Oh, Pixie don't know street address. But, if Pixie taken to a place, Pixie know how to find it later, Master Harry, Sir," said the elf.

"And what about finding another house elf, even when they're not bonded or they're taking Polyjuice potion?" he asked.

"Pixie can find house elf if Pixie has met them before, Master Harry, Sir," she said.

"Okay, then," said Harry. "If I take you to outside a place, can you go into the place and go where I tell you to find a Polyjuiced house elf?"

"Oh, yes, Master Harry, Sir!"

"Good," he said. "I'll apparate to a place in Surrey. I'll then call you. You come and I'll point the house out to you, okay?"

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir!"

"Fine," he said.

Harry apparated to the laneway not far from Privet Drive and donned a Disillusionment Charm. Then he walked around to Privet Drive and stood not far from Number 4.

"Pixie!" he called softly.

The little elf popped in to existence alongside him.

"Yes, Master Harry, Sir?"

Pointing to Number 4 he asked, "Do you see that house over there?"

"Oh, yes, Master Harry, Sir!"

"That will be the house I want you to come back to when I tell you to go to Privet Drive. In the cupboard under the stairs is a little house elf named Dobby. He's taken Polyjuice Potion to look like me. I want you to come back tonight and bring him food and a message from me, okay?"

"O-Kay, Master Harry, Sir!"

"Good girl," he said. "I want you to go back to Potter Manor, for now. I'll see you there shortly," he instructed.

"Yes, Master Harry, Sir!"

And the little elf immediately popped away. Harry waited for a few moments to ensure there was no one magical watching him. Then he walked back to the laneway and apparated back to the Pottery.

Once back, Harry set about writing down his instructions for Dobby, so he had it fixed in his mind.

Calling Pixie back to him, once more, he told her what to tell Dobby and told her to take food with her to him as he'd been locked in the cupboard for three weeks already. She was also to make sure he had enough food and was to visit him in his cupboard at least once every three days until the morning of the 24th of July.

Pixie left straight away and was back about fifteen minutes later.

"Dobby knows," she said. "Dobby will wait for letter and come straight here as you said."

"Thank you, Pixie," said Harry, relieved that another problem would soon be resolved.

Pixie popped away.

# # #

Back into a normal 'work' week and Harry continued to write his book.

His typing was becoming much improved and he was starting to knock pages over at a decent clip.

Sometimes he'd have to go back and add a section he hadn't thought was that important at the time he was writing it. Later, he realised it was integral to another part of his life, so he had to add the missing section. He knew he'd have to retype the whole thing over again, once he'd finished. But, for now, he just added sections by typing it up and pinning it to the sheet where the missing section belonged.

Part of the problem of having an eidetic memory wasn't so much trying to recollect everything, as trying to sort through everything for the nuggets of memory that were important, against almost all the memory which wasn't. Think of it as writing an executive summary of half a page from a folio of over a thousand pages.

He had also given more thought to when he would have the book printed, as he didn't want Dumblebutt tipped off by someone in the printing company. Then he realised he could avoid that entirely by going to a mundane publisher. He'd just tell them it was a fictional account of the life of a small boy, and that he only wanted a modest print run to start with. Once he had enough for the entire student population he'd hold off on having more printed until he was ready for the rest of the magical community to learn about what happened to the boy known as Harry Potter at the Dursley residence.

Then he'd send it to a publisher in the magical world with an addendum:

'This is an account of the life of the boy known as Harry James Potter, the so-called boy-who-lived, as written by Harry James Potter. Any other works ever written about my life are pure fiction. I have never been interviewed by anyone looking to write a story about my life. I have never endorsed a

product, no matter what a manufacturer may advertise. If a manufacturer says I endorsed their product, they're lying!

By Thursday morning the other Heirs had finished the last of the four cubes focussed on magic. There were just three to go, and these focussed almost entirely on mundane matters - except for magical security systems and the language of the goblins and a couple other races.

Sirius had let him know that both Susan and Neville had contacted him for advice of nailing down their animagus forms, but Hermione hadn't yet. Harry wondered whether it was because of her fear of heights, or she felt she was making fast enough progress. He'd check with her that night. Harry had also, as promised, attended the Granger residence every morning to go through a morning training session. Just this morning, Dan had brought a small 25 calibre ACP automatic.

Though, he had the knowledge of mundane weaponry, this morning was the first time he'd actually held a handgun in hand. It was small, but Dan assured him it was only until he was able to hold a larger calibre. Sure, there was little if any stopping power in the gun; but, that wasn't the point. Magicals didn't use mundane weaponry. Having a handgun, one he can use left-handed, was extra fire-power. Besides, he was interested in finding out how well a Protego Charm could stop a bullet; or, even if it could.

Things were progressing well, but it meant Harry was beginning to feel bored. When he was with Myrrdin, every moment not spent sleeping was spent doing one activity after another. He even read, or they talked, while eating.

Ever since he arrived back at the beginning of the month he had very few moments where he wasn't either sleeping, acting or planning to act. This waiting grated on his nerves. He'd pace if it was in his nature to do so. He

only did that when he was really angry. Being bored because he lacked something on which to focus only really had one answer. He meditated. He was clearing a space on the floor of the parlour to give himself some breathing room when his mirror vibrated. Pulling it out and flipping it open he saw Hermione.

"Hi, 'Mione," he said. "What's up?"

"Hi, Harry," she replied. "You know how you said on Sunday I was welcome to try the spells if I could figure a way to use less energy from my magical core?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, is it still okay if I can do that?"

"'Mione," he replied and sighed. "Just don't do anything that's going to cause you harm, okay?"

"Oh, I'll be careful," she said. "I'll make sure I do all the arithmancy. But I'm going to cross check it all against modern mathematics."

"Okay, but nothing dangerous, right?"

"No, Myrrdin taught you, and us, better than that," she said.

Harry nodded and said, "Well, I did say you're welcome to try. So, have at it. Just don't forget to continue to meditate on finding your animagus form and working with Susan on going through the laws."

"Of course not," she said, clearly put out by being reminded.

"And don't do anything dangerous!" said Harry.

"No, Harry; I won't," replied Hermione, with a roll of her eyes.

"Okay, then," said Harry, "I'll see you tonight."

After disconnecting from Hermione, Harry held the now normal mirror in his hand and sighed. "Well, there goes any chance of calming myself enough to meditate," he muttered to himself.

He headed out the back of the manor and sat on the back step for a

while. He was trying to work out something to do but couldn't think of anything. So, he rose from where he was sitting on the back step and walked towards the back of the property.

Looking over Pixie's garden beds and chook enclosure, something was gnawing at his thoughts. He pondered it for a while. Then it came to him. He knew how to keep Hogwarts' costs down while also creating both a way for students to earn back points and run a business for those seeking to earn a Mastery in Business Principles. He'd have a farm at Hogwarts! 'Yes!' he thought. 'It can be on the small scale, of course. Cultivate a decent enough sized vegetable garden with fruit trees to feed the student body, run some sheep for meat, some cows for milk and meat, run some chooks for eggs and meat, run some pigs for meat. It would work! There was plenty of land at Hogwarts not being used.'

Now with the idea in his head, Harry ran back inside to his desk and began to figure it all out. He needed to talk to someone about how much fruit and vegetables the students would consume, how much meat, eggs and milk they'd go through, and then determine how much of Hogwarts' land he could set aside for it. Okay, he couldn't use the lake and stock it with fish because of the merpeople and the giant squid, but the cost of fish was nothing compared to the cost of the other meats.

The elves could look after the farm while students weren't there, because they didn't have to do so much castle work while said students weren't in residence. They'd be pleased to have something to do. And the students can earn points, learn to run a business, and how to put in place a production plan, all off the back of it. The added bonus would be a huge reduction in the costs of feeding all the students for the nine months of the year they'd be in residence. That would be a significant saving on outgoing costs.

In his excitement, Harry decided to go and check out the grounds immediately, so he had an idea as to where the Hogwarts Farm could be located. It had to be close enough to the castle not to mean the students had to tramp long distances just to get there, but far enough away from the Forbidden Forest not to allow the denizens in there to raid it as they pleased.

Harry switched into his animagus form and phoenix-flashed to the skies well above Hogsmeade. Then he did the same skirting of the wards he did the last time he was there, but more intent this time on looking at all the open grassland around the castle. He found a small vegetable garden next to the castle, but it wasn't anywhere near the size they needed. He thought they might have been magically inducing the vegetables to grow at a faster rate. It could be the 'reserve' vegetable plot. The best place for a new and bigger one was located around the Quidditch pitch, and out towards the boundaries of the warded land.

However, the land out there actually extended well beyond the wards; so, he'd see the other heirs about pushing the wards further away out there. He, again, had that strong sense of yearning from the castle he felt last time. An eagerness from the castle he enter it. Sighing, Harry flew off and phoenix-flashed back to the Pottery.

