

Інформація

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Alliance

Books > Harry Potter

The Potter Alliance

By: OrionB15

OoTP Alternate Story Line. Susan Bones has many questions for one of her class mates, and some of these questions lead to a proposition that very well may shake the future of the wizarding world. Read to follow a story in which Harry has some fateful romantic times, and how they will effect his decisions. Mostly Canon! HarryXSusan no slash, no major character bashing.

Rated: Fiction M - English - Romance/Drama - Harry P., Sirius B., Neville L., Susan B. - Chapters: 34 - Words: 137,380 - Reviews: 1,240 - Favs: 4,281 - Follows: 4,260 - Updated: 23.04.2020, 08:33:39 - Published: 05.10.2016, 07:58:10 - Status: Complete - id: 12177763

1. Possibilities

Chapter 1

"When your seconds away from dying, or watching a friend die...you just don't know what that's like."

The assembled students in the Hogs Head were shocked to silence. Harry Potter, the boy who lived, and the boy who had lost his mind in the maze last year was presenting himself naked in front of his fellow students. He sounded desperate, and defeated. It was in this moment that some of the students were stirring. This wasn't some ploy for attention, or an attempt to usurp the Ministry like they had been told. Whatever had happened to the last Potter, it was deep, and it was scarring. Something had changed the young heroic boy, and the man that stood before them was

attempting to save them, though they had done nothing to deserve it.

A young head red head, whom was in Harry's year stood in the back of the room in deep thought. Her Auntie was unsure of what exactly had happened at the end of the Triwizard Cup, and Dumbledore had blocked her off at every attempt to get in contact with the young man. Susan had tried to reserve her judgment about Harry, she had once fallen prey to the rumor mill that entranced the magical world, and she misjudged the boy then, but now she did not want to misjudge the man in front of her. Susan Bones was many things, but a fool was not one of them. She knew from what her Auntie had told her, Harry was almost dismissed from the Wizarding World just before the start of term for simple underage self defensive magic, which was undoubtedly used to counter a dementor. Her Aunt had questioned as to how she knew that he hadn't just used it to show off, but Susan knew the boy well enough to know that wasn't his style. Harry Potter had a short temper, and if he was going to get in trouble for underage magic she had no difficulty believing that it would be a blasting charm to some stupid muggles face.

She didn't know how much of the rumor mill was true, but she knew that every rumor had to hold some truth to it, and if even one of the stories about Harry Potter was real, he was an incredibly powerful young wizard, with a decent fortune to inherit when he became of age. He was no millionaire by any means, but he certainly had enough money to buy himself some better clothes, or some private lessons to fix his grades in theory.

Had Harry been in Hufflepuff Susan would have tried to befriend Harry Potter, and maybe even ask him some of the questions that she at times pondered when he came up at the dinner table conversations. However she was not friends with Harry Potter, yet here he was offering to, if

nothing else save her grade from a failing practical OWL.

Looking at her best friend Hannah next to her she knew that the girl was much more interested in the drama than the grade, but also knew that she would want the grade. Every person in the room had different opinions about Harry Potter, but at one point or another they had all seen his clever abilities, or superior wand work. The Triwizard tournament certainly proved that he was capable if nothing else.

When Hermione stood at the end of her tirade she turned to gathered students, "Whether you believe Harry's story or not, Umbridge has to be stopped. I am not proposing any actions against her, but if you want to pass your practicals Harry is your best shot. He covered every spell up to NEWTs last year to help him survive the tournament, and he was able to teach Ron and I most of these spells. He is a capable teacher...I have a contract here that says you won't rat any of us out to Umbridge. If you sign it, I will give you a fake galleon that will heat up when we have decided a time and place to meet. If you don't decide to sign you can leave now, and forget this ever happened."

Not many people cleared out, but nearly everyone was at the very least interested in what Harry would teach them, so by the end of the day there were lots of signatures on Hermione's paper. Susan wasn't surprised to see lots of Ravenclaw names on it. Everyone knew that they would ace the theoretical portions, but if they wanted to get their outstanding, they would need the actual practical to get it.

Susan and Hannah got in line standing behind Cho Chang who was attempting to give Potter her doe eyes. Susan rolled her eyes a bit knowing that Cho was a bit of a psycho obsessive, especially when it came to her powerful wizards. A bit of the teenage girl's heart throbbed at the thought of her friend Cedric she had lost just six months, but shook it

off hoping that he was in a better place, and also importantly, away from Cho.

As people were clearing out Susan was trying to explain to Hannah that she just wanted a quick word with Harry before they headed back to more popular side of the village. Unfortunately convincing her very blonde best friend of anything wasn't the easiest task in the world, and that wasn't the only obstacle in her way. When she approached the table again that Hermione, Ron, and Harry were quietly talking at they all went quiet when she got within ear shot. Ron and Harry looked expectantly at her, while Hermione smiled at her, "Hey Susan, glad to see you signed your name on the list. Did you have a question or...?"

Susan understanding that she was kind of interrupted something said, "I was just wondering if I could have a word with Harry."

Ron protectively said, "Anything you need to say to Harry you can say to us to. He's my best mate, he is going to tell me anything you say anyways."

Hermione bit her lip, like she always did when she wanted to give someone a only half way pacifistic answer, "Harry just had a bit of a rough meeting, can't it wait?"

Clearly being annoyed Harry rolled his eyes, "Harry can speak for himself, thanks. Is it important Susan?"

Susan was biting her lip nervously now, she had never been under the pressure of Harry's watchful green eyes before, "Uhhh, no it wasn't important, I will just ummm, talk to you later, yeah?"

Harry glared at his best friends, "I was just leaving actually, mind if I walk you out?"

Susan smiled a bit, but felt her confidence waver under the glaring eyes of Hermione and Ron, "Its really okay Harry, I don't mean to intrude. I

just had some questions for you, it really isn't that important! I will just see my self out, Hannah is waiting for me at the door."

Harry nodded his head, "If your sure then. Will I see you at the next meeting?"

The girl tucked a bit of her hair behind her ear smiling, "Yes, I do believe you will. See you around Harry!"

With that the girl turned around and walked over to her best friend guiding her out to the door. The blonde whom had seen the conversation unfold immediately busted out her questions the second the cold air was on their faces, "Merlin! If Hermione and Ron weren't so damn up tight Potter might have more friends around our parts! And what was with that all that tucking your hair behind your ear, and smiling, and stuttering? I mean seriously what are you 12?"

If it was possible Susan's cheeks would've turned a deeper stage of red, but the freezing cold weather kept her pride in tact, "Hannah Rebekah Abbot! Don't you dare lecture me on my actions in front of Harry, after you all but accused him of attacking Justin in second year. Also should I remind you the last time that Cormac Mclaggen tried to talk to you, I had to all but carry you out of the room."

Hannah swore, "You promised never to speak of that again!"

Grinning the red haired girl spiked out, "I fight dirty to defend myself!"

"Fine fine! I won't attack you or your school girls crush sorry!" Hannah held her hands up in mock surrender.

Susan tried to glare at the girl further, but the brutality of the winter storm was overwhelming, which made the two girls decide to head back to the castle a bit early.

The nervous students gathered in the large room hesitantly. None that gathered had ever been in this room before, in fact most did not even

know it existed until about 30 seconds before entering the room. Harry had not told them how to open the room, or what he did to make it appear, but it was clear that the boy with the scar once again had a well kept secret.

Susan and Hannah were among the nervous tonight. Susan's aunt was the head of the Department Magcal Law Enforcement, and if she were caught in this group tonight she would be in big trouble with not just the school, but her aunt as well. It was now against Hogwarts student code of conduct to be in unsanctioned groups. The result of being caught could be expulsion, and that was not something any member of the Bones family had ever had to endure, yet she was still there, hoping for something worth her while.

Harry stood in front of assembled group with a neutral expression on his face. Flanking his left and right were his usual best friends that were always at his side, and they both at least had a bit happier expressions. Hermione was of course the one who got the ball rolling, "Thank you everyone for coming out. Believe me, we know and appreciate the risk you are taking to be here, so we will try to make it worth your time and dismiss you in groups to ensure that you won't be caught out in corridors, and that you will be back before curfew."

Mandy Brocklehurst from Ravenclaw rose her hand sarcastically, and asked, "How exactly are you going to do that? The whole not getting us caught thing?"

Harry speaking for the first time tonight, "You won't be caught. Trust me."

Some murmurs and whispers came from the group, and Herimione bit her lip as if she wanted to say something to Harry, but shook her head and continued, "Anyways, I think before we get started we should come

up with a name. Something to call ourselves, I also think we should elect a leader."

Harry's eyes flashed with annoyance as he gave Hermione a look Susan was becoming all too familiar with, while Neville asked timidly, "I thought Harry was going to be the leader?"

Ernie nodded speaking out, "Yeah, no thanks Granger, your brilliant and all, but I don't think I want practical lessons from a text book!"

Hermione flushed, and Ron spoke up, "She was just suggesting it McMillan, we will both be voting for Harry, but it's a formality, don't be a git!"

Ernie blushed a bit, and nodded his head. Hermione then asked, "So all in favor of making Harry the leader?"

Most of the hands went up, and when Hermione asked for other nominees the room was quiet, meaning the ones whom had not raised their hands had been abstained from the vote, "Right then. Now a name? I was thinking something simple, and something that would make an easy acronym."

Silence enveloped the room so Ron spoke to the group, "If no one has any ideas we discussed a few. Dumbledore's Army, which would be kind of a shot at the Ministry as a joke. We thought Defense Association, and also Potter's Marauders?"

There were some whispers at each of the names, but Cho said, "Best to keep as simple as possible, in case we are caught. Potter's Marauders would probably see Harry in Azkaban, and Dumbledore's army would be unfair to the headmaster."

There were some nods at this logic, and Harry shook his head, "That is all really excellent, so now that we have done all of Hermione's pre-planning, does anyone have any last complaints? We elected a leader, we

took a name, shall we move on?"

Some more quiet mutters of agreement went up and Harry nodded his head, "Good, grab a partner, and practice the shield charm and disarming charms. Obviously one person will attack, one person will defend. Make a line, and we will assign a side to attack first."

Zacharias Smith Susan's least favorite housemate voiced a loud complaint, "You gotta be joking Potter? The shield charm is a third year spell, and the disarming charm I learned in second year! You talk about fighting the Dark Lord, but that is all your going to teach us."

Susan's eyes never left Harry's as he spun around in annoyance, "I was going to have Hermione demonstrate with me, but I suppose you would like to Smith. By all means. See if you can disarm me correctly. I won't even move. You get one shot, and then I will return fire. We will take turns until one of us is disarmed."

Zacharias nodded as people began to clear a path between the two. Harry held out his wand as Zacharias pointed it at him and cried out, "Expeliarmus."

A jet of red light shot from the boys wand, and Harry's head weaved out of the way at the last second as the spell zoomed past him. Before most people could blink Harry had returned the spell and disarmed Zacharias, holding both wands now in his hand.

Harry threw the wand back on the floor towards the boy, "Your wand movement was to erratic. Had my head been my wand you would've had a good chance at disarming me. You can perform the spell, but you can't hit a wand with it, which makes it worthless. Your shield was to slow, if I was a death eater you would be dead. If I was a dark wizard you would be dead. If I was your enemy, you would be dead. Keep that in mind as you practice Smith."

Feeling thoroughly chastised, Zach fell in line with the rest of the pairs, and began working on the charms.

Susan was quiet impressed with Harry's wand work. His follow up spell was so fast, she wasn't sure an auror could have blocked that. She was also impressed with his critique. It was useful, and to the point. She wasn't sure she had someone ever critique her like that, which made the young red head hope he would get around to her in this class period.

After a few minutes of mostly failed attempts Harry stopped the lesson and told everyone to face the center as he and Hermione faced off against each other. He called out to her to ask if she was ready, and as she nodded, he shot a spell slowly at her. Though the spell was slow, Susan was certainly not the only one to notice its power. Hermione had a nearly solid shield, and it still shuddered at the impact. Still though her moves were exaggerated, and fluid. It was clear the two had worked on the combination of spells many times together.

Harry spoke as the demonstration went on, "The shield charm has to be one precise circle. It has to be with your whole arm, and not as much wrist movement. If we were dueling and just flinging curses, it would be the flick of a wrist, but this is just practice so keep in mind you know exactly what spell is coming. Use it to your advantage. The disarming charm is almost the opposite. Its no arm and all wrist. Make a tight circle, and will your magic to the results. You know what should come out of this spell, just make it happen. Don't focus on the words, focus on the goals. I believe everyone in here is capable of this drill. Just focus, and don't force yourself to it, let it flow. Half the effectiveness of this drill is to make it flow, and give it good speed. It helps with your reflexes and it helps with your wand work. Get back at it, I will come around and assist where possible. Hermione and Ron will do the same."

Harry went straight back to Neville whom was greatly struggling while Ron and Hermione both went over in different directions to help people from different houses. Susan wondered if they had a system of some sort worked out, where Harry would help the Gryffindor's, Hermione would help the Claws, and Ron would help the Puff's. The thought irritated Susan greatly that the teacher might just work with one house, but tried to focus on the drill he had laid before them. Her shield charm wasn't bad, but she could not seem to hit her friends wand with her disarming hex. Hannah was only having a little bit of luck with each of the spells, but she hadn't had as much practice as Susan had.

Ron caught wind of their troubles after just a short while, and came over to help out. He watched for a moment and corrected Hannah first, but when he watched Susan it was like a confusing puzzle or riddle was laid out to him, "I don't know, it looks alright, but your spells are shooting off a few feet in the wrong direction. I would try and compensate and go a different direction with your aim, but that isn't what Harry would do...let me go get him, and I will try and help Neville." After just a moment the two stopped and watched as the gangly red head walked over to the teacher, and watched him teach Neville for a few moments then interrupted. Ron seemed to explain the situation to Harry, and the young man nodded and started heading in their direction.

Hannah muttered, "Don't look now Suzy, your crush is coming over!"

Susan glared at her best friend, but held her best composure as the handsome young man approached them, "Okay guys lets see it. Ron says your wand work looks good, and that he doesn't understand whats wrong, maybe I can give a better guess then aiming in a different direction."

Susan nodded, and once again tried to complete the drill with her best

friend. Harry watched it 3 times before walking over to her. He was standing maybe a foot in front of her, and seemed to be inspecting her. The young red head did her best not to blush, and failed when he asked, "May I see your wand arm?"

Susan nodded and stuck her arm out quietly, and when she felt his hands touched her she almost flinched in surprise, but what happened next shocked her. Harry put his hands on her wrist and began rolling back the sleeves on her robes, then said, "Now try it again!"

Susan still a little red in the face turned to the smirking Hannah and told her to cast first. The shield charm came up easily enough when the disarming hex came at her, and when she fired at the hex back at her best friend it felt just a little different, and was a little to surprised when a wand came flying towards her and fell to the ground.

Harry smirked at the girl putting a comforting hand on her shoulder, "Your robes are to long, when you are here roll them back a bit to give your wrist some room. That was good wand work, but make sure you work on your catching. The advantage to having your opponents wand can be more than just taking their wand, but it could be alternate wand if you lose yours in a battle. Keep up the good work Susan, now Hannah your circle is a little off..."

As Harry explained the intricacies of Hannah's critical wand work error, Susan was simply amazed that Harry was so knowledgeable in dueling and in spell work! It made her mind swell with even more unanswered questions, which made the enigma of Harry Potter just a little bit more interesting.

When he was walking away he Hannah whistled lowly, "I think we did a good thing joining this group Suzy. I will be reluctant to admit it, but Potter really knows his stuff. At least in his basic dueling charms."

Susan nodded her head in agreement, and finally the two had pulled off a successful four rounds of exchanges, before Hannah over powered her shield and disarmed her. They practiced for thirty more minutes, when Potter called the end of the class.

"Alright guys that was pretty good, I noticed improvements in everyone's work, some of you it was drastic, and for some it was simply rolling up your sleeves so well done!"

Susan smiled at the acknowledgment, but no one except Hannah knew whom Harry was referring to, "I would like to keep classes less than two hours, but more than an hour if possible. Next time for fifteen minutes we will practice this, and move onto the next few things. We are working to have a full on duel before the end of the year. I think everyone did great today, and I hope everyone can make it to the next meeting hopefully in a few days. Thanks for coming out guys, goodnight!"

Before the class could dismiss, Colin Creevey of Gryffindor asked, "Harry can you show us your patronus now? You told me you would show the class sometime, and I really wanted to see it?"

Harry's cheeks colored a bit, "Umm, maybe not tonight Colin, everyone has been here for a while, I am sure the others want to get back to their common rooms."

Terry Boot of Ravenclaw muttered loudly, "I've never seen a real patronus before..."

Others around him nodded and Harry sighed, "Okay, I will give a demonstration. The patronus is one of the easier wand movements, it is simply a flick outwards."

Taking a deep breath Harry closed his eyes. A small smile appeared on his face as he flicked his wand outwards, "Expecto Patronum!"

A giant light erupted from his wand, and a ethereal creature emerged from

the light. A large stag stood in front of the students standing proudly, and simply radiating power. Harry spoke, "Meet prongs, it was my dad's Animagus...He has saved my life more times than I will ever care to count...Now if that will be all, Hermione says we can release the Ravensclaws. Thanks for coming out guys!"

Harry bowed to his patronus, and Prongs bowed back, and then disappeared in a fine mist that settled to the floor. Everyone had clapped at the performance, but Susan was speechless by the power of the patronus. Her aunt told her that only a few wizards alive could cast a true corporeal patronus. Harry's was almost alive though, it was almost as if Prongs could actually impale something with his massive antlers. Susan wasn't just impressed, she was amazed!

As Harry dismissed the Gryffindor students, Susan began to approach him, "Thanks for the lesson Harry, I really appreciated the fix in my fashion statement!"

Harry gave the girl a slight nod, "It was an easy fix. Your wand work was pretty good, I am guessing with your aunt being an auror, you have had some pretty good teachers before me?"

Susan shrugged, "Just my Auntie actually. She doesn't like to take time from her other aurors, but she has helped me during the Summer when she could, as you can imagine she has been quiet busy over the past two years."

Harry nodded grimly, "Yes I am afraid I can imagine so."

Susan grimaced at her choice of words and began to apologize, but Harry waved her off, "It's okay really! I am glad you learned something, and I am glad you and Hannah enjoyed yourself. Next week hopefully I will have time to reach out to the others. I told Neville if he wanted extra work we could do some stuff together in the dormitory since we are

neighbors after all."

Susan smiled at the boy, "That's great! Hey listen Harry, I was wonderin-"

Ron came into the conversation at that point, "Brilliant lesson mate! We should get going before Umbitch catches out past curfew!"

Harry nodded and agreed, "Yeah okay Ron! I'm sorry Susan what were you saying?"

Susan looked from Harry to Ron, and held a fake smile, "Oh I was just going to ask if you would give me some last second tips, but next time! I will let you get back to your dorm!"

Ron grinned and carried Harry off, as Hannah walked over to her best friend, "That red head is one annoying prat!"

Susan sighed, "I don't want to ask anything super personal! Just a few questions about the trial, what happened at the third task, and if you-know-who is really the one who killed Cedric."

Hannah gasped, "So you believe him?"

Susan pondered her best friend's question for only a moment before answering, "I do, but if he is telling the truth, then we all have a lot more work to do than just shields and disarming hexes."

(A/N) I know new story, while two others are in progress, but as you can all see it has been a while on those updates. I have quite a bit of this story already written, so I am going to update every Tuesday or Wednesday, and maybe if the reviews are really good I will update some more :) Cheers guys and it's good to be back! Also please comment if you want lemons in this story making it M, or if we are good with T and no lemons!

2. A Scheme

Chapter 2

The winter had definitely arrived in full force at Hogwarts. The Scottish

Highlands were in the middle of a blizzard that was not allowing the students to go anywhere. If you asked the usual Hogwarts staff where their students were, they would say they are having a lie in, or that they were studying for midterm exams. However that was not the truth.

Somewhere on the seventh floor in a room unknown to most of the wizarding world teenagers, along with many whom could be considered young men and women were training their hardest in order to make a passing grade in their upcoming exams, and also learn a few things about what it could take to survive.

Susan Bones was in a frenzy trying to block incoming spells at her. She had done really well so far and defeated four opponents before her current opposition stepped to the plate. Hermione was fast with her wand, but what was really killing Susan today was the spell variety. She was getting hit with a bunch of charms that could not simply be blocked with a little protego charm. She needed different shields to block some of these nasty little charms.

Most of the onlookers were impressed with Susan's defiance. Most of the people who had faced Hermione went down before 10 spells could be cast. Susan had easily doubled that number, and was looking at 30 spells being traded soon. Though most people couldn't tell that Susan was starting to approach her limit on magical exhaustion, one person could, and they were getting tired of the duel fast.

Harry called out to his best friend and said, "That's enough Hermione, finish the duel."

Susan was confused at first, but then she saw three spells zooming towards her, and before she could even block the second spell she was on the ground completely immobile, and tied up.

The young red head was only that way for a moment though when she

was released from the spells by her best friend, "That was some duel Suzy!...Potter looks furious!"

A faint buzzing was in the air as Harry was clearly taking Hermione for a spin or two. When the spat was over the buzzing faded and Hermione approached Susan sheepishly, "Sorry Susan, I was just trying to test your endurance as well as mine. I don't usually get to cast so many spells, and you were doing such a good job at blocking them and countering."

Susan shrugged, "Don't worry about it Hermione, it was good practice!"

Susan offered her hand to the girl which Hermione joyously took. Harry was quickly behind the girl though saying, "Susan take the rest of practice off. I don't want you to strain yourself."

The pretty young Hufflepuff girl huffed in defense, "I can make my own decisions Potter."

Harry turned around in surprise looking at the girl, "I'm sure you can, but whether you realize it or not your magical core is rapidly depleting. If you exerted yourself much more you could be on the verge of passing out from magical exhaustion, which if you haven't done before, I can promise you its not something you want to experience."

Susan countered, "Well how am I supposed to get better if I don't push myself? Did you hold back when you were facing you-know-who?"

A dark look crossed the green eyed boys face, and his eyes seemed to turn a few shades darker, "Get up then. Grab your wand."

He quickly shouted for everyone to move to the side as he walked across the floor in long strides, "Hermione give us the countdown."

Susan quickly fumbled for her wand, and Hermione stumbled questioningly, "Harry are you sure this is a good-"

With a powerful glare sent towards the usually bossy girl she began calling the bows and then shortly followed it with the countdown. Susan

was staring across at her opponent nervously, and when the number one was hit she immediately raised a shield but she only managed to block four spells and the next two hit her hard taking her to the ground. Her eyes rolled back into her head, and she thought for a moment she had been killed.

What felt like many hours later she opened her eyes and saw Harry Potter standing over her looking only a little sorry, "Hermione was toying with you. That is not what we are in here to do. If you want to get better by harming yourself you will want to find a different teacher. I want you guys to get better, and I want you guys to survive any bad encounter, but not at the cost of your lives or your health. Pushing yourself is one thing, but pushing yourself to the point where you could pass out, injure yourself, or even die, that is where I draw the line. We don't train in here to kill ourselves before the darkness can get you. We train in here to fight the darkness in case it ever comes knocking on our door. For someone like you Susan I hope that never happens, but if it does one day I hope you are prepared to throw it all the line to stop it. Next time I ask you to rest... I expect you to do so. I don't do it to handicap you, I do it to keep you safe."

Susan nodded blearily and felt really sore that she let her pride get in the way of her learnings. The room was very quiet over the ordeal, and Harry stood in front of the group now, "I can appreciate the effort you guys are putting into this, but it is my belief for at least today we are safe in the castle from death. Whether you believe me about you-know-who or not is irrelevant, I can tell you for a fact he isn't going to launch an attack on the castle. Umbridge is not going to kill any of you. I only say this because we have 6 months until the Summer. That means we have six months where everyone in this room can grasp the basics to the best of

their ability. In that six months you will see massive improvement, and the duels in here could get a little heated. You must however keep a calm head, and keep in mind your limitations. Out there in the real world, that is where you push yourselves to the limits. In here, this is where I want you to figure out just how much you can do without putting yourself in jeopardy. Because no matter how badly you want it in here, out there you are going to react differently, and there is nothing I can do as a teacher or a friend to simulate that. Please keep that in mind tonight. We have one more lesson before the holidays, and tomorrow I promise we are going to work on something a bit more fun. Sorry to take this all to a deep end, but sometimes it is necessary. Good work everyone, and I will see you all tomorrow!"

There was some light applause to Harry, and he turned around to walk towards the back of the room to be alone. Susan was watching this boy the entire time, and knew that if she didn't want things to be awkward between the two she needed to say something.

When she approached the boy he was leaning his head on a mirror where a picture of a group of young adults was taped to at the top. Along with other headlines from the daily prophet. Ron and Hermione were nowhere in site this time around, and Susan hoped that this might be a chance to talk to the young man in front of her.

Before she could open her mouth Harry spoke softly, "I'm sorry."

Recoiling slightly at the unexpected apology the young girl replied back quietly, "About what?"

The green eyed boy turned to face one of his brightest students with clearly red eyes, "That I got so upset with you earlier. I shouldn't have, especially because were our rolls flipped I can almost guarantee I would be doing with you were doing."

"Then why get so-"

"Because sometimes I can't control it. I feel this intense anger from everything that has happened this year, and when someone does something that I don't like or agree with, I tend to lose it. With Hermione I thought about it all the wrong way. She knew she was going to win, but she was also helping you with your shields. I still don't think she considered how tired you were, but that isn't here nor there. You questioning my authority just snapped something in me. And that thing has been snapping more and more, and I feel like I might be losing my mind after everything that has been happening. So I am sorry."

This time though the girl shrugged, "You're under a lot of pressure right now. You are trying to keep the DA together, you have been suspended from Quidditch, which everyone knows is something you loved.

Umbridge is basically keeping you under house arrest, and Merlin only knows what other things that you don't tell the rest of us. If anyone should be sorry it should be me!"

Harry looked up at the girl questioningly and she sighed, "You are risking a lot in helping all of us. Vol...You know who is on the rise and instead of training yourself you are offering training to everyone. You are fighting for the system that is working to basically oppress you."

In surprise Harry asked, "So you believe me?"

The two made deep eye contact. It made Susan freeze in her place. The eyes she was looking at now, weren't the same ones that looked upon her earlier. These were a calm light green, desperate, hopeful, and beautiful, "Yes Harry, I believe you. I don't think you killed Cedric, and I don't think that Headmaster Dumbledore and yourself sat in his office for hours devising a ridiculous plan to usurp the Ministry. The timing isn't right, and things are looking bad out there. From what the aurors have

told me its beginning to look like before, and these disappearances are how they started last time. So its either Sirius Black being the new dark lord, or Vold-...You know who has returned."

Harry actually laughed at what she said, and before the girl could be insulted he said, "Its not Sirius Black, I can promise you that. Could swear an oath to it in fact."

Susan was confused by his answer. She knew the history of the Potters, and story that led to their downfall. She found it very hard to believe that Harry would defend this man in any way, "He is no doubtfully powerful, he escaped Azkaban, tried to kill you, and has been evading the law for well into two years now. Something that many believed to be impossible."

Harry shook his head, "You misunderstand. Sirius Black didn't try to kill me, in fact he was trying to save me a few times. He was after someone else here at Hogwarts it was why he came here."

"But he led Voldemort to your parents. He practically killed them himself!" Susan exclaimed in shock.

"Sadly that is the story the world believes. I could swear you an oath on my magic right now that Sirius Black is one of the good guys. He didn't betray my parents, and he didn't kill Pettigrew or those muggles. Make no mistake he is powerful, very powerful in fact, but he is no murderer. In fact he is my godfather." Harry explained.

Susan stared in disbelief, "But the Ministry...the Aurors..."

"Were not under your aunts leadership at the time. Trust me. Crouch wanted nothing more than to appease the Wizarding World as he was about to be up for election for Minister. Bagnold was ready to end the whole thing and put Voldemort behind them for good. They arrested Black without much investigation or a trial, and ended the thing right

there."

"But that is so..."

"Wrong?"

"Yes! How could the Ministry do this! Sirius Black would have been the Lord of House Black, and they didn't even warrant an investigation for the arrest of a Pureblood Lord?"

"The Ministry is more corrupt than some might guess Miss Bones."

"So you know him then? You know where he is? You know that he is innocent and that Pettigrew betrayed your parents?"

Harry took a defensive step back as if he was going to reach for his wand,

"How did you come to that conclusion?"

Susan recognizing immediate danger instantly began defending herself,

"My Aunt is the head auror Harry. It isn't hard for someone like me to see a connection. If Black was arrested for murder of Pettigrew, but Pettigrew is still alive, then Pettigrew had to be the one to murder those muggles, and he had to be the one who betrayed your parents. If Black was innocent like you say, then there would have been no reason for the man to go after Pettigrew if he didn't hold some guilt over your parents death. Which means the stories were wrong and that Peter Pettigrew was the secret keeper to the fidelius charm in October of 81!"

The young man nodded his head deeply impressed, "And this why I hate the Ministry. You don't even have your OWL yet Susan yet you were able to figure this out in a five minute conversation. Its been fifteen years and the Ministry never even questioned it!"

"If my auntie even had half the information you had just given me she would have figured it out. She would have freed Sirius Black. She was friends with him in their school days from what I heard from my Grammy Bones. They may have even been romantically involved at some

point."

Harry's head was now spinning with the information that he was given, "Perhaps I need to sit down with your aunt then, and maybe I can make something happen!"

In hopes of making amends, and possibly even a new friend she offered, "I could set up an appointment between the two of you over the holidays. You could come over to the manor and talk privately, she even has a pensieve that could help the situation. I can't promise you anything, but a foot in the door!"

Harry stared at the pretty red headed Hufflepuff in front of him for a few minutes, as if he was using Legillmency on the girl. Susan had even considered the possibility of it, but knew her shields would have felt a probe had he attempted anything. Finally after what felt like forever Harry sighed, "I don't think I can do it."

Susan was extremely confused in that moment, "But Harry, if this man is your godfather and innocent, don't you want to help him?"

Harry looked around sighing, rubbing his head with his fingers, "Its a little more complicated than that. I don't get to really go home during the holidays, because Hogwarts is my home. I usually spend it with Ron's family with Dumbledore's permission. He doesn't let me go anywhere while I am away from Hogwarts."

"No thanks to you or the headmaster Harry, but Dumbledore doesn't get a say in what you do outside of school. He isn't your legal guardian if Sirius is innocent!"

Harry looked puzzled, "What do you mean?"

Looking exasperated and slightly frustrated Susan exclaimed, "Harry! If Black is really innocent and didn't have a trial then Gringotts and magic itself will not have recognized anyone else's attempt at guardianship,

meaning if you took Dumbledore or the Weasley's or anyone else who claims to be your guardian who has a say over your life to court, they would lose. Unless Black specifically says you can't then you don't have to do what any of these people say outside of school."

Harry seemed to take all this deeply into consideration before saying, "Sirius won't let me leave if he thinks I could be going into danger or anything that might put me at stake."

Susan immediately recoiled at that realizing just how Harry knew that Sirius was innocent. He wasn't staying with the Weasley's he was staying with the known fugitive and criminal Sirius Black. Susan knew it was better not to address that though, especially after she had seen how thorough Harry was with his wand work, she didn't stand a chance if he decided she knew too much and obliviated her. She had heard the rumors behind the second year professor Lockhart incident too, whether they had any truth to them was not something she was super keen on finding out. Before she could think her plan or response out she said, "Be my boyfriend!"

Harry's eyebrows shot into his hairline, "Excuse me?"

The redhead blushed a color that rivaled her hair as she stuttered out her response, "We pose as a couple for the next few days to spread the thought into everyone's minds. Then over the break you tell the Weasley's or Dumbledore, or whoever that you want to see your girlfriend just for a few hours over the holidays. Whether that be Christmas Day, New Years, or whatever. We don't tell anyone the truth, and then we get in my aunt's ear about your godfather, and we could get the ball rolling towards an investigation, and Harry by the time Easter rolls around you could have your godfather attending your quidditch matches."

Harry put his hands on his hips in deep thought with a small smile

tugging on his face, which Susan secretly thought was quite adorable on the young man. Harry didn't say anything for only a few more moments then said, "Okay lets do it."

Susan nodded her head, while Harry asked, "So how do we do this?"

Susan looked at the boy questioningly while he turned a bit red, "Well I have never had a girlfriend before so, I am kind of at a lost as to how to do all this stuff!"

Susan's eyes widened, "You've never heard a girlfriend? What about Granger? Or Chang? Or even Patil at the Yule Ball?"

Harry scowled, "I'm not pulling your chain Susan, I have never had a girlfriend including any of those 3."

Susan held her hands up in surrender clearly detecting some defensive hostility, "Sorry right. Well the best thing to do is hold my hand in front of a bunch of people, offer to walk me to my classes, sit with me at lunch, maybe kiss me on the cheek if you are feeling bold and want to really sell it."

Harry shrugged, "Seems easy enough!"

Susan gave him a small smile, "Yeah, though if you have sometime I do have some of my own questions that I would love to ask you, if we have extra time over the holidays."

Looking at the picture that hung on the mirror Harry said distractedly, "Yeah I am an open book, you can ask me whatever you want!"

"I will hold you to that Harry!"

As he stared at the picture with such intensity Susan began to wonder if she was intruding on something personal, "Well I am going to go."

Harry immediately snapped out of his trance, "I'll walk you to your dorm then, as that seems to be one of my boyfriend duties!"

Susan gave the boy smile and offered her hand out to him, "That it is!"

Good job passing the first test!"

Harry gave the girl a coy smile as he took her hand, "Your going to be testing me then professor Bones?"

Taking it in stride, "That I am Mr. Potter, you make a a good teacher, lets see how you do as the student!"

With that the two walked out hand in hand alone. They were the last out of the room of requirement as most of the crowd had fled earlier in hope of avoiding Harry's obvious ire!

As the two were walking Harry realized it must have gotten pretty late as they passed a window that led to nothing but darkness, "We may be out past curfew. If I show you something very secret as my fake girlfriend do you promise not to tell anyone?"

Susan looked at the boy curiously and nodded, "As long as its not super illegal and will jeopardize my Aunt's job or my life then I won't tell a soul. You have the promise of a Hufflepuff!"

Harry nodded, "Don't worry its nothing like that, but it could see me expelled with Umbridge on the warpath she is on right now."

With that he pulled out a large piece of folded up parchment and drew his wand looking around. Susan was about to accuse him of being mental, but not for the first or last time, Harry Potter surprised her with 10 words, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good!"

With that a map evolved in front of her. With hundreds of names all over it, and little footsteps by each name. Harry quickly scanned the map, folded it up and said, "Mischief Managed!"

Susan spat out a response quickly, "What the bloody hell was that?"

Harry grinned, "A family secret and heirloom! Only a few people in Gryffindor know about it!

Susan shook her head, "Harry Potter you are full of surprises! Are we

clear?"

"We will have to take a secret passage, but we should be all good, I will check it again when I drop you off!"

Susan was not about to question how Harry knew the secret passage way system in the castle that was supposed to be only known to the head master, but she sure was glad he did.

When they reached the Hufflepuff floor she was almost unsurprised when Harry took her right up to the dorm room which was supposed to also be a secret, "Harry can I ask you something before you let me go?"

Harry turned to face the girl directly in front of the Hufflepuff common room, "Sure, whats up?"

"The picture in the Room of Requirements? What is it?"

Harry froze for a second, "Thats a tough question, because I am held under magical oaths and charms. The best I can tell you is its a group my parents fought with in the first war against Voldemort."

"My parents were in that picture Harry..."

Harry recoiled in surprise, "Then it seems we have a lot more to talk about over the holidays than I thought. I will see what I can do to tell you more...are they...?"

"Yes...by Voldemort himself. My dad dueled him long enough for my mom to get me out. We apparated to a safe point when we were ambushed by an unknown death eater. He or she killed my mom and tried to take me, but Aunt Amelia and a team of aurors showed up and took me."

Harry looked pained by the story, "I'm sorry Susan, I didn't know."

Susan gave the boy a sad smile, "Your parents weren't the only ones who died for what they loved Harry. Mine were actually some of the first to go. I am not ashamed to be that child, nor do I hold any ill will towards

the subject. They died heroes fighting for their family. My dad told Voldemort to his face that he would rather die on his feet than live on his knees. From what they tell me my dad was no upstanding duelist either, but he held him for nearly three minutes. Longer than just about anybody else, longer than many aurors could."

Harry nodded, "I wish there was something better I could say, but all I have is that I am sorry, and that I am going to do my best to prevent things like that happening in our generation, and if any of us go down then we go down fighting, and taking as many SOB's as we can with us. That's a promise Susan."

The girl looked up at the boy wiping away an incoming tear, "Well goodnight Harry, and thank you for the words."

Harry gave her a smile and she walked towards the barrels and before she could open the door to her common room Harry called out to her, "Hey Susan?"

The red headed girl turned around to see Harry right behind her planting a kiss on her cheek. The two didn't say anything for only a moment then he said, "Thank you for the chance to save my godfather, I know there are no promises, but it's nice to have some hope again. Also I wanted our first kiss to be in private, just in case I botched it!"

The girl laughed lightly at that, which sounded nearly musical to Harry, "It wasn't bad Mr. Potter, but I expect more practical work in the future to ensure optimum potential."

Harry shivered at her nearly perfect recall of Umbridge's sickeningly sweet voice, "Goodnight Susan."

"Goodnight Harry!"

(A/N) So I hope everyone likes that chapter. I got 5 yes and 1 no, but didn't really mind, for the lemons, so I will let it go for another

week or so, and then change the story rating if need be! Cheers, and please review!

Questions: Do we want Amelia Bones to die? Do we want her with Sirius? Tell me about what you would like to see done with her character!

3. Building a Trust

Chapter 3

Harry didn't say anything to his housemates or friends that night about Susan, so imagine the whole school's surprise when Harry walked past his two best friends the day before the express departs for the holidays to sit at the Hufflepuff table and plant a gentle kiss on Susan Bone's cheek while sitting down as if he belonged there his whole life! The whispers were immediate, but Harry played it off like he knew nothing, "Good morning Susan, sleep well?"

The girl gave him a large smile and before she could retort a squeaky voice came from behind, "Good morning Mr. Potter, forgive my intrusion, but I was just wondering what you might be doing?"

Without even turning to address the elephant in the room Harry stared into Susan's eyes saying, "Having a pleasant breakfast with my girlfriend Professor Umbridge, you have yet to make an educational decree about that, or did you do slam that one in there while I was sleeping last night?"

Professor Umbridge giggled falsely, "Now now Mr. Potter, you know it is school rules that each student must sit at their house table for all meals of the day."

Before Harry could retort Susan used her excellent impersonation of the professor with a sickly sweet voice, "Actually professor, the Hogwarts guidelines and rule book which can be found in your friend Mr. Filches

offices states that any member of any house can sit at any table with the exception of three days, can you guess what days those are Harry?"

Grinning at the brilliant red head he responded, "Opening feast, Halloween, and the last day of school."

Before further interruption could come Professor Sprout came bustling down the hall, "Ten points to Hufflepuff and Gryffindor for a good show of house unity, another 5 to you Ms. Bones for checking in the school rules before inviting Mr. Potter to have breakfast with us. As long as there is no disruption or tension from the majority of your housemates, then I am glad to have another student sitting at our table!"

The bat like professor turned slowly to face her colleague and gave a very large predatory smile, "Now Pomona, I do believe that encouraging defiance particularly in young Mr. Potter ought to be avoided and-" "Good lord Delores the boy if following school rules, if you have that much of a problem with it then I suggest you get to the Ministry and start working on educational decree number 84 or whatever number you may be on today." Professor Sprout put her hand on her hips and gave the women a defiant glare.

The two women stared each other down, and Harry heard Dumbledore in the background talking more to himself than anyone else, "Why the house elves made some fine tea this morning."

This literally caused Professor Umbridge to flinch and immediately flee the hall in attempt to create another educational decree as suggested.

When the women was out of ear shot Harry turned to his Herbology teacher, "Thanks for that Professor Sprout!"

The women shook her head towards the door, "Someone has to stick up for what rules are left around here. Besides Mr. Potter if you are welcomed by Ms. Bones for any reason at this table then I along with the

rest of Hufflepuff will support the invitation. Enjoy your breakfast!"

As Professor Sprout stomped back to the staff table Hannah Abbot whom was sitting across from the new couple the whole time whispered, "Hey Potter, I am guessing you forgot to tell your pals and housemates about your new relationship status, yeah?"

Harry and Susan both looked at the girl curiously and she tilted her head towards the direction of the Gryffindor table causing the two to turn their heads to discreetly to look at Ron, Hermione, and Ginny, who were in hush whispers at the table. Harry shrugged it off casually, "Yeah, when I got back to my dormitory last night, everyone was either asleep or avoiding me. Whoever Susan told is completely her business, but nobody asked me where I was or who I was with, so I didn't tell anyone!"

Ernie McMillan who was seated nearby laughed, "Merlin Potter they probably thought you were going to blast one of them to pieces after last night's altercations. By the way how did you go from dueling to dating in just a couple of hours? Your wand work must be better than we thought!"

Harry who missed the innuendo shrugged, but Susan caught it quick, "Oh yeah he is pretty good! He has offered to show me a couple of tricks, and give me a few extra lessons after each DA meeting."

The pretty red head said it with a wink, but Harry missed it again causing the nearby Puffs to laugh up a storm, but Harry who was still not understanding the whole concept said, "It just takes a lot of practice!"

This caused the eruption, that literally made Justin Finch-Fletchleys morning Pumpkin Juice to shoot out of his nose! Harry however was watching the scene in confusion, which was misinterpreted slightly.

Wayne Hopkins another fifth year Puff said, "Ease it up their Potter! We know the Griffs like to be serious all the time, but us Puffs over here like

to keep things real laid back! As long as none of our own are being persecuted we like to keep the party ratings up, and the detention/fatality level to a real low!"

This caused some nods of agreements and even some high fives, while Harry nodded, "Sounds good to me, I could use a bit of a laid back atmosphere, a third of the school thinks I am a liar, another third thinks I am a murderer, and the last third is usually my staunchest supporters. Nice to be on a bit of neutral ground. Though I still don't get what was so funny earlier."

That caused some more snickers down the line, but Susan whispered in Harry's ear really quietly, "I still think your cute!"

Harry wasn't sure that if the whispering was supposed to be apart of the act so he simply smiled and once again kissed the girl on the cheek.

Nobody else had to know that he was a nervous wreck the first time, as it was his first official kiss.

When lunch ended Harry attended to his boyfriend duties and walked Susan to class without a shred of complaints. When he left her at potions he met up with the rest of his classmates whom were all heading to Professor Planks care of magical creatures class.

Hermione spent the rest of the day giving gentle indicators and cues that she wanted to know how him and Susan hooked up, but he pretended not to know what she was talking about each time, and to keep the act up just gave small smiles as if he were thinking of something or someone else.

By the end of the school day though, later in the common room finally Ron was tired of Hermione beating around bush and asked, "Merlin, enough Hermione! Harry mate, when did you and Susan start seeing each other?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders, "Last night after the meeting. While all you guys were running with your tails tucked between your legs Susan finally approached me to ask her questions, and apologize about the way she acted. Of course I apologized first, but her follow up apology was a nice addition for sure. We talked, that led to this, and here we are now, having this conversation."

Hermione sniffed a bit and stared at Harry expectantly, "Thats it?"

Harry agreed with a small smile, "Thats it Hermione, no complicated puzzle no sinister plots, just someone who found me interesting outside of me being the boy who lived, asked me out and I said yes. We knew we couldn't do Hogsmeade because of Umbridge, but you know we are dealing with what we got so she asked me to be her boyfriend and I said yes!"

Ron clapped his hands together clearly pleased, "Well done mate! Bones isn't exactly hard on the eyes. I would offer you my congratulations, but from the Hogwarts rumor mill I hear you don't need them!"

Harry chuckled a bit, "Thanks Ron, but you know about how reliable that circuit of news it!"

Scoffing Hermione replies, "About as reliable as the daily prophet, but really Harry! Don't you think its a bad time? With the Ministry?

Umbridge? Voldemort? The DA? OWLS? Dumb-"

Interrupting the brainiac for a moment Harry spoke clearly, "Hermione, if I survive all of this, and we all get to live in peaceful times again I want to be able to say that I didn't stay indoors hiding from death eaters. I want to live my life! Maybe not like a normal teenager, but I want to live it! Susan is a nice girl, surely you don't protest to that?"

Hermione looked to counter, but came up with nothing which allowed Harry to continue, "Exactly, which means she will be a good first

girlfriend for me, I will get some experience about what I should do with a girl, she may teach me a few things, I may teach her a few things, isn't that what growing up is all about? I mean I am not about to go get married to her or anything, but its something that I want to see where it goes."

Harry wasn't quite sure why he was so keen to jump to the defense of Susan, but after all she was putting her reputation on the line by helping him out, so the least he can do is defend her honor, and make sure she is well defended in the Gryffindor common room! When clearly no more opposition was going to come from his friends he said, "Look I seem to have Ron's support?"

He looked to his best male friend who nodded his head then he turned back to bushy haired girl, "I would really appreciate it if I had your's to Hermione, you guys are my best mates! I need you guys as much as I did yesterday when I was going stag in life!"

Hermione stared at Harry for a moment, and the temperature in the room seem to get really warm with all the tension, but it died when she took a deep breath, "Okay Harry. I am going to do this for you, but I will be keeping my ear to the ground on Susan, I don't want to see you getting hurt, or this be some kind of cruel trick!"

Harry just about jumped into defend his faux girlfriend again, but realized he couldn't say anymore without revealing ulterior motives!

With the conversation being over and the day dying quickly the three friends made their way to the room of requirements on the seventh floor, where some of its members were hanging out inconspicuously across the top habitable floor at Hogwarts. The leader of the DA had already checked the Marauders Map before coming, and quickly checked again before opening the door to the groups hangout, and he was glad to see

that Susan, Hannah, and a few of the other puffs were already waiting around near the entrance to the room.

Upon arrival the DA took their hushed whispers as Harry fake commanded the door open with the waves of his wand. The reality was he was taking small steps pacing back and fourth to create the need for the room. Hermione had come up with the idea, so that way no one from the DA would truly be able to open the room without them knowing about it. They had yet to figure out away to plot the room on the Marauders Map, but once they could they agreed to share the room a little more extensively.

There were small greetings between everyone once they had gathered in the room, and even gave some of the late members a few minutes to show up before beginning the lesson, "Thanks for coming tonight guys. This is our last night, so instead of taking things serious, and causing some emotional distress we are going to do something a little more fun!" One of the girls in front giggled, a girl Harry recognized to be Romilda Vane, "Geez Bones what's your secret? One day of being Potter's new girlfriend and you already have him giving the DA a bit of relief and fun!"

There were some sniggers in the group, but before Harry could say anything Susan stepped up to the plate with quite the surprise, "Harry and I actually agreed to leave our relationship at the door when we are in here, for at least as long as people are in here with us. We don't want anything interfering with everyone's practice, and we certainly don't want to make anyone uncomfortable. So please guys out of respect for Harry if anything try to keep the comments down during the DA lessons!" Harry nodded his head gratefully at the girl, "Were all friends here, and joking around is good, and yes Romilda I did think the DA had been

working really hard, so I thought one good lesson of the Patronus charm may ease people up a bit for the holidays. No matter whether the spell works or not, I can guarantee you will be walking out of here with a smile on your face!"

Some excited whispers rang throughout the group, and Harry gave his Hufflepuff friend an impressed smile at her ability to keep it all going on the fly, "Okay guys like I showed you on the first night, the Patronus charm is a very simple wand motion, but it is not the motion that produces the charm, but a memory or an emotion. Though I do not have the background to prove it, I myself do not use a memory, but an emotion to power this charm. Professor Lupin taught this to me in third year, as you all had obviously seen at the quidditch matches or heard about it, you know they affected me rather drastically. So the good professor taught me this charm. At the time however I did not have a happy enough memory to produce this kind of magic, so I used an emotion. An emotion powerful to my specific soul."

Cho Chang raised her hand nearby, "Is the Patronus charm soul magic then Harry?"

Hermione however stopped Harry from answering this question as she said, "I actually asked Professor Flitwick that same question Cho, but he told me that it was something much older than soul magic, but it was emotional magic. Without giving a history lesson to everyone, the first type of magic was something from pure emotion, whether that be anger, hate or love. That was long before spells were ever invented!"

Harry nodded, "Yes, so the more powerful the emotion the more powerful this charm is. Now Professor Lupin says your happiest memory can usually power a good patronus, but for it to take form and be truly powerful it must come from the heart. Today we are just going to try and

produce the mist though. Feel free to spread yourselves out in groups or however you like as you practice the charm. Feel free to talk among yourselves to try and think of something happy! That is the key here guys happiness!"

As the group of DA members spread out Harry immediately began helping the Ravenclaw as Hermione predicted they would be the toughest to work with. It was only a few minutes before someone got their first mist produced, and unsurprisingly it was a Gryffindor, what was surprising however was that it was Colin Creevy!

What got to Harry though later was that Colin had not only produced the first patronus, but he swore he saw it beginning to attempt to take a form. That either meant Colin was more powerful than he gave the boy credit for, or he had one very happy memory! Neither would completely shock the leader of the Defense Association, but he was curious.

Harry quickly found a trend in the people who were producing patronus were muggleborn. It didn't at that point take a genius to figure it out. For most magical kids finding out they had magic was something they discovered when they were very young. Harry however understood from being raised by muggles, and basically anti magic folk, that finding out you were special, and could do things only a few beings in the world could do, was amazing!

Harry heard some people sharing their memories with other people trying to spark more memories, but the room went dead silent when a rabbit began darting around the room! When Harry looked to see who he should be congratulating he saw Luna Lovegood holding her wand with a very happy smile, that could almost be heartbreaking, as he could see the pain behind it. He knew her story, and much like him, it was a tragedy.

Harry quickly and loudly congratulated the young Ravenclaw for the

corporeal patronus, "Well done Luna! That is a beautiful patronus! If what Remus tells me, your animal can sometimes change in your life, so keep working at it, fantastic!"

An hour passed and most of the class had been able to produce at least a bit of a mist, while very select few were taking weak forms of animals.

Some they were able to decipher, others would still be a mystery for quite sometime. No one had produced one like Harry or Luna, but Harry was happy with the results. He figured however that without the pressure of a dementor and all the core exercises they had been doing, there were some pretty powerful young witches and wizards in the room that may all one day be capable of producing a true patronus!

The last person Harry worked with was Susan, he came to her after he had nearly helped everyone else and the girl was clearly frustrated. Harry came up behind her clearly watching the concentration on the pretty girls face, and when she attempted to cast the spell for an unknown number of times he spoke softly, "You need a different memory Susan. Whatever you are using isn't strong enough to your soul."

Susan swung her wand in frustration, "Its the happiest I have ever been or could imagine being."

Harry nodded, "Okay, take a break, we will work on it, but let me get everyone else out of here. I promise you we will get something before the nights over."

The girl merely shook her head and walked back to her group of friends while Harry called everyone together, "Fantastic work today everyone truly! If people outside of this room could produce patronus like that everywhere I guarantee you the guards of azkaban would be all but useless!"

There were some light applause to this while Harry continued, "This was

our last meeting for the holiday so go home and be with your families, and practice what you can, and truly well done everyone!"

There was more applause, and Ron came around the corner, "Alright Claws, you guys are all good to go, have a Happy Christmas, and see you guys on the train tomorrow!"

No one any longer questioned just how Harry, Ron, and Hermione always knew when the coast was clear, but by now the trust in the group was pretty solid, and people were just grateful they had the tools or assets to keep them out of trouble.

It didn't take long for Hermione and Ron to shuffle everyone out of the room, and then it was just Susan and a few of her friends, including Ernie and Hannah. Before the few Puffs left they threatened Harry jokingly to have her back within 30 minutes of curfew, or they would go on Potter Strike!

Ron and Hermione followed the last of the Puffs out and quietly gave Harry back the Marauders Map as it once again just became him and Susan, "I don't mean to be personal Susan, but can I ask what memory your using?"

Sharply she shot back, "Can I ask you what yours is?"

Harry recoiled a bit at her frosty tone, "Of course you can. I told you though earlier, its not a memory its a thought. Its more of my imagination then anything else. I suppose it could be real, but the truth is I don't really know...its an image...of my mum and dad talking to me...just talking. I don't need to imagine their warmth, or anything of that nature, I just have to imagine the two of them talking to me. Before there was any war, or Dark Lords. Its the three of us as a family. That is my happiest emotion. Trust me I went through the loops with this. A Dementor knocked me out 3 times before I got it. I tried to use the

memory of the first time I road a broom, the day I found out I was a wizard, and even when I met Ron and Hermione, my first friends in the world. The emotion is what powers this Susan, not the memory. Do you understand?"

Susan stared at Harry's emerald green eyes for several moments. Harry had never been under the direct scrutinzation of a Bones women before, but those piercing brown eyes were striking to him, and he felt as if he was an open book to this red headed beauty. After a moment longer she closed her eyes. She took several deep breaths. She cast the spell. It failed.

Harry spoke commandingly, "Be confident Susan its in your head! Your happy, you see the memory, you feel the memory, you taste, smell, hear it all. Feel everything in the memory."

"Expecto Patronum!"

A mist finally formed, but Susan had yet to open her eyes and see it, and Harry knew she wanted to be pushed, "If its sad Susan cry, if its happy or funny feel free to laugh, the moment you are creating is as real as it will ever be right now! Call it to you, pull your magic to create this moment."

This time she opened her eyes and flicked her wand out faster, "EXPECT PATRONUM!"

A small creature on four legs erupted from the wand of the fifth year Hufflepuff, and it was fast and darting around the room with an intent to smell something out, or attack, whatever came first. Harry was only a little surprised to see that the corproreal Patronus of Susan Bones, was a badger.

Susan watched the creature in awe, while Harry did it in appreciation, "The animal your patronus takes is the animal that reflects you or your past the most. The badger represents your house, loyalty, fierceness,

protectiveness, and many other fine qualities. Congratulations."

The girl smiled very brightly in the light of her patronus, and when the little creature faded she took a deep breath, "Its tiring!"

"It can be very tiring! The stronger it becomes, the tougher it is to hold, but it will help you grow your core pretty quick! I think my core took its biggest jump while practicing this all the time, several times a day!"

Susan shook her head in amazement, then began to look sheepish, "I am sorry about snapping at you Harry! I was embarrassed that all my friends were getting the spell down with at least a little success while I couldn't seem to do anything right today!"

Harry shook his head, "I disagree, I think you did lots of things right!"

Susan looked at the boy questioningly, but he didn't have to think long to compile a few things, "Your execution of this whole plan has been flawless, your on the spot acting is great, and you are handling these things beautifully, and things are turning out far better than I predicted on all this! Plus you managed a corporeal patronus much brighter and stronger than anything Hermione or Luna managed to produce! Well done Susan, well done!"

The girl gave a shy smile, "Be careful Harry its starting to sound like your beginning to like me!"

Harry returned the smile, "Oh don't worry Susan I like you plenty, and I really do appreciate everything you are doing for me!"

"Its not half as much as what you are doing for all of us Harry, really thank you!"

The two gazed at each other for a moment and Harry felt the urge to say or do something to win the approval of the girl in front of him, but before he could she said, "Its getting late, would you mind walking me back to my dorm?"

Harry wanted to say something more, but couldn't find the words so settled with, "Of course Susan, come on, we can take the shortcut again!"

The two walked in very companionable silence for the rest of the walk.

Harry wasn't sure if it was out of comfort or instinct that he took her hand either. He didn't really care though. When they made it to the Hufflepuff common room, the red head turned around, "This is me Harry, thank you!"

With the girl kissed him bravely on both cheeks, and turned to common room, "Goodnight Harry! See you on the train!"

Harry waved gently to the girl, "You can count on it Susan, goodnight!"

(A/N) Thanks for the all the positive reviews! You guys have been great so far, and I look forward to reading more feedback. It really helps.

So questions... Ron and Hermione friends to the end? I have always like the character of Collin Creevy, and I am thinking about making him a little more prominent. Thoughts?

4. The Head of Magical Law

Enforcement

Chapter 4

A large snake of unknown origin slithered down the hallway of a forbidden location. His eyes appeared to be narrow slits, but the truth was this creature could see the whole room, and everything within it. In the distance he saw a man with a partially lit wand, clearly someone who attempting to hide something from the world, and whatever it was hiding, the snake wanted to find out. For this was not a creature of secrets.

As the beast slithered upon the man it was clear that he had been spotted. A spell was cast at the snake before he could decide whether he was going to strike, but once the spell washed over it, the creature was angry. Incredibly so.

It lashed out opening its mouth and scraping his teeth across the human being. Making him want to suffer for his unprovoked attack. He bit him again and again, and the creature felt glee from the pain of the man whom he made pay for attacking him. The snake let out a bellyful laugh that did not sound at all like a reptile of any kind, but an evil human being that has haunted the nightmares of many.

A young man with emerald green eyes and a scar on his forehead bolted out of bed in fright. He knew the man that was being attacked in his dreams. It was the father of his best mate. He was dripping in sweat, and felt dirty, as if he had committed a terrible crime. It was clear that his dream had awoken up some of the others, and for some reason he could not shake the feeling that what he saw was more than just a dream so he took a chance, "Ron, get McGonagall, we have to get to the headmaster, now!"

Neville who was getting closer to the bed now clearly alarmed, "Harry what's happened?"

Harry and Ron made eye contact, and Ron never did respond to Harry as he darted out of the common in search of his head of house. Harry attempted to stand, but he collapsed into Neville's waiting arms, "Easy there Harry, I got you! I will help you get to Ron and McGonagall just hold on!"

Harry wasn't positive of where he was, which resembled the state he was in perfectly. He hardly even knew who he was in that moment. When McGonagall came through the portrait with Ron she looked highly alarmed, "Potter what is it?"

Harry shook his head, "Professor it has to do with the Order, we have to speak with Dumbledore!"

The head of Gryffindor House merely sighed, "Potter it is nearly 3 in the

morning, whatever you have to speak with the headmaster about, can't it wait till morning?"

Shaking his head quickly, "No professor, I think its Mr. Weasley, I think he has been attacked!"

The women eyed one of her favorite pupils with great surprise and much worry while finally nodding, "Very well, Mr Longbottom can you please help Mr Weasley escort Potter and I to the headmasters office?"

Neville nodded his head as Ron with a bit more urgency swept under Harry's arm and helped practically carry their young leader down the grand staircase. When they made it to the headmasters office Harry was finally regaining his strength to as he could walk on his own two feet.

Ron and Neville were in no mood however to slow down and let him gain his step.

It was only a matter of moments, before Harry was facing the fully awake Headmaster of Hogwarts whom had been avoiding him semester, "Good evening gentlemen, I don't suppose you have come to me at this hour for a drink, so please have a seat. Mr. Longbottom thank you for being an astounding friend and carrying Mr Potter down here, but we can take it here from here, goodnight!"

Neville whom had gained a lot of confidence from his recent success in the DA stood tall however, "With respect Headmaster, if you don't want me apart of the conversation, I would prefer to wait outside until Harry is ready to go back to the common room."

Harry said, "I trust him headmaster, his parents were in the order, and he has just as much right as Ron and I do to know what we do!"

Without looking or answering the boy Dumbledore turned to his second in command, "What is the situation Minerva?"

The head of Gryffindor house immediately launched into her

explanation, "Mr. Weasley came banging on my doors, and I thought someone had died. He told me that Harry was possibly hurt, or needed some type of help so we hurried back, and I saw that Mr Longbottom had helped Potter down the stairs where he told me that Mr. Weasley, I am assuming he meant senior, was in trouble and needed our help, that is really all I know!"

The witch then turned to one of her star pupils and awaited the rest of the explanation, "Sir, Mr. Weasley was attacked by Voldemorts snake, I don't know where you have him, or what he was doing, but I know he doesn't work this late on his own accord, please send someone to help him!"

Dumbledore was still looking everywhere, but at Harry while he swept towards a few paintings giving quick commands on where people needed to be going, including a picture of Sirius great grandfather Phineas Nigellus who was supposed to inform the order and send immediate help to Arthur Weasley, "In the dream were you watching the scene from above, or merely standing nearby."

Frantically Harry was trying and failing to understand the situation, "Neither, I was...This dream, are you sure it was real?"

Without answering the question Phineas returned to his photo, "Arthur is alive, but gravely injured, he is being escorted to St. Mungos as we speak!"

Dumbledore chanced a quick glance at Harry as he nodded, "Inform them that I will have Arthur's children gathered, and they will be arriving shortly, by portkey!"

With that the Gryffindor head of house immediately darted out of the room to retrieve the other Weasley children. Harry however was still out of the world of focus, "Professor, can you please just tell me whats-"

Phineas responded quickly, "It was also told that the prophesy was not discovered on this night!"

Dumbledore seemed to have a great deal let off his shoulders when he heard that, "Oh Thank God, we-"

"LOOK AT ME!"

The young boy with emerald green eyes had enough of the whole situation. He was tired, he was scared, and he felt terribly weak, "Whats happening to me?"

The room went dead silent as all eyes were on Harry. A deep voice came from behind the boy shortly after his explosion however, and the local potions master had arrived, "You asked for me headmaster?"

Dumbledore nodded, "Yes Severus, I am afraid we cannot wait any longer, not even till morning, otherwise we will all be vulnerable!"

Severus nodded and reached to grab Harry, but before he could he found a wand at his chest, "Don't touch me! I am not going anywhere with anyone, until someone tells me something."

Snape looked like he was about to smack the boy, but he quickly found two more wands drawn on him. Neville no longer feared professor Snape like he used to, and Ron was already in quite a state, so Harry felt his two closest male friends covering his back as wands were clearly being drawn, "How dare you!"

Dumbledore spoke calmly over the situation, "That is enough! Boys lower your wands!"

Harry shook his head, "I want answers Headmaster, I am scared, and I don't know whats happening to me, and all you have done this term and this summer was avoid me. No more! I am not going anywhere consciously or with a wand until I know something!"