Back at the Pottery and a few more notes about the information he'd need to make the castle self-sufficient for food, or as close as possible, and he had the concept down on paper. He'd see someone who was used to feeding a large body of children about just how much food said children and staff combined would need.

As soon as he thought about it he knew the answer. He needed to find out the information from a non-magical boarding school with the same problems. Sure, wizard children ate a bit more because of the energy they

expelled through their magics, but about twenty-five percent should just about cover it.

He wrote a letter to Sir David Smythe-Umpton asking him to find out the information for him. He needed to know how much food he'd need to farm; how big the farm would need to be, and how much under crop, how many of each animal he'd need, how to accomplish that in the south east Scotland coastal area - taking consideration of how much snow they'd get, etc.

Oh, yes. Snow. Some permanent charms and runic work to keep the temperature in, and a little around the crops, to maintain a moderate to warm temperature... Yes. Something to ensure it didn't cause a near permanent fog from developing from the warm ground about the crops while the rest of the land was frozen and buried under snow...

He'd drop a letter on Sir David's desk for something about the non-magical aspects. And might set Neville, with his gift for herbology, working on it with the magical aspects. Neville was still at him about getting a serious project to do. This should do it. He'd discuss it with him tonight by turning up a little earlier than usual.

'I love killing multiple birds with one stone,' he thought. 'Especially, when the birds are this big.'

# # #

That night he arrived at Longbottom Manor early, and had the opportunity to discuss his idea with Neville.

Neville quickly went through the outline and said, "I like the idea of large fallow land being cultivated for crop, and the idea of running some chickens and that for soil fertilisation and eggs. But, do you really want to bring in animals that'll be slaughtered? Some of the students are going to 'adopt' those animals, give them names, and stuff like that. Then you're

going to send them off for slaughter?

"I can see it now," he continued. Then, using a little girl voice, "Excuse me, Professor? Have you seen Fluffy the little baby sheep? He's been missing for two days," and, in a sterner adult voice, "No, Miss Smith, I have not. Now eat your lamb chops."

Snorting, Harry said, "I didn't think of that."

"And why are you thinking of charms work and the like that'll require them to be recharged so often?" asked Neville. "Use wards. You can use wards to do everything you want to protect the crops. They can be insect repellent for all bar bees and the like for pollination; they can be used to keep out foraging animals, they can be used to pen in animals, such as chickens; they can be used to keep the area within warm during winter; and they can be powered by the same major nor-west to sou-east ley line from which the main Hogwarts' wards are powered."

Harry replied, "I didn't think about that, either. But what about the loss of ley line magic and what that'll do to the main wards?"

"If you need to ramp up the power for the main wards during emergency situations, it's a simple matter of redirecting the energy from the crop wards to the main wards through a simple magical shunt. It'll also provide even more power to the wards than they have already," replied Neville. "Merlin, Harry. You're over-thinking it."

"Damn, Nev!" exclaimed Harry, realising his friend was right. "I knew you were the bloke to do this."

Neville grinned and said, "As for paying for meat. That's easy. We've got all these greenhouses, of which only a few are currently in use. Get them all operating on growing plant-based potions ingredients and we can sell them off to buy the meat and milk. If necessary, we can build more. At the moment, a lot of plant-based potions ingredients are purchased from

the continent. So, not only will we be running a profitable business; but, we can sell them for less than what they cost to be imported. And, it means we can sell them without the added impost for import."

Harry laughed and said, "Definitely the right bloke for this! Okay, it's yours. Design the wards and work out how you're going to do it.

Remember, it's also a way for students in detention to be given productive work, for students to earn back lost points, a way to keep the house elves active while the school is shut down, and for the school to become, at least in part, self-sufficient."

Neville grinned back and said, "Yeah, I like it. It's right up my alley.

Thanks, Harry; I can do this."

"I know," replied Harry. "And you've already surpassed the idea I had with a much better one with only a minute of thought. Once you get tomorrow night's cube, the one on business principles, you'll be able to go to town on how to set it all up as a self-sustaining business. For now, though, just give thought to what you're going to put up as wards."

"What about creating the wards in the first place?" asked Neville. "We don't have the magical core to be able to set it up, ourselves."

"That's what the staff are for, Nev!" replied Harry with a grin. "As you said, though, once it's set up it just needs to be anchored to the ley line. As long as someone on the staff can redirect it's power to the main wards in an emergency, it doesn't matter how many of the staff will have to be involved in providing power to get it running."

"Well, that'll make it easier," said Neville.

"If you need help with it," said Harry, continuing, "Hermione has already asked me if she can look at how to make spells less energy draining on the magical core. Talk to her and see if she can solve any energy hogging problems you encounter."

He further said, "I think she's looking at the magical energy drain on some of the higher spells. I'd rather she directed those thoughts to something like this, than towards seeing if she can reduce energy drain, or adding further power, towards a spell such as a blasting hex."

"Oh, that could be bad," said Neville, thinking about the damage such a spell could do.

Harry nodded.

"Oh!" said Neville suddenly perking up. "I think I know what my animagus form is!"

Surprised, Harry said, "Okay, what is it?"

"I'm a badger, believe it or not!" said Neville laughing. "The Hufflepuff mascot!"

Grinning back, Harry said, "Okay, when you have time, I want you to come over to the Pottery and Sirius and I can help you through actually making that image you've got become a reality. Once we help you through it the first time, each time after that will become easier until you can do it with barely a thought."

"Okay," replied Neville. "Sounds good."

"The last one to attempt to find their animagus form, and the first one to find it," said Harry, grinning. "That's pretty good, Nev!"

Neville grinned back, quite excited.

"Now we need to confirm it," said Harry. "What I want you to do is meditate but remain in your human form. Find a clearing in the area wherever you are, and sit in the middle of it. Back in your meditation pose. While you're there call your animagus form to come to you. You'll be able to see it in its full form. Touch it, and you should feel yourself merge with it. In the meantime I'm going to buy the biggest encyclopaedia of animals I can find."

"I can do that?" asked Neville. "I didn't know I could do that."

"Nev," replied Harry, "it's your meditative state. You're a god there. You can bend your will to anything. Think about what you did when you were building your mind palace."

"Oh, yeah!" said Neville.

"Anyway, cube time. I've still got to visit the others yet."

# # #

After leaving Longbottom Manor and visiting Susan at Bones Manor he asked her, "And how's your animagus form coming along?"

Susan, thoughtful, said, "I think I'm some kind of dog with a long muzzle. When I look down I see paws, but everything is brilliant shades of grey. I don't know what sort of dog, I am. But it feels big."

Just as he did with Neville, Harry said, "What I want you to do is meditate but remain in your human form. Find a clearing in the area wherever you are, and sit in the middle of it. Back in your meditation pose. While you're there call your animagus form to come to you. You'll be able to see it in its full form. Touch it, and you should feel yourself merge with it. In the meantime, and as I've already said to Neville, I'm going to buy the biggest encyclopaedia of animals I can find."

Nodding, Susan said, "Yeah, I can do that." Perking up she also said, "Can dogs see in the dark?"

Shrugging, Harry said, "I have no idea. But, Sirius might know. He's quite knowledgeable about those sort of things."

"And there's also something weird going on when I'm in dark shadow.

Everything seems to blur a bit and I think I'm moving a lot faster."

Nodding, Harry said, "Well, let's find out what sort of animal you are, and we can work out the rest from there. Once we know what animal it is Sirius and I can help you through the first transformation. We'll work out

the rest from there."

Susan said, "Okay, Harry."

"Now, how are your other projects coming along?" he asked.

"Slower," she replied, with a frown. "Hermione says she's working on something else, so she's not helping as much. But she still helps out when I specifically ask her to."

Shaking his head, Harry said, "That's okay. The law is going to take a very long time to sort out. There isn't a big rush on this. If you want to work on something else, for a while, do so. I know how boring the law can be."

"The law isn't boring!" she retorted. "It's really very interesting, and I'm having fun with it. I like going through all the laws and seeing how I can make them better."

Holding up his hands in a warding gesture and laughing, Harry said, "Okay, I yield! It's fun and interesting for you. But that doesn't mean it's so much for everyone else, okay?"

Grumbling, Susan said, "Okay."

"Now, you've received all the cubes on magic except the one on magical, and mundane, security systems," Harry said. "That's tonight. Is there anything you want to ask me before we start that cube?"

"No," she said. "I think I've covered everything."

# # #

At the Granger residence he found Hermione sitting in the lounge room with a stack of paper sitting on the coffee table in front of her. She was madly writing away with arithmantic formulas and calculus mathematics. Emma was sitting in the chair opposite looking a bit frazzled.

"Okay, what's going on?" asked Harry.

"She's been like this for hours," replied Emma. "She's had dinner but just

about shovelled the food down her throat trying to get it over with so she could return to this," she said with a wave of her hand gesturing towards the stack of paper.

Harry looked at Hermione, who still hadn't paid him any attention. He reached into his satchel, removed one of the old cubes he still carried around, and lobbed it to land on the paper in Hermione's lap on which she was still madly writing away.

"Oi!" he called.

Looking up, Hermione said, "Huh?"

"Mione, you're losing yourself in the work," he said quite sternly. "We've talked about this, remember?"

"Oh, Hi, Harry. Yeah," said Hermione ranging through the emotions of surprise, pleased and glum in a couple of seconds.

"I know you're really excited about what it is you've learned, so far," said Harry. "But, you need to remember to pay attention to what's going on around you, at the same time. Stop shutting people out!"

"Sorry," she said. "I've just been working on something really hard and I wanted to get it finished before you arrived."

Moving to sit down, Harry sighed, "I take it you've got some idea about magical energy conservation in spells?"

"Oh, yes," replied Hermione, clearly excited. "I've already gone through the arithmancy for it. Now, I'm just refining it with proper mathematics. Did you know it's all about high energy physics?"

"Yeah, I did," said Harry. "But there's plenty of time to work on it. You need to spend as much time, as possible, speaking with your parents before the 1st of September. First and foremost, enjoy their company while you can."

"Sorry, Harry," said Hermione, downcast.

Harry sighed and said, "I've told you before, 'Mione; you're the brightest, smartest witch I've ever, and will ever, know. You don't need to prove it to anyone. You definitely don't need to prove it to me."

Hermione scrambled out of her chair and threw herself into Harry's lap and hugged him. "Thank you, Harry."

She leaned in and kissed him on the cheek. Harry blushed from his toes to the tips of his hair while Hermione then leaned her head of his shoulder.

"Ummm... ahhh..." he stammered.

Dan just snorted while Emma smiled and blushed, herself.

"Pumpkin," called Dan softly. "I think you should climb off Harry, now."

"Okay," replied Hermione. She climbed back off Harry's lap and returned to her own chair.

Clearing his throat, Harry then said to her, "Susan tells me you're not helping her as much with the laws."

"I didn't mean to," she replied. "I just..."

"You just got carried away with the project on the coffee table," finished Harry. "I get that."

"Do you think I should apologise?" she asked.

"That's entirely up to you," he replied. "Do you think you should?"

Frowning and biting her lower lip, she said, "Yeah."

"Then apologise," said Harry. "Friends and family do that with friends and family."

"Okay," she said softly.

Harry nodded and then said, "Now, your animagus form, how's that going?"

Frowning in thought, she replied, "I'm definitely a bird of some sort. But it keeps flying very high in amongst storm clouds. It scares me and I keep

losing focus."

Harry nodded and said, "Then I'm going to suggest what I've already suggested to the others. What I want you to do is go into your meditative state. But, do it in your human form. Picture yourself outside on a wide open field, or lawn.

"Once there, and you have everything perfect, I want you to call your animagus form to come to you. That is, call it to meet you. Ask it to land in front of you.

"Once it's there, get to know it. Picture it in your mind. Then switch places with it, if you can. When you drop out of your meditation you'll have it pictured in your mind. Then we can go through zoology books and find it."

"Okay, that sounds good," she replied with a nod.

"If it is a bird, and it sounds like it most definitely is, I'll help you with it," explained Harry. "I won't let anything bad happen to you, I promise."

"Thank you, Harry," she replied.

"Now, it's getting late," he said, changing the subject. "Let's get this third last cube going, okay?"

Nodding, Hermione rose and headed for her room to get changed.

After she'd gone upstairs, Harry sighed and said, "She's just so damned focussed."

"I told you, she's in love with you already," said Emma softly.

Harry blushed again.

"You know, you're cute when you do that," she said with a big smile.

"I'm eleven, ma'am!" retorted Harry

Dan shot back, "With the mind of a nineteen year old!"

Harry snorted. He had no response for that.

Saving Harry from further embarrassment, Emma said, "Hermione should

be ready by now. I think we should head upstairs."

She rose and led Harry and Dan up to Hermione's bedroom.

After activating the cube, Harry left shortly thereafter.

Returning back to the Pottery, he was still feeling a bit keyed-up from his time with the three other Heirs and their families. So he decided to go for a bit of a fly in his animagus form around the Great Woods where the Pottery was hidden.

He was also making sure he had everything perfect, and that his flying was great. He knew he'd be the one who had to take Hermione up into the sky, once she was able to assume her form. He had to get her over her fear of heights if she was to make the best use of her form.

# # #

The next morning, after his training session with Dan, Harry made another trip to Diagon Alley to visit Flourish and Blotts to pick up as many books on magical creatures as he could find. He eventually came away with a single huge tome on every magical creature they knew to be in existence.

Then he headed out into mundane London and went to a large bookshop out there that stocked many non-fiction texts. They were the main supplier for the University of London. There, he found a large volume designed for university veterinarians that contained the largest range of non-magical animals. He even picked up a high school biology text, just in case it contained anything not covered in the other.

Back at the Pottery and he read up on the various dogs and badgers.

Then he went through the magical creatures book and stored that in his memory.

"Sirius!" he called.

"In here, Harry!" he heard from the kitchen.

Walking into the kitchen he found Sirius working at cooking something.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked.

"Pixie's teaching me how to cook," replied Sirius.

"Okay," said Harry. "Why?"

Sirius shrugged and said, "It's something to do, I guess. Besides, I've always wanted to learn how to cook."

Thinking a bit, Harry said with concern, "Padfoot, if you're bored here, and there's something else you want to do; please, go and do it."

Looking back, Sirius said, "Pup! I'm happy, okay. I'm having fun."

Sighing, Harry said, "Well, if you're sure..."

With a firm nod Sirius replied, "I'm sure!"

Thinking for a moment, Harry then said, "There is something you can do for me, though."

Curious, Sirius asked, "Oh?"

"I think Neville now has the set of all the textbooks for Hogwarts this year. I'll get the ones that cover Defence against the Dark Arts. I want you to read them all."

"Why?"

"Because, within a couple of days of school starting, Hogwarts is going to need a new Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor," he explained. "And I think, with your experience fighting Riddle and his cronies back in the 70s, you're the perfect choice for the role."

Shocked, Sirius asked, "Why? I haven't even been practicing since I got out of Azkaban. And, before that, it's been close to ten years since I had a wand in my hand."

"I know," replied Harry with a bit of a shrug. "But you're one of the few wizards still around who has just so much actual combat experience.

You've lived it. That can't be taught. And you've got a few weeks to get

your skills back with a wand.

"Besides, that. You're still a target for those Death Eaters and Riddle supporters who have a grudge to settle with you. You need to get your skills back, and they have to be sharp."

Sighing, Sirius replied, "Yeah, I guess I've been putting it off long enough, haven't I?"

Harry nodded and replied, "And I'm sure Dan would like some training in how to use his non-magical talents and weaponry against a trained combat wizard. Get in contact with him by mirror when you're ready. He'd really appreciate it, and I'm sure you two are really going to hit it off."

"That's actually a really good idea," said Sirius, somewhat surprised. "It would give both of us more skills that may prove truly useful." And he more seriously replied, "Thank you, Harry."

Harry shrugged and said, "I'd actually only just thought of it. But, I'm sure you'd have come to the same conclusion."

Coughing to clear his throat, Sirius then ordered, "Now, get out of here and let me cook you something to eat. Go write your book, or something."

"Yeah, I can do that," replied Harry. "But, before I do, can we check to see if we have any anti-food poisoning potions on hand?"

Sirius threw a potato at him as he ducked and dived back out the door laughing.

# # #

"Harry! Harry! I really am a big badger!"

Neville had called Harry out of the blue via the floo, not via mirror, the next morning. He was clearly very excited. His excitement brought Sirius into the room.

Harry laughed and said, "That's great, Nev! Now, we've only one more cube to go, tonight. So, do you want to come through tomorrow and Sirius and I can help you change into your form?"

"Yes, please!" replied Neville. "I'm so excited!"

"You should be," replied Sirius. "It's a very big thing to discover and do."

"Oh, Nev," said Harry. "Do you have all the texts from Hogwarts from Susan yet?"

"Yeah," said Neville. "Susan passed them through this morning. I was reading through them but took a break to do some meditating when I finally met my animagus form in the space. He's big, too. But his colouring looks wrong."

"Well, your own features will form part of the fur, so I wouldn't worry about the colouring too much. We'll see what it looks like tomorrow," replied Harry.

Signing off, Harry and Sirius grinned at each other.

Shaking his head, Sirius said, "Damn, Pup! That was fast!"