Dumbledore raised his hands in a placating manner, "I understand your

confusion Harry, but please you must trust-

"Trust is a two way street Headmaster, and I have trusted you with everything and you have nearly gotten me killed at every turn! Please I just want to know what's happening to me!" Harry begged.

Dumbledore looked saddened and greatly pained by this turn of events,

"Perhaps I will just send you back tonight with the Weasley's perhaps sometime with your Godfather will soothe things over. Severus my friend you may rest for the night. I will call for you if I need further assistance.

It is clear that our young Mr. Potter is not quite ready for his lessons as of tonight."

Snape glared from Harry to Dumbledore to the two boys still pointing wands at him, and swooped out of the room.

Dumbledore turned to face his three young charges and spoke gravely,

"You three are all very good together. You remind me a bit of three other boys who once walked these hallways. Though each of your situations were different from there's, I believe you all to be quite similar. It is truly remarkable."

Harry's frenzied rage had died, and he merely stared at the man he once idealized, and knew tonight something had broken between them.

Dumbledore however did not say anything of it, and merely continued with his line of thought, "I think you all should stick together, for the greater good. I believe you can all do wonderful things together, and I do hope that you won't lose yourselves in the coming times, with what may happen."

The cryptic message was not understood, but Ron and Neville who understood a warning when they heard one exchanged nervous looks.

Harry was still staring defiantly at the headmaster when his head of house returned with the other Weasley children, "Excellent, you will be

going straight to St. Mungos to be beside your father. I am afraid tonight he was gravely injured, but has the best care in the magical world looking out for him right now. Mr. Potter you shall be first to leave however, as you are going back to Grimmauld place."

Harry glared at the headmaster once more, but knew he couldn't be so selfish as to keep his best mate and practical family away from their father, so instead he turned to Neville, "Tell Susan I'm sorry, and give her the bare minimum of what happened, and inform her that I will send her a letter the moment I wake up tomorrow."

Neville nodded in understanding, and said, "Happy Holidays Harry, if you need me, owl me."

Harry gave the boy an appreciated smile, and stepped towards the floor. He wasn't thrilled with the situation, but did understand his needs were not as great as the others!

A few days had passed into the holiday season. Mr. Weasley had recovered, and was told that he would make a full recovery with just a little bit of time.

Sirius was surprised and thrilled to have Harry home a day early, and his heart was warmer with his godfather back in his presence, and prayed to every god that may or may not have existed that one day he would be a free man.

With those thoughts on his mind he had started his correspondence with Susan about when they were going to meet up. They had thought either Boxing day or New Years would be their best bet on selling the whole thing to whoever was in charge at the order that day.

He had also exchanged gratitude and correspondence with Neville since he had gotten to Grimmauld place. Harry never knew the boy could be so brave, but what also shocked him was his loyal conviction that he wasn't

sure a Hufflepuff could have faced down.

Harry had told Sirius that he had a new girlfriend and that he was hoping to see her on the day after Christmas so they could exchange gifts, and spend a bit of time together and the man was ecstatic to hear that Harry had one, but even more so when he heard that he was being invited to her home the day after Christmas!

The green eyed boy couldn't wait to get his godfather in on his plan maybe, but he was also cautious because he didn't want anyone to stop him until he got the wheels rolling.

Christmas came and gone, which allowed Mr. Weasley to return home to his kids just before the holiday would be over. That made everyone in the house a little more humble and thankful that year, despite the circumstances of what they knew would be the coming days.

On boxing day Harry rose a little excited from his bed. When Sirius saw him he thought he was nervous to meet the parents of his girlfriend, but truly the man had no idea. He had yet to tell Ron or Hermione his plan to leave yet, but figured as long as he Sirius' permission then no harm could be done.

When he finally got ready to leave however he was quickly proven wrong of his theory. As he was preparing to enter the floo network Molly Weasley of all people came storming into the kitchen, "Harry Potter just where are you going?"

Harry recoiled in shock at the tone of the women's voice, "To Bones Manor Mrs. Weasley? I am visiting Susan for the day."

The women immediately came bustling over shaking her head, "Not without Dumbledore's permission your not, now get upstairs go, go!"

Harry pulled away from the women as she approached, "I got permission from Sirius, and he is my godfather and this is his house, so if you don't

mind Mrs. Weasley, I would really to see my girlfriend as I do miss her!"

Harry thought he came off at a perfect level of respect and defensive, but clearly he was wrong, "Why the nerve of you men! You don't get to just leave without asking permission of the headmaster!"

Harry all but shouted back, "The headmaster is not my father! He does not make decisions for me, and if he has in the past that ends today. To say my faith in the man has been shaken is an understatement."

Molly recoiled as if he said he was devil himself, "Mind your tongue young man!"

Before the women could retort however a new voice entered the room,

"What is going on here?"

It was Sirius to Harry's great joy, and he seemed quite irritated, when Molly began talking before Harry, "Your Godson seems to think he go off with some girl without asking anyone for permission!"

Sirius strided forward slowly, "He did have permission...from me!"

Molly shook her head, "That wasn't your decision to make!"

Harry growled out, "Its certainly not yours! Sirius is my godfather, he was never convicted of a crime, and is technically my legal guardian. If Sirius says I can go, then I am leaving!"

Sirius nodded, "Get out of here pup, I will handle this crowd until you get back!"

Mrs. Weasley looked like she was going to stop him, but without any further question he swooped up the floo power at barked out, "Bones Manor!"

Green fire erupted around him and his stomach dropped heavily as he was whisked across the country. When the fire subsided and he slid out of the fireplace of his destination, he heard some giggling and groaned as he knew he was on his back, "I hate magical travel! If it isn't a broom

then I really don't want anything to do with it!"

He quickly pulled himself to his feet, and saw a smiling, beautiful Susan Bones, "I see you need work on your floo travel Harry. I heard rumors of your less than graceful entrances, but I must admit I am impressed!"

Harry glared at the girl for only a split second, and then remembered why he was there, "Thanks again for helping me do this, I hate that you had to lie to your friends and be stuck with me for a few days!"

Susan shook her head, "You aren't exactly hard to be around Harry! Besides I have enjoyed your company, before you ran out on me on the last day of term."

Harry paled a bit at the memory and she asked, "Do you want to talk about that?"

Shaking his head he responded, "Not today, I would have to explain a lot more than a days worth of information for you to understand that one!"

The young woman nodded with a bit of a sad smile, "Do you think we still might have time to talk after your done with my aunt?"

Harry grinned nodding, "Yeah that still sounds great! Like I told you before I am an open book, I just don't like telling people half told stories, or tales with only half the facts behind them. That is how are rumor mill at school gets so drastic most of the time!"

Susan grinned at him, "Have you heard the ones about us?"

Harry groaned, "A few, though I have been trying to avoid them?"

Susan giggled and put a teasing finger her mouth, "Oh so you don't like the one where I seduced you in the room of requirements, and convinced you to marry me and give me the Potter fortune!"

Harry rolled his eyes, "The rumors are always better than what really happened!"

He said this with a wink, which caught Susan by surprise, and made the

girl blush ever so slightly, however his moment of victory was short lived when he heard a stern voice come into the room, "I hope you were not entailing that you want my niece to seduce you Mr. Potter?"

Spinning on his heel he saw a lovely women at about forty wearing a monocle over her left eye, and wearing quite sharp looking dress clothes, "Of course not Madame Bones! I was merely playing! Susan gets me all the time, and I was hoping to get her back at least once, of course my-" "Timing was absolutely terrible?" The women asked chuckling lightly. Harry nodded a bit sheepishly, "Maybe we can start over, I am Harry Potter, and I don't know if Susan has told you, but I am her fake boyfriend."

The women raised an eyebrow at this, "Yes she told me your cover up, and your reasons why. With the plan you two came up I am surprised I am not staring at two Slytherins' instead of a Hufflepuff and Gryffindor respectively."

Harry nodded, "Professor Lupin told me my third year they sort us at 11 because if they sorted us at 13 we would all go to Slytherin."

The women chuckled, "Remus Lupin. A fine man, and a very worthy scholar! A shame that he had to leave his post at Hogwarts, Suzy told me that he was a fine teacher."

Harry nodded, "The best we ever had."

Susan shrugged, "Some of the DA might disagree with you on that Harry."

Harry stared at the girl in shock, but her aunt beat her to the explanation, "Yes Susan explained to me what you were doing for the other students, and I find it very admirable of you Mr. Potter. I would love to have you work with some of my aurors on the patronus charm if you can produce the same results you did with Susan. I dare say her Patronus is almost as powerful as my own."

The green eyed boy grinned sheepishly, "Remus Lupin taught me ma'am, perhaps you should seek him sometime. I could give you a way to contact him."

The women nodded in thought, "Perhaps, though he is not the reason we gathered here today is it? Susan would not budge on just what you needed, but told me it was the up most importance, and that we were to meet in complete secret. So here I am. If you are submitting the information of inquiry you have for me today in a legal sense then I have brought Veritserum home from work, and my pensieve is just in the other room, if you just wish to speak on certain events however none of that will be necessary."

Harry gulped a bit realizing it was time to get down to business, "I will submit to whatever practices you might want so you may get the truth, but I swear to you that to the knowledge I have today this is the truth."

Harry delved into the story of Sirius Black, and his meeting in third year. He pulled back the blinds on the very gross miscarriage of justice that had happened for all these years, and the women was openly hostile about the conversation at first, but she softened greatly after she asked the same questions with him under the truth serum. Harry tried to tell the women easily as he knew it was easily life changing news he had just dropped on her, and potentially even career defining.

The last thing he did was show her the memories of the last few nights of his third year that led his reuniting with Black, and the moment where Pettigrew reappeared.

When they emerged from the final memory the women was shocked.

Susan had been allowed to watch it all as well, as she already knew the whole story from Harry. It was then when the women sat down in her chair, and began cursing almost inaudibly.

To break the ice Susan spoke, "It was why I suggested this meeting. I thought and hoped that with some luck that Harry might have his godfather back sometime this Easter!"

The women spoke softly, as clearly she was devastated by the news, "The hell with Easter, my department will begin the investigation today, and I will have my day in court before you kids are back in school. This is preposterous! I knew Sirius Black my entire time at Hogwarts, and he was a soul with a mean streak a mile wide to people who wronged him, but James and that boy were brothers. Not even the Imperious would have turned those two against each other, and I fell for it. I was a rookie auror when all this went down, but I didn't even raise an eyebrow at it. I just took it lying over without asking any questions."

Susan stood by the women and hugged her tightly, "Oh Auntie, you couldn't have known."

When the two women separated Harry stood trying to relieve himself of the awkward situation, "I should leave you to your thoughts Madame Bones."

The women however quickly wiped at her good eye and stood fast, "Wrong you are Mr. Potter, now is not the time for that. Now we must compile a list of evidence as quickly as possible, witnesses that can come to all of this. I will have to pull some strings to get Sirius his court date, and call an emergency Wizengamot session, that I will need you at Harry. Do I have full permission to use the memories, and veritserum evidence that I acquired today in court?"

The green eyed boy nodded furiously, "Of course Madame Bones. You can use whatever means necessary to get Sirius free."

"Do you have a means of contacting him?" The stern women inquired.

Harry looked a little sheepish at that question, "Yes ma'am I do!"

She raised an eyebrow at the coloring of his cheeks, and new the answer to her next question, so skipped it in order to not incriminate the boy at all, "Very well, inform him that I will summoning him to court for his fair trial day, and that he has the words of Lady Bones, the head of Department of Magical Law Enforcement, as well as an old friend that he will be protected."

Harry smiled hopefully, "I will let him know as soon as possible then."

Madame Bones nodded, "I will want Remus Lupin to come to this trial to, so if you have a means of contacting him that will be perfect, otherwise, I will send some people to hunt him down."

"No ma'am, I no where he is as well, and will be seeing him in just a few days." Harry explained.

"Good. I will reach out to Minerva, your head of house, as well as a couple of old classmates to come and testify on his behalf, or whatever may be necessary to see this go down fairly, and legally." The woman's brain was clearly running a mile a minute as she went over to the floo, "Suzy I am going to the office today, we need to get this ball rolling now. The longer we wait the more that could go wrong. Harry you are welcome to stay here, I just ask that you respect my home in my absence."

Susan blushed, while Harry gawked at the insinuation, "Ma'am we really are just friends."

Amelia gave a sideways glance at the two before nodding, "I will leave the pensieve here for now, so feel free to use it Suzy for anything that may come up, and let me know if I need to be made aware of anything before this day is over."

With that the head of the Bones family slipped into the floo network and vanished with green fire.

(A/N) Okay so that was the first chapter of putting the plan in legal motion. Susan and Harry make quite the team, and it seems so far we have positive reviews on how their relationship is being portrayed. The next chapter is nothing but Harry and Susan getting to know each other, and the lead up to Harry going back to face the order! Stay tune, and please review.

Questions: Should Harry be forced to stand trial? What do we want to see happen after the trial? Marriage contract between Susan and Harry? Or true love conquers all? You tell me in the comments section below! Cheers!

5. Locked Away Memories

Chapter 5

It was just Harry and Susan in Bones manor for the remainder of the day. The two kept it pretty light until around dinner time, when they decided to sit down and eat together before sending Harry back, "You know I am glad this all went well, I half expected Dumbledore to show up and demand I return to Headquarters!"

Susan lifted her small glass of wine off the table asking, "Headquarters?"

Harry stuttered a bit before saying, "You know I trust you Susan, but there are somethings that are dangerous to know. I don't want to endanger you like that."

The girl leaned back in her chair a bit clearly befuddled by what had just been said, "I don't understand Harry, are you in some kind of danger?"

Shaking his head a bit he shrugged. "No more than I usually am I guess. I don't know if you've noticed yet, but I am kind of a magnet for trouble!"

"You know there are a lot of people who are envious of you at school!

Even some of the members of the DA, I mean who doesn't want a little excitement in their life!" Susan said neutrally.

"Yeah its really great to almost be killed every year, or be forced into tournaments that are designed to kill you. Its so much fun when your friends life is on the line, and your mistake could cost them their lives."

Harry said sarcastically and bitterly.

Susan recoiled a bit, "I only felt that way towards you our first year. You guys were so behind in our first year in the house points, but on the last day Dumbledore awarded all those points, and you all won the cup!"

Harry snorted a bit, "Yeah that was kind of ridiculous. Dumbledore told me he wanted to keep the whole Quirrel incident to a minimum, but then he rewarded us all those points, and the whole school had to have known something went down."

This was the questions that Susan had been waiting for, she had hoped an opportunity would arise to ask some of these questions, and get some answers. The young red head was much like her aunt, she loved puzzles, but she hated them when pieces were missing, and Harry Potter was a very large missing puzzle, "So something did go down between the two of you. Do you mind if I ask what happened?"

Harry opened his mouth and immediately closed it, as if he didn't want to tell her some horrible secret, "I don't mind telling you, but you have to understand, these aren't childrens novels. These are real world disgusting stories, that don't always have a happy ending. On all accounts I should have died in our first year, and our second, third, and fourth, this is the only year so far where I have not nearly been killed at school, or because of school!"

Susan reached out and took Harry's hand that was on the table talking very softly, "I am curious about the things that have happened around the school, but don't feel like you have to tell me. I am here to listen, and I am here as your friend. Or if nothing else someone who would very much

like to be your friend."

Harry took a small suspicious look, "But why? Its not because I am-"

"No Harry, its not because your the boy who lived. Its because you are the boy who beats the odds. Who takes care of people, who saves people lives. Who shows bravery and loyalty to people who certainly don't deserve it. You are offering so much of your time and effort to give people a fighting chance with the DA, and you are risking it all to teach us how to defend ourselves, and if nothing else pass our OWLs. Harry I am grateful, and I am not the only one, but I am the one that is here right now, and wants to get to know the real Harry Potter. Not the one in the prophet, or the boy who lived, or even the Triwizard champion. But the boy who is our leader, and the one who one day may save us all...I believe you about Voldemort Harry, and I also believe that another war is coming. I am a Hufflepuff, myself and the rest of my house will take a clear stance on whose side we are on. You will not ever meet a neutral Hufflepuff, we are loyal, and do take sides in all matters, and I am siding with you."

At the end of the girls tirade Harry stood up abruptly, and Susan went to stand with him to prevent him from leaving, but instead she felt two very strong arms wrap around her body. At first the girl was surprised and froze, but then she realized who was hugging her, and immediately put her arms around the boy. After a short while she heard him whisper two words that would change it all for her, "Thank you."

She wasn't sure why those two words seemed so significant in the moment, but she knew they were. Susan Bones knew in that moment she was smitten with the boy that was holding her, and she hoped one day soon, she would be more than just his faux girlfriend.

When they separated Harry said, "I could easily sit her and tell you the

stories of what has happened at Hogwarts, but I think it will be better if show you."

She nodded and summoned the family pensieve to the dinner table, and had her personal house elf clear the rest of the room while they prepared for the memory. When Harry held his wand to his forehead as instructed early by Madame Bones he dropped a fairly large memory and said without looking at her, "Before we enter I must ask two things of you. Do you mind?"

Susan nodded her head, and the boy made his two request, "If it becomes to much for you at any point, don't try and be tough, just let me take you out of it? Okay?"

The fifth year Hufflepuff agreed, and Harry made his final condition, "Don't tell anyone all of this. If you want to share it with your Aunt or with Hannah thats fine, but I would rather this not get around to everyone, you know what I'm saying?"

Susan shook that off easily, "Of course Harry, now shall we get started?"

Harry took a deep breath and nodded, "This is going to be a bit violent, and kind of long, so I hope you are ready for it...Lets go."

Then they delved into the memory. Susan watched as the memory started in a bathroom that she recognized on the third floor. However it was hardly recognizable with the troll in the room...literally. The site that was in front of her was just short of horrifying. A large full grown mountain troll was swinging his club around in attempt to possibly kill first year Hermione Granger! It wasn't long before the heroics started!

Susan literally laughed when Harry and Ron began throwing debris at the troll, and claimed it was cute, until the thing turned on them and decided they needed some attention. She awed in Harry's bravery when he dove towards the creature, and attempted to furtherly distract from Hermione

who was practically a sitting, wounded, scared duck in the corner.

She had a heart attack when the troll grabbed him and attempted to dislodge his head from his body, and nearly fell to the ground with relief when Ron's stupid levitating charm managed to knock the troll unconscious.

The scene then skipped to a memory she was all too familiar with. Harry's first game against Slytherin. It was pretty much the same as she remembered, but Harry said something kind of quiet that made her think twice, "It was obvious, I can't believe we missed it."

She wanted to question Harry, but knew it would be better to save all questions until the end, so that way she did not upset the boy. It skipped around talking about the Sorcerer's stone, and finally it came down to the facing of the three headed dog!

Susan was nothing short of terrified when she saw the three headed monster wake up its slumber, though even Harry said it was much more frightening to watch the dogs wake up, compared to suddenly realizing they were about to attack like in the initial memory!

She was impressed that Hermione managed to clear Professor Sprouts Herbology puzzle so quickly, and even awed in Harry's ability on a broom down beneath the school with the keys. What really amazed her however was Ron who managed to sacrifice himself to win the chess game!

Then came the potions room, which surprised her with the simplicity of the riddle. It was a common one in the Wizarding world that she had definitely heard more than a few times. The simplicity to all these trials were starting to seem more like test than they were traps as Harry had explained to her.

When the final room came down she was holding Harry's hand in fear

knowing that he was not about to go face Snape in the next room, but Professor Quirrel.

When Harry reached the room Susan froze, and didn't say anything for the entirety of the conversation. When he removed his turban though the girl gasped in a cold fear. Harry wasn't sure if she watched the whole fight between himself and Quirrel, but she saw the end results of him killing the man, and stopping Voldemort from reaching the stone.

When the memory was over they reappeared in the dining room of Bones Manor and Susan was close to being shell shocked. Harry let her digest it all for a few minutes before saying, "A tough pill to swallow huh?"

Susan shook her head, "You were only 11 years old Harry, that's the amazing part. You doing that today I don't think I would've freaked out so bad, but you were only 11. With less than a year of magical learning, yet you survived it all, and even managed to come out on top. Your place in Gryffindor has never been questioned by the school, but now I am truly impressed."

Harry blushed a bit at the girls praise, and said, "Well like you saw, I had help!"

She disagreed immediately, "Through the puzzles, that I think almost any intelligent second or first year could have passed, as long as they had a decent flying ability, and knew how to put the dog to sleep with music. But Harry you stood down fear itself, and there you didn't have luck, it was just you!"

The green eyed boy blushed a bit, "You say I faced down fear, I say I faced down my parent's murderer. I was not raised with the same fear that all of you have of Voldemort. I don't fear him personally now, and I certainly didn't fear him then."

Susan awed at the boy who was clearly Gryffindor through and through,

"So not even the rumor mill had gotten the exaggeration of this tale right Harry. Had Quirrel gotten the stone we may have faced a fully charged Dark Lord 5 years sooner."

"I suppose you could look at it that way. Admittedly though I didn't have that intention going into the situation." Harry explained.

Susan stayed quite for a few moments before asking, "That may have been one of the most horrifying things I have yet to witness in my now seemingly sheltered life, but at the first gathering of the DA people mentioned so many other things, that I had never even heard in the rumor mill! Hundreds of dementors? Something about a basilisk?"

Harry shrugged, "The basilisk was the creature that was going around petrifying people in second year. The whole school was blaming me for it, and were calling me the heir of Slytherin, so I took it personal to figure out what was happening. However when a certain Gryffindor was taken into the chamber to die, Ron and I did everything we could to try and help, which made us stumble upon Slytherin's monster. The rest is history!"

Susan shook her head, "I would like to see that memory if you don't mind?"

Harry hesitated, "This isn't like the first memory Susan. In the last memory you saw me face a man, the next is much more complicated, and much more horrifying. I still have nightmares from what happened down there in the chamber. Its one thing to hear the story, its another thing to watch it. No one has ever known or watched what happened down there when I faced the basilisk, not Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, or anyone. I think it was for the best, because I don't believe anyone would want the burden of this memory. I don't think you should watch it..."

Susan asked directly, "So are you not going to let me watch it?"

Taking a deep breath Harry shook his head, "I told you I am an open book, but I want you to understand that I advise you against it, and that even I will admit the memory is truly horrifying when I look back on it."

The red head took his hand gently and said, "Show me, you have taken this burden by yourself for long enough. Besides if 12 year old you could beat this thing, then 15 year old you can keep me safe from a few ghost and memories."

Trying to take the compliment that was given Harry sighed, "Okay then lets get started."

When Harry pulled the memory it started with the first petrification and his attempt at following the noises that even in the memory Susan could not understand, "What are you doing?"

Giving the girl an odd smile he said, "Following the voices."

"Of course its a snake, and your a parselmouth." Susan exclaimed!

Harry gave the girl an encouraging, but forced smile, "I wish I had known that when this was all happening. Maybe we could've discovered the answer, before what happened to Hermione."

She nodded and watched as by shere coincidence Harry stumbled upon each petrification. It was then seen how they used the invisibility cloak to confront Hagrid, "Blimey Harry, I thought I was the only one in the school that had an invisibility cloak!"

Harry gave the girl a surprised look. "You have one too?"

She grinned, "Yeah my uncle made it for me when I was born. He is an unspeakable. Very rare, and very hard to make."

"Mine has apparently been in the family for generations!"

Susan recoiled a bit at that. She wondered if every 10 to 15 years a Potter just redid all the charms on the cloak, after all they aren't supposed to last forever. Making a mental note to ask him another time if he did it

himself, she paid attention to the descending pair into the dark forest.

She clearly was not keen on following the two, but she did so anyways as the memory dragged her around.

When they were confronted by Aragog Susan thought she was going to past out in fear. She wasn't particularly afraid of Spiders, but seeing one this large, this close, was not something that was going to be on her top 100 things to before she died. The message they received from Aragog was vague and cryptic, and it all went to hell when he told them they were dinner.

Thankfully Harry did not choose to show her the next scene, and it took them to revelation that it was a basilisk going around the school, and Harry explaining to Ron why no one died. Shortly after they saw the message on the wall that was written in blood, but Harry turned to her before they approached, "Promise me you won't ever confront this particular Gryffindor about what happened. It is her story to tell, and I don't want to betray any confidences. I would also appreciate if you never mentioned this part to anyone. Can I have your word?"

Susan straightened up clearly realizing that Harry was trying to give her some of his trust, "Of course Harry."

He nodded and they approached the scene just in time for the two 12 year old boys to realize that Ginny had been taken into the Chamber.

After that the scene skipped to the confrontation in Lockharts office, where he admitted his crimes, and prepared to obliviate the boys.

Susan merely rolled her eyes as the full grown wizard got over run by two second year Gryffindors without using a single spell.

The next part of the memory however was already to starting to turn her insides to jelly. Harry walked over to the sink on the familiar second floor girls bathroom to her, and whispered something in Parseltongue to

open the Chamber of Secrets, "What did you say Harry?"

Sheepishly Harry answered, "Well I wasn't sure if there would be a password, so I just tried Open!"

Chuckling lightly she watched as they shoved Lockhart down into the chamber. Without saying anything on the matter she held out her knuckles which Harry grinned and touched with his, "Wish I could've done that to the geezer!"

Harry took the moment to laugh one last time before Ron and his twelve year old self delved into the chamber. It didn't take long for Susan, like they themselves did, to notice the very large snake skin, "Merlin Harry, that thing must be huge."

In a bit of terror relapse Harry whispered, "You have no idea."

The failed confrontation horrified Susan when she thought Harry was going to lose his memory, and that Ginny was going to be left to die down there. She prayed that someone was going to come in and stop the man, that way Harry and Ron would have some help, but what happened next was far worse. She watched the spell backfire and cause the massive cave in, which separated Ron and Harry. She knew in this moment that once again in the final hour of desperation Harry was alone. She wanted to cry for the boy, as she feared he would die down in the chamber, but she knew the young man next to her was breathing proof that he survived this encounter.

The next few minutes were a blur when Harry approached Ginny Weasley, only to be approached by a specter of a young man. The fear Susan felt when the ghost revealed himself as Lord Voldemort, and the fear spiked even further when he summoned his monster.

Susan felt a tear of pure fear drip down from her face as she saw 12 year old Harry run for his life in hope of fleeing the beast. She herself had

drawn her wand to help, but Harry put a hand on hers gently, "There is nothing we can do but watch Susan, it is in the past."

When Susan's eyes went to the teenage version of the young boy running for his life she his face was paler, but he was also standing a little taller.

Clearly proud that he survived such an encounter.

Her heart soared when she saw the phoenix swoop into the room and claw the basilisk eyes out, to give Harry a chance to actually look at the beast. Her heart stopped when she saw him cornered in the pipes and nearly fell with relief when the stupidest rock trick worked.

She noticed Harry turned a little pink looking back on the idea, and how stupid it actually was. The final confrontation between Harry and the snake was terrifying and exhillarting the moment the sword came out of the hat.

She felt that Godric Gryffindor himself would have been proud to know that his sword had defeated Slytherin's Monster, and that one of his possible descendants was the one to do it. She also thought he would be even more proud to know that a twelve year old had done it.

When she saw the sword go through the roof of the giant snakes mouth she wanted to cheer, but instead she screamed when saw the fang go into his arm, knowing that in mere moments he would be dead.

By instinct she turned to face the other Harry who to her grand surprise was actually smiling a bit, "How...How are you alive?"

Harry turned her shoulders gently and whispered, "The greatest miracle of my life is about unfold, just watch."

She watched as twelve year old Harry Potter crawled over to eleven year old Ginny Weasley who was waking up and clearly terrified. He heard his whispers, "Ginny, go to the end of the chamber and find Ron, he will get you out of here."

Ginny didn't seem to comprehend why he could not go with her until she saw the cut. The girl looked devastated for a moment, but then the Phoenix landed in between the two. Fawkes took one look at Harry, and did what any sentient being in Susan opinion would do...it cried.

What Susan didn't know was that Phoenix tears could heal any wound, including something as destructible as basilisk venom, "That stuff still runs through your veins Harry..."

He nodded stiffly, "I know, I try not to think about it. From what Hermione told me the stuff is so destructive it literally eats everything inside the body. It is still a mystery to us how I survived long enough for Fawkes to save me."

Susan nodded in agreement, and just watched as the scene unfolded, and then felt the familiar drag that indicated the end of another memory.

The red headed Hufflepuff immediately took a seat on the closest couch and put her hands in her head. She felt the stress of the last memory pour over her, and she wanted to cry. She was on the verge of doing so to, until she felt the couch shift a bit indicating that someone else was now sitting down with her, "Its a tough pill to swallow isn't it? Some days I myself find it all hard to believe and accept."

Susan lifted her head up a bit, "Tough pill to swallow? Merlin Harry, I didn't have enough to drink to prepare myself for something like that!" Shrugging his shoulders as he usually did when he didn't know what to say he responded with, "You could be amazed by what adrenaline and lu-"

"Harry by the love of Merlin if the next word that comes out of your mouth is going to be luck, I am going to slap you!"

The boy recoiled a bit in surprise, and Susan jumped right back on the wagon to finish, "That was incredible Harry. It was stupid, it was

reckless, but my gods it was incredible. You survived something I guarantee you most grown wizards would not have, and you did off pure nerve. You didn't cast any super powerful spells Harry. You didn't use incredible feats of magic, you did it off everything that anyone else has the potential to have. Courage, wit, and yes maybe a little bit of fate, not luck Harry, but fate."

Harry stared at the girl without saying anything, because he felt interrupting her would be detrimental to his health, "You've been tested Harry. Your whole life you have been tested. I don't know if any one man is pulling the strings, or any one being, but I do believe with all my heart you have been tested. Maybe something out there is pulling for you, but I think nature, and perhaps magic itself is preparing you for something big, and I place all my money on that it is going to have something to do with Voldemort."

She didn't say anything for a moment, so Harry took his chance, "I have always considered the possibility that someone was testing me, even that Dumbledore may be testing me, but I don't want to believe that someone or some being would put me through all this for any reason."

Susan stared at the boy in disbelief, "Even if that reason was to help you survive?"

That question silenced Harry for several moments. So Susan continued, "Harry...I don't think anyone else at Hogwarts...no I don't think any kid in the world would have survived both events you went through. One maybe, with the luck of all of magic behind him, but both? No Harry, that isn't possible. Not to mention you still survived 3 dangerous tasks in a tournament meant for people with twice your magical experience. Not just survived either Harry, you won! And that included fighting a dragon! Whatever all this Harry, its destiny, it has to be, or I don't think you

would've made it this far."

The two made eye contact, and didn't break it for nearly a full minute, when a bell chimed indicating that another hour had passed. Harry broke the contact when he looked to the clock and saw that it was now 10:00Pm and it was time for him to go home, "I should get going. They may send a search party after me, if I wait any longer!"

Susan shook her head nodding, "Yeah that's a good idea...listen Harry, I don't know why these things have happened to you, but I do know that something out there has got it out for you. I guess what I am saying is, thanks. Thanks for being the hero we all need. Is there any chance you will come back around New Years, or maybe even New Years eve to finish your story with me?"

Harry blushed a bit, but then smiled at the girl, "If I can get out again, I promise I will come back New Years Eve, if anything to visit a friend, and to get away from where I am staying!"