Chuckling, Harry said, "That's because you marauder guys set the method by which others could follow. In the process you made a lot of mistakes that we learned from. Myrrdin and I took what worked out and built upon it. And, because myself and the other three were already pretty decent experts at meditation before we started, it made it that much easier to learn and master.

"You guys had to learn from scratch and had no assistance whatsoever. You also had to get past the belief that only a very few wizards could be animagus. We didn't have any of that."

Nodding, Sirius said, "Yeah, we did. And it took a lot of work to undo what we did wrong. Plus, though we all wanted to find the forms to help Moony, I don't think any of us knew if we could do it or not.

"It was your father who drove me and Wormtail on. I was the first to change because I believed him. He just didn't believe it himself. But, when I changed, he knew it was possible. That's when he believed. It wasn't long after that, he changed too."

Snorting in wry amusement, Sirius went on to say, "We should have realised about Pettigrew then. It took him almost another year before he got it and changed. He should have known and trusted us. But because he knew we shouldn't trust him, he didn't trust us."

"Water under the bridge, Padfoot," replied Harry.

# # #

Stepping through the floo, Neville arrived at the Pottery both nervous and excited. Harry and Sirius had already moved all the furniture out to the walls leaving a large open space in the middle.

Sirius said to Neville, "Okay, Neville. We'll do this when you feel ready. You might want to meditate a bit to calm yourself, first."

Neville dropped down into the centre of the floor into his crossed-legged meditation state while Harry and Sirius took a seat on one of the couches and just sat silently.

After about a minute Neville nodded. Sirius quietly said, "Okay, since your form appears to be a badger, I want you to get on your hands and knees."

Without a word, while staring off into space, Neville assumed the hands and knees position.

Sirius said, "Now concentrate on the feelings you had of your animagus form and pump magic into it. Make your body assume the shape."

Standing on opposite sides, Harry held his hands ready and Sirius drew his wand and pointed it at Neville. As Neville started to shift, they both pumped magic into the changing form.

Suddenly, Neville almost popped, his change was that fast.

Between Harry and Sirius stood on four legs what looked like the biggest badger either of them had ever expected to see. But it wasn't a badger.

Harry laughed and sat on the floor in front of Neville while Sirius conjured a large mirror just off to the side of Harry aimed back at Neville.

Neville, in his form, looked at the mirror and the expression on the animal's face was definitely one of surprise.

Grinning, Harry said to Neville, "Nev. Mate. You're not a badger, though I can see why you think you would be. The two animals look somewhat similar, and the form you've taken is not an animal you'd ever expect to see in the United Kingdom, except in a zoo.

"Nev, you're a wolverine!" he laughed. "Pound for pound, easily the most ferocious animal in existence!"

Neville looked to have dropped back to sit on his haunches. Not a position you would ever expect a wolverine, or a badger, to assume. And his head tilted slightly to one side. Almost a dog like expression.

Sirius, seeing the expression on Neville's face, had sat down on the floor and fallen over roaring with laughter.

Still chuckling, Harry said, "Okay, Nev. Changing back is a hell of a lot easier. All you have to do is let yourself assume your natural shape. So, go for it and do that."

Harry held his hands ready to assist, but Neville didn't need it. His reverse change took just over a second to complete. And Neville was sitting on his haunches on the floor.

"I'm a wolverine?" he asked, shocked. "But why am I so small?"

Sirius answered, though still chuckling, "That's because you're still young. Therefore, your animagus form is also, comparatively speaking, still

young. Your animagus is still growing!"

Nodding, Harry said, "You're a juvenile wolverine. No longer a cub, but not yet an adult."

"Wow!"

"It suits you, Nev," said Harry. "A wolverine is an omnivore that will generally avoid trouble. It will run, when it can, but will turn and fight in the most ferocious manner it's capable of if cornered, or if it's family unit is in danger. The only time it generally goes out of its way to attack is if it's hunting small game.

"While it looks a lot like a badger, a badger is a member of the same family as the weasel while a wolverine is more closely related to the bear. It moves about twenty five miles a day when foraging, but is capable of a pretty decent clip of speed for short periods of time.

"It's a really cool animagus form, Nev!" said Harry. "And it definitely suits you."

Neville was grinning like a loon, clearly pleased with what he was hearing.

Harry and Sirius helped Neville shift once more to his form and back again, but let him do it himself, successfully, on the third attempt.

Afterwards, Sirius said, "Okay, that's enough for one day. While your form is pretty close to your own mass, it still uses some of your magical energy from your core to occur. The closer to your own mass, the less energy it takes. But, as Harry has the last cube for you tonight, you need to not be magically exhausted for today."

Harry nodded and, also talking to Neville, said, "Practice it yourself tomorrow, if you like. But only try no more than about three times.

You're also going to need to practice moving around in your form, so just move around at home for a while when you're in your form, okay? And

call Sirius if you have any questions."

Nodding, Neville said, "Okay, I got it."

They sent him back through the floo to Longbottom Manor.

Turning to Sirius, Harry said, "Well, that's one. And the fact his mass is very similar to his form may further explain why he was the first."

Shrugging, Sirius said, "You're probably right. It may also explain why I was the first to change, your father second, and Pettigrew last. My form was pretty close to my original mass, your father's was about double, and Pettigrew's is only about one one-hundredth."

# # #

## 15. Harry's Sword Prank

### Chapter Fifteen - Harry's Sword Prank

# # #

Later in the day, though it was a Saturday, Harry and Sirius went to Gringotts to find out how the purchase of the Daily Prophet was progressing.

After the pleasantries were over Harry asked Blockrig, "How goes the purchase of the Daily Prophet?"

"Very well, My Lord," said a clearly pleased Blockrig. "You now own the major controlling interest with forty-five percent of the company. We're having trouble securing any further as some of the part-owners are reluctant to part with their shares as the company is seeing an increase in profits of late."

Snorting, Harry said, "An increase in profits mainly as a result of the heightened interest in the criminal proceedings against Crouch and the previous Minister, no doubt."

"Yes, My Lord," said the goblin. "The goblins representing those interests are loathe to release them without making obscene profits."

Sirius spoke up for the first time and asked, "Does the Black family own part of the company?"

"Yes, My Lord. Thirty percent," replied the goblin.

Harry laughed and said, "In that case, friend goblin, don't worry about pushing to purchase any more. With Lord Black here," he said, indicating Sirius, "we control seventy-five percent of the company. That'll do for now. But, if they come up, by all means purchase them."

"Yes, My Lord," said the goblin. "Is there anything else of which I can assist?"

Thinking, Harry said, "Yes, Blockrig, there is. On Wednesday... probably around late afternoon... the real Harry Potter is going to come out of hiding. In the process, I'm going to cause a great deal of embarrassment for one Albus Dumbledore.

"I'm going to arrive at the bank at about 12.30pm under cover of disguise. I'm going to have the blocks removed on the Head of House Potter and the Heir of House Black rings. But not the Head of House Slytherin ring. This will give the impression Harry Potter has come to the bank for the first time and is given both the Potter Will to read and to take up his House rings. At that time you can block all access to the Potter vaults by Dumbledore, and begin recovering from him that which has been stolen.

"Then Harry Potter is going to go shopping for his school supplies. He's going to make sure everyone sees him doing his shopping.

"When Dumbledore turns up and attempts to drag Harry Potter away. And, I assure you, friend goblin, he will. Harry Potter is going to scream about how 'the dirty old man is trying to drag him away to touch him in his naughty places'. Harry Potter may even kick him in the shins a couple of times for good measure. That'll bring the aurors in force.

"His godfather, Lord Black here, his rightful magical guardian, has been looking for his godson for quite some time. He will find Dumbledore 'accosting' his godson and is going to have a mighty argument with Dumbledore.

"The aurors, of course, who will have arrived by that time, will have no choice but to hand Harry Potter over to his proper guardian, especially when Harry Potter waves his copy of the Potter Will about, and the Head of the DMLE has no choice but to read it. Harry Potter is also going to show everyone the nice pretty ring the goblins gave him to wear that has his family crest upon it. And Harry Potter is also going to mention, once he's told Dumbledore's identity, how the nice goblins told him about the... really long term here... financial malfeasance... that has been going on with his trust fund by Albus Dumbledore.

"No doubt, Dumbledore will be taken back to the DMLE in manacles to answer questions of Will tampering and/or interference and theft from the Potter accounts, adding to his charges of mail owl interception.

"Lord Black is going to immediately take Lord Harry Potter, the poor wee lad, directly to Gringotts, where he, Lord Black will learn of the thefts from the Potter vaults, and demand an immediate investigation. It is also likely the aurors will be summoned, once more. You'll need to be prepared for that.

"It will also come to light at some stage how Harry Potter has been abused by his 'muggle' relatives for his entire life since he disappeared on the 31st of October in 1981. A place where Dumbledore, acting as his magical guardian, put him. It will soon be discovered how Dumbledore knew of the abuse.