The girl smiled at him, as she escorted him to the floo, "Well goodnight Harry, and thanks for everything."

Harry shook his head as he grabbed the floo pattern, "No Susan, thank you, for listening. Headquarters #12!"

And with that Harry Potter was gone from Bones Manor.

(A/N) So what do we think? Harry and Susan are getting closer, and I hope everyone likes the progression of the relationship so far. Stay tuned for more.

Questions: How much do we want to see Neville in this story? How about other Hufflepuffs as main characters? Voldemort is of course going to be pretty OP like he is in the books, but I want a death eater other than Bellatrix to also be super powerful, thoughts?

6. Repercussions

Chapter 6

When Harry flooded back into the kitchen of the Order of the Phoenix it was clear that he had stumbled right into the proverbial shit storm.

Dumbledore was there sitting at the head of the table, and it looked like almost all the Order members were there with him, "Good evening Harry, I trust you have had an eventful day."

The conversation across the table was silenced, and he noticed that Sirius was not at the table, nor was Remus, "That I did Headmaster, was your day swell?"

The old man chuckled lightly, "In fact it was not, I got quite the alarming call that you had left headquarters without permission! I came here as soon as I heard."

Crossing his arms and leaning against the fireplace, "I did have permission headmaster, from Sirius. I asked him yesterday if I could go have a late Christmas visit with my girlfriend, I told him who it was, and he knew Madame Bones from their school days, so he didn't think it would be an issue."

"A decision that was not for him to make!"

Feeling his anger rise he shouted back, "Then whose was it? Mum and Dads? Well they aren't hear anymore, so you know who they chose to look after me if they couldn't, two people! Alice Longbottom whom is currently and most likely permanently unavailable, and then there is Sirius whose house we are currently staying it. I will tell you whose decision it wasn't headmasters, but you wouldn't like the answer."

Arguing around the table commenced once again, many were towards Harry, but he defiantly stared at Dumbledore, whom merely raised his hands for silence, "What brings such hostility towards me Harry, we used to have the quiet the trust in one another, but on days like this I wonder

what you would do if my back was turned."

"Your back is already turned on me headmaster. If I would've known that this is what it was going to take to get you to talk to me, I would've run from Hogwarts months ago. This is the first time you have even looked at me since the Triwizard tournament. Its actually funny you asked what happened to the trust we had in each other, because I was going to ask you the same thing."

Dumbledore recoiled a bit this time, "I don't underst-"

"Understand, Understand Dumbledore! I have been your loyal little lap dog for years. I stopped the Stone from being stolen, I defeated Slytherin's Monster, I kept Sirius from getting kissed, I won the Triwizard tournament that I shouldn't even have been allowed to compete in, but you let it happen, and by extension you let Voldemort rise. You let me go into that graveyard, and you let me deal with your problems. He is after me headmaster, only a few would think otherwise, yet you keep me in the dark." Harry exclaimed hotly.

"What happened to your humility Harry, you yourself have always told me you had help doing all of these extraordinary task, but now you take credit for them as if you did it all on your own."

Growling Harry responded, "Someone opened my eyes. I don't think I could've done some of those things without Ron and Hermione, but at the end of the day, I was alone in the chamber, I was alone when Quirrel and I fought, I was alone in the Triwizard tournament, and this year you have isolated me more than ever. We should be comparing information, you should've asked for my memory of what happened in the graveyard, because I promise you I didn't tell you everything, and I promise you there were a lot of things happening that I didn't quite understand, that you could probably answer, but you won't because you have been

running from me all term."

The headmaster's calm demeanor finally broke when he shouted, "Because I fear what will happen to you!"

Silence in the room. Harry had expected lots of answers and responses, but he expected them to be overly calm, and ridiculously secular, but this was something he didn't expect. After the silence lasted so long Dumbledore said, "Everyday the Dark Lord Voldemort grows stronger. He has a connection with you Harry, I trust you know that. I fear that if this connection grows too strong he will attempt to either take over your mind or destroy it. That is why we have been so careful with information around here. If we lose you, and Lord Voldemort knows everything you know then we are doomed. You have seen so much as it is. You know the faces of our order members, you know the location, you know so much, and if we lose you, we stand to lose a lot, and I do not wish to lose anymore."

Harry felt anger well up inside him as he responded back, "Then why not have Snape give me the Occlumency lessons, I know that's what you wanted him to do. Sirius and Remus gave me a good foundation, and from what I have heard Snape is a master. Not that I anticipate meeting with the old...Professor, but if it was jeopardizing people's lives, I promise you I would've gone with only a bit of complaints. If you feared to lose me, then you should've held me closer instead of pushing me away. I have so much to learn, and so much that I need to do, before Voldemort and I face each other again, and you must know the moment is inevitable."

Dumbledore slouched down into the chair behind him, "That it is Harry, but I promise you if there is breath in my old body you will not do it alone. You will have myself and the wand of every person in this room.

We are still trying to prevent Voldemort from gaining intelligence on so many things, that I fear to share these things with you for the time being, can you respect that?"

Harry nodded, "Yes Headmaster, I can. Had you told me that at the beginning of the Summer when you brought me here, we would not have had such a shaky year. Dodging me all term must stop, I beg you. Even if you just spoke with me and asked how my day was, I would like that better than you just walking by me as I attempt to talk to you, which you have done at least 3 times this last term."

"I did it to protect you Harry!"

"Well you have done a great job at doing that haven't you..."

Silence stung the room this time, "Now I will let your meeting continue without my 'childish tantrum' as some of you called it. But I am going back to Bones Manor on New Years Eve, and if anyone wants to stop me, you are going to have to draw your wand to do it."

Having made his point, and drawn his lines, he stormed out of the room in hope of avoiding the imminent hexing that someone was about to have coming their way.

When Harry made it out of the room, he went straight upstairs with the intention of going to his own room to be left to his thoughts, however when he got there, two men were waiting for him, but it wasn't an unwelcome site, "Sirius, Remus!"

Sirius smiled slightly at his godson, "Hey pup, have a good day with the Bones women?"

Harry smirked a bit, "Bones woman, Sirius, Madame Bones had business to take care of. Remus, no order meeting?"

Remus sighed a bit, "I had to make sure Sirius didn't take off, I thought it was very mature of him however to come up here to this room instead of

storming off like he would've when your parents were around!"

Harry blushed a bit, "So you missed the fireworks huh?"

The werewolf gave the boy a slightly knowing smile, "We are Marauders Harry, we had our ways of listening in. I would lecture you about half the things you said, but I am afraid Lily is standing in your corner right now, and if there is one thing about that women I don't miss is her flaming temper, and I just witnessed the second coming of it."

Growling Sirius added, "Plus half of your points are well justified. I had half a mind to fight my way out of here, and come remove you from the whole damned country all together."

Remus interjected, "However I was able to convince him out of it, as Dumbledore, Kingsley, and Severus would likely prove to much for him, and even both of us had I decided to go along with the crazy idea."

At this Harry took a serious look on his face, "We need to silence this room from listening ears, I have something I need to speak with you about Sirius, and maybe..."

At the questioning look he shot towards Remus, Sirius waved his hand, "His loyalty will always be to the Marauders first pup, and you are one on an honorary basis for now. Not to worry. Mooney and I will handle our privacy problem."

With that the two men went to work on bringing up charms in the room, and when they put their wands away Harry began speaking, "I am afraid I may have told a little white lie to you Sirius, but I hope you won't get mad, because I have found a way to set you free."

Sirius and Remus both looked shocked by that, and the old werewolf spoke first, "Harry I wish it were that simple! But so many eye witnesses put Sirius at the scene of the crime, and no one among the living have seen Pettigrew alive outside of the people in this house. Without the

capture of Pettigrew we would never be able to get him a trial."

"But what if I could get him a trial? Do you think we could prove his innocence with Veritaserum and memories?" Harry inquired, "How about an awesome defense attorney, and possibly the leading prosecution on our side?"

Eyeing his godson carefully he asked, "What have you done?"

Harry gulped a bit under the strict gaze of his godfather on which he had never seen before, "Susan Bones and I tricked everyone into believing we were a couple. We told no one and kept it to ourselves, so when the image of me wanting to visit my girlfriend around Christmas came up, no one would question it. Not even Ron and Hermione. I managed to speak at lengths with Madame Bones today, and I gave her enough information to demand a trial. She has offered her word as Lady Bones, and her department head to ensure your safety on the day of the trial. Given that you submit yourself to arrest one hour before the trial she will personally come to place you under arrest, and administer veritaserum in front of Kingsley Shacklebolt, and Master Auror Mad Eye Moody for validity. With that information they take you straight in front of the Wizengamot and make you re-testify the truth, in which point you will be found innocent. Remus I was told to inform you that Madame Bones would want you to stand trial on Sirius' behalf, and tell the court your opinion of the events."

Sirius looked shell shocked by the plan that his godson had put together on his behalf, while Remus was letting the gears whirl to see where the potential failures in his plans might be. After a few moments the two had said nothing so Harry spoke, "Sirius, I don't want you to be a prisoner for the rest of your life. You spent thirteen years behind bars for something you didn't do. Today we have a chance to change it all, and make you a

free man. I know there are risk, but what happens if Voldemort gets annoyed and kills Pettigrew tomorrow, we never find his body. You would have to be on the run forever, or if someone we knew became Minister of Magic. Do you want to wait for that to happen? What do we have to lose?"

Sirius sighed, "Amelia is a good women. I knew her well while we were in school, and she was as Hufflepuff as they come. I don't think she would lead you astray by all this."

Putting a hand on his godfathers hand in hope to comfort and assure the man Harry said, "She was crying Sirius. When it was all said and done she cried. She left to get started on the case as soon as we finished, and she seemed absolutely determined to see you free."

Stunned the man asked quietly, "Amie cried? Truly? You saw the tears?"

Harry nodded his head, while Remus was dead silent, "No doubt Sirius."

The man rolled his hands through his hair a few times slowly, and then spoke, "If Amelia has set her mind to it, then I will be a free man one day.

She is just as brilliant and clever as your mother Harry. The house of Bones has always been influential in law makings, and they have heavy influence in the political arena. If anyone was going to set me free without bringing Pettigrew to the courts alive, it was going to be Dumbledore or Amelia Bones."

Harry shook his head, "I wouldn't count on Dumbledore to do anything for me today, or tomorrow. No thanks to the old man, but I think he is to into controlling the situation, that now some of the aspects are changing he is trying to tighten the reigns, and make him seem like the most important player on the board."

Remus defended the man in an instant, "Dumbledore is a good man Harry. He has everyone's best interest in mind when he makes a decision.

He is also the only reason we are all gathered in this room together. Any one of us would be dead without him."

Harry shook his head, "I think without him and his interference I would be living with Sirius probably far away from here. But it is pointless to speculate what could have happened. Dumbledore has fallen from what I believed to be grace, and I am going to be more dependent on my contacts and what I can do for myself, instead of what he can attempt to do for me. From here on, I am just another student. If he keeps going on the route we are on now, I will be dead before the year is over."

Neither men responded to that, but all had decided that the night was over. No one in the house slept easily that night, but for most it was different reasons. Some were apprehensive about the rise of Voldemort, and the disappearances that were rampaging the country once again. A few were apprehensive about a certain upstart teenager that was starting to cause trouble in the Order. However a young teenager was wondering if he was ever going to have a family with his godfather in the open world, or if he was going to have to continue being the orphan, that he was perhaps meant to be.

The next day Harry received an interesting letter from Susan that professed her dying love for him, and that she couldn't wait to have his arms around her again. He read the letter once under the scrutiny of Molly Weasley whom had received the letter and clearly attempted to read it before giving it to the young man. The letter was rather graphic in their non existant intimate relationship, that made Harry smile stupidly at the girls clearly dirty mind, and chuckle a bit remembering how Mrs. Weasley blushed before handing it over..

Later when he was alone he had revealed the true contents of the letter with the password he thought she might use, "I solemnly swear that I am

up to no good!"

When he said that the true words of the letter revealed themselves,

Dear Harry,

I hope you were clever enough to figure out the message. I wasn't sure of a password in which you would get, so I thought I would try the one that activated your map. If we have to correspond through more letters it will be the same password each time. However I don't think we will have to do this anytime soon, because Auntie has already put together enough things to bring up a trial. She wishes for Sirius to surrender himself to her office at exactly 12:00Pm tomorrow afternoon, where my auntie will open her floo line for five minutes. If he misses this time line, we will assume that he does not wish to play the cards he has been given, and completely understand the skepticism that might follow this letter. However Auntie promised that it was quite disgusting how easily she found the error in justice, and hopes to fix it as quickly as possible. Ron, Hermione, Remus, and Professor Mccgonagal are going to be receiving court summonings the moment Sirius submits himself to trial. If everything goes well, then this may be the best coup ever pulled off by a couple of magical teenagers!

Tomorrow is December 28th, and Auntie says that when the year 1996 rolls around she expects your godfather to be a free man, and I hope this becomes a reality. With whatever its worth Harry, I really hope this all works out, and I will be at the trial, which will start by 1:00PM at the latest, needless to say I would arrive thirty minutes early, just in case. I will meet you at the visitor center floo with some dress clothes that I don't believe you have access too.

Stay well, and stay safe Harry,

Susan Amelia Bones,

PS. Sorry about our cover up letter, I wanted to embarrass someone from reading the whole thing, or trying to delve into it to far.

Harry grinned at the end of the letter and immediately set out to find his godfather and give him the news.

The two celebrated quietly after Sirius carefully read the letter multiple times, cracking a smile at the last line each time. When it was over the man jumped up with glee and hugged his godson happily, "I can't wait to take you to all these places we never got to go to! I will take you to where the Marauders went during the summer, I am going to teach you become an Animagus! So much to do, so much time to make up for!"

When he finished that statement he brushed the hair out of his godsons face smiling, "Were going to make your parents smile down at us Harry, that's a promise. I know we had a tough start in life together, but its not to late to turn it all around. That promise about us being a proper family comes true tomorrow. We will activate the Potter and Black vaults once again and start taking an offense in everything we do. Dueling lessons from the best teachers in the world. Wards, wards, and more wards. We could hire hitwizards from the continent or the America's to come help us fight. So many options Harry, and so many opportunities once I am free!"

The man smiled, like Harry had never seen him smile before, and he prayed and swore upon his magic and life, that he would do whatever it took to see his godfather walk out of the Ministry of magic tomorrow a free man.

(A/N) So the next chapter is the trial and what happens directly after. Its not going to be too much honestly, as I want to move to the actual story line of this fanfic. The summer is going to take up several chapters, and the remainin of school year will do the same, so plenty of story to still go through.

Long run story thoughts:

Where would we like to end this? At the Half-Blood Prince? On the

run with Susan through the Deathly Hallows? I won't reveal how it ends, but just where do we think this is going?

7. The Trial

Chapter 7

When Harry awoke the next day he was very anxious. However he was not quite as anxious as his godfather who hadn't rested a bit. Thankfully not many Order members were around that morning, so most didn't see the nervous tendencies of Harry, Sirius, or Remus, throughout the morning, though Ron and Hermione were starting to catch on to the fact that something was up. Hermione noticed that Harry had a big smile on his face and asked him with a snippy tone, "Another letter from Susan Harry?"

Forgetting about his faux girlfriend for a second Harry looked confused, but then said, "Oh no. Why do you ask?"

Ron grumbled as he sat down at his late breakfast, "Because you look like you just won the Cup over there mate. Stop smiling so damn big!"

Making Harry smile larger at the twos frustration he said, "Oh come guys cheer up, its going to be a good day."

Ron in fake cherry tone said, "Oh yeah mate, it will be great. More sitting around the house doing nothing, but exploding snap, and reading."

Hermione gave the boy a nasty look, "And what may I ask is wrong with reading?"

Ron held his hands up in surrender, "Nothing at all. I was just saying its not my cup of tea for a great day that smiles over there is talking about."

"I don't think you are going to be sitting around all day here Ron, I think you should be ready for anything." Harry said with a bit of a wink.

Before the two could question the boy Harry looked at the clock, and knew it was time. As if on cue he heard an explosion go off upstairs, and

new the plan was going into motion. With a quick draw of his wand he faked panic, and went straight for the stairs, with everyone in the kitchen behind him. As he ran past Sirius under the invisibility cloak he gave a little prayer that everything today would go over well.

When they arrived to the top floor there was a small fire started, and a stench that could make a skunk blush was in the air. Mrs. Weasley immediately set out to blame Fred and George, but when they wouldn't fess up to it, no one believed them. The mess took a bit to clean up, and took almost every available wand to do it. However when they were done, Harry slipped out of the room, and prayed that no one was going to be downstairs when he got there.

Making it into the kitchen however he saw the back of a man he really did not have an interest in seeing. The old bat was wearing his usual black cloak, and was clearly already annoyed Harry quickly checked the time to see it was already almost 12:30, and knew he had to get out, and change before he could appear before the court.

Deciding whether to stun the man or not, the decision was made for him when an owl flew to the window and was impatiently waiting for the man to retrieve the letters. When he did this Harry made a casual walk into the kitchen and into the floo, Snape didn't realize what he was doing until it was too late. A red spell flew towards him, but by the time it approached him he was already whirling across the country to the Ministry of Magic.

When he appeared out of the floo he was in a familiar large atrium that he had only first stepped into a few months before. Looking into the sea of unknown faces, he saw one familiar one that had a pretty smile, and long red hair, that was clearly searching for someone familiar as well. Hoping to be the one the girl was looking for he quickly set out to

approach her, "Susan!"

The girl's eyes darted straight to the sound of his voice and she exclaimed, "Harry!"

The girl quickly embraced the boy, clearly happy to have a familiar face to be with and said, "I ordered some robes with the money you left me with the other night, and I had some change left over."

She quickly reached into her pocket as she handed him the parcel she was carrying, but Harry waved her off, "We can use it to celebrate tonight so keep it."

Smiling at her fake boyfriend she nodded, "Alright now go change. The trial could start any moment. I have already seen a few Wizengamot members come in clearly disgruntled!"

Harry nodded quickly taking his first good look at the girl who was looking prettier than usual. Wearing a short skirt, and expensive looking blouse, the girl's bust, and waist line were looking phenomenally on point. Not that this was the first time Harry had noticed either of those things, but today he was wondering just what life would be like if Susan Bones was his girlfriend.

Shaking the cobwebs out of his head, he quickly told her that he would shortly return and change into his robes.

Looking into the mirror he knew he had never worn finer clothing. The silk type material he was wearing now was dark black, and had what he believed to be the Potter family crest on his robes. He had never seen a real picture of it, but he had it described to him by Sirius over the summer, and knew this must have been the majestic symbol of his family.

When he left the nearby changing room he approached Susan once again who looked him over once and quickly adjusted his cloak and collars,

gave him another look and smiled, "You look great Harry, lets go have a seat in the courtroom. We may be separated in there, or they could have us sorted by minors maybe, it depends which room we get."

Glad to have the clearly well informed red head at his side, he took her outstretched hand and followed her to the courtroom that they were instructed to go to.

Upon arrival to courtroom number ten Harry remembered that this was the exact room that he had once been seated in on trial himself. This also meant that the entire back part of the room however was for media, and guest. The front row was cleared off for some of the of witnesses, or their guests. Naturally Harry invited Susan to sit with him in the front row of the stands, where Professor McGonagall was already seated with Remus Lupin, one of whom were surprised to see him there, "Mr. Potter? I don't suppose you know why we were called here today do you? I had feared that it might be you on trial up there, when I received the message."

Harry and Remus exchanged brief looks that said, 'Don't rat me out, I am playing dumb.'

Taking Remus' ignorance into account he attempted to feign the same ignorance, "I have no idea professor. I was downstairs when I received the call to the Ministry, and I thought it might have been Professor Dumbledore needing me, so I came straight here. In bad judgment though, I forgot to tell anyone I was leaving."

The Transfiguration teacher nodded then looked at Susan, "And you Ms. Bones? What are you here for?"

Flying on the spot with hope of fooling the old woman she said, "I am interning for my Aunts prosecution position. She told me that there was going to be a huge case today presented to the Wizengamot, so I thought it would be a good day to come spectate. I was just as surprised as any

when I saw Harry here."

It was clear to both pupils of the stern professor was not easily fooled by the two's lie, and sniffed, "Potter why do I have a feeling you know exactly why we are all sitting here today?"

Harry gave the women a small sheepish smile, and said, "After all these years professor, I thought you were starting to just kind of go with it!"

This time Harry and Susan were almost floored by the smile that crossed the witches face, "You're right Mr. Potter, I don't know why I even asked!"

The four that made up the group in that moment all smiled a bit. The teenagers were sharing mischievous like looks, while the older man had a look of remembrance, which the oldest witch shared.

Ron and Hermione filed in shortly after, and it was unsurprising when Hermione revealed the obvious to something that the adults had previously overlooked, "Harry. When did you get those robes, and when did you have time to change into them?"

Grinning at his female best friend he said, "Its going to be an interesting day Hermione, and I will apologize in advance for keeping you two into the dark. We had to be sure no one would interfere with what happens next."

Hermione looked accusingly at Susan, "Since when have you kept us in the dark?"

Susan visibly flinched, but not from Hermione's word, but Harry's reaction, "When you decided to keep me in the dark over the Summer! Its not that I wanted to, but I couldn't allow Dumbledore to try and stop us, and who would you side with Hermione, me or the headmaster?"

Hermione hesitated to answer that, but thankfully Ron didn't, "It would be you no doubt mate, you know that."

Harry gave his best friend a grateful nod, "Thank you Ron. I wish

Hermione shared your loyalty."

The girl blushed at that, but before she could protest Fudge slammed his gavel on the desk. "It is December 28th 1995 the year of our Lords and Ladies. This is the 455th gathering of the Wizengamot, and we have been called by Amelia Susan Bones, whom wishes to address with what I have been assured is a most pressing matter. Madame Bones."

Madame Bones stood up from her position straightening up here business dress and robes, "Thank you Minister Fudge. I don't want to waste to much of everyone's time with the politics of all this, so I will just say that 2 days I ago I stumbled across some evidence in the case of Sirius Black murdering 13 muggles back in November 1981. This evidence troubled me, so I began to dig. I kept digging and kept digging, and this is what I found."

Amelia dropped two sheets of paper on the desk, and immediately the chamber went into silence, until the uproar began starting with Augusta Longbottom, "That is Preposterous, that is two measly pieces of Paper Madame Bones, I assume there is more to this evidence list that caught your professional eye."

The head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement merely shook her head, "Actually Lady Longbottom it was the fact that there were only two sheets of paper that caught my attention in the first place. I was looking for a court record that way I could take the testimony and hopefully see why it was that Black did not get the death penalty, because believe it or not Lords and Ladies of this governing body, what brought this whole thing to light was teenage love."

It was then when Amelia Bones turned to Harry and Susan in the visitor box, and Susan instinctively quickly took Harry's hand to prevent him from panicking, "You see, my niece Susan wanted to give her boyfriend

Harry Potter a Christmas gift that would be more meaningful than something of monetary value, because she knows his story, better than probably anyone else in this room, and she asked me why the person who handed the Potters over to Voldemort still was a freeman, and I saw something I hope I never saw in my nieces eyes, and that was doubt, that her government, and my department could protect her, so I began to dig."

It was clear to Harry that the women's words had already struck many people in the audience, so he didn't attempt to protest anything yet, and clearly Susan had a lot of faith in what was being said, so he implied that she had heard this speech at least once, "Ladies and Gentlemen I found two pieces of paper, and all it was is the arresting papers that Barty Crouch Sr. filed when he took Black into Custody. It includes that Black was laughing hysterically, and that they found Pettigrew's finger and 13 dead bodies. That is it ladies and gentlemen, no more and no less."

The room was silent, but not for long as one person stood in the crowd of Lords and Ladies, "You mean to tell me that the Department of Magical Law Enforcement sent a lord to Azakaban without a trial, is that what I am getting Madame Bones?"

Susan whispered in Harry's ear as quietly as possible, "That is Hannah's mom Harry, Becky Abbot, both her parents are on the Wizengamot."

Harry nodded while Amelia put her hands in front of her and looked down in shame, "Sadly that is exactly what I am saying. Sirius Black was never given a trial. His wand was never recovered. Nor was Pettigrews, nor were any magical eye witnesses there to put him at the scene of the crime, much less say that he did it."

The Minister was quick to intervene, "This can't be true Amelia. I was there as a young auror cadet when we apprehended Black! He was mad with rage."

"Rage Minister, or hysterical from losing his best friend, a man he considered to be his brother in all but blood?

The man sputtered out, "It can't be. Not with Barty, nor Bagnold as Minister of Magic!"

Amelia shrugged, "The war was over Minister. Many people were still being found dead in the streets. Can you blame former Minister Bagnold or Barty for trying to sweep this all under the rug."

Knowing it was wise not to answer that bait he remained silent, but Amelia decided to take command, "Lords and Ladies. I propose we rescind the kiss on the site order of Black, and offer him a fair trial. Right here, right now. We use emergency powers of veritserum, and pensieve collected memories from people in this room, and make a decision on guilt or innocence. Minister Fudge has repeatedly said in the media in the past few weeks that this is a time of peace, let's act like it, and attempt to fix our families old crimes, and potentially shed light on a family who lost everything in the world for the people in this room."

Many were screaming their agreements from the stands, including Augusta Longbottom, the Abbots, the Diggories, and many other families of the light and neutral side of things. Even the darkest of families like the Notts and Malfoys' had stayed respectfully quiet.

When the chanting and talking died down Fudge banged his gavel, "Very well. All in favor of rescinding the kiss on the site order of Sirius Orion Black, and allowing him a trial as soon as possible. If in favor say aye."

More than half of the crowd easily answered that and raised their hands in the air in show of approval. In Harry's surprise even Fudge raised his wand to show his favor on the matter. When the matter was decided Fudge banged his gavel again, "Excellent dispatch an edition of the

Daily Prophet and let it known that Sirius Black is now being welcomed and invited into the Ministry for a fair trial for the murder of Peter Pettigew, and 13 muggles. Let it be known that we are ready to here Black's side of the story, and if that he does not show up we will have to assume that he is guilty of all charges."

Amelia Bones then stood up and said, "As it happens Minister Black surrendered himself just an hour ago to the questioning of my department, we have dementors getting ready to kiss him as we speak, should I rescind the order!"

Fudge looked pale at the thought, "Amelia! I am surprised at you. I order you to rescind the command, and bring him here at once."

For a moment Harry's heart dropped, but Susan gave his hand an extra squeeze to assure him that it was all a hoax, to ensure that Amelia didn't take any of the heat on this. The woman quickly however through her patronus charm out of the room and it took off towards the headquarters of her office, "Forgive me Minister, I was merely fulfilling my duty, and trying to fulfill the last standing order. Black will be brought here within minutes. My men will be quick, that is a promise."

Quicker than what would have perhaps convinced most people Sirius was being dragged into the room a little roughly by Moody, and Shacklebolt, both of whom kept a very serious poker face. Many people gasped at the man who was clearly not the young man they had all remembered years ago. Of course for many people in the room they had gone to school with this man, and were shocked as the rest of the country to learn that he had been sent to Azkaban for what he had been accused of.

Sirius was aggressively sat in the chair, and the Wizengamot was abuzz with quiet chatter until Fudge banged his gavel, "Sirius Orion Black, you have been brought in front of the Wizengamot today for the murder of 14

individuals, 13 muggles, and one Peter Pettigrew, I am afraid that regardless of your guilt this body owes you an apology, this is a matter that is very long over do. With that being said Mr. Black, would you like to the court to present you with an attorney."

"No Minister, I would merely like to face the music I have been forced to live with."

Mutterings in the room seemed to not like his choice of words, but Fudge nodded, "Very well, then how you plead Mr. Black?"

It was the next words that would change Harry's life forever, "Not guilty on all counts."

This surprise was clear to everyone, and then outrage. Harry stared at the back of his Godfathers head the whole time, and part of him was wondering if they had been foolish to attempt this, but then Madame Bones stood up, "Minister I would like permission to administer Veritaserum to the accused."

Fudge nodded quickly to the women who signaled for a nearby auror to bring her some, and the man stumbled to do it quick enough. When Amelia took the bottle she menacingly walked over to Sirius Black, "Lord Black I suppose we should call you until the court has determined your guilt or innocence, do we have permission to use the truth potion on you for the sake of this trial?"

"You may."

The man said confidently. She then swept forward capping the bottle open and administering three drops to his mouth. She waited a long thirty seconds then asked, "What is your name?"

"Sirius Orion Black."

"What is your date of birth?"

"November 3rd 1955."

"Are you ready for the questions that will determine your future Mr. Black, that may very well determine whether you live or die today?"

"I have been waiting for 15 years Amie, and I don't wish to wait another moment."

His words shocked the court, but no one said a word. Voldemort himself could have appeared in the room, but Harry was unsure whether people would have noticed him or not, "Sirius Orion Black, are you a death eater?"

"No, I hate death eaters."

"Did you support Voldemort in the last war?"

"I would rather have died."

"Were you the Potter's secret keeper in 1981?"

"No."

"Who was?"

"A man we very well trusted James and I. We thought we had everyone fooled. We had no idea just how true that was. Peter Pettigrew was the secret keeper, and I wish I could've have killed him for it."

Harry waited for the shouting, but it never came, "Lord Black, do you mean to tell this body of Lords and Ladies, that you did not betray the Potters?"

"I would've died a thousands times over before I gave up James and Lily. Not a day goes by where I wish I had not allowed Peter to cast the Fidelius charm and become the secret keeper."

"Can you tell us what happened Lord Black, don't leave anything out, it is time for the world, and the young man behind you to know exactly what happened."

Sirius nodded and began his story. He told the crowd how he had convinced James and Lily to make Peter the secret Keeper, how they

thought Remus was the spy in their group that was fighting the death eaters. He told how he felt the spell destroyed on Halloween of 1981, and thought that Peter had been found and killed, so he made a beeline to Godric's Hallow only to be too late. He cried through the part of holding the Potter's dead body, while Hagrid came and pulled Harry out of his crib, and took him to Dumbledore. He sobbed through the part where he tracked Peter down and confronted him in the street after he had learned of the man's survival, and the taking of the dark mark.

The room was silent, except for one interruption from Fudge to readminister the Veritaserum as the dose might have worn off. But Sirius took another dose, and they continued on. The story of him being arrested, and then carted off to Azkaban, and stopped at his escape where he confessed to being an illegal animagus. He even ratted out James and Peter for their law breaking habit. But after he told the court why they had done it they understood, and it was basically an unspoken agreement that he would not be charged with such a small crime in the grand scheme of things.

When it was all said and done, Amelia said her final words, "Lord Black. I cannot speak on behalf of this body, much less the wizarding world, but if everything said today was true the world owes you an apology, and I hope you will take mine first, for I am truly sorry."

The women didn't cry though it was clear to some that she wanted to. She then stepped down from the stand, "Minister I have witnesses to something that happened on Hogwarts ground in 1993, as well as teachers and friends to testify on behalf on Lord Black today. I do not wish to burden or take anymore of the courts time, so if it found unnecessary, and we believe we can cast a just decision, then I am prepared to rest my case."