"It will further come to light that Harry Potter was kept in the dark about his wizarding heritage, only learning of his heritage that very day, when

he received his letter from Hogwarts.

"You may wish to... take a stroll... through the Alley, that afternoon after I visit here. I believe you will find the shenanigans quite entertaining."

By the time Harry had finished, the old goblin was nearly roaring with laughter. A laughing goblin was quite a fearsome thing.

Waiting for some time for the goblin to gain control of himself, Sirius asked wryly, "I take it you approve?"

"Oh, yes, My Lord; Oh, yes," chuckled the goblin with glee.

"Again, My Lord," he said on a serious note, "I must ask that if I ever displease you as much as Mister Dumbledore has done, you deal with me the goblin way and just take my head. If you need to borrow a sword for the deed, you may borrow mine. I would rather you do that, than destroy my name, or that of my clan, by reducing it to dirt."

"Oh, friend goblin," said Harry with an evil grin. "I'm only just getting warmed up. These are only the opening skirmishes."

After withdrawing some more galleons from his vault, Harry and Sirius left.

# # #

After Harry and his godfather left the bank, Blockrig sought audience with Director Ragnock.

Entering the Director's office, Blockrig gave the usual formalities.

\*How goes young Lord Potter, Account Keeper Blockrig?\* asked the Director.

\*He is about to implement his next plan to discredit wizard Dumbledore.

In the process he is bringing the real Harry Potter out into the open early,\* replied Blockrig. \*He plans this to happen just after noon this Wednesday.\*

Putting down his quill, the Director sat back and said, \*Tell me.\*

Blockrig told the Director what Harry had told him. He left nothing out and did not exaggerate any point.

The Director was also left chuckling, \*When Lord Potter returns to the bank on Wednesday, he and any of his party with him are to be escorted to this office. I will remove the blocks on the rings he requests. I will be looking forward to the visit.\*

\*Lord Potter also suggested I may consider taking time out of my schedule on Wednesday to witness this event for myself,\* said Blockrig with a look of glee.

The Director asked, \*Do you wish to?\*

Thinking about it, Blockrig replied, \*I do, but I do not want to abandon my post.\*

Waving his hand in a dismissive gesture, the Director said, \*It is of no consequence. You may, if you desire. If Lord Potter has suggested it, then you will comply. We consider him a friend of the goblin nation.\*

\*Shall I inform him of that, Director?\*

 asked Blockrig.

Ragnock thought about it for a moment and replied, \*No. If he has not determined that for himself yet, he soon will. Let it be a surprise.\*

\*Very good, Director,\* replied Blockrig.

The Director said, \*You may return to your work, Account Keeper. We thank you for your report.\*

\*Thank you, Director,\* replied Blockrig bowing and leaving the room.

# # #

That evening, Harry did the final round of the Heirs with the cubes.

He checked in on Neville to make sure he'd behaved himself, only to learn he changed to his animagus form about an hour after he arrived home.

"I know I should have waited, Harry," he said abashed. "But, I wanted to

make sure I could do it on my own without assistance. What I didn't realise is Gran walked into the room just after I changed."

Sighing, Harry said, "What happened?"

Speaking up, Augusta said, "I just saw this big, mean-looking animal in the room and tried to hex it."

Harry snorted in amusement.

Neville said, "It's not funny, Harry! She screamed at me and it scared me.

When she tried to hex me I had to try to get out the door. I've not tried to move in my form yet, so I was a bit... clumsy."

Augusta cut in, "Clumsy? You tried to hop up and run on your back feet!

If it wasn't so surprising watching this animal moving like an animated toy, I might have actually hit it with a second hex. As it was, I was so surprised I held my hex for a moment."

"That's when I turned back out of my animagus form," said Neville a bit glumly.

Harry laughed. He couldn't help it. The image of what happened in his mind's eye was just too funny.

"I didn't think it was funny," said a sullen Neville. "When I turned back, grandmother hexed me anyway."

Harry laughed even harder. "Serves you right!" he said with mirth. "Didn't you think to tell your grandmother you'd managed to change to your animagus form before you actually did it while she wasn't in the room?"

"I wanted it to be a surprise," said a still sullen Neville.

Augusta replied, "Oh, it was a surprise, alright. One that nearly got you injured bad enough to need hospitalisation! And the last one was a stinging hex only."

Finally calming down, Harry walked over and checked Neville's magical core. While it was a little depleted it wasn't close to being a dangerous

level.

"Next time, Nev," he said a little exasperated, "change while your grandmother watches. And you may as well start to learn how to walk in the form, before you try and run in it!"

# # #

At the Ossuary, Amelia brought Harry up-to-date on the cases against Bagnold, Crouch and Dumbledore.

"Bagnold has fled the country and we're trying to get her extradited from the United States. Her actions will likely lead to her spending time in Azkaban but the US won't comply because of the dementors," reported Amelia. "When we grabbed Crouch we learned his wife had switched places with their son in Azkaban, where she died soon afterwards from an incurable illness.

"Crouch Junior was found in Crouch Manor, recaptured and returned to Azkaban; and Crouch Senior, due to his role in that and in Black's illegal incarceration, has now joined him. I hope they both rot there!

"Dumbledore's been madly trying to delay the trial for as long as possible. Even then, he's been bribing members left, right and centre to try and get the case thrown out. I just can't prove it! The evidence against him is clear. I now have over one thousand formal complaints, forming over five thousand individual cases, of mail tampering. But, if I can't get him back on the witness stand, I can't convict him. And then people can't sue him for the loss of galleons they spent on sending you gifts."

"That's okay, Madam Bones," replied Harry. "In less than four days he's going to have far worse trouble when Harry Potter makes his big debut in Diagon Alley. As long as he hasn't managed to get the case thrown out by then, you'll be able to pile a lot more illegal actions upon him. His support will evaporate very quickly after that."

"Ah, yes," said Amelia with a grin. "I've already started to ensure I'll have a fair-sized team lined up ready to go when we get the first call of a child in danger in the Alley."

"I've planned to arrive in Gringotts at 12.30pm," said Harry. "I'll then leave Gringotts, after about an hour, and start my shopping at that time. I don't think it's going to be very long before old Dumbles makes an appearance and tries to grab me. The goblins already have what they need to do lined up ready to go."

"Oh, and you won't be offended if I land a couple of kicks to Dumbledore's shins when he grabs me, do you? After all, that's what a mundane child has been told to do if they're grabbed in a similar manner."

"Just so long as you land a couple of good ones for me," she replied with a grin.

"Oh," said Harry, suddenly thinking of something. "Can I have that list of complainants, and who they're on behalf of if they're acting as guardians for the real victims? I want to write a letter to each and every one of them. Even if I have to get a form letter printed off and I personally address and sign each one."

Surprised, Amelia said, "Yes, of course, My Lord. But that's a great deal of work you've set yourself up for."

Nodding, Harry said, "I know. And I know it's going to take me a long time to address them all. But, I have a reputation that's in tatters from what Dumbbutt has done. And I need to fix it, since I can't expect Dumbles to do it for me."

Impressed, Amelia said, "I'll get you a copy of the list of names, and see if I can get you a list of what they sent you to match."

"Thank you, Ma'am," he said. "And, do you know where I can order a

whole batch of dicta-quills?"

"I'll get you the contact details of our supplier," she replied.

"Again, thank you," replied Harry.

While Harry and Amelia had been talking, Susan came into the room and had sat quietly. Turning to her, Harry said with a big smile and a deep flourish, "And good evening to you, My Lady Hufflepuff. I hope I find you well, this evening?"

Amelia rolled her eyes at Harry's antics.

Grinning back, Susan replied with an equal deep curtseying flourish, "I am well. Thank you, My Lord Slytherin, for asking."

Chuckling, Harry said, "How goes the search for your animagus?"

Sitting up in excitement, Susan replied, "I'm a dark grey wolf with a hint of reddish colouring between my ears and down my ruff. It also has the same dark brown coloured eyes as me!"

Nodding, Harry said, "Okay, if your aunt allows it you can come over to the Pottery tomorrow and Sirius and I will help you to assume the form for the first couple of times."

Both looked towards Amelia, who nodded and said, "But she's to come straight back home afterwards."

Nodding, Harry said, "Of course."

Looking back at Susan, he said, "Come through via the floo at about 10.00am and we'll have the middle of the parlour floor cleared of furniture."

"Yes!" squealed Susan. "I'll be there!"

A little while later he activated the last cube for Susan and left for the Grangers.

# # #

"Come in, lad," said Dan, holding the door open for him, after first

checking the street.

While Dan was returning his weapon to his new gun safe in the hall closet, Harry went into the lounge room to half flop into his now favourite chair.