Minister Fudge looked pale as he said, "No Madame Bones, I do believe that is all we need to make an informed decision."

"All in favor of clearing the accused of all charges?"

Harry was surprised to see Fudge's hand go straight up. He looked over to the Delores Umbridge who was sitting in the stand with a clearly angry look on her face. The green eyed boy was almost disturbed the fact that the toad faced woman had said nothing during the trial, but couldn't bring himself to think anything negative in the moment, because this was possibly the moment he had been waiting for his whole life. The moment he would no longer be an orphan.

As he looked across the room his hopes continued to rise. It was clear that many people had been touched by the trial. It was then when Fudge slammed his gavel on the desk, "Cleared of all charges!"

Harry didn't wait for anything or anyone else, he cleared the bench that separated him from his Godfather and ran up to the man as fast as his legs would carry him, and hugged the man. He heard the sound of snapping cameras, but for the first time he didn't care. He felt his Godfather's hand run through his hair, and knew his dream since he was just a little boy had come true when he heard the words, "Thank you pup, for helping me keep my end of the bargain up!"

Harry didn't hold back the tears that followed. They weren't sobs or anything like that. They were dignified tears, that showed he had a rough start of things in life, but on this day of December 28th 1995, his world was going to change, and he owed it all to a certain red head behind him, and he was never going to forget it.

(A/N) So short and sweet, and I hope to hear from all of you in the reviews. Cheers!

Thoughts:

I have written out pretty far into this, and I am looking at some characters that I need to know what to do with. This is a Harry light side story, so do we want to see Snape killed? Draco? The story line with Draco and the vanishing cabinet? Tell me what you think! Also to the reviewers who have commented on the explanation points, I am working to fix it...lol sorry.

8. A Free Man

Chapter 8

The court scene that Harry and Sirius dealt with was rather ridiculous, but at the time neither man could be upset. It was a miracle that Sirius Black who started this day as a mass murderer, and Enemy #1 of the country walked through the halls of the government a free man.

Many Lords and Ladies had approached Sirius as Lord Black, and he told them that he had been away for a long time, and would have to speak with his advisors at Gringotts, and check what the state his house was in before he could make any promises, or contribute to any alliance building activities.

The main moment of truth came when Sirius and Amelia came face to face and he bowed deeply, "It seems that I find myself once again in the debt of your family Madame Bones. Is there anything I can do to compensate you for your efforts? I know the risk you took, and a Black always likes to pay his debts. What will it be? Gold? Property?"

The women stared sternly at the haggard man for a moment before saying, "I think you and your Godson should join my family on New Year's for the Bones annual party. Perhaps then we can discuss the state of our alliance, and perhaps other things that may be relevant at the time."

Sirius bowed once again, "I humbly await the day then my lady."

The Marauder then kissed the fair ladies hand, and put his arm back around his Godson and dragged him off to get closer and closer to the gate. It was there where they faced Dumbledore, who did his best to look cheery for the victory, "Congratulations gentlemen, your schemes on all fronts seemed to have paid off."

Harry shook his head, "I learned from a master Headmaster. I was sad to not see you at the trial. Perhaps you could've been Sirius' defense."

The old man took a fake smile with the men responding with, "It does not seem Mr. Black needed any extra help today. He had a good ghost in his corner, and I can only be of joy that a tragedy of justice has finally been corrected. I hope this does not end any of our current arrangements."

Sirius merely shrugged his shoulders, "Oh many changes are coming Dumbledore, and I will remind you that I am Lord Black as I am the sole remaining survivor of the Black Line that holds the name. Headquarters may still be yours, as I hate the home, and you may still uphold operations there. Harry however is going to be coming with me, and we are going to revive Potter Manor, and ensure that guardianship is in my name before the day ends."

Looking grave Dumbledore said, "I don't think that is a good idea Sirius. Perhaps you should stay at Headquarters for a while, that way you have some time to find your feet once again. As for moving to Potter Manor, I do not believe that wise with Voldemort stocking through the streets."

Sirius stepped up toe to toe with Dumbledore this time and growled out, "No more Dumbledore. The last time we listened to you it nearly killed us all. Had James listened to his father chances are he would still be here. Potter Manor's wards are still standing, and it would take Voldemort himself to rip those wards apart. Harry will be safe there, and will finally have the chance to be the young wizard that he was supposed to be."

Given the world of opportunities that I know Lily and James would have wanted him to have. He will have the finest dueling instructors in the world, along with a Quidditch coach if he so desires it. Because that Dumbledore is what I childhood is supposed to be like, not that equivocal shit you left him in. Good day headmaster, and for once stay out of the way."

With that Sirius dragged Harry through the atrium roughly bumping the headmaster as he walked by. Before they made it to the floo network though they were stopped by a soft voice calling for Harry. Harry instantly recognized the voice and stopped to look for the source, when he saw a red head trying to make her way through the crowd and get to them, "Harry! I am sorry to catch you guys on the run, but I was wondering if we were still on for New Years Eve?"

Sirius managed to beat the boy to the explanation however and claimed, "It seems you are a dollar waiting on a dime Lady Bones. My young Godson here has already made plans with me, and I apologize if that takes him from you."

Knowing that Sirius was playing a mean trick Harry spat out, "With your Aunt Susan, Sirius is playing his first joke as a free man. Madame Bones invited us to come over New Years for the party, and celebrate the victory, and alliance between our houses."

Susan's face instantly brightened at that announcement and jumped into a hug for Harry, "Then I can't wait to see you guys then! Enjoy the next few days Harry, from what I understand you will have deserved it."

Harry wanted to say more to the girl, but knew this wasn't the time or the place, so he merely returned the hug the best he could, and promised to write to her soon. As the two men were preparing to turn to the floo they heard a scream in their direction, "Die Blood Traitors, AVADKA

KEDAVRA!"

Seeing a flashing green light come towards them Harry did the only natural thing he could think to do, and that was tackle the person closest to him, which was Susan, the moment they hit the ground though he had popped back up and began returning a flurry of spells towards the man who was the clear attacker, "Reducto! Impedimenta! Expulso!"

The three spells snapped out so fast the man didn't have any time to defense himself, and he was quickly knocked out. Most of the atrium had come alive at the site of the green killing curse though and had scattered to run for their lives, as if they were chickens with their heads cut off.

Harry was almost disgusted with these people, but didn't want to raise a fit now. Aurors were already on the scene, and he didn't attempt to rush the downed man. He turned to Susan whom had already made it to her feet, "You saved my life Harry."

Shaking his head, "I did what anyone would have done Susan. I saw the curse coming, and I moved as quickly as possible. I remember what happened the last time I heard those words, and didn't see it coming. I didn't want it to happen to you."

A scream from behind them made Harry's nerves jump and pointed his wand towards the sound of the voice, but quickly discovered the attack may have been over, but there was a casualty. Laying on the floor nearby was an unknown man who had a look of fear in his lifeless eyes. Harry felt his insides go cold. He had saved one, but cost the life of another.

Sirius swept quickly behind the two and said, "Lets us all leave. Susan you can come with us for now, and we will send your Aunt a Patronus from Ollivanders which will be our first stop. We must get a wand in my hand, before something like this happens again. The fact that my fifteen year old Godson had to save my life, and yours Ms. Bones is no longer

acceptable. You will be safe with us I promise."

Susan looked around and nodded her head at the chaos. The aurors were still surrounding the man that had been down, and noticed he was not moving. Fearing the worse, she quickly agreed hoping to prevent Harry from seeing who he may or may not have killed.

The trio quickly went into the floo, and traveled to the Leaky Cauldron in mere seconds, but the moment they touched down, Harry drew his wand on Sirius and said, "The news may not have traveled yet Sirius, you should go in disguise for today. Nothing too drastic, but something that will keep most eyes off of us."

The Marauder nodded his head quickly, and Harry cast a few advanced glamor charms to change his look, and then turned to Susan, "I will send your aunt a message now if you'd like. You are welcome to tag along with us, but it could be a long day, and I assume your aunt is about to be a very busy woman."

Susan looked around for a moment and then said, "Tell my Auntie that I am going to hang out with you guys in the alley, and I will return to Bones Manor by 6PM at the latest."

Accepting the red heads answer he looked at Sirius and thought of the future they were going to share together as a family, and flicked his wand out, "Expecto Patronum!"

The stag popped out quickly and bowed to his master as he saw no enemies were around, "Prongs, go to Madame Bones at the Ministry and inform her that Susan is safe with Harry Potter and Sirius Black, we are fleeing the scene of the crime where a man just shot a killing curse at us, and attempting to get Sirius a wand as quickly as possible. Susan will return to Bones Manor by 6PM."

The large creature bowed once again, and then shot off in a direction that

must have been the quickest route to the Ministry. Sirius gaped at the boy for a moment, then merely hugged him, "I think that was the first time I consciously saw your patronus Harry...It looks just like your dad. Down to the smallest detail. It's perfect."

Smiling sadly at the man he said, "It's still my favorite spell. Now come on, we need to get going. The sooner we can get you a wand the better." Agreeing with the sentiment the three runners went straight for the alley, and straight to the wand shop without getting a second glance. When they made it to Ollivanders wand shop, he was clearly surprised to see the people in the room, "Mr. Black, Mr. Potter, Ms. Bones, what a pleasant surprise. I do not usually do much business during the school year, so it is nice to have some company today. Let us see if I can remember this right, Mr. Potter, 11' Phoenix feather and holly wand. Ms. Bones you were 11' Unicorn hair and holly. One of the odder combinations I have ever made. I find it interesting with the similar components of your wand, and Mr. Potters, that you approach me together. I do believe these wands could quite easily-"

Sirius interrupted the man, "Sorry to interrupt Mr. Olivander, but we are in a bit of hurry, we were just attacked earlier at the Ministry."

The stern man then turned on the younger man saying, "Considering the fact that you are with the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcements daughter, can I assume that you have been finally cleared of all charges then Mr. Black? Or should I be checking these two very unlikely people you would be with for the symptoms of the Imperius curse?"

Susan snorted, "Even if I were Mr. Ollivander, no one can hold Harry under the curse, not even Mad-Eye Moody."

The man looked in amazement at the young man across from, "Quite an

impressive ability Mr. Potter, one I did not know you possessed. But yes, perhaps given the circumstances we should make haste. Mr. Black, I did not give you your first wand if I remember correctly, which I almost sure I do. Your wand was made by your grandfather Orion Black, who was quite the skilled wand crafter. Made every primary wand for the Black children for as long as I can remember. It is sad to know that he left the world without passing that knowledge on to you, or another."

Sirius looked at the ground sadly, "It is true, my grandfather was a very talented man, but you are correct, I don't believe he passed his knowledge down to anyone. My last wand was a Blackthorn wand, 11 inches, and Acromantula heartstring."

Harry and Susan both shivered at the thought of an acromantula heart being the core to someone's wand, but mostly because of the memory of Aragog running fresh through both of their minds. Ollivander nodded, "I myself have never used Acromantula heartstring for a wand, and I hope your previous wand is one day recovered so that way I may study it?"

Sirius shook his head sadly, "If by some miracle it is found again, I can promise you I will let you research it, but I believe Pettigrew stole it many years ago."

Shaking his head the man nodded, "Alright let us begin with something then. You are older, and your magical core is most likely almost fully built, so let us see if we can find a last permanent partner for you. I have a few blackthorn wands in the shop, let us see if any of them work for you."

After several attempts at wands, with no success, Sirius was beginning to get frustrated, when Ollivander handed him a completely different looking wand, "Humor me Mr. Black, I do believe this wand may fit your taste."

Eyeing the wand skeptically Sirius reached his hand out to grab the wand, but before he could touch it, the wand shot straight into his hand, and a shower of red and yellow sparks came out, causing the three to spectators to jump for joy. Sirius eyed the wand in amazement, "I have never felt such power in a wand, what is it?"

The old wand crafter smiled lightly, "It is thestral hair, and elder wood Mr. Black. I have only ever made five wands with this type of core, and they have all been given to all kinds of different people, but I do believe this one will serve you well."

Sirius nodded again in appreciation before pocketing the wand, and offering his hand to the man, "Thank you Ollivander, for your haste, and your silence."

With that Sirius reached into his pocket and pulled out 10 galleons and placed them on the counter. Harry and Susan both watched in shock, clearly not knowing the man had galleons on him, but he merely winked at the kids, as the man took the coins happily, "I am happy to serve the house of Black. I hope in the future if you sire offspring I may seem them in my store."

The man laughed lightly, "I don't know if the world is ready for Sirius Black to have children old chap. I don't think they are even ready for him to be free, so perhaps, but perhaps not."

The man smiled and bowed to the Lord of the Wizengamot and recently freed man.

This allowed a moment to pass before Sirius said, "I do believe Gringotts is next, for I have exhausted the little cash I had on hand. Ms. Bones you have a choice here. You can sit in on whatever we do next, or you may return home. Now that I feel I can safely escort you to the place."

The girl shyly looked around for a minute and said, "Auntie isn't going to

be home until late, and Hannah is on the continent, so if you don't mind the intrusion..."

Sirius waved the young girl off before she could go on, "No intrusion at all actually! Just some simple matters, and you can even be a witness to something quite historical."

Looking confused the red head asked, "What would that be Lord Black?" The man took one look at her then dramatically out to the sky, "The day the tides turned Miss Bones, the day the tide turned."

Susan and Harry grinned at each other, as they followed the man who was clearly on a hot streak a mile long, and they followed him straight up to the pillars of Gringotts, where he pushed both doors open and walked in like he owned the place. When he made it to a counter he proclaimed, "I would like to see my useless account manager, I believe he goes by the name of one nut!"

The goblin behind the counter growled, "What business do you have with Lord Rugnut wizard. He is only Black Account Manager, and does not take calls from a wizard of lower status."

Grinning Sirius snapped, "Well I do happen to be Sirius Orion Black, Lord of House Black, so if you don't mind retrieving my account manager, I am sure he will be both happy and pissed to see me at the same time!"

Suddenly a booming voice came from behind the counter nearby, "Why I thought I smelt a son of a bitch walk through our doors! I would've had the guards throw him out had I known he was going to rot the place up so bad!"

"Lord Rugnut, it has been a while!" Sirius said walking towards the master goblin who stood at about average height of the rest of the race. When the small creature approached him they stood toe to toe for a moment before the goblin responded in a serious tone, "Not long

enough."

The two stared at each other for a moment, and Harry and Susan both began fingering their wands as if a death match might take place any moment, but just as Harry was about to suggest their departure the creature and man began laughing as one! The two teenagers took the moment to stare at each other in pure confusion, while Sirius and the goblin shook hands aggressively, "It is good to see you again Lord Black. I feared those imbeciles at the Ministry would never let you walk these halls again as a free man!"

Susan asked in shock, "You knew he was innocent?"

The goblin turned to face the young lady snorting, "Knew it? We told the Ministry about 300 times in the first year that Pettigrew and Potter took the Fidelius here at Gringotts with Rucksalt! I was in the room at the time, and we attempted to get in contact with many Ministry officials, but us being lowly goblins, we did not get the grace of a response!"

Shaking his head Harry responded, "Why does that not surprise me!"

"Your dad did the fidelius charm here with the Potter account keeper, who was a long time ally to house Potter. Ruginut was there at the time, and witnessed the event. Its how I have been getting money, and how I got your firebolt Harry." Sirius explained.

Ruginut nodded, "No trial, means no guilt. In goblin nation you are innocent until proven guilty. So Lord Black and I exchanged correspondence from time to time, but kept it minimal in his best interest. He mailed me just yesterday however informing me that today he would likely be a free man, and that he had certain interest he wanted to take care of immediately. With that being said, lets us all take a step back into my office, so we can make this as short as possible."

In awe Susan and Harry followed back the goblin and wizard to where

they entered a quite quaint little office. It wasn't anything special, but Harry knew the goblins probably didn't spend just large amounts of time in these small little spaces, as they were obviously very busy creatures, "Right down to business then. These are the papers that makes Harry James Potter your blood and legal son. This will give him all rights to the Black family in case of your demise, and it will also require him to sire 2 Black children, neither must be male, though it will be stipulated from birth that one of them must keep the name Black. These are the papers to annul the marriage of Lucius Malfoy and Narcissa Malfoy. These are the papers to bring back Andromeda and Nymphadora Tonks back in the house of Black. I also took the liberty of gathering what properties you have left, and putting them in this file. I need several signatures, and a couple drops of blood from both of you."

Harry looked at his godfather in shock, whom had already frozen, "I had yet to inform Harry of that possibility Rugnut."

The goblin looked slightly embarrassed as he stared from the folder back to the boy, "Err, right, well then perhaps I will give you two a few moments to talk-"

Harry shook his head, "No need. Sirius if you are offering to blood adopt me then I accept."

The man shook his head and dropped to his knees in front of the boy as he was seated in the chair next to him, "I am not asking you to forget James and Lily Harry, in fact I am asking you to do the opposite. Let me protect you from everything that may legally stand in your way. Let me do what Lily and James chose me to do all those years ago, that I have failed so greatly. Let me be the dad you always wanted, and James will be the father you always needed."

Harry nodded gently, trying to hold back the tears, "Nothing would be

better Sirius!"

The two men stood up and embraced each other tightly, but then quickly separated and listened to the instructions of the master goblin, "I warn you Mr. Potter. Upon your seventeenth birthday you will still become Lord Potter, with the full duties of a Lord. That will include the possible duty to marry, and continue the Potter line. This will give you the opportunity to learn about this as I am sure Lord Black will teach you many things, but if something were to happen to him then you would take on both titles, and be required to uphold both ends of the family tree. Do you understand and accept these conditions?"

Harry nodded his head slowly, "Sirius still has time to have children, and I hope he lives through whatever may come next in life, so yes I do accept."

The goblin nodded and pointed at a few places that required signatures. After that he said, "Ms. Bones I believe? Will you please come stand over here and witness the blood signing of the papers?"

The girl quickly nodded and stood up while the goblin made Sirius and Harry stand a precise distance apart while holding their hands out over the paper while he swiftly nicked both of them, "By the power of magic, law, and Gringotts we deem these documents official and completely legal to be recognized by all intelligible bodies in the world. So mote it be."

Harry and Sirius both said at the same time, "So mote it be."

This caused the blood droplets to turn golden for only a moment, and then solidify onto the paper, "That is all that I require of you three today. Lord Black I will begin filing all of this at once. Is there anything else that you require of me?"

Sirius shook his head, "I need another large pouch of 1000 galleons

retrieved from the Black family vault, and then that will be all."

The goblin nodded, and called out to a goblin standing outside the door to go and fetch the gold while Sirius finished signing just a few more spots on the paper, "Your gold is waiting for you at the counter at the front. It is a pleasure to have you back in these halls Lord Black."

The man grinned shaking the goblins hand again, "It is a pleasure to be back Ruginut, I am sure we will be in touch soon for further actions."

Grinning menacingly the goblin responded, "I sure hope so Lord Black."

With that the three once again departed another location. As soon as Sirius had picked up his gold, and then left the building Susan didn't wait ten steps for saying, "What the bloody hell was that? I have never seen wizards and goblins act so casually with one another? I have also never seen such efficient work from them in my fifteen years of dealing with them!"

It was news to Harry that Susan was fifteen like him, making her one of the younger ones in their year like him, but didn't raise the question as he to was curious about the goblins. Sirius grinned at the girl and walked off for a moment before turning around saying, "Why don't we all discuss it over lunch. I am buying, and then I can talk to you two, and get you home Ms. Bones as it is now 4:00Pm and I never like to send a lady home past a set curfew."

The girl grinned and nodded following after the man who was clearly strutting towards the leaky cauldron with his two young charges in tow. After arriving at the Cauldron the group ordered their food at the front, and then took a seat at a nearby booth while Susan was clearly waiting for some answers. Sirius however was perfectly content on looking at his fake finger nail polish, so Harry took some mercy upon the girl, "Come on Sirius out with it!"

The man chuckled and leaned over the table to whisper quietly to his younger companions, "Look Black family stuff has made the Goblins and my family go way back! I have known Ragnut my whole life, and I used to deal with him when I went to the bank with either my grandfather or my father. I learned that the little goblin has a wicked sense of humor, and doesn't like to be treated any differently than how we treat each other. So I deal with him however I want, instead of trying to act all cordial and respectful. He appreciates, and I appreciate it, because we aren't into the whole formalized bull shit. Sorry I hate to swear in front of a lady, especially one that has red hair, because it brings nothing but bad memories!"

The man grimaced, but Susan wasn't appeased or distracted, "But what about everything else. You clearly had plans, and you didn't execute all this in the twenty four window we gave you."

Sirius gave the girl a sad smile, "Ms. Bones I have been planning this day for a long time. I have had most of this stuff running through my mind for well over 10 years. When I heard of my brother's death, and the death of Orion Black, I began planning just what would happen to the house of Black. Well I certainly didn't want it to fall in the hands of a Malfoy so my first thought was, how do I get the fortune and the title to someone who won't spoil the house or fund the dark lord. Well that was easy, if I could get Harry to agree, then I would blood adopt him and then he could have it all if I die or have no kids. Boom that was one problem solved. However if that didn't happen and I was never freed it was all in my will for Ragnut to make sure Harry was my blood adopted son off the record when I died. It couldn't be on the record for obvious reasons, but he would've known to make sure it happened the moment he heard about my death. Do you follow me so far?"

Susan nodded, and Harry paid close attention trying to pick up on the little things, "Okay so the other things were even simpler. Narcissa was forced into that relationship with Lucius Malfoy, and she hated the man while we were in school, so I didn't want her to be stuck with him. My dear sister Andromeda was cast from the family by my mother because she married a muggleborn, but that is kind of ridiculous and medieval so I reversed that decision to. Had I died all this would've happened, but now I get to live to see it happen. I had written it all down months ago when Voldemort returned, because I assumed that anything could happen at any point, so I wanted to be ready."

Feeling amazed by the man's well thought out plans Susan said, "That's brilliant Lord Black! It seems like you really thought it all out!"

Taking a bit of an easy smile he said, "No Lord Black stuff around here. If we are in the Wizengamot its a must, but anywhere, and I do mean anywhere outside of that courthouse or government building, I am Just Sirius Orion Black, or Padfoot if you prefer."

The girl looked questioningly at the man, and he just laughed, "Oh pup you have a lot to teach this one!"

Harry smiled at the girls colored cheeks, and chuckled, "I will explain it another time!"

Smiling back at the boy she said, "I look forward to it."

The two stared at each other for a moment, but then the food arrived and they were distracted from one another in the form of food.

When Lunch was over they walked Susan over to the floo, and said their farewells, and made sure she made it okay. From their the two sat back down and began talking again, "That some girl you have there."

Smiling lightly he said, "She isn't mine Sirius. She is just a friend."

Shaking his head the Marauder reached out with his hand and swatted

the boy in the back of the head, "Ow Sirius what the bloody hell was that for!?"

Laughing the man laughed, "Oh come on pup, you can fight dragons, but can't take a good smacking from an old man? But listen, that girl stuck her neck out on the line for you. Risked her reputation, and her aunts career by taking this to her. She knew the risk, but she still did it...for you! I only spent one afternoon with her, and I know that girl is worth a million galleons! She reminds me a lot of your mum, and its not just the red hair. I admit years ago I had hoped you and Hermione would end up together, but the truth is your just two different, and I think she herself has a thing for red heads. Missing the point though, a girl like that won't wait around forever. Believe me I know! What's stopping you from going after that? Shoving the girl in a broom closet, I tell you what if I was twenty years younger..."

Harry shook his head quick to dispel those thoughts from entering his mind, "There is a lot on my plate right now Sirius. I am trying to lead the kids at school, with a lot of stuff I still need to tell you about. I have Umbridge, Dumbledore, Voldemort, and OWLs, and she has all that too."

"You're starting to sound like Hermione talking like that!"

Rolling his eyes a bit he then softened up, "I don't want her in danger because of me Sirius."

"Isn't that her decision to make though Harry? I tell you what, on New Years you give her a nice little chaste kiss on the lips, and be careful about it or she is going to put your lights out. I know Amelia Bones pretty well, and if she taught her niece anything its how to handle handsy boys. But you know keep it simple. Maybe it will be nothing to either of you, and you will know its not how its supposed to be." Sirius advise carefully. Giving the man a questioning look the boy asked, "How will I know if its

more?"

The godfather of the boy laughed very hard at this and patted him on the back standing up, "Oh trust me pup you will know. You will know!"

(A/N) Next chapter is a Boneless chapter, but the good stuff is coming, just wait! Cheers, and please review!

9. Up to Speed

Chapter 9

Sirius, Harry, and Remus along with some of the aurors that presided in the order of Phoenix were talking excitedly over the trial that had taken place just earlier that day, and the atmosphere inside Grimmauld Place was exciting.

Sirius swore up and down that this would be the last night he ever stayed in the house of his ancestors, because as of today, he was the man with a plan, and he was very soon to share that plan with his Godson who had no idea the firestorm they were about to create.

Leaning against a nearby wall with a butter beer in hand Harry thought about just how all this had become possible, and like most of his thoughts that day they had been on one Susan Bones whom had done the above and beyond to help him get the family he now had, and he played many situations and possible outcomes in his head at the inevitable conversation that would take place between them.

Ron and Hermione had been a little bitter with Harry at first over the plan, but knowing how well it went, and how important it was to keep as few people involved as possible they lightened with the party, and forgave Harry easily. Hermione however started the notion that Susan was a bad influence on him, but Harry had taken to the girl's defense and ripped the brainy girl a new one, which caused Fred and George Weasley to erupt in applause and laughter when he stormed out of the room.

Even Ginny whom had a crush on him since her first year knew that all the good recent changes in Harry's attitude and overall life were because of the girl, and no matter how much she wished she was in the other red heads shoes, she was not, but couldn't help herself to be happy for her friend Harry.

Sirius had come to finally talk to his godson in private about just what the next move is as he knocked on his door gently, and was invited to come in, "Hey pup!"

Harry merely raised his eyebrows towards the man, and put the book down he was pretending to read as his godfather took a seat on his bed, and spoke, "That was some lecture you gave Hermione, and don't get me wrong I think you are right about most of those things, but it proved to me a little more that you two are just too different."

Seemingly thinking on something deep Sirius quickly waved it off, "Anyways, we have some big plans in the making that need to be executed, and I want you in on them the whole way through. Are you ready?"

Harry sat up immediately recognizing excitement in old Marauders voice, "Born ready, what's the plan Padfoot?"

Sirius and Harry talked deep into the night, and Harry absorbed a lot of information, and at the end of it all he merely asked, "Are you sure all that is going to work?"

The old man merely threw an arm around his shoulder and laughed though, "Trust your old dog father, and have a little faith. Tomorrow we start with Gringotts, and that will determine just how successful we will be from there."

"I would like to see my account manager Rucksalt." Harry said confidently to the young goblin that was sitting behind the tellers' desk.

The goblin however did not even look up as he said, "Name and purpose of business."

"Harry Potter with the purpose of claiming his heir or Lord Status." Harry said giving only a briefly faltering confidence look to Sirius whom had an impassive look on his face.

The goblin this time did look up, and then his eyes flitted from Harry's eyes to his forehead, and then nodded quickly, "Yes Mr. Potter I do believe your account manager has been waiting for this meeting for quite some time now."

The young goblin shouted behind him in his native tongue as an even younger goblin rushed forward, "This way sirs."

Harry and Sirius followed the young goblin around the corner, and to what appeared to be several offices that went down a very long corridor.

They went only a few doors down though when the young goblin lightly knocked on the door, "Master Rucksalt, Harry Potter is here to see you."

There was a brief silence, but then the door swung open, and a goblin unlike Harry had ever seen stood before him. This goblin was the tallest he had ever seen, which was still short at maybe 4 foot six inches, but the thing that would make him stick out beyond that was his massive build.

His shoulders were wide, and he looked like he could wrestle a bear into submission, and it all looked so out of place in his finely tailored suit, "Ah young Potter, I have been waiting for you to show up here for ages.

Excellent, truly excellent."

Harry and Sirius were cordially invited into the office and were offered seats, biscuits, and drinks all at once, which they accepted all of. Harry who was already curious asked, "Lord Rucksalt, if you had been so anxiously waiting for me to arrive, then why not write me a letter?"

"Standard protocol. At fourteen years of age you can acquire your heir

status as I am sure your new father by magic has informed you, but the thing about that is it was the duty of your magical guardian to inform you of this, and not Gringotts. We are efficient, but we are merely bankers, not a wizard's keeper. Even those of us who are designated to take care of one massive account must respect tradition on the matter. Had it been my way or had your parents ever instructed me to do so I would've reached out to you, but without such a request I merely patiently waited for you to come in, but over the past 3 years you have not visited Gringotts since your first and only visit at 11."

Harry thought back on it and realized the goblin was right. In his second year, he used what gold he had on him still from his first visit to get all of his school supplies, and his third year the Minister had it done for him when he hid out in the Leaky Cauldron. In his fourth-year Mrs. Weasley fetched it all for him. Suddenly Harry had the feeling that none of this had been coincidental, but no longer cared if the situation was fixed, "I suppose that makes sense. So today I am here to claim my position as heir Potter, and hopefully find out the state of my accounts and properties."

The goblin leaned back in his chair thoughtfully and said, "You competed in the Tri-Wizard tournament last year did you not?"

Sirius nodded with a smile, "He did, and won the damn thing at that."

Harry confirmed this with a nod and a small smile noticing Sirius' pride in his voice. The goblin smiled what seemed like viciously, "Interesting that the headmasters of the three largest schools in Europe seemed to overlook the fact that you are now a recognized adult by magic itself, whether the Ministry wishes to acknowledge it or not."

Sirius this time look taken by surprised Harry however remained confused, "Is it because you had to be seventeen to enter the

tournament?"

"That is precisely why Mr. Potter. When you stepped foot into the first task and your magic did the will of the goblet of fire you became a legal adult in the matter, however you will not have the full powers of one, or can you take on the full benefits of Lord Potter. I do believe when you leave this bank today you will be Lord Potter." Rucksalt explained.

Sirius looked giddy, "That is way better than we could have hoped for, what needs to be done Rucksalt?"

Reaching around his desk and standing quickly he pulled out some supplies, and a large bowl, "First I need to magically confirm that this Harry James Potter birth son of Lily Evans Potter and James Charlus Potter."

The goblin pulled out a knife that looked wicked sharp and asked, "The last enemy to destroyed, will it be death?"

Harry who didn't know what to do was nudged by Sirius to go forward, and he offered his hand in only basic understanding, "Yes, as the words of my family motto say."

"But do you believe it Harry James Potter?" Rucksalt asked almost snappily.

Harry flinched back a bit, and thought about the words. He felt a slight tingle in his body at the thoughts that led him along the lines of the family motto, but spoke anyways, "Yes I do."

"Allow me to take a bit of your blood as a sacrifice to your ancestors and magic itself."

Offering his hand out Harry felt a quick slash go across his palm, and it was relatively painless as blood dripped into the stone basin that glowed immediately a bright gold color, and Rucksalt along with Sirius had their eyes widen. Rucksalt almost stuttered, "Magic has accepted your claim. It

recognized who you are; now ask it confidently if you are ready to be Lord Potter."

Harry felt almost a little silly talking to himself, but did as he was told, "My name is Harry James Potter, and I seek to learn if I am ready to be Lord Potter."