Hermione was still working on the arithmancy equations but, at least this time, she wasn't so deep into it that she wasn't paying attention to what was going on around her.

"Hi, Harry," she said glancing up as he walked in.

"Hi 'Mione," he replied with a grin. "Still working on magical energy conservation?"

"Oh, yes," she replied. "I think you're going to be really surprised!"

Dan came in and called Emma from the kitchen.

Answering Hermione, Harry said, "I've no doubt."

Emma and Dan both came in and sat on the sofa facing the two kids.

They clearly had something on their minds.

"Oh, oh!" said Harry in mock dread to Hermione. "The Major's called in support from the good Lady Emma. Why do I have the feeling I'm about to be ambushed?"

"Because you're smarter than you think?" asked Hermione with a wry smile.

Dan snorted. "Uppity kid!"

"Daniel!" scolded Emma, rounding on her husband.

Leaping to his feet, chest puffed out, fists on his hips and feet apart, Harry declared, "I, am Super Harry! And I am impervious to your taunts!"

"Sit down, you impertinent child," Dan mock ordered.

With an airily gesture of his right hand, Harry declared, "Super Harry must first give his impressive monologue!"

"Sit down, or I'll give the Sergeant Major a call," Dan ordered with a grin.

Deflating, as he had already met He-who-makes-you-hurt, Sergeant Major Bellows, on more than one of his training exercises, Harry said, "Super Harry is not impervious to Sar'Majors." He flopped back into his chair.

Dan chuckled while Emma just gave a 'why me' sigh and a roll of her eyes. Hermione just shook her head with a slight smile.

"Did you hear what he said to to me, this morning?" asked Harry.

"Oh, this'll be good," said Dan with a look of glee on his face.

"He said, 'You, my little butt nugget, have as much co-ordination as two jellyfish fornicating in a bucket of warm snot.'"

Dan roared with laughter while Emma looked scandalised.

"He never!" gasped Emma.

"That's one of his better ones!" chortled Dan.

Hermione blushed a little but didn't say anything.

Once everyone had settled again, with her patience voice, Emma began,

"Harry, I'm... we're... not happy about you having to deal with Dumbledore, on Wednesday in the Alley, on your own until your support can arrive."

"I'll be fine, Ma'am," replied Harry, still grinning. "Everyone is a only few seconds away."

"Well, there's going to be three people right there with you," she said.

"Dan, Hermione and I will be joining you in Gringotts before you walk out to start your shopping. Mister Dumbledore does not know us, so he will think we're just other shoppers who happen to be near you when he sees you."

Frowning, Harry thought about it. He said, "Well, I don't think I really need the backup. But, if it makes you happy, we can do that."

"It makes me very happy, Harry," she said in a firm voice.

"Okay," said Harry, surrendering. "We'll all go shopping together. We'll

make it look like Hermione and I had just met and we worked out we were both to be first years together at Hogwarts. We'll then go shopping together to buy what we need off the shopping list."

"I already have everything I need for school, Harry," said Hermione.

"That doesn't matter, I'll pay for you to have a second set of everything. I'm rich, remember?"

Dan said, "Good plan. But you're not going to buy a second set of everything. It's a waste of money."

"But," said Harry sitting up, "if we're going to do this, then I get to buy you some gifts."

"Only something small, useful and cheap," said Emma.

"Madam, you wound me!" mock declared Harry. "I would dishonour the memory of my ancestors if I was to... stint... on my responsibilities as the Head of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter!"

"Can it, lad," said Dan with a chuckle. "We're non-magical upper middle class, remember?"

"Okay, but I still get to buy gifts," grumbled Harry. "I told the goblins I'll be at Gringotts at 12.30pm. I think it's going to take about an hour hiding in the back offices before we then come out and start shopping."

Turning to Emma, he asked, "Are you going to be okay taking a day off, Ma'am?"

"I've already cleared the time in my schedule," she replied.

"In other words, you'd already planned to ambush me with this, well in advance," he grouched.

Sighing, Emma said, "Sometimes you take too much onto yourself, Harry. You might have the mind of a nineteen year old but you've still the body of an eleven year old. It's you who keeps reminding us of that."

"Having a couple of adults along will not harm your 'rep', lad," said Dan.

Holding up his hands in a sign of surrender, Harry said, "Okay, okay."

Grinning, Dan said, "We knew you'd see it our way."

"Did I actually have a choice?"

"No," he grinned.

Shaking his head and changing the subject, Harry turned to Hermione and asked, "How goes the search for your animagus form?"

Brightening, Hermione replied, "Oh, I'm a big raven... or a crow... or something."

"Or something?" asked Harry.

She said, "It... looks different... to what I'd expect a raven or crow to look like."

Curious, Harry asked, "What do you mean?"

"Well," she replied, "for starters, it doesn't have the yellow irises of either of those birds. Its eyes are brown, like mine."

"That's because it has a lot of your characteristics," said Harry. "Clearly, one of the characteristics in your form is the colour of your eyes. Susan said the same thing."

"And, though it's a black bird, it has pure white tips to its pinion and tail feathers," she said, thinking hard.

"Does it have four or five pinion feathers?" he asked.

Thinking, she replied, "Five... yes... definitely five."

"That's a crow," said Harry with a smile. "Ravens have four."

"Okay," said Hermione. "But, as I'm Ravenclaw, I'd have thought it'd be a raven."

"Nope!" he replied. "But, the only difference biologists can determine between a raven and a crow, is the difference of one pinion feather between the two."

Grinning, he said, "That is, the difference between a crow and a raven is

a matter of a pinion!" He laughed.

"Oh, Harry," she said with a little sigh and a shake of her head. "That really was lame... Clever... but lame."

"Yeah, well," he said, still chuckling. "I thought it was funny."

"Even so," she said. "It still doesn't explain the colour difference in the feather tips."

Shrugging but still smiling, Harry said, "I know. But, we'll work it out.

How about I come and pick you up just before 10.00am tomorrow morning. Susan's also coming to the Pottery and Sirius and I will help you through the first form shift or two along with her."

Looking back at her parents, she asked, "Is that okay?"

Her father nodded, but Emma said, "As long as I come, too, that's fine."

Harry replied, "That's fine. I appreciate the idea of having a female chaperone there. And I hope Madam Bones comes, too. Sirius and I will be along shortly before 10.00am and we'll side-along apparate the two of you."

Emma only nodded but Hermione was a bit excited.

Dan said, "Okay, Pumpkin. Time for bed. We'll be up shortly."

Sighing, Hermione packed up what she was working on and tucked it all under her arm. Then she walked over, kissed her mother, then her father, hesitated a moment, rushed over to Harry and kissed him on the cheek before dashing up the stairs with a giggle.

Harry blushed again, quite gobsmacked.

Emma just smiled at him and shook her head. "I told you," she said. "She already falling in love with you."

"I'm soooo not ready for this," said Harry with a mumble.

Dan just grinned and said, "Too bad!"

Activating the last cube for Hermione, Harry headed for home. He

needed sleep.

# # #

The next morning, after his training regimen with Dan - Something he was beginning to enjoy no matter how much he now pretended to whine and moan about it to Dan - he returned home to find Sirius had already cleared the floor of the Parlour again. This time he had removed the furniture.

Pixie prepared a light morning tea with small quartered sandwiches and tea in preparation of their guests.

Sirius and he, at a little before 10.00am, apparated over to the entry hall of the Granger residence and announced themselves.

"Hello?" called Harry.

"In the kitchen," Harry heard Emma call.

Harry led Sirius through to the kitchen at the rear of the house and said hello.

"Hermione!" Emma called.

With a sudden rush of thumping feet Hermione came down the stairs leading up to the bedrooms in a rush and barrelled into the kitchen.

"Hi, Sirius!" she said, going to the older man and giving him a hug.

A little shocked by Hermione's forwardness it took him a moment to hug her back.

Looking down at the top of her head, he said, "Hello, my little darling."

Harry just snorted and Emma just rolled her eyes.

"Where's Dan?" asked Harry.

Hermione said, "Outside talking to the lovely men who stopped by in a plumbers van across the street. He's just letting them know we're going to be away for a while."

Harry nodded

Hermione helped her mother tidy up the kitchen while they waited.

A few minutes later, Dan walked back in the front door. He drew a small automatic from the middle of his back and check-safed it before re-tucking it back into the small holster in the small of his back.

Sirius watched him with curiosity.

"What was that?" he asked.

Dan replied, "A nine millimetre automatic. Twelve rounds, hollow tipped."

That seemed to confuse Sirius even more than he was already.

Harry grinned and decided to explain it to his godfather. He said, "A powerful enough mundane weapon useful at short distances no more than about duelling ranges. For longer distances they have a longer weapon. Quite lethal."

"Ah!" said Sirius, suddenly understanding.

Looking around the room he asked, "Are we ready to go?"

Dan replied, "Yes. But I'm coming, too."

Looking at his godfather, Harry asked, "Can you side-along apparate two?"

Frowning, Sirius said, "Yes, but it'd be easier to make two trips."

"Okay," said Harry. "You take Emma and I'll take Hermione. Then you can come back for Dan?"

"Sounds like a plan," said Dan.

Sirius walked up and held on to Emma while she held on to him. Then they were gone. Harry took Hermione.

# # #

At the Pottery, Harry arrived and held up Hermione for the few seconds it took her to get her balance, and Sirius went back and collected Dan.

They were back a few seconds later.

Pixie popped in and asked, "Missy Emma and Mister Dan like tea?"

Emma said to the little elf, "Yes, but I'll come and give you a hand."

Pixie, having had previous experience of this with Emma, nodded and popped away. Emma left the room heading for the kitchen. Harry suspected she was more checking to ensure he and Sirius were eating well, than to actually assist in making tea.

A few moments later they received a floo call from the Ossuary. Amelia, then Susan, stepped through. Amelia had her wand out ready for trouble until she was sure the room was safe.

Sirius said to her, "You know, you come across as quite paranoid when you do that," indicating her wand.

Amelia grinned and said, "My instructor at the auror training centre said, 'Better to look paranoid and be alive than be foolish and dead'."

Sirius grinned and nodded his head. "Moody. We were the same during the war," he said.

"Okay, that's everybody," said Harry, changing the subject. Turning to Susan he asked, "Do you want to go first?"

Susan replied, "Yes, please."

Sirius said, "Right. Everyone else, please move to the walls. Susan, you're in the middle of the floor."

After moving folks around, during which time Emma came back in, they were ready.

Looking at Susan, Sirius said, "The best way to start is to put your body into a position somewhat how your form looks when you've changed. It gets your mind thinking of the shape. So, you're a wolf, right?"

Nodding, Susan got down onto her hands and knees in the middle of the floor, "Is this okay?"

Sirius replied, "More than okay."

"Now, I want you to relax, in that position meditate just slightly if you need to, then use your magic to push your body into the shape of the wolf. Let me know when you're ready."

Susan held still for a little while and then quietly said, "Okay, I'm ready."

Harry moved up to one side of Susan, holding his hands at the ready, while Sirius drew his wand and took the other. Everyone else remained quiet and watched with avid interest.

"Okay, Susan," he said. "Now."

Harry and Sirius both pumped their magic into Susan. And she changed with an almost audible pop.

Dan and Emma gasped in shock.

"Merlin!" said Amelia.

"Wow!" said Sirius. "That was quick."

Harry moved around in front of the young girl and told her to sit on her haunches. She did so and copied almost the same expression as Neville the day before.

Thinking, he said, "Definitely a wolf. Young adolescent from your lines. A pretty big one, too."

Suddenly, he realised what he was seeing, "Damn, Susan! You make one big wolf; bigger than a timber wolf, even!"

Susan tilted her head across to the other side and appeared to frown back at Harry. She rose back up onto all four feet and turned her head to look at herself from one side to the other.

"Allow me," said Sirius. He conjured the same mirror they'd used for Neville and put it so Susan could see her own reflection. Again, she made those slight head tilts Harry was used to seeing a puppy do.

Grinning, Harry stood back up and said, "Okay, time to revert."

Sirius then stepped forward and said, "Okay, Susan." Getting the girl's

attention he said, "To revert you just need to let the form go and allow yourself to revert back to your normal self. When you're ready, do that.

Harry and I will be here to help force the change, if necessary."

Again, with an almost audible pop, Susan changed. This time, back to her normal self. Harry looked up at Sirius and asked, "Did you assist?"

"No", said Sirius. "She changed too quick for me to even have a chance to raise my wand."

"Me, neither," said Harry. "I think she's going to understand this the quickest of the three."

Looking at the young girl as she rose to her feet, Sirius asked, "How did that feel?"

Thinking hard, Susan replied, "It felt... right. I felt alive and I felt like I needed to run and hunt!"

Looking at Harry, he grinned and said, "She's going to be a natural at this."

Nodding, Harry grinned back before turning to Susan and saying, "Yeah, you're not going to have any trouble getting this down pat."

Sirius piped up and said to her, "For now, though, take a break. We'll give Hermione a shot."

Susan moved off to the side to stand next to her aunt, grinning like a loon. While Hermione came forward and stood in the middle of the floor.

"Okay, 'Mione," said Harry. "As you're a bird, you'll need to remain standing. But I want you to lean forward a bit and hold your arms straight down by your sides as if they were your wings."

Hermione took the stance as she was instructed, but asked, "Why do I need to do this when Harry doesn't?"

Replying, Harry said, "Because I now have quite a bit of experience assuming my form. Taking the stance just helps you get your mind into a

receptive state for your first couple of times."

Sirius then said, "Same thing as Susan, meditate a little and focus on assuming the shape of your..."

"White-tipped crow," finished Harry.

Sirius then said, "Let us know when you're ready."

A few moments later, Hermione nodded.

Stepping forward, as Harry did the same from the other side, he instructed, "Okay, push!"

Harry and Sirius both pushed their magic into Hermione and she flowed into her shape. Now standing before them was what looked like a large crow with white tips on its pinion feathers and the tips of its tail feathers. Again, it was a large bird, standing almost knee high to the adults in the room.

Again, Harry heard a sharp intake of breath from the others in the room. He wondered when he'd become quite so blasé about someone assuming their animagus form.

"Okay," said Sirius in a little amazement. "That's pretty big for a normal adolescent crow."

Hermione was using the mirror to give herself a good look over. She was carefully moving her wings out from her body and spreading her feathers. Her wingspan was going to be quite impressive; bigger even than Harry's.

Grinning, Harry replied, "That's because I don't think she's going to be a normal crow. I think she may be something more than that. Those white tips are very unusual."

Hermione was looking all around; at herself, at her reflection, at her parents, at everyone.

Stepping forward again, Sirius said, "Okay, time to revert."

"Okay, Hermione," he said. Hermione looked up at him as he said, "Time to revert. When you're ready."

Harry moved into his now normal position on the other side and both he and Sirius stood ready to assist. She leaned forward just a little and then... blurred. 'Normal' Hermione was now standing in front of them bent forward a little.

She stood up straight, turned to Harry, grinned and threw her arms around him.

"Oh, wow!" she exclaimed. "That was so... cool!"

Looking over her shoulder, Harry asked Sirius, "Did you need to assist with the reversion?"

"No," replied Sirius. "You?"

"No," he said.

Patting the girl on the back, Harry said, "Okay, 'Mione. You need to let me go now."

Hermione reluctantly let go of Harry and went to her parents saying, "Did you see that? I'm a crow!"

"Errr... yeah," said Dan, still a little shocked.

Sirius then turned to Susan and asked, "Ready for a second attempt?"

Nodding, Susan replied, "Yes, please!" And moved into the centre of the room once more.

Standing between Sirius and Harry she concentrated a little bit and, before Sirius or Harry were even ready, she blurred and assumed her wolf form.

"Ummm... Harry?" asked Sirius. "Did you..."

"Nope!" said Harry with a grin. "That was all her!"

Susan sat on her haunches and looked around a bit to make sure she had everything where it was supposed to be. Then stood and tried to walk

around the room a bit. At first, she was a little off-gaited, but soon learned how to walk in her form after a bit of concentration.

She moved back into the centre of the room and, after a little hesitation, blurred back into her normal human form.

Sirius chuckled and said, "Yeah, she's got this."

Grinning, Harry said to her, "What you're now going to need to do is watch how dogs and horses move about. A wolf moves the same way.

There's walking, trotting, galloping, jumping and the ways they suddenly change direction."

Getting her attention, Sirius said, "When you're ready to try those, the Pottery here has plenty of outside space in the woods where we can help you practice that. We're a pretty decent distance from non-magical folks. And I doubt it's going to take you all that long to get the hang of it, considering how quickly you've picked up assuming your form and reverting back."

Turning to Hermione, Harry asked, "You ready to try again, 'Mione?"

Hermione nodded and skipped to the middle of the room as Susan moved out of the way. She leaned forward slightly with her arms by her side and, before Harry or Sirius could even move to assist, she blurred and assumed the form of her crow.

Exasperated but amused, Sirius said, "What is it with you kids? You're picking it up so fast!"

Hermione looked at him with her beak slightly open and gave a little 'caw!'. She spread her wings out to each side and turned about on the spot with little hops. She looked down at her rather skinny legs with her splayed toes, and moved them about a little.

Looking up she gave her wings a single beat and lifted about a foot into the air.

Harry pleaded, "Please don't try to fly in the house."