Another drop of blood fell into the basin and it glowed the same color, and Rucksalt said with a bit of a barking laugh, "Merlin, I dare say magic accepts your claim."

Sirius murmured, "I barely got a slight glow of silver."

This comment was missed by Harry, but the goblin smirked at the man, "Well that was accepted, but I still do not believe you will have the full title of Lord Potter. Make no mistake you are now Lord Potter once I grab the ring from your vault, but whether you will be able to take your seat on the Wizengamot or empty your vaults if you wished is still a question."

"I wouldn't want to empty my vaults though, I only want to use some of the gold and reactivate the properties of Potter Manor, and see if my family owns anything of value." Harry said honestly.

Rucksalt laughed as he pulled out a large binder from his desk, "Hold onto your pants there boy, because I think you are about to be in for a shock."

The goblin began flipping through a few pages and said, "Now your grandfather was not the most established wizard, but he died young compared to some of his previous members of your family. That however does not mean he did not make his fortune selling the hair product that he invented himself when your father was just a boy. It still brings in a respectable amount of money each year to even this day nearly forty years later. His father was a curse breaker for Gringotts, and didn't care

to live life very extravagantly, and made another fortune that was never spent. Before him another curse breaker, before him a ward creators, before him a Hogwarts professor, and so on and so forth of successful legacies from the Potter family, now. This is your overall account total."

The goblin slid a piece of parchment over towards Harry, and he picked up and said, "Holy Sh-

"It's quite impressive, isn't it?" The goblin said interrupting his swear word in mid formation.

Turning to look accusingly at his godfather, "Did you know it was this much?"

Shaking his head, he responded, "No, but we all knew that your family had money. The way James always bought stuff for us, and took care of Remus like it was no big deal at all, but he never flaunted his wealth enough for us to know anything like this."

Harry blew a raspberry quietly, and said, "What about investments?"

The goblin nodded his head, "That is actually what your father did for nearly a decade. He had a financial mind the likes very few wizards ever have. If Gringotts hired Wizarding accountants I guarantee your father would have been the dream pick for some of our best accountants. He took the fortune and spread it out, but now in the past fifteen years he has been gone it has nearly doubled."

Another piece of parchment was passed over to Harry, and he gasped again, but this time Sirius wasn't as surprised this time, "The old codger always said he wanted to run the world, and we thought he was just joking."

Rucksalt shook his head, "No I daresay your father was a genius and a gambler. He took every bit of the fortune and invested it in different companies he thought would do well. Some did okay, some did great,

some failed, but for the most part it was all good investments, and it certainly paid in a decade and a half."

Harry recognized lots of the companies on the list. Nimbus, Florean's, Florish and Blotts, the potions shop, dervish and bangs, and dozens and dozens of others. Some were even muggle Harry noticed. Sirius asked, "How many of those does he have controlling interest on?"

The goblin shook his head, "None on that list. All the controlling interest companies are on this list."

Another sheet a parchment, and Harry almost dreaded to look at it, but the only two names he recognized on it was, "Firebolt and Marauders Jewelry."

Sirius looked up in what almost looked like alarm, and scrambled up to see it, before cursing, "Damn! I wish I would've known before I bought you that broom they might very well just give you one if you called for it. What is Marauder's Jewelry?"

Harry shook his head, and looked at the man incredulously as if to ask, 'how am I supposed to know?'

Before he could respond verbally the goblin said, "Lily Potter was founder and CEO, and I believe the business was never given the opportunity to take off, but it started their last year in Hogwarts when James and Lily Evans, at the time, came in and started talking about a company start up. They laid out all the investment plans, but to my knowledge they never got to go through with it."

Sirius looked curious at this, but didn't say anything. Harry however wondered just what his parents might have been up to, while Rucksalt was patient, "That is all of your financial equities. Let's move on the last thing and most likely what you actually came for and that was property. " The man pulled out a much smaller binder thankfully and said, "Your

father did not care as much for property and had lots of it sold off to build the fortune for investments, and I can say it paid off in the overall value of the Potter account, but you still have 10 properties. One on each of the six habitable continents, in New York just outside of MACUSA headquarters, in the Amazon Rain Forest near the school Castelobruxo, un Minami Iwo Jima, Japan, also near the Japanese wizarding school of Mahoutokroro school of magic, Uagadou that actually sits on the grounds of the African school in Uganda the Potters actually helped build, a small cottage in Sydney Australia just outside the magical community, and then four homes across Europe, of course Potter Manor, Godrics Hallow's cottage, the home in France, and the mansion in Rome. Lily Evans also had a flat that she called The Marauders Lodge. So, eleven properties is what you own and ten of them belong in the Potter Family. Each home was also there for good reason, and James Potter was not stupid when he decided to keep them all."

Harry processed this and had a disturbing realization come to him. If he wanted to run he could do it, and run far. He could make Dobby his secret keeper, and he could literally disappear under the fidelius charms of any of these homes that are far away, and would be safe forever.

However, he was no coward, "That's amazing."

Sirius nodded in clear surprise, "What of Potter Manor, it still stands yes?"

"Of course, and all the wards will be in place still. Some of the finest work goblins have ever done for a wizarding home. Of course, it will need an exceptionally powerful wizard to power the wards, but from the way young Lord Potter here made the basin glow earlier, I dare say he could do it just over a few short days." Rucksalt explained easily.

Remembering the plans Harry and Sirius laid out the night before he spoke, "I would like access to all these homes, and over the Summer I will

attempt to resurrect the wards at least two of them, and every break I have from Hogwarts I will repower the wards. How do I get to Potter Manor?"

"And do we have any house elves at our disposal from the family?" Sirius asked.

The goblin flicked threw a few papers before saying, "You need to go first by portkey to Potter Manor after that you should be able to plot it in your mind and apparate to it if you wish. You may even bring back on the floo line as it has been warded against the Dark Mark, but I still advise you to be careful using it considering just who it is after you."

This caused Harry to look up sharply, "You know Voldemort is back?"

Nodding gravely the large goblin said, "Of course Gringotts has known since the first day that the Gaunt family vault was reactivated. Never in our history had an expired vault reactivated like this before, but it left no doubt that someone had committed dark magic to come back, and Voldemort is the only one with that type of power, and the only logical suspect."

Harry didn't know who the Gaunts, were but Sirius looked fascinated by this, "So it's true that Voldemort is the heir of Slytherin?"

"Aye, and we are lucky that those incestualized inbred idiots killed off the family fortune before Voldemort rose to power or I doubt anyone could've stood in his way." Rucksalt spoke calmly.

Storing all this information away for another day Harry asked, "So all I have to do is go inside the Potter Vault, and find a portkey that will take me to Potter Manor?"

"Yes, but you won't have to search for it. Upon entering the vault, you should fine the Potter family ring, and that should easily guide you to the portkey, or it is possible that the ring is the portkey, we goblins do not

know, and have never seen it before."

Sirius exclaimed, "It must be. James always wore that ring after his parents died, and he usually preferred portkeying onto the grounds then apparating, and we never knew how or why. We assumed of course, but knew it would be a faux pas to ask even our best mate about his family magic."

Rucksalt agreed, but didn't give any verbal signs. Harry however stood, "Forgive my rudeness Lord Rucksalt, but I am very anxious to see just what my family has left for me, and what the family home looks like."

Rucksalt waved him off, "You are welcome to anything in the vault, just know that if magic thinks you are trying to take too much out for your own good it will stop you in a potentially violent way so be careful. The goblin that escorted you in will take you down to the vaults and allow you ample time to get what you may need."

Harry shook hands with the goblin as he pressed a small button and barked into a command that neither man in the room understood. The young goblin from before however spilled into the room and asked for them to follow him as they said their farewells to the account manager Rucksalt.

The young goblin led them to the carts where Harry asked him to turn it on top speed so that way they could get their fast, which was a decision that Sirius wanted to smack his dog son for, and Harry tried not yell out in glee at what seemed like a high-powered roller coaster.

Upon arriving at the vault after a short journey Harry jumped out and faced it, but then seemed to realize something obvious, "But we don't have a key?"

The young goblin snorted, "Lord Potter I do believe that the oldest accounts are the best protected as they usually contain the most valuable

objects, so it is my belief if you touched that door and confirm that you are Harry James Potter it will merely open, and if you are not then well...I suppose it will be a lonely ride back to the surface."

Harry gulped only a little bit before going forward and gently placing his hand on the wall, and having the upmost confidence having already been accepted as Lord Potter by magic just an hour before hand. The door responded to his command, and when it opened Harry did get through his whole swear, "Holy shit."

He however noticed that Sirius had said the words as him, and didn't even bother to chastise him for his language. The closest thing to him before emptying the vast vault that could've been a large one story house was a stand with a closed mahogany box that he marched straight over too, and opened it at once as if he was compelled to do so. He then without question pulled out the ring in the top right corner of the beautiful box slipped it on, and felt a nice smooth sensation trail through his body. Harry sighed contently, and looked back to his dog father, "It must have worked, and I think you were right this is the portkey."

Sirius carefully stepped into the vault looking around as if he was afraid he might be struck down by some unknown force, and only relaxed when he got next to Harry once again, "That is the ring James used to always wear, and I don't know what the rest of these are. I think I saw your mom wear that bracelet a few times though. Why don't you grab a few things, and then we will go check out Potter Manor?"

Harry quickly agreed to this and walked around grabbing a few random things that picked his interest and nothing as nearly as interesting as the journals that he found that had Lily Evans Potter engraved on them. He put those in a small duffle bag that he found in the room, and a couple of other trinkets, that he wanted to look into, and walked over to Sirius, and

the small goblin who had been waiting on him, "Sirius, a lot of your family had magical portraits painted of them, do you think that my-" Sirius shook his head sadly, "Your family was much to humble for something like that Harry...I'm sorry."

The boy merely nodded though having not gotten his hopes, up and then said, "Alright then let's get out of here."

Harry, Sirius, and the small goblin made their way back to the cart, which took them to the main lobby back at Gringotts where Harry and Sirius left the small goblin behind, and attempted to exit the building. Their attempt however was thwarted by an aged wizard with an all too familiar white beard, "Ah good afternoon gentlemen, Harry, Sirius. Or should I say Lord Potter and Black?"

Harry tried not to let his face reflect his surprise, but Sirius squashed his suspicions, "See the thing on his finger then? I hope that will dissuade you from interfering in his life any longer. He should have all the legal rights of an adult now, and when the letter reaches the Ministry tomorrow I suspect even his trace of underage magic will disappear."

Dumbledore nodded in agreement, "I dare say that I believe so as well. I trust that you two are off to Potter Manor then? To revive the wards? Perhaps I may be of some assistance."

At first Sirius looked like he wanted to object, but Harry spoke first, "What is it you want Headmaster? I know it is not some coincidence that we run into each other here."

Dumbledore sighed, "I merely wish to begin to make up for my mistakes. I recognize a changing tide when I see one, and while I still do not wish to endanger you Harry with too much current information, I still wish to help you to the best of my ability, and that means if Voldemort peers into your mind and sees Potter Manor, I want him to face the full wrath and

vitality of what hundreds of years of wards can bring. I believe I can help you with that."

Sirius didn't say a word as Harry and Dumbledore eyed each other, and then Harry spoke softly, "I do suppose that will be okay. I don't exactly know how to power wards up."

Dumbledore smiled at the boy, "Then perhaps I can teach you so you can do it to other properties that the Potter's own. I know the location, so if you will portkey first to replot the property on the maps I will follow shortly after."

Harry nodded, and turned to Sirius, "It's all up to you pup I will follow your lead, but we need to get a move on. If Dumbledore knew we were here it's possible a Death Eater could too, and even an idiot would know that our first step would be to power up the wards at Potter Manor so that way it would take some serious fire power to get to you."

Harry nodded quickly, and the three wizards walked outside where Harry activated the portkey by the simple word, "Portus."

Harry held onto Sirius for dear life as he felt his body whirl through time and space, and when he landed on the ground with a hard thud he heard a soft pop from behind him, "Well done Harry. We must be quick though in case we were seen."

Harry nodded, but as he stood he took in the area. He didn't know where they were, but there was a small mountain in the distance along with trees that surrounded the massive property. It was the largest land he had ever seen, and while the house wasn't anything terribly impressive in size it looked like a comfortable home at just a little bit larger than the burrow in length, but not nearly in height. The grounds were beautiful though as he admired the green grass, and the blue little lake or pond that was at the end of his eye site.

Dumbledore was already moving forward though as Sirius and Harry followed him towards the house. When they approached the front door, several loud pops were heard, and Harry at first thought they were in trouble, but then saw that what had appeared were tiny house elves who were screeching in joy, "Master Harry has returned!"

They all took a low respectful bow, and Sirius said, "Hello mips, I wondered if you would still be around these parts. I forgot to get my answer from Rucksalt."

The oldest of the elves stepped forward bowing, "Master Padfoot it is a pleasure to have you back on the ground with the good sir. It is our honor to have a Potter back on this land."

Sirius spoke gently to Harry, "Harry this is Mips the head Potter elf. These are his children, and his wife is..."

Sirius looked at Mips, and the creature bowed his head with a small sad smile, "Gone to the next world I fear. Took her just a few years ago, but she lived a happy life and went surrounded by myself and her children."

The marauder smiled sadly at that, but said, "I am sorry to hear that mips, I loved tips. She made the best dog biscuits."

"A recipe shared before she passed with our oldest daughter." The house elf motioned to another elf that looked young and a little like winky that Harry had met in fourth year. That crazy elf though was a bag of cats he never wanted to cross paths with again.

Dumbledore smiled patiently at them all, "Forgive us, but we must power the wards quickly, Mips, can you take us to the stones?"

The old elf smiled instantly, "Ah Master Brian, of course come this way."

Harry wasn't sure why the elf referred to Dumbledore by his middle name, but didn't question it as he followed the elf and two wizards to the middle of the house where Mips took them into a small room surrounded

by books, and pointed to a nearby bookshelf, "Young Harry go place your ring on Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, and a small room should be revealed where you may power our protections back to life." Harry couldn't help but notice how sophisticated and intelligent this elf sounded compared to Dobby, and wondered if Dobby was just so mistreated that he didn't know proper English or such. Harry however did as he was told and placed his ring up to an old textbook, and the book shelf folded in on itself and gave a small passage way to a room with a dully lit green stone.

Dumbledore swept into the room before Harry could even check it out and said, "Watch carefully Harry."

Dumbledore took two of the three stones presented in the triangle on separate stands, and began breathing deeply, "Make sure you only do this while you are perfectly calm. The wards will react to your magic, and the emotion it feels. Once you feel a slight tingle in your body start saying spells quietly. Any that you wish. I caution you against saying spells that are dark magic, but it will power your wards if that is what you wished. It is merely going to take the magic from your core that you would cast these spells with and power the wards like so, protego, expelliarmus, expulso, bombardia, expect patronum..."

Dumbledore said easily two dozen spells most of which Harry knew and with each spells the stone grew brighter, until they were emerald green like the color of his eyes, and when Dumbledore was done he let go the stones, and Harry noticed out the window that lights were flashing around the property, and a large dome was being created out of magic. Harry watched in awe, and Dumbledore said, "Now you try the last stone, and see how you do. This old man is rather drained, but I still have energy to fight in case of emergencies."

Harry nodded and stepped forward repeating the process that Dumbledore did, however he used expect patronum half a dozen times, and each time it was clear that this caused the biggest flux of power to the wards, and wondered what would happen if he only used this spell to power another home.

It only took a moment to finish, and when he did he saw Dumbledore looking outside, "I feel them. They are as powerful as ever before."

Sirius nodded at the old man, "Thank you Dumbledore for your help. I am sure they are more powerful since you did them yourself."

The man merely smiled, "I did say I was here to help. Now Harry, would you like to place the Fidelius charm on the grounds?"

Thinking for a moment he shook his head, "Yes, but not today. Possibly not even before summer, but one day yes."

Dumbledore nodded, and did not attempt to voice his opinion, "Well you two gentlemen have lots to do, and lots to learn about the grounds. I am sure you are in capable hands with the house elves and Sirius who knows his way around. I will bid you two good day."

As the headmaster began to exit the room Harry called out, "Wait Headmaster..." the man stopped and turned while Harry continued, "I don't know if I will fully forgive you for what you have done, or perhaps what you haven't done, but thank you for what you did today. I would still like for us to be friends one day."

The old wizard seemed to look through him as he said, "My boy I am but an old man, and I have made many mistakes, and I fear some of my worse one's will have been involving you. I hope you will find it in your heart to forgive me one day, and would very much like to be friends as you said."

Harry nodded to the man, and he tipped his hat, and walked out of site,

and a few moments later he heard a pop indicating the man was gone.

10. New Years

Chapter 10

When New Year's Eve was upon them the men dressed their best after receiving a formal invitation from Madame Bones that the dress wear was semi-formal, and that many other friendly Lords and Ladies would be attending the party.

This made Harry and Sirius go buy new outfits for the occasion and get neatly trimmed up, and shaved to make it all look presentable. Ron and Hermione had both been invited by the Bones family, as had quite a few members of the DA Susan explained briefly in a letter he had received that morning, and the boy was greatly looking forward to the event, that he knew could very well change his life. At least if he listened to anything Sirius Black said.

The two were walking through the wards side by side in accompany with one another when Sirius said, "Relax Harry I think your beginning to sweat. I haven't seen a man get this nervous over a red head since your dad, and before him, never!"

Remus was in tow with the men when he grinned, "I will never forget how pale looked when he came back from asking Lily to be his girlfriend the first time."

Harry was only recently getting used to the story of knowing that his mum had rejected James Potter well over a dozen times before accepting his invitation to go on a date, and still couldn't believe they didn't have the golden romance like people had told him!

Sirius cracked a laugh at the memory, "We can say what we want about old Prongs, but the man was determined, and he was loyal."

The three held a moment of silence as they approached the main door,

where Sirius insisted they entered like proper gentlemen, and not through the floo which was a wizard's rudeness sometimes.

Looking at Bones Manor from the outside Harry realized the massive size of the home, and wondered just why if this was a wizarding home the place even had a doorbell, which Sirius rang to see if anyone would be waiting at the door, "That will be five sickles Mooney old chap, I told you no wizard or witch waits at the door for their guest anymore, its always by the fireplace!"

It wasn't long before a striking woman whom Harry did not recognize at first opened the door, "Harry!"

The woman slowly walked over to the young man and embraced him tightly, and for the life of him he couldn't think of an intelligent response, much less his first name. Susan was wearing a short silver dress that hugged her body quite nicely, and showed off everything the girl was blessed with. From her nicely tanned legs, to her widening hips, to her ever-growing bust line that made many boys at Hogwarts drool.

While Harry remained speechless, Sirius saved the boy from embarrassment, "While my boy Harry here seems to need his tongue untied, I hope you don't mind that we dragged Remus Lupin with us, I know you two know each other, and I know your Aunt will remember him, but the poor old chap was sitting alone when we were leaving Potter Manor, and I begged him to come along with us, so he could spend my first New Year's Eve as a free man with me!"

Smiling at the two men to her right she responded with, "Of course! Auntie Amelia is always happy to have more guest in the house, especially because it feels kind of empty with just the two of us around most of the time! It is good to see you again Professor Lupin!"

Remus offered the girl his hand and said, "Please just Remus or Mooney

will do. I am no longer your professor, and now that I am entering your home, I insist that we keep it simple!"

The girl laughed, "I think I am familiar with your nickname Mooney, so that will do nicely for me!"

The two Marauders both gave the boy a surprised glance that he had shared that story with the girl, and he turned a bit red, "It may have come up once!"

This caused the men to throw their shoulders back and laugh heartily, and Susan escorted the three inside. It was three hours to the New Year, and most of the guest at Bones Manor had already arrived, including like Susan promised many of the DA members. Among the notable people were Neville, and Hannah who seemed to be getting cozy in the corner when he walked in. When the two Gryffindor boys made eye contact however they went towards each other at once. As the boy approached Harry noticed he had several small cuts on his face, and a large bruise on his neck, "I was hoping I would catch you here tonight Harry. You have had a busy holiday it seems!"

Grinning at the boy he smiled, "I had some help, but yeah it has been busy, and great! How about you? From the look of those marks, it looked like you came across something that didn't like you!"

This caused the boy's face to nearly split in two, "That was my Uncle Algie, he came into Christmas this year and began bagging on me like he usually does. He then started on Gran, so I told him to shut his mouth. He didn't like my disrespect, so he stood up to teach me a lesson, and we dueled. He got me a couple of good times, but I taught him to respect me for it."

Harry laughed a bit at the boy's crazy family saying, "Well I am glad you are able to use some of what I am teaching to you guys!"

A voice came from behind him that sounded stern and almost like a certain Transfiguration professor at Hogwarts, "The boy is being modest. What he didn't tell you was that his Uncle is an Unspeakable, and one of the best duelist in our family, which given its law enforcement history is saying something. Whatever you are doing Potter keep it up. You have the full support of House Longbottom, and I am glad someone in that school is standing up to things."

Scratching the back of his head with a bit of embarrassment the boy said, "Thank you Madame Longbottom, I am just doing what I can. It's not much, but these are dangerous times we live in."

The women raised her a glass a bit to him, "That they are Mr. Potter. That they are. I won't bother you kids any longer, but I just wanted to congratulate you. If you can teach my nephew the art of dueling, and self-defense, then perhaps you have a higher calling in teaching. Have a good evening."

The teenagers said their goodbyes to the older lady, and circled up talking about their holidays and plans. At some point, Antony Goldstein, Hermione, and Ron showed up, which made their circle even bigger. It kept growing until eleven, where it was almost half the DA!"

Susan and Harry spaced out from the group at some point as the red head could tell he was getting overwhelmed. She decided to take him down to the grounds for a bit for some fresh air, and some personal one on one time together, "It is a beautiful night, if not a bit cold."

Noticing for the first time that the girl was a little bear in her clothes, he quickly removed his jacket without word, and wrapped it around the girl carefully, "Sorry I didn't even think about how cold it must be in that outfit!"

The girl laughed a bit, "Well you know sometimes a girl has to dress to

impress, and it can get a little cold once you step away from the party."

Those words felt significant to Harry though he didn't comment on them, as they walked through the garden. The comfortable silence didn't go for long as Harry spoke, "I really do appreciate what you did for me Susan. No matter what you say, I don't think I will ever be able to repay you for that!"

The red head bumped his shoulder lightly with hers as they walked grinning, "It was the right thing to do Harry. You have been robbed of so much in this life, and the fact that I was given a chance to help you and make a difference was important to me. You give so much to help the kids back at school, and I know most of them in a heartbeat would give up just about anything to you if you asked for it. We all feel a little indebted to you."

Shaking his head, "Well you definitely shouldn't, you have done more for me than literally anyone has in my whole life, and we have only been speaking for two months."

"Don't you think that is a shame too?"

Raising his eyebrows, a bit he asked, "What do you mean?"

The girl stopped and faced him, and began nervously twirling her hair, "I don't know, I just feel like we have hit off pretty well these past few months. We made a hell of a team with this whole scheme we through together too. We had everyone fooled, and we put that together in one night. Imagine what we could have done together had we been friends all this time."

The boy offered his arm in a fake arrogance, "Care to take over the world mi'lady?"

The girl laughed at his outrageous suggestion, but took his arm none the less as they continued to walk through the courtyard, "I guess when we

go back to school we can tell everyone we broke up. It was friendly, and that it was clean. Not many people would ask questions after the first few days."

Without thinking Harry asked, "Yeah, but what if we didn't?"

This caused both of the teenagers to stop, and then she looked a little bewildered, "What do you mean Harry?"

At a loss for words Harry tried to reach for the right words, but couldn't find them. It was then he heard a voice call over his head, "Harry the New Years is starting, come up here and get Champagne glasses!"

Turning to look at the girl then his calling godfather, he decided to hold off the conversation for a bit and just offered his arm again, "Come on let's go celebrate the new year with some style!"

Smiling at his words the girl took his arm once again and they quickly made their way back to the manor. Upon arrival, most of the party had gathered around a conjured clock that looked a bit like the tower that stood in London, but a much smaller version. Sirius was standing with Madame Bones, and Remus, and he was holding his glass in preparation to speak when his godson and friend walked back into the room, "Now that were all here, I would like to say a few words as we only have a few minutes left in the New Years."

Everyone gave the former prisoner of Azkaban their attention as the clock ticked towards midnight, "This year I started as a man on the run from the law, and life itself, and today I stand before you a free man. In just five minutes we are going to enter a new year, and it is a very important one to me, and the people I call family."

Harry watched his godfather speak carefully, and tried to analyze every word he said, "Though I may be a free man, I know dark times are ahead, but the people in this room, tonight, have reminded me just why we all

fight for the light. Why we as people, friends, and family, fight for one another. Many changes are coming, and House Bones, and House Black, are going to take them together. I hope in time, many of you will stand with us, because a fight is coming, and I know many of us lost a lot in the last war, in fact some of us lost it all, but we must stand together, if we want to save it all this time."

The clock showed one minute left and he held his glass in the air, "A toast to the new year, to peace, to family, and to everlasting alliances, for without those things, I would not have a reason for tomorrow! To 1996 Ladies and gentlemen!"

Many people called back the toast, and Harry hugged his Godfather, but then he turned to the red head who has had his attention the whole night. A countdown was going on in the background, but he wasn't processing it. The words Sirius had just spoken rang in his ears, and he knew they were true.

As he approached Susan, something inside him clicked, and he grabbed the girl, and gently brought her closer to him, as he softly placed his lips against hers. He heard the cheers behind him, and he wasn't sure if it was the New Year, or people were happy to see young people kissing, but either way it was over his head.

Harry felt something he had never felt before tug inside him during the short kiss. It wasn't anything huge, but it was intimate. It felt special. It was his first kiss. It was his first kiss, and it was on the first moment of a new year.

When the two separated, the girl blinked a few times, then said, "Was that why you didn't want to tell people we weren't split up?"

Nervously the boy pulled at his collar a bit, "Yeah, yeah it was."

This surprisingly made the girl smile, and she pulled him back in for

another soft kiss, and whispered back in his ear, "Yes, I think I agree then."

The young man's smile in this moment could have lit up a dark room, it could have blinded the dark lord, but instead it made the beautiful young women across from him smile just as large, because she had never seen such a look on his face before.

A stern clearing of the throat happened from behind them, and Harry turned to see the smiling face of Amelia Bones, "Mr. Potter, I hope I don't have to give you the usual threatening speech about how if you hurt my niece you will find yourself in the darkest corners of Azkaban?"

Harry chuckled nervously, "No ma'am, I have had my fair share of dementors in my life, and I don't fancy another casual run in with them, much less on a regular basis."

The women laughed lightly, "Good, you are welcome over here anytime, but I don't think I will be leaving you two alone all day anymore. Heaven only knows what I would have done in this empty manor with a boy here all day."

This made the two teens blush, and others who were listening nearby laugh. Thankfully Harry remembered a last piece of advice Harry had been given by Sirius and asked, "Will you go on a date with me before we go back to Hogwarts?"

The girl looked surprised at the question, but then smiled, "I am sure I can fit you in my schedule Mr. Potter, just when would you like to do this certain date?"

"How about Tomorrow, I can pick you up here, and we can go out and do something fun."

Giving the boy a teasing smile she said, "What kind of fun did you have in mind Potter? From what I have seen of your life, we might have two

very different definitions."

"I think I might just surprise you then. I don't get to surprise people very often for something good, ya know?"

"Then I very much look forward to tomorrow night, and our evening together."

Feeling lucky and in the moment, he laughed, "Let's take it one day at a time then from here? I know things can get shaky back at Hogwarts, so let's do it right while we can?"

"That sounds wonderful, but don't forget I still want to know a few things about you! I do believe we have two more years of memories to go through sometime. When you're ready."

Harry forced a bit of a smile at that, "I know, and a promise is a promise!"

The music in the background was starting again now that people were done wishing each other a happy new year, and Susan dragged Harry out to the dance floor saying, "If you're going to be my boyfriend you're going to have to learn how to dance with me, and handle me. I am also a bit of a partier, but for you I don't think that will be a bad thing at all."

She whispered the last part in his ear, and the two danced with the other people on the floor. It was mostly the younger crowd, but Sirius had guided Amelia on to the floor at one point, and kicked it back for a while. Harry wasn't sure what this new year would bring, but if this was any indication, then it was going to be the best year of his life.

11. Interruptions

Chapter 11

The days that followed were wonderful to Harry. New Year's Day the men slept in extremely hung over, because after the party they had come home, and 'made Harry a man' as far as drinking went. There was some

vomiting, and a lot of laughing on behalf of the Marauder men. Which meant when they work up that day hungover to hell, they spent a lot of time just lounging around, and not going anywhere.

The day after New Year's was the date that Harry had planned with Susan, and with the Marauder men help they planned something pretty fun, and what they all thought would be safe.

As planned Harry, had arrived at Bones Manor at 7PM sharp, and was dressed in casual muggle clothes, as he had instructed Susan to do as well. Like Sirius instructed him however he did not arrive at the floo, but at the front door with flowers in hand.

Ringling the doorbell nervously, a regal looking woman answered the door with her monocle in staring down at the boy, "I see you arrived just in time Mr. Potter. I hope you can keep up your streak through the night as being a gentleman."

Bowing to the lady slightly he said, "I will do my best Madame Bones. Is Susan ready?"

Laughing lightly the woman gestured for him to come inside, "Not quite, but if you aren't prepared to wait on the woman, you don't deserve her in the first place."

Smiling at the gesture, and the welcome he responded with, "I don't mind waiting, I like to think myself pretty patient."

"From what I hear you have done with the students of Hogwarts so it must be at least partially true." The woman said with a hint of respect.

"Dueling and dating ma'am are two very different things." Harry answered honestly.

The woman nodded, and went silent for a few moments then said, "I won't forget that you saved Susan's life at the Ministry the other day. The fact that someone else died in her place made it even more real, and all

the more horrifying. I trust that since I am allowing you to take my niece on this date that you will be keeping her safe?"

"I understand your concern Madame Bones, as did Sirius, so we decided to delve into the Muggle World for the night, in order to avoid wizarding affairs."

The women smiled at that, "Brilliant mind you and your Godfather must have, because that is precisely what I was going to suggest. I had forgotten that you had grown up in the muggle world, and might know some of the best things to do."

"I don't know about all that, but I am going to try and show Susan a good time." He answered avoiding the fact that he had only heard about the great things of the muggle world, seeing as that the Dursleys never allowed him to go anywhere without them.

It was at that point that a young women's voice came from behind the hall, "I am sure it will be fine Auntie if you are done giving my boyfriend the fifth degree."

Turning to the girl to face her he was once again impressed with her choice of outfits, and it wasn't because of the pretty red color of her skirt, "You look beautiful Susan, I brought these for you, but we will be moving a lot tonight, so I suggest leaving them here."

Looking intrigued by his words she nodded her head, and ran to put them in water, it was then he turned to the head of Department of Magical Law Enforcement, "I will protect her with my life, I hope you know that. I have been trained well by my experiences, and I don't know if I have a talent in the world at anything, but escaping bad situations relatively unscathed is quite the niche. I promise to bring her back in one piece, by whatever time you wish her to return."

Understanding the underlying question, she responded, "Midnight Mr.

Potter, not a moment later. If that clock rings 1201, I am sure you will not like the consequences."

Gulping slightly, he nodded, while Susan arrived back in the entry way exclaiming, "Alright I am ready to go."

Smiling at the beautiful girl again he responded with, "Then let's be off. Thank you again Madame Bones for letting us do this. I give you my last word of being absolutely safe."

With that the two were off walking onto the Bones property across the ward scheme to arrive at the main road when she asked, "Are we taking the night bus Harry?"

Smiling at the girl he pulled his wand out and gently waved it in front of him as a shining black motor bike appeared before them, "We are actually going by land. If you are comfortable with it, if not then yes I can call the night bus."

The girl gaped in awe at the bike in front of them, "But Harry we are thirty minutes from the nearest muggle town!"

"Does it make you nervous? The bike flies, as it is magical in nature, but if you don't feel comfortable with the fifteen-minute ride, then that is really okay."

"Is it safe?"

Harry nodded, "Completely. Unless we are blasted out of the sky, but in that case I was given emergency portkeys, so if we are attacked, we can bail on the bike."

He showed her the two shoe strings that he was holding in his coat pocket, and she nervously stepped towards the bike, "If this is a part of your plan, then I guess I will go with it!"

Smiling he helped her onto the bike and then mounted it himself saying, "Hold on tight. We have quite some distance to travel, and I don't want to

perform any dives after you today."

"Maybe the second date then?" The girl joked.

"Maybe!" Harry joked back.

With that he started the bike, and with the roar of an engine, he slowly started moving across the nearby dirt road, and after some time on the ground he asked, "Ready to fly?"

The charms on the bike were quite sophisticated. It had notice me not charms, it had anti wind charms, and many heating charms, direction charms, balance charms, and charms he had never heard of. When the girl squeezed him tightly indicating she was ready he hit a couple of switches that Sirius had very specifically shown him, and they were off to the skies.

The girl yelled a bit in joy, and in fear, but the dominant emotion seemed to be exhilarated. After a moment, she screamed behind him, "How long have you been able to fly this thing?"

"About 24 hours!" He smiled at her clear surprise, but didn't say anything more about it.

They were in the air for about fifteen minutes, and Harry could start seeing the city lights, so he took the bike down to where a part of paved road started, and avoided muggle traffic as he landed very softly, "We are just a few minutes from our first stop, but I will ask how did I do?"

Keeping her arms wrapped tightly around him she kissed him on the cheek, "Well I didn't fall off and die, so that is a good thing!"

Nodding in agreement at the thought he then asked, "So what do you think, dinner and dancing, or dancing then dinner?"

Surprised at his proposition she asked, "We are dancing again tonight?"

Shrugging his shoulders, "It seemed like you really liked it the other night, so I had thought it would be fun. Good time to get to know each

other socially instead of personally like how we started. We can get dinner at a nicer place first, or we can eat some food at our dancing destination. How does it sound?"

Laughing the red head said, "I am glad I got to you before the other Hufflepuff girls did, if they knew you liked to party, I would probably have to beat them away with a beater's bat! Let's go straight to the dancing, and just eat there. I am always ready for the party atmosphere!"

Glad she liked the idea he went straight to the club that Sirius had told him about, and parked in the specified areas, which allowed them to dismount the bike. They talked casually until they walked into side to blasting music. Harry had to pay a cover charge upon entrance, but the exchange rate at Gringotts that day was particularly generous, so he didn't mind giving up the cash.

The music was bumping as was the party. It was already dark outside, and it was clear the youth of the town had already arrived in force. Susan was clearly feeling her dancing feet coming to life, and immediately dragged him onto the floor after they got showed to where would sit.

The dancing was some type of electronic funk, and Harry had never heard anything like it. Susan though was quickly getting into it bouncing on the balls of her feet, making her heels barely touch the ground. The teens were getting rowdy, but it was nothing like when a few minutes into the song the song stopped, and then an explosion of music happened, which caused most of the people to lose their minds, and he could faintly hear a happy giggle that made his heart soar.

The dancing ranged from the slow mellow toned beat, to the complete raging party atmosphere that was making some girls to drop low, and rub themselves against their men. The place was awesome, and Harry was really glad his godfather had told him about it. Susan seemed to be

having the time of her life, and was begging to come back to the place by the end of the night. As Harry had watched how the girl moved her body to some of the songs, he quickly agreed to it, and helped her out the door.

The two were walking side by side holding hands towards the motorcycle parked nearby when Harry felt something poke into his back, "Don't move Potter, or it will be your last. The Dark Lord will be extremely grateful for my capture here tonight, and I am sure my men will be even more thrilled to have such a young beauty in their beds."

Going stiff beside him Susan froze as she glanced at the man who was wearing strange black pants, and a shirt that was partially open, she did however recognize him from the wanted posters as she whispered, "Fenrir Greyback."

The man leaned back and laughed, "That I am lass. It is good to know my name is still a household fear in the Wizarding World. I was just hoping to go out tonight to feed on some muggle scum, but who would have thought that I might find Potter and a whore out while I was at it."

Harry growled, "Greyback, I didn't know you ever gave your victims a chance. I am surprised you didn't just come up and bite us while you had the chance, or are you going soft for your master."

Susan stared at the boy in fear and awe that he was speaking so disrespectfully to man who had a wand in his back who was notorious for killing his victims most brutally. However, the man merely grinned, "The Dark Lord has offered a price so high on your head Potter that even I can respect that he wants you alive."

Laughing sarcastically Harry said, "Becoming the Dark Lords bitch must be such a harassment Greyback, you know I am sure he has enough followers kissing his arse, but I thought you were better than that."

At this the werewolf growled and spun the back around and lifted him off the ground roaring out, "Listen here boy, I will rip-"

Before he could say another word, he was blasted off his feet, and thrown backwards. The moment Harry's feet touched the ground, and his arms were free he pulled Susan close to him, and drew his wand screaming out, "Stupefy!"

The werewolf dodged the first curse, but Harry rained stunners down upon the man until he made contact and saw that the man had been downed. It had all happened so fast, by the time Susan had drawn her wand the man was unconscious. Turning to his girlfriend he asked, "Susan are you okay?"

He grabbed her gently and she answered quietly, "You handled him so quickly. But you used magic. The Ministry will have you expelled."

Harry grinned at that, "Not when I bring them enemy #1, you do happen to know much his bounty is these days?"

In awe the girl made him let go of her, "You used the situation to get his bounty? How could you put me in danger like that?"

Harry straightened up quickly at that shaking his head, "I didn't use the situation. Nor did I put you in danger on purpose. In fact, I actually kept his attention on me the whole time, while you still have your port key.

The only other thing I want to say on the matter is your adrenaline is still pumping, so I hope you didn't seriously just believe that I was going to put you in danger like that."

"But what about the bounty?"

"It was a joke to try and relieve some of the tension, now we need to get him out of here before more werewolves, death eaters, or the Dark Lord himself shows up."

Susan shocked, and sad that she had not thought out her accusation

merely nodded, and followed Harry as he kept his wand locked on the downed death eater. For good measure Harry stunned the man again, and walked over to him taking his wand, and snapping it, "That was for my uncle. Be lucky a lady is here with me, or I would do so much worse."

With that he offered his open hand to his date, "Take my hand, we are going back to my home. I will fly you back to Bones Manor by broom, or you may take the floo if you wish to go home right away."

She nodded not saying a word as she took his hand, and they felt the tug of a portkey whisk them away from the area.

When they landed, they landed to an alarm ringing throughout the house, and Harry immediately drew his wand commanding her to do the same, "Don't fire unless they do. Defend yourself, but don't attack yet."

Not understanding what was happening they heard two distinct pops nearby and a man barked out, "What were the words said in front of Hogwarts in June of 1993 from Sirius Orion Black."

"You offered me a chance to live with you. If I wanted to get away from my aunt and uncle. You also turned into your animagus form to save us from Mooney's furry little problem."

The man stepped forward and then gasped when he saw the body that was on the floor, "That's Fenrir Greyback!"

The man that had stepped forward was easily identified as Sirius Black himself, while the other man stepped forward, "That's impossible."

This man was Remus Lupin, and he was as pale as a ghost, "He held Susan and I at wand point in the parking lot of the muggle club. He picked me up and I blasted him off his feet with a wandless blasting curse. He was so surprised that he didn't even have a chance to duel with me. We came straight home once we grabbed him, do we have a notice from the Ministry yet?"

Sirius shook his head, "Nothing here pup, but this is incredible, you captured the most notorious werewolf in the world, this could very well be the cure to Remus' affliction if we kill this man now."

Before either man could point their wands at him Harry spoke sharply, "The niece of the head of DMLE is here with us tonight. We can't very well kill him in front of her. Besides we need to take him in alive if we are to prove my innocence."

Sirius said, "I say we hold him here then for 24 hours, and if we don't get a notice we take him out front and set the bastard on fire."

Surprised by the hostility of the men in the room Susan was silent. Harry however turned her citing, "This man may have killed more people in the first war than Voldemort himself, not to mention the hundreds of lives he ruined by changing people. He also is the reason that Remus is a werewolf, bit him when he was eight years old."

Remus spat, "And I have hoped for revenge ever since I was a boy."

Susan spoke timidly, "We should call my aunt and have him arrested. No matter what you do to him, it won't be worse than the dementors kiss.

Plus, Harry would stand to gain a lot of money from the bounty. It would also give my aunt a chance to interrogate him possibly to get information about Voldemort or his pack."

The men all looked back and forth between each other, and for a moment Susan wondered if she was about to have her mind wiped of the evening.

Harry spoke softly, "Killing him now wouldn't be right. He has been beaten. He had no wand, and no means of defending himself. We would just be killing prisoners, and then we are no better than them. I am sorry Remus I shouldn't even have bothered stunning him, the curse that came from my wand should have been green instead of red, but Susan is right, we must turn him in. It could do too much for our side."

"And if he escapes from Azkaban like the rest of them?" Remus asked quite dangerously.

Susan shook her head, "Won't happen. No one would come for him. He is too dangerous, and he will be held in a cell at the Ministry. Judging by his list of crimes on the #1 most wanted list I am guessing he will be given the death penalty pretty much immediately. His trial would be nothing, but a formality."

"You think he would be thrown in the veil?" Remus asked skeptically.

"I certainly think it is a possibility. With his crime record. People have gone in for a whole lot less."

Questioningly Harry asked, "What is the veil?"

Sirius explained, "It is supposed to be a doorway to death. It is rumored to take people to other dimensions or wipe them off the face of the Earth. No one knows for sure, but anyone who goes through has certainly never come back."

Feeling cold as he learned about this death penalty Harry asked, "Where is it?"

"The department of Mysteries, usually guarded by the unspeakables."

Susan answered.

Harry sighed. If we kill this unarmed man now we would be due to answer for the crime. We can't ask Susan to lie to her aunt, and we can't wipe her mind because she has seen too much. Then we are no better than them."

Taking a sigh of relief at hearing her boyfriend's words, she also understood that her fears were very real possibilities when she entered this room.

Sirius looked back and forth between the two teenagers then nodded his head simply, "I will fire call Amelia right now. Bring her down here. I

will also call for Kingsley, he is a friend, and I know he will help us out with the arrest, and that way your aunt doesn't have to take this scum in alone. If anyone could handle this man it would be Kingsley."

With that he told the three remaining in the room to kill the man if he rose to his feet, and not to give him a chance. Remus gave a curt nod, while the two teenagers didn't say a word. When Sirius left the room, Remus asked gently, "Well before this happened how did you two's first date go?"

Harry was about to answer with a quiet negative response, but Susan beat him to it, "It was such a good time. Harry and I danced most the night away at this little muggle club. The food was great, the people were great, and the music was-"

Remus gave the girl a smile, "Great?"

"Better than great! It was unlike any thing I ever heard!" She exclaimed happily.

Recalling the hours before Harry was really warm on the inside looking back at the moments, and suddenly very angry that Greyback had ruined a perfectly beautiful first date with his now very real girlfriend.

Bravely Harry said, "Well on a first date we capture the most wanted known felon in all of England, what should we do for our second?"

The question was clear to Sirius and Remus, but Harry was very unsure of what the answer may be. The girl looked at the man on the floor in front of her who was out cold, then back at the boy in front of her, "I think we should hit up the Dark Lord next! If next time you let me draw my wand on our enemy I think the second date will be very successful."

Remus grinned, as did Harry at the girl's boldness. At this moment, Amelia Bones came storming into the room wand drawn, "My Gods." Staring at the frozen unconscious body on the ground she asked, "Is

everyone alright? St. Mungos is just a floo call away."

Harry shook his head, "We were lucky. Greyback let his arrogance get the better of him, and I hope it will cost him everything for it. I made sure he didn't lay a hand on Susan."

The head of DMLE turned to face her niece, but the girl was nodding her confirmation, "It's true, Harry handled the beast beautifully. One wandless blasting charm, and several stunners. Greyback didn't even have the chance to raise his wand."

Amelia Bones immediately casted several binding charms on the man, including creating magical resistant handcuffs. Once she had the man secured Kingsley Shacklebolt walked into the room, "You have a prisoner for me to take in Madame Bones?"

The women snapped up, "I didn't call for you Shacklebolt?"

Sirius stepped back into the room, "I called for him actually Amelia. I didn't think you should take this monster in alone."

The women fixed the Marauder with a glare before softening up a bit, "Very well. Shacklebolt, make sure this one gets processed properly, and is held at the highest security clearance in the Ministry, with five aurors on him always. His trial will be tomorrow, and I want Potters bounty, as soon as possible. Congratulations Mr. Potter, you just apprehended arguably the most dangerous werewolf since Lyacon himself. On behalf of the Ministry I would like to thank you for your capture. I must also offer my thanks for keeping your word and keeping my niece safe. It is 1130, so I hope you don't mind me stealing your date for the night, as I take her home."

Harry shook his head, "Of course, thank you for assuring safe passage to her, and your swift arrival of getting rid of the scum in my family's home. I believe all of our wands were itching to purge the trash."

The women seemed surprised by the boy's hostility, but looked to Remus Lupin, and seemed to remember something from the past, while nodding, "Of course. Susan I will give you five minutes to say goodnight to your date. Then I expect you to go straight home. Let's go Kinglsey, we have paperwork to file."

With that the prisoner was levitated out of the room, with the rest of the adults in tow. Harry was just beginning to prepare an apology to the red head, but before he could say a word, her lips were on his in a heartbeat. The moment lasted what definitely could have been longer than the five minutes Madame Bones demanded, but he couldn't really find himself to care. When the kiss separated, she whispered into his ear, "I have never seen something so attractive as to watch a young man protect his women with whatever it took. Thank you for keeping me safe tonight. Goodnight Harry."

With that the girl spun out of the room, and Harry's mind was in the clouds. Thinking overall the night had been great, and anxiously awaited to be back in his girlfriend's presence on the train in just two short days.

12. Preparing For a Storm

Chapter 12

The day after Greybacks trial the kids were all back on the train, and Harry was ten thousand galleons richer. The trial had been nothing short of a ridiculous formality, where the auror department came in with an overwhelming list of evidence, and witnesses, that permitted them to instill the death penalty on the monster.

Of course, it was all over the daily prophet, that Harry had been trying to eliminate all competition of the most dangerous dark wizard, and that he had seduced young and naive Susan Bones into the muggle world, where he intended to have his way with her. This of course brought the outrage

from Susan on the train ride to Hogwarts as she had her feet on Harry's lap in the compartment with Neville, Hannah, Ron, and Hermione, "I can't believe they said you seduced me! Those stupid imbeciles. I am not some common slut that follows untrustworthy wizards out into the muggle world where people can't see me. They didn't even mention that we were dating!"

Harry shrugged, "That's probably for the best. It is our benefit that the rest of the wizarding world may see you as a victim, it could make you less of a target."

Susan was about to argue, but Hermione interjected, "He is right you know Susan. For whatever reason Harry, has been quite the target, or magnet to Voldemort, and his death eaters. With Malfoy, and the Crouch problem, along with Quirrel, I think the less the public knows about your relationship the better."

Hannah countered with, "But if the Hogwarts rumor mill is still as legendary as it always has been then most of the students already know, and anyone who shouldn't know from Slytherin or Ravenclaw has probably already told their parents. You can't protect her from this forever."

At this Hermione shot Harry a dirty look, but before he could say anything Susan interjected, "I knew what I was signing up for Hermione. Besides, what is the difference between you and I, you are always at Harry's side, and all of Hogwarts knows that. So, by extension why aren't you a target?"

Hermione gave the girl a soft smile before responding, "That may be true, but I have a reason to fight. I know what would happen to people like me, Muggleborns, if the Dark Lord took power, or if any death eater took power. I stand with Harry, just like I stand for the cause. I always have,

and I always will. I have faced these dangers with Harry-

"I have too now, when Greyback tried to rip our throats out. These maniacs killed my parents Hermione, I understand why you are doing these things, I just ask that you understand why I am doing it. I like Harry, and I will not let his beliefs or mine be a reason we can't be together. If things don't work out, it won't be because someone told us we couldn't be together."

Neville clapped his hands together, "Here here."

The girl beamed at the shy Gryffindor who was gaining more confidence by the day. Ron spoke up at this point, "I just hope you don't freak out at the end of the year when things go to hell."

The other three in the cabin all looked at Ron in confusion, while Harry flinched, and Hermione looked pained. Susan then turned to Harry to ask him directly, "What does he mean Harry?"

Hermione came to Harry's rescue at this saying, "Its somewhat of a rumor, and a fact. Some say it's a curse in our house, but we don't know for sure. But every year at the end something bad happens. First year it was Quirrel, second year it was the chamber of secrets, third year it was Professor Lupin, and Sirius, then last year Voldemort returned at the end of the Triwizard Tournament. If History repeats itself then something bad will happen this year. There is even a betting pool going on in the house. Some are hoping that Harry leads the school in a rebellion against Umbridge and the Ministry."

Harry stared at Hermione in shock, "I haven't heard that rumor! That's ridiculous! Besides Dumbledore won't let this all fall that far down. He had to maintain his control for the greater good. He won't give that up, and I won't lead people against him."

Trying to lighten the mood Neville asked, "Do you think I might be a

trivia question one day? Who stood in the way of the Golden Trio as they marched to defeat the Dark Lord in their first year?"

Grinning next to him Hannah said, "I would like to solve the puzzle! Fifty points towards the answer of who is Neville Longbottom!"

Everyone laughed at that lightly, but Susan said with a frown, "Aren't you worried then about what happens at the end of the year?"

Harry shrugged, "I believe we make our own destinies, and I don't believe in divination so I don't see a reason to stress out over that. We have six months till we approach that bridge, and we have much bigger problems that are looking us in the face these days. Umbridge, the DA, Dumbleodre, Death Eaters, Voldemort. I think we can safely say that this curse it towards the bottom of my stress list right now."

With that said the compartment door to the room slid open, and an arrogant voice entered the room, "Must be feeling pretty high and mighty these days Potter. Shagging up with blood traitors, becoming friends with idiots, and capturing the big bad wolf."

Before any of them could do anything, Neville jumped to his feet wand in hand, "Take it back Malfoy."

The rest of the group was so surprised by Neville's launch out of his chairs they didn't even move, "Careful Longbottom are you sure your holding the right end of your wand."

Growling back, "Care to find out. One word and you will hit the ground, and be left outside of our compartment for the rest of the ride."

Draco looked behind him to see his two goons were watching carefully to see if the boy would do anything or given them a command. Draco merely held his hands in the air in hope of placating the angry boy, "I only meant to pass a message onto Potter. Now get that wand out of my face."

Speaking quickly enough Neville responded with, "Harry doesn't care what you have to say, neither do we. Now get, before I blast you out of here."

"That is no way to speak to a prefect Longbottom."

Harry groaned, "Speak your mind Malfoy then get out. Neville don't lower your wand."

Draco looked over to Harry speaking angrily, "Call your dog off Potter, I won't speak under this threat."

"Then get out Malfoy. We don't want whatever you are trying to sell."

Hermione said.

"Fine, but you will regret this-"

"My father will hear about it, yes we know. We hear it every year, bugger off." Ron said in annoyance.

With that Neville stepped back and slammed the compartment door shut, while Hannah said, "Well done Neville."

Harry smiled at the boy who was gaining his confidence, "I didn't get to hit him though for insulting my ladies honor!"

Susan gave the boy a soft wink, "I do feel rather tainted with the insult still ringing in my ear."

Neville not getting the girls innuendo said, "I can drag him back here if you want Harry?"

Grinning at his friend he shook it off, "No don't worry Neville. But that was fast wand work. We are going to keep working through the semester, but loved your confidence. That can be half the fight sometimes."

The others also congratulated Neville, and began taking turns changing into their robes. The arrival at Hogsmeade allowed the teenagers to exit the train, and find their horse drawn carriage back to the castle. This time around Harry was not as surprised to see the thestrals, but sad to

hear the words that came from his girlfriend, "What are they?"

Most of the group took a moment to comprehend what Susan had asked, it did not make the headlines that Harry had saved her life, nor had they mentioned it to the others, "They're thestrals Sue. They have been kind to me in my few encounters with them, but you can only see them...if you have seen death."

Susan paled a bit, and the others all raised their eyebrows, while Ron asked, "I thought you didn't kill Greyback? I heard he was being thrown through the veil."

Harry sighed, "A story for later guys. Greyback is as of today, still unfortunately alive, but we can discuss it more later. Let's get up the castle."

The group all still looked partially confused, but none raised anymore questions as the squad boarded onto thestral drawn carriages.

Harry held Susan closely to him, as she was clearly remembering that her life had flashed before her eyes, and the green-eyed boy had felt a little guilty. Both times she had almost been killed were because of him, and he hoped that his romantic life at Hogwarts wasn't going to cost this girl her life.

When the group entered the castle, it was to light chatter and amusing tales of other's holidays. It wasn't until Harry saw Professor Umbridge that he remembered it was time to go back to hell. It was easy to forget with all the positive things going on in his life recently that things were still not going well on the Hogwarts front. Umbitch still ran the castle practically, and they were all still in constant danger of being expelled. Harry tried not focus on this as he let go of his girlfriend's hand with a kiss on the top of her head allowing her to join her housemates for the welcome back feast, and the start of the newest term. No speeches were

given, other than that Dumbledore welcomed the students, back and reminded them to remain vigilant despite dark wizard activity, with brief mentioning of the war criminal Fenrir Greyback instead of the Dark Lord. Many eyes went to Harry when this was mentioned. Rumors had circulated, but Amelia Bones had claimed that a citizen that wished to remain anonymous had captured Greyback by surprise, and that the only way this citizen was going to lose that right was if it was decided that they were going to give him or her an Order of Merlin.

However, no one knew for sure how Greyback had been apprehended, and Harry hoped that it was going to stay that way. He wouldn't lie to anyone, but he wasn't going to be forthwith with the information.

It wasn't long into the new term when the DA had been back in session, "I hope everyone had a productive holiday. As I am sure you have all heard mine was quite busy, but we can get to some of that later if people are more curious."

Some people smirked at that, and Harry himself figured just about everyone was interested, but he didn't want to take time out of the lesson, "Now normally we review our last lesson, but we will save more work on the patronus for later, mostly because I have taught you all I can on the matter. The rest will be up to you."

There was some disappointment at that, but Harry was ready for this, and smiled, "But with that being said, I think we have done as much as we can with the basics, and it is time to start working on something a bit more complicated. Ron, Hermione if you would please."

They had already gone over in private of what would happen next, and they had tried to prepare as best as they could, "Two on one dueling is very useful practice, but I want you to attempt something rather specific while doing this. I will demonstrate first."

Everyone cleared the middle of the room as the three duelists gave each other wry smirks, while Harry thought he would be more playful, "Come on Ronnikins I think I deserve some payback for some of the well placed comments you made about me and my lady. Or are you going to fidget your way out of it at let Hermione do the man's job."

This made both bristle, Ron for being called out, and Hermione for the sexist comment. Almost on cue they both started sending spells flying forward with marksmen level precision, however this is what Harry had hoped for as he brought up a reflective shield, and then began firing spread fire shots of magic. Two stunners at the same time, with almost perfection, but that wasn't enough to beat down his protege's. So, with that he followed it up a chain spell that was quite simple. It consisted of the reducto blasting charm, flipendo the knockback jinx, and then the disarming charm expelliarmus. This allowed him to take Hermione's wand, and then focus in on Ron, who was just at that moment preparing to fight back, but it was too late, once Harry focused on him. There was a smattering of applause once both of his friends had been disarmed, and Harry grinned at them, "Sorry guys that was a bit of personal vengeance for some comments I heard this morning. The goal of your training is to learn to stand up to two duelers, AND use your chain spells. This is the first time we have done something like this, so I would like to start with just the chain spells. We will over the next few weeks work our way up to what you just witnessed.

Now pick a target, and we will begin working on that exact chain I just did, it's one of the most basic, and easiest to master, but it is one of the most useful. Get to it."

With that Harry flicked his wand and felt a bit like Dumbeldore when targets around the room appeared. With the DA began at once.

Susan was watching her boyfriend with a smile on her face as he easily impressed the entire room with his casual display of his dueling prowess. To Harry it was clearly no big deal of what he had just done, but to the rest of the DA it was quite the display of power. She would never admit it, but she didn't have to when her best friend giggled beside her, "He is dead sexy when he does stuff like that!"

Susan turned and gave her best friend the stink eye, "Hannah you have your own hunk of a Gryffindor to make eyes at, don't you dare give mine two looks."

This made the girls burst into giggles as they prepared to attempt the chain spell with only a little success. After several attempts, Harry came by smirking, "Ms. Bones it seems you may need some tutoring."

The girl gave him a flirtatious grin, "I am sorry Professor Potter I am trying my absolute best."

With that he winked at the girl, and moved on so as not to take too much time of his lesson. It made Susan smile as he went to interact with some members of her house, giving them quick pointers, and most of them seeing instant progress.

This went on for over an hour, while Harry called the meeting to an end, "I gave us a little extra time, because I wanted to answer some questions about what happened over the holiday. Instead of feeding the rumors my friends and I have agreed perhaps it's time to be a little honest with everyone, and see how that one goes for us, instead of just letting the rumors fly to the point that I was under the imperious curse by Susan."

Some people laughed at this while Susan huffed having not been enthused by that particular rumor she had heard at dinner the night before, "Listen, without going into a lot of personal stuff it is true, that Susan and I managed to get my now father by magic Sirius Black a trial

and a chance at being a free man. We did some pretty underhanded stuff to make it happen, but it worked perfectly, and I owe Susan a great debt for giving me a chance at a family..."

This made some people smile, including all of Harry's friends, "Now I would rather you all not advertise this bit of information to much, but... I will confirm that Susan and I were the ones that apprehended Fenrir Greyback. He attacked us while we were out on a date, and I assure you we were lucky, I got the drop on him, and I did not do any incredible magic to do so. He was arrogant and I bested him with one blasting charm, and a ton of stunners. Which is part of why I wanted to focus so much on the basics in here. I didn't use anything a second year couldn't have used. All I used was a lot of trash talking, and a little bit of luck!"

Silence enveloped the room until Ernie McMillan asked quietly, "You mean you talked to trash to one of the most dangerous werewolves, and dark wizards of the century."

All eyes went back to Harry and he blushed a little bit, and Susan took pity on him, "It was pretty scary hearing Harry swear at the monster, but it was clear he knew exactly what he was doing."

This caused a roar of laughter to come from some of the boys, "Blimey Harry does nothing scare you!"

Harry merely grinned and grimaced at the implication, while Cho asked, "So was it true that Susan and yourself made up your relationship?"

The green-eyed boy was just about to answer that, but Susan merely stepped forward and took his hand, "Not in the slightest. We had a very pleasant and romantic holiday together, though we are still going to hold to our promise that we are leaving our relationship at the door each night we come in here."

Agreeing Harry spoke, "We ask everyone to do that for any developing

relationships in this room. We have noticed a few come up, and we ask that each night you leave them at the door. Don't forget about them, just don't let it affect the way we train in here."

Many people agreed to that easily, and Harry began dismissing the group, until it was just Susan and Harry again.

Susan was nervous, as she was preparing to make a request of Harry that she wasn't sure he was going to be very receptive of, "Harry, can I ask you for something? I know we agreed to leave our relationship out of the DA, but still feel like this needs to happen if we are going to be together."

Harry rose his eyebrows, "What is it Sue?"

Susan took a deep breath, "Twice I have almost been killed in your presence, and neither time was I even able to draw my wand. But what happens if next time I have too, and you really need another capable witch or wizard at your side. I don't want to be the witch that was killed in the first few spells and couldn't even raise her wand to defend her friends or family."

Harry looked at the girl deep into her eyes, as he pondered what she was asking, "Susan...I don't know if what you are asking for is a good idea.

You seem to pretty good for the average fifth year, and-"

Susan interrupted him gently, "But if I am going to be with you I can't just be the average fifth year. I need to at least stand out amongst you guys. Ron and Hermione both could wipe the floor with me, and I am sure at least a few others could as well, no more how decent I am with a wand."

Sighing deeply the boy scratched his head, "I don't know how to go about this Susan. I don't know if I am worth the trouble for you on this. You are right, you have almost been killed twice, and we have only been together for a few weeks. It's going to be worse to once Voldemort comes out in

the open."

The red-haired flame stepped right in his bubble saying aggressively, but quietly, "If you think I am coward Harry Potter you really don't know a thing about the Bones women, Hufflepuff, or me in general. Just because things are getting rough and ugly, doesn't mean I am going to lay down in die. In fact, I want to rise up, and become the capable witch that my family has produced, and if you won't help me to reach that potential I will find someone else who will. I want that person to be you Harry Potter, but don't think for a second that you are the only reason I will be targeted when You know who returns."

Taking a moment to collect his thoughts Harry nodded, "What you are asking for isn't easy. The training I underwent with Ron and Hermione was hard. My very life was depending on it last year in the tournament, and I had that to push me through every day. The DA is also taking lots of our spare time, and I don't know if we will have the amount of time I did last year for me to prepare you."

Susan disagreed, "I don't need to be as good as you Harry, I just need to hold my own, or to protect our backs if you are having to fight whatever is in front of us. Or give you an extra wand if we are both fighting a fight we are hopelessly outmatched in."

Understanding where the girl was coming from Harry finally nodded, "Okay. I will do everything in my power to help you Sue, but I don't know if you are going to like me if I push you to this."

Disagreeing she put a finger under his chin, "Or maybe I will find it really attractive that a young man is willing to go so far for a girl he still hardly knows."

Smiling at the girl, he said, "We will do everything we can then my lady, when would you like to start?"

The girl looked around at the empty room, and then smiled, "Right now!"

13. Valentine's Day

Chapter 13

The first month of the second term had gone splendidly, but it had also gone horribly on different fronts. As far as how happy Harry was he could easily say that he had never been happier. Umbridge had not attempted to give him the blood quill again now that she knew that Sirius Black was in regular contact with his godson, nor did she want to tangle with Amelia Bones now that her niece was dating the boy. However that did not prevent her from attempting to make Harry's life difficult. Each day she cracked the whip with new educational decrees that did make the DA members slightly nervous knowing that someone had to be leaking information, and there was no way Umbridge was just this good at guessing.

Several decrees had been passed about organizations being formed, and even about groups not being allowed to gather outside of the common room. She even managed to cancel a few Hogsmeade visits, but thankfully not all of them.

Susan's training had been coming around great. Harry did it with her in private as often as they could. He had not told everyone what they were doing, nor did he plan on it. As far as he was concerned it was their business, and he was fine if people were thinking that he was taking one of the most attractive girls in the school to a broom cupboard. Susan smacked him a couple of times when she caught him grinning about that rumor, but he was also rewarded at the end of many of their private lessons.

The girl was the type of loser that Harry had a deep respect for. Susan Bones was a very competitive witch, but he knew there were two types of

losers. One type would just be sore about losing, and not do anything to attempt to make the next match any better, but then there was another type who took it personally, and let the bitterness seep into their training allow them to push themselves harder and harder each time, and that was the type of loser Susan Bones was, and Harry loved it. Each time Harry struck her down, she would get up and insist they do it again.

A month had passed and Valentines was approaching quickly. It was the twelfth before Susan even brought up the day to Harry.

It was a cold February Friday night, while Harry and Susan were training privately after the DA lesson. Susan was doing fantastically, as her magic was finally starting to respond to her brain, and not just her hand motions and words. She had made a marked improvement that was almost as big as Neville's. Neville had definitely come the furthest, but Susan was quickly approaching Ron and Hermione and it had only been a month of Harry's private tutelage.

Susan was drinking a pepper up potion and wiping the sweat off her brow. It had been a tiring lesson, and Harry had finally gotten her to apply the chain spells in a full-length duel. She had even almost disarmed Harry, but unfortunately for the young red head he had seen it coming a mile away. Never the less the girl was quite encouraged by her success and felt on top of the world when he asked, "So what are we doing for Valentine's day?"

Harry looked up abruptly, "Valentine's day?"

Susan looked at the boy in surprise and carefully said, "Yes Harry, Valentine's day it's this Sunday."

Gulping a bit Harry said, "Can I be honest, and say that I have honestly never had Valentine's day with a girl before?"

It was clear there was a question in his voice, but Susan honestly didn't

know what to say, "Gee, Harry I don't really know what to say to that. I haven't exactly spent tons of Valentine's day with actual Valentine's, but you know it doesn't have to be a big deal. Of course, I do want to spend the day with you, and all that, but it doesn't have to be much beyond that."

Harry took on a very thoughtful facade, and then said, "I think we should spend it just the two of us, right?"

Susan gave the boy a pretty smile that made his heart beat a bit faster, "I would like that."

Harry nodded, "Then consider it done my lady. Maybe I can end up surprising you. Thank you for bringing it up though. I think I might have embarrassed myself pretty good had you not said something about it."

The red headed girl shrugged, "Your busy Harry, and the girls in Hufflepuff didn't want me to say anything to you figuring you had some kind of surprise, but something told me I shouldn't let it be a surprise just in case."

Smiling at the girl he called his, he responded, "Come on I should get you back to your common room, and I need to let our group no that we are unavailable this Sunday."

The couple took each other hands, and took a quick look over the Marauder's map as they marched down to the Hufflepuff common room, and Susan was just about to walk into her common room after a kiss goodnight when Harry stopped her for a moment, "I'm sorry for not being normal on this type of thing Sue. I really want this to work between us, so please if you feel there is something else I am not doing as your boyfriend that I should be doing please don't let it be quiet. Sirius had taught me a lot, but we still have a lot of time we need to spend together before I learn more about the fairer sex. I guess what I am trying to say

is, thank you for being patient with me."

Susan was shocked for a moment, but then gently cupped the boy's face, "Harry I know from what little you have told me, and what rumors have gone around the school that you didn't have the best life before Hogwarts, with the muggles. I also know from how little you talk about them and how excited you were to live with Sirius for a change that they probably didn't treat you very well. I am happy to help you with these things, and glad we can learn about some of this stuff together. You know that is kind of what being a young couple is all about so Auntie says. We learn stuff together, and we just live our lives to the fullest. No regrets, just fun nights, and great times that we spend together."

Harry smiled at that and leaned down and kissed her gently on the nose, "Brilliant witch your aunt is! Goodnight Susan."

"Goodnight Harry."

Two days had passed and the day of love had finally arrived. It was a day that many young witches around the castle had high hopes for. One of those girls was Susan Bones. It was clear that she may not have been in for the greatest day, but she had high hopes that she would get some personal alone time with her boyfriend and they could enjoy the perks of being young and together. She had no idea that her boyfriend did not do anything half ass.

Harry Potter woke up Gryffindor tower with a smile on his face, and nerves in his stomach. After his conversation with Susan just a few nights before he had gotten in touch with his godfather, and began planning what he hoped would be quiet the romantic day for his girlfriend. He had hoped that she would be receiving her first surprise at any moment now. Said surprise had just been discovered by the certain red head as she rolled out of bed, and saw that the most beautiful flowers were found on

her bed side. They were an assortment of colorful lilies, and they seem to brighten as she stared at them. She noticed a card was on her bedside, and she quickly opened it,

Susan

Happy Valentine's Day! I hope you found these by your bedside first thing in the morning, and that my charm on the flowers worked well. You see while the flowers before you are not real, they are enchanted to be as beautiful as any real flower. They will change colors with the mood of our relationship, if you are happy with it, they will be a beautiful bright color, and the happier you are the brighter and livelier they should be. And of course, it does work both ways. Now I have prepared a series of surprises for you today, and hopefully I can make this day special to you. The first surprise lies in the flowers, hold the tip of your wand to them, and it should recognize your magical signature and give you my first gift. I'll see you at breakfast, and hope your housemates won't mind that I join you.

Hoping to see you soon

Harry

Susan quickly fumbled for her wand and taped one of the lilies, that bloomed out a silver charm bracelet, that had two cute charms on it. One was a snitch, that obviously represented Harry, and then there was a small little animal that was clearly a badger that represented her. She had to do her best not to squeal, as the boy had already blown her away, and she had yet to even see him. Her best friend was at her side in a moment clearly detecting the girliness that was going on. As she read the note, looked at the flowers, then at the bracelet the girl whistled lowly, "Damn Potter is good. Once this gets around the Hufflepuff house all the girls are going to be expecting something like this from their guys!" Susan grinned, "I wonder how he got the flowers up here. You don't think

he managed to do it himself, do you?"

Hannah at first looked skeptical, but then shrugged, "If it was anyone else I would say definitely not. But this is Harry Potter we are talking about, so I don't know. I guess he could've. I just don't bloody know how!"

Susan grinned, but then her smile changed, "Maybe I should wear something nicer today, if this is just the beginning of his surprises, then perhaps I should do a bit better."

Hannah shook her head, "No go with your plan Bones. It freezing ass cold outside! We can see what he is wearing at breakfast, and if he is pulling a Mr. Darcey then I will make up something that will allow you to come back to the common room and change!"

Susan nodded gratefully at her best friend and planned to do just that.

When the rest of Hufflepuff house rose, it was already going around the common room of what Harry did, and many were speculating how he did it. Some said he snuck in, some said he used the windows, some said he used some kind of advanced switching charm. Susan wasn't sure what the truth was, and wasn't entirely sure she would even attempt to figure it out. It would somehow make the moment less magical.

It wasn't long before most of the house went down to breakfast in groups as it usually did, and it when she got into the great hall she was very shortly joined by her boyfriend with a kiss on the cheek, "Morning my lady."

When he sat down there were immediately some whispers, but Harry ignored them and gave the girl a charming smile, "Did you get my surprise?"

It was clear he was a little anxious about the matter, so she quickly pacified him, "Yes Harry thank you so much. It was really sweet of you."

Susan took this moment to take a good look at him. Harry was looking

particularly handsome this morning as he was wearing a long-sleeved nice Black polo, that hugged his body rather tightly showing off all the muscle he had put on in his training and in quidditch, while also wearing a simple pair of nice jeans and nice dragon hide boots. It made the girls' heart do a little dance, as she too was wearing something rather cute, but simple at the same time. She was very content with having breakfast with him, and not having too much conversation.

It wasn't long before they heard a sickening giggle that interrupted their breakfast, "Good morning students."

It was clear she expected a response, but when none came she began speaking again, "Mr. Potter I must ask you to go back to your table."

Harry gave the women a surprised glance, "Really professor? Why is that?"

The women gave the boy a patronizing smile, "It is against school mandates to sit at other tables. Be glad I am in a good mood this morning and simply wish for you to move back to your table."

Harry shrugged, "It's actually not against school mandates professor. Will that be all?"

The green-eyed golden boy gave his girl a slight wink, and began attempting to re-strike up conversation with the people around him when Umbridge tried to continue the conversation with a slight giggle, "Funny Mr. Potter, you seem to think you know the rules better than me. Now please go back to your house table before I assign you a detention."

Now turning completely around to face the women he stood, "Professor Umbridge. I don't quite understand the problem this morning. I assure you it is nowhere in the school by laws that says I must sit at my own table. While I do not claim to know the school rules better than anyone, my best friend you see is considered the brightest witch of our age, and

has read Hogwarts History backwards and forwards many times as what she considers light reading, and she assured me last night that it is not actually required to sit at your own table except for 3 meals. Now Professor, it is Valentine's Day, and I have quite the special day planned for my Lady, and do not wish to be taken from her any longer."

Just as Umbridge was about to retort Professor Sprout came bustling by, "Good morning Puffs, and welcome to our table Mr. Potter, I am always happy to see new comers come sit at our table. Good morning Dolores. Shall we have a cup of tea before we enjoy our Sunday afternoon off."

Professor Umbridge looked very conflicted about what to do next, but then she bristled, "Mr. Potter should not be welcomed by you Pomona he is breaking school rules?"

The head of Hufflepuff house instantly looked alarmed and looked at Harry and his hands as if they were doing something inappropriate, when she saw they were firmly relaxed at his sides she shook her head, "I am afraid I don't see it Dolores, what rules is he breaking?"

"Sitting at the wrong house table!" Umbridge said in clear exasperation. Professor Sprout instantly took offense to this, "How dare you! Is my table not good enough to be visited by the other houses."

The Undersecretary the Ministry flinched, but then smiled at the clear misunderstanding, "I think you misunderstand Professor Sprout, Mr-" "Mr. Potter has been welcome to this table by my house, and his lovely girlfriend Ms. Bones. If he wishes to sit here this morning he can and he will. I ask that you not furtherly disturb my students and their guests breakfast."

The women looked prepared to argue some more, but she was getting glared at by the entire house of Hufflepuff now feeling that their house had been slighted due to the twisting of words that Professor Sprout had

done, "I still feel that we are misunderstanding each other Pomona, but I suppose we can discuss it in private over our morning tea. Good day to you children."

With that the women bustled off towards the table while Professor Sprout turned and winked at Harry and Susan and followed shortly after. Harry stared in astonishment of what happened then turned to the Puffs who were watching him, "Your head of house is totally wicked! Are you guys sure she wasn't a Slytherin in school?"

This caused some laughter while Justin grinned, "You better watch yourself Potter, us Badgers can be just as vicious as the rest of you, and we have been known to kill a snake or two!"

This caused some good-hearted laughter, and Harry merely smiled at his girlfriend as they enjoyed the rest of their breakfast together. When breakfast was over Harry smiled, "Are you ready for an adventure with me Ms. Bones?"

Susan's eyes lit up at this, and she nodded quickly, when Harry offered her his hand, "Then please follow me."

With that hand in hand the couple left the hallway, but did not head towards the entrance hall, but towards the grounds in the direction of Hagrid's Hut. When they made it onto the grounds Susan was starting to think that perhaps they weren't going to Hogsmeade, but when they made it outside Harry looked around and then grinned as he pulled out a miniature version of what looked like his firebolt. He then asked, "We have two options. Its early so we could do both if you want. One option is we take this broom and fly over the lake towards a secluded area that I have warded off where we can have some private time just the two of us, and do somethings you've probably never done before. The second option is we can fly this broom disillusioned to Hogsmeade and spend our day

there. Its Valentine's day how does my girl feel, adventurous, or a need to relax?"

Her heart jumped a bit when he called her his girl, and she was nice and full from breakfast so she didn't need food right away, so she figured maybe the adventure first, and then Hogsmeade for food later, "Well Mr. Potter you have my curiosity, lets what kind of adventure you have planned for us."

Harry grinned at the girl, "I was hoping you would say that."

With that he mounted the broom, and offered a place behind him, where she mounted the broom and tightly wrapped her arms around him. From there they took off and stayed low to the ground over the lake. There was still a light snow on the ground, and it would have been very cold, but Harry seemed to have some type of heating charm or something come from his body, but she did not know what it was as she had yet to be cold all morning.

The fly over the lake was truly beautiful, and Susan had never flown this close to the water. At some point, she even dipped her shoe in the water and skimmed it which proved to be the first time that she had actually felt the cold since they had stepped outside. She knew they flew good ways from the castle, and it was almost out of site when Harry dipped them towards an opening in the forest on the right. At first, she got nervous thinking that they were going into the Dark Forest, but Harry quickly assured her, "We are so far out that this actually not a part of the dark forest. This is part of a forest that actually muggles can hike through."

Susan hadn't ever really thought about it, but they weren't that far from muggle towns that were out in Scottish Highlands in fact she was surprised Hogwarts students never came across them from doing exactly

what she and Harry were.

When they landed on the ground Harry smiled at the girl, and drew his wand and did a quick motion with it causing a small backpack to zoom towards him. He quickly grabbed it and pulled out a couple of things like two sticks that he enlarged into hiking sticks, and a large knife he put over his back with a strap. He smiled at the girl and offered her a stick, "I thought we could go on a little hike. I know a place."

The girl smiled at the boy, and took a stick gratefully, and Harry took her extra hand and began leading her down the trail that was before them. It was a peaceful silence, as they walked along beautiful trail hand in hand, but there was one thing that was kind of getting her, "Why am I not cold?"

Harry chuckled lightly, and touched the charm on her wrist, "The bracelet is charmed."

She looked at the bracelet curiously, and then gasped, "Enchanted jewelry where did you get it?"

Harry looked at the girl in surprise, "I made it."

Susan stopped looking at the boy in awe, "You made it?"

The boy nodded, "Sirius gave me this journal my mum had, and it had step by step instructions to do it, it was easy."

Susan quickly spoke, "Harry don't share that journal with anyone.

Enchanted jewelry is super valuable and super rare. It must either be a family secret, or your mother could have been on the verge of something huge for a business."

In shock Harry merely nodded but then smiled, "Well I am glad I could you something so cool. I had no idea, but I am glad you did."

The red head smiled and leaned up against him finding it very romantic that he had taken her here, and made her super rare enchanted jewelry.

They walked for a while, when Harry finally spoke, "Were here."

Susan had clearly been lost in her thoughts, because when she looked at the opening on her left she saw something breath taking. A small fire was lit over this little campsite, and it sat right on the water, where you could see a clear drop off, that made a small waterfall. She also noticed that a small basket was by the fire, that might have held food, or snacks, and the girl was instantly curious, but the view in front of her kept her attention. Susan looked out into the distance in wonder, not even knowing that Hogwarts was so close to something like this, "It's beautiful."

Harry stared out at the cloudy sky, as snow gently fell, "It is."

With that Harry grinned, "You ready for the cool part?"

Susan looked at the boy in confusion, "This isn't the cool part?"

Laughing quietly the boy shook his head, "This was the beautiful part. The adventure was only partly going off the school grounds, and don't worry I covered our tracks well."

Susan sighed in content, "You didn't have to do all this Harry, it was really, really sweet of you, but I would have been happy with something simple."

"You only live once Susan, and the odds are against us on super long lives, so might as well make the best of the peaceful times we have, right?"

The girl gave him a shy nod, and Harry grinned pulling something else out of his back pack that looked very strange. Harry quickly put it on, and gave the girl a fierce smile, "Do you trust me?"

Susan looked at his out stretched hand, and nodded ever so slightly taking his hand, then Harry smiled and said, "Then come here."

She did as she was told, and Harry directed her towards the edge gently,

and Susan was starting to get a little nervous, "Is this going to be safe?"

"Well I have only done this once. But I think it's safe particularly."

Susan muttered about how he wasn't being very reassuring, but then he said, "Sometimes you just need a leap of faith."

When she looked at his face when he said that he was grinning so wide it was infectious, but then she replayed the words in her head a leap of faith, "Harry James Potter were not going to-

"Jump? If you are up to it we are. You are going to hug me, and then we will jump off. You will pull the parachute, and we will coast down to the bottom where Sirius left us a half a dozen portkeys where we could use it as many times we wanted it we so desired."

Susan looked over the edge in trepidation, and a bit of fear, "Harry I don't know."

"You trust me, right?"

The girl nodded silently, "Then give me a hug, I promise that no matter what happens I will keep you safe. I swear it on my very life."

With that they stared into each other's eyes, and then Susan gave the boy a hug, and he lifted her off the ground effortlessly, and then he asked,

"Are you ready?"

She didn't say anything, but nodded quickly, and that gave Harry the cue to take a running few steps forward, and then jump off the cliff. It didn't take long at all as they plummeted with Susan screaming and Harry laughing, that she pulled the parachute. When she did that Harry gently turned her around where she could see them slowly descending over the water, and towards a nearby shore line. Susan was in awe.

When they hit the ground Harry, redid the parachute real quick and set the girl on the ground, "What did you think?"

Susan took a deep breath and gave a hearty laugh, "It was incredible

Harry, can we do it again?"

Harry nodded at the girl with a smile, the longer we wait to use the parachute the more thrilling it will be!"

The girl nodded and they took the portkey back to the top doing the dive again, and this time they did wait a little longer, and a little longer, and one time Harry even pulled out something a little more daring, "This one you do on your own, you just put it on over your clothes and glide to the bottom."

Susan smiled nervously and agreed as he tied the harnesses to her. He gave her a quick kiss on the cheek as he did his own, and then smiled, "I have come to find out I am quite the dare devil, so let's see if you can keep up."

With that Harry charged towards the edge of the cliff, and jumped off blowing her a kiss as he dove. Susan rushed to the side and didn't jump right away, but instead watched her boyfriend do flips throughout the air, and glide across the sky. It was so impressive, but then she got nervous and thought she would wait for him to come back up, which he did quick after he noticed she wasn't following, "Something wrong Sue?" She shook her head, "No, I just wanted to go first on my first try, so that way if something happens you can catch me."

Harry winced, "Sorry I got a bit carried away, I really like this one. Just be like a bird, and let your arms go out as far you can to the side, and the wind along with gravity will do the rest."

Susan nodded eyeing the side warily. After another moment, Harry took her hand, "Let's do it together yeah?"

Susan shook her head in response thankfully, "Please."

As one the two jumped off, and screamed in fear and joy. It wasn't long before they were flying in the air with speed of the wind as they fell. It

was a rush, and so much fun.

The two spent the rest of the day doing this kind of thing, and at the end of the day they laid out by the fire, looking out at the sunset. Susan was very happy with their day, and Harry looked equally pleased. She leaned on his chest smiling, "Thank you for such a wonderful time Harry."

They had already eaten the food he had packed and baked himself in the kitchen with the help of his house elf friend named Dobby, and they were now just resting preparing to head back, "Your welcome Sue."

She blushed a bit as she felt around in her pocket, "You know I got you something, but not it feels like it doesn't measure up to what you did for me today."

Harry grinned a bit, "Sirius said Valentine's day is more about your special lady, and not so much about yourself. He said it's the day I spoil you to the point where everyone else is jealous, and if you choose to tell the other girls, I am sure some of them will be."

Susan blushed even deeper, as she pulled out a small black box, "I had this made for you, but if you don't like it, I can get you something-"

"I am sure it is great Susan, whatever it is."

She handed him the box, and said, "Happy Valentine's day Harry."

As Harry opened the box a watch was revealed, that had a lightning bolt in the middle of the clock. IT was nice as it was all black, and then just showed a small silver lightning bolt in the middle. Harry loved it, as she whispered into his ear, "It's to remind you that you are who you are no matter what anyone thinks. Don't ever forget where you come from. Or what made you who you are today."

Harry stared at the watch as she attached it to his wrist, and then they stared at each other in the eyes for a moment, when Harry whispered, "I think I might be falling for you Ms. Bones."

The look he was giving her made her body tingle, and she whispered back, "You have me spellbound Mr. Potter."

With those words, they met in the middle for a sweet kiss, and then another, and then another. It was a sweet moment, and neither new that this night was the night they started to wonder if they were falling in love.

(A/N) Honestly not my best work. I promise after this chapter it gets more interesting. It was fluff, and I apologize lol!

14. The Inquisitorial Squad

Chapter 14

Valentine's Day had been a resounding success in Susan's opinion. It was clear to the young red headed girl that the boy that kept her company had cared a great bit for her after their very thoughtful date. She had been completely blown away with how well he treated her, and his gift giving skill. She did however proudly note that every time she had seen Harry he was wearing the watch she had gotten him.

Her friends had been very jealous and envious of her when she told them about her day in the common room, and Hannah swooned a bit sarcastically, "I think you're in love Suzy!"

Susan didn't dare comment on this, as her face reflected her line of thought clearly. It had been a few weeks now since Valentine's Day, and she could hardly think about anything else, other than Harry. He was constantly on her mind, and wondered just when their next adventure would be together, or when she was going to learn more about the enigma that was her boyfriend.

The DA classes had gone well, and Susan was almost as helpful as Hermione and Ron these days, as she helped out her housemates as much as possible, which gave the other two members of the golden trio more

time to work with their own house, and Ravenclaw. Of course, that didn't mean they never worked with them, but usually Susan could give the little pointers that fixed their spell work.

Harry practically made it a point to never help Susan in class, and usually if he ever even spoke to her it was to ask for a demonstration, or instruction on how to teach someone something specific that they may have been struggling with.

Most of the quidditch teams had been disbanded by Umbridge, which at first got a lot of people down, but then it just caused an influx of meetings, which made some people hope that Harry was soon going to lead the school in uprising, because what happened next would anger them all.

At Breakfast one morning in early March, Dolores Jane Umbridge grinned at the gathered students, as she cleared her voice, and moved to stand in front of them all. It was not very long after Valentine's Day that the foul women had created an educational decree about having to sit at your own house table, but that did not stop Harry and Susan from exchanging glances when she began speaking to the gathered crowd, "Good morning students. I would like to make an announcement."

The student body went silent instantly expecting heavy trouble coming, "Due to the standards at Hogwarts having slipped, I have decided to create another educational decree, and students this is one is important which is the reason why I have decided to address the entire student body. Starting today a new group has been formed under my command that will help ensure that order maintains in the school. Today is the day that the Inquisitorial squad will be founded."

There were some quiet murmurs across the hall at this, and Susan felt a small knot form in her stomach as the toad like women smiled widely, "I

would like to welcome the captain of this squadron, fifth year prefect Draco Malfoy."

Susan flinched at this knowing that the women could not have picked anyone worse to give power to, and the look on Draco and Harry's face confirmed that she was not the only one in these thoughts. Draco came and stood by the High Inquisitors side, while she gave a light applause that only followed from Slytherin. After a moment of no one joining in on the clapping she gave the crowd a stern look before continuing, "Mr. Malfoy has been asked over the past few weeks to gather a few students to join this squad and at first, they will remain anonymous, but they will be revealed over time. The powers these students have will be a bit more than a prefect. They will assign detentions, and deduct house points. They will also be reporting directly to me to help maintain optimum potential."

With that said the women motioned for Draco to take a seat, and then took her own seat back at the staff table. Susan and Harry held eye contact for a moment, but then he nodded at her, making it clear that they would speak at lengths later about what could and should be done. Breakfast went by much quieter after that announcement. When it was over the Hufflepuffs rose together, and went towards their lessons. When they exited the great hall, she felt a hand grab her arm, and at first she had hopes it was her boyfriend, but when she turned and saw a blonde boy that she could just not quite stand holding on to her, "Bones, can I have word with you in private?"

Susan stared at the boy in clear anger, "Perhaps if you unhand me first."

Draco grinned at the girl saucily, "You mean the rumors that you like to be handled a little roughly aren't true? How disappointing."

At first the girl blushed, but then she bristled, "Excuse me!"

Ignoring the girl's outburst, he spoke, "I just thought I would give you a warning. From one Pureblood to another. You are a very attractive witch, and I hate to see that you might get caught in the coming crossfires while being in the company of undesirable company. I am not sure the taint will ever come off you, but if you come around Slytherin common rooms fairly often I am sure I can help you."

Susan at first was confused, but then she got very pissed off, "How dare you!"

Draco shrugged, "A war is coming Bones. A war that is going to cast a dark shadow over Hogwarts, and Umbridge is going to bring it, are you going to be on the wrong side, just so you can be at the side of some idiot boy wonder."

Susan had to do everything she could not to slap the boy, "I can choose my own side thanks."

Draco shook his head, "Don't make the same mistake that your parents did."

Susan couldn't resist any longer before she could comprehend it her hand was moving very fast towards Draco's face when she connected with a resounding SMACK.

The blonde hair ponce looked shocked for a moment, but then anger crossed his face, "You stupid bitch."

He reared back to punch the girl, but before he could a spell hit him hard and blasted him across the hallway. She felt a pair of strong arms begin to carry her away from the scene, but before they could get to far, he felt the same arms slide her out of the way as a shield appeared in front of them, Harry taunted, "Now now Draco that was dark magic. You should be careful just who you throw spells like that at. Had that hit Susan and seriously injured the niece of the head of the DMLE you could be sure

that nothing would have kept Amelia Bones from throwing you into Azkaban."

Draco growled, "I'll have you in detention for a month for this Potter."

Harry stepped forward boldly, "No you won't Draco. Because if you do, I will ensure that you are disowned from the Black family. My father by magic is now the head of your mother's house, and if you do something that magic would see as an insult to the family, Sirius will be able to banish you from the family. Which could give you a lot to lose if Sirius and I die in the coming war. Which you and I both know is likely.

Consider this a peace offering between you and me. Attack my girlfriend again though, and the least of your concerns will be losing a part of your inheritance."

Draco bristled, "I won't be threatened by the likes of you Potter."

Harry stood at his full height, and stepped towards Draco, "That wasn't a threat Draco. This is my threat. If you ever touch my girlfriend again I will fucking kill you. Not your father or even the Dark Lord will stop me from doing it either. Stay away from Susan, and stay away from me."

Harry stared at the boy in the eyes, as he pulsed out his magic feeling the anger palpable in the air. With that Draco gave him one last angry look and then stormed off. Susan was surprised at Harry's language and his rage, but was quite thankful for his intervention when he had come. He spoke softly, "Are you okay?"

Susan nodded her head quickly, "Malfoy was nothing I couldn't handle, but thank you for coming to my defense."

Harry shrugged, "This isn't over, but hopefully I will have put him off you for a while."

Gratefully she took the boys hand, "I think we're lucky Umbridge didn't show up like she usually does."

Grinning happily the boy responded, "The Weasley's are going to be keeping her busy for a while. They were quite displeased with the announcement, and made sure that she knew it."

The grin was near sinister, but Susan was still incredibly heated from the argument, and felt an overwhelming desire to jump Harry's bones for standing up for her, and doing it so furiously.

However, she felt calmer as he walked her to his classes, and when she got there Harry pulled Ernie and Justin aside quickly, "Watch out for her, we had a little run in with Malfoy, it should be okay for now, but you can't ever be too careful."

The boys nodded, and Susan put her hands on her hip as her boyfriend grinned and kissed her on the cheek and darted out of the room obviously towards his next class.

That night during the DA lesson Harry stood up addressing the group, "This inquisitorial squad is going to be a serious nuisance, but I assure you we will continue in here with as many people who want to do so, however, if anyone wishes to leave, I would not think anything less of them. You don't have to walk out now, but if you don't come into the next lesson I will completely understand. Umbridge had a lot of eyes before, but now she has some students in our school who are basically her spies. We will do our best to figure out who they are, so that way we can watch out for them, but I can't promise anything. The stakes have been raised."

Harry took a deep breath, "I ask you all to keep in control of your emotions. I know that can sound rich coming from someone like me, as we all know I am not the poster child for self-restraint, but I am going to do my best as well. I don't want to give the bitch a reason to get any of us killed or worse expelled."

He gave Hermione a look at this as the girl blushed and Ron chuckled, "Now other than that, we need to keep working in here, and if this is anyone's last lesson, take this one with you, and work on it on your own, because it will be useful."

Throughout the rest of the lesson Harry explained the finer magical science behind how to duel properly, and what you can do to improve your skills. He talked about stances, and chain spells, along with dodging, and its importance. Part of the lesson had Harry taken people's wands, and having the golden trio cast light stinging hexes at a few people at a time, making most of them yelp in surprise.

After a bit, Harry had the groups watch him, as Hermione, Ron, and Susan casted spells at him. Over the next minute, he would only be hit by one spell which came from Susan whom was definitely the best marksmen possibly out of all of them.

Harry then gave some advice, "The key to this is to trust your instincts.

You must be light on your feet, and very alert of all your opponents.

Right now you are only dodging one opponent, and not returning spell fire. But soon you will be able to dodge, and return spell fire. This is your best chance of beating opponents who horribly outclass you. Surprise."

The gathered group nodded, and went back to attempting their dodging lesson, and some had some improvement, while others were still getting stung. At the end of the lesson Harry spoke calmly, "This is the last lesson we will go over and hopefully in the next few weeks we will work on straight up dueling. That will give us what is left of the two-month term to put everything we have learned together. It will be a struggle at first, but that's why I am giving up two months to go over it. Well done everyone and stay safe."

It would be a few weeks before anything of note would happen. Harry for

one was glad however to see that no one had dropped the DA, in fact many were approaching him about a few people who wanted to join in on the resistance, but Harry firmly said, "I taught you all as a core group, teach others now. If it comes to it next year then maybe we can split it up into an advanced and beginner group for those who are struggling, and those who need to be pushed. I can promise everyone that I will be busy training this summer with my Godfather."

It was those words that were relayed to the hopefuls which made many pray for the next year to come a little faster. The DA was already in need of two groups. The older students were progressing beautifully, while the younger kids were hitting a bit of a wall due to the under developed magical cores.

It was discussed among who Harry was considering his inner circle which consisted of Hermione, Ron, Susan, Neville, Luna, Collin Creevy whom had grown up quite a bit this year, and Hannah Abbott, of course with the addition of the Weasley twins who were their own firecrackers that could not be controlled or tied down, that they were doing all that could be done so far, and weren't sure if anything additional should be added due to the current oppression happening in the castle. Had they known what would happen next, perhaps they would have split the group to minimize casualties, but it was too late.

On a warm evening in May Harry was holding a rather productive DA meeting that consisted of fast pace dueling from the younger years, and nice slow going duels for the younger years. Harry was cheering with joy watching his students fight fiercely, as he was quite proud of them. Soon though the ceilings rattled a bit, and Harry looked up in surprise.

Everyone ceased what they were doing and stared around the room.

Harry went to where they had the map laid out, and saw Umbridge along

with a large gathering of students outside of the room. It was then when Dobby appeared, "Harry Potter, you must run, the evil pink women is trying to get in."

This caused panic in the group, and