"When you want to try that," he said, "we'll go outside and try a few attempts at gliding and banking. Then we'll go over how your wings work when they're flapping. In the mean time, you need to watch some videos in slow motion of birds in flight, and how they take off and land."

Hermione, without warning, suddenly blurred and assumed her normal form.

"Merlin!" exclaimed Sirius. "Both of them! Like naturals!"

Harry just shook his head and chuckled. Speaking to the room, he asked, "How about we have some morning tea?"

That made everyone at least start to relax. With a wave of his wand, Sirius brought the furniture back into the room. "Pixie!" he called.

\*Pop\* "Yes, Master Sirius, Sir?"

"You can bring in the morning tea, now, Pix," he said.

\*Pop\* \*Pop\* And the morning tea was laid out on the coffee table.

# # #

After a quick call through to Longbottom Manor via floo, they were soon joined by Neville and Augusta.

Hermione and Susan tag teamed Neville and told him they, too, could now assume their animagus forms. Neville was clearly excited for them both.

Augusta said, "This is actually quite extraordinary. Everyone always assumed it was such a rare gift."

It was Sirius who responded first. Shaking his head, he said, "No, it just takes learning how to meditate, seeking your form, meeting it, and then being given a bit of assistance in assuming it for the first time. If you want to discover your own, Harry and I can help you."

"Lord Black," said Amelia. "Clearly, you have such an animagus form,

yourself. You wouldn't know so much about the subject if you didn't."

Looking abashed before sighing, "Yeah, I do."

He gave a shrug, looking at Harry, said, "It was bound to come out sooner or later."

Harry just grinned back and said, "You'd best show them."

Sirius rose from his seat and moved to stand in front of the fireplace. He suddenly blurred and took the form of his Irish Wolfhound.

Harry said with a wide grin, "Everyone, say hello to Padfoot!"

"He has his own name?" asked Hermione wondrously.

Sirius blurred back and said, "In the group of like-skilled folks I was a part of, it was de rigueur to have a different name when you were in your animagus form."

"Can we have a name for ours?" asked Susan excitedly.

Sirius, moving back to his seat, said, "Yes, but it's not up to you to pick the name. It's up to the others to pick it for you."

Sitting back and clearly remembering better days, he said, "It was James and Remus who picked mine, Padfoot. I picked Pettigrew's, Wormtail.

James gave Remus his very early, Moony, because he's a werewolf. That's what started the concept, actually. And Moony and Pettigrew who gave Harry's father his, Prongs."

Turning to Harry, she asked, "And your name is 'Pup'?"

Harry snorted and replied, "No. Sirius is the only one who calls me that."

"Moony called him 'Cub'," said Sirius, continuing. "And James called him 'Prongslet'."

"Then, do you have one, Harry?" asked Susan.

Nodding, Harry said, "Myrrdin called me 'Archimedes', but it's not really a suitable name for the style of which Sirius speaks."

Hermione, frowning, asked, "Wait. Wasn't Archimedes the name of

Merlin's owl?"

Grumbling, Harry said, "No. I was never 'Merlin's owl'. It was that damnable blonde-headed kid, Arthur, who called me that because he knew it annoyed me. That damned kid was never Merlin's apprentice, I was. But, Merlin taught Arthur how to read and write and, when he grew up, he wrote a bloody book. In it he claimed to have been Merlin's apprentice and I was just an owl, when he knew damned well that wasn't true!"

"You were Merlin's owl?" asked Dan, shocked. "The one in the Disney film? That owl?"

"Yes... No... Disney, as has a lot of the written history, got a few things wrong," explained Harry. "That damned kid wrote what he did as revenge against me for pranking his butt on a couple of occasions. And then people assumed it as fact, rather than the fiction it was.

"I was the so-called owl and wore the glasses, not Myrrdin. I was also the apprentice, but part of my training was assumed to have been Arthur's because of his bloody book. Arthur lied about that; he was only a non-magical. I couldn't speak in my earth phoenix form, either, as Disney's version does. However, Myrrdin was a highly skilled Legilimens and he could read my thoughts while I was in my form. I, of course, could understand him when he talked to me."

"Just because, on one occasion, I stuffed this great honking sword he found through the middle of a rock in a churchyard, he held a grudge."

"It was you who put the sword in the stone?" asked Emma.

"Well, yes," grumbled Harry sitting back with his arms crossed. "I did it as a prank."

"The sword in the stone was a prank?" asked Sirius.

Harry just grumbled about people taking things too seriously, while

Sirius rolled around in his seat howling with laughter.

"Why else would a sword be sticking out of a rock?" he asked.

Emma asked, "So, you pulled a practical joke on King Arthur?"

"No," replied Harry, "I pranked a kid, another orphan, that Myrrdin rescued from semi-slavery from a castle in England. Myrrdin thought he'd make a good friend for me. But, we never got along. Not really. Myrrdin used to grab him, bring him to the pocket reality, teach him some stuff, and then send him back. But I'd be trying to meditate and the kid would poke me and demand I come play with him. He just annoyed the hell out of me.

"On one of those occasions the kid had brought an old sword with him and was dragging it everywhere. But he left it behind when Myrrdin sent him back. Myrrdin told me to send him his sword, so I did. I stuffed it in a rock in a nearby churchyard where he'd find it. And I was kind enough that I left it keyed to him so no one would steal it.

"It was those silly bloody bone-headed knights who, seeing him pull it back out, instantly declared him their rightful king for his deed.

Seriously, I think those knights must've taken one too many hits to their collective heads to have done that! Not one of them bothered to ask how the sword came to be in the bloody rock in the first place!"

Sirius, having laughed himself right out of his chair, was still howling with laughter on the floor.

"Shut up, Snuffles!" grumbled Harry to his godfather.

Still laughing, Sirius said, "You went to pull a prank on a poor, defenceless mundane kid, and it made him a king!"

"It's not funny, Snuffles!" exclaimed Harry quite crossly. "It upset the future of the country and it took Myrrdin and me years to fix it. It took a couple of centuries in real time before we got the rightful ruling line back

where it belonged and have the so-called history of Arthur rendered folklore. That little wart of a boy was supposed to have gone on to fulfil his dream and become a mighty knight; not become king!

"As punishment, Myrrdin made me train the boy for the next few years while he worked at fixing the problem it caused, until it was safe to leave him alone to his own devices."

Neville, speaking up for the first time, said, "So, not only did you prank Merlin. You also pranked King Arthur."

Shrugging, Harry replied, "Yeah, I suppose."

Neville declared, "You're bonkers!"

"Neville!" cried Augusta. "What a horrid thing to say!"

Neville asked, "Well, what would you call it, grandmother?"

Thinking, Augusta replied, "Inadvisable."

"Anyway," said Harry, trying to get the conversation back on track. "We need to figure out Marauder names for everyone. But I suggest we wait awhile. I have a feeling there's more about each of the animagus forms we don't know yet. And we might want to learn what those are, first."

"Anyone else have anything?" asked Dan.

There were a range of verbal nods in the negative from everyone else.

"In that case," said Dan, "Emma and I do. We're not letting Harry walk through Diagon Alley alone. No matter how close his backup is. We're going to walk with him."

Harry just rolled his eyes.

Amelia leaned forward and said, "Actually, Major Granger, that's a very good idea. I must confess it concerned me, too."

Dan said, "Well, we know this Dumbledore fellow doesn't know us from a bar of soap. So, when Harry goes straight to Gringotts, we'll be there waiting for him. Supposedly, he and Hermione will quickly discover

they're both going to Hogwarts for the first time and strike up an immediate friendship. Emma, Hermione and I will then be walking with him when he goes to do his shopping."

Nodding, Amelia said, "That works. Anyone else have ideas about this?"

More negative head shakes from everyone else, including Harry, this time.

Harry said, "Just that Neville and Susan will be trained by Sirius on how to move in their animagus forms, while I'll train Hermione in moving and flight in hers."

Susan and Neville nodded. But Hermione said, "Harry, I'm afraid of heights. I don't think I'm going to be any good at this."

Harry smiled and replied, "You'll never need to be afraid of heights again, 'Mione. The fear of heights has more to do with the fear of falling, together with the... sudden deceleration syndrome at the end. And that's something you're never going to have to fear again."

"Well, I have one to add to next Wednesday's... festivities," said Amelia.

"Just so Figg can't get in contact with Dumbledore when Harry pays her a visit, I'll be summoning him to my office for questions relating to... how it is he's managing to avoid being put on trial. I'll also be hinting how I believe he's been bribing other members of the Wizengamot. That should keep him busy for at least an hour."

After working out times when Harry and Sirius could train the three, the semi-impromptu meeting broke up and folks headed home. The Longbottoms and Boneses left via the floo first; and then Sirius and Harry shuttled the Grangers back to their home.

# # #

Внимание! Этот перевод, возможно, ещё не готов.

Его статус: идёт перевод

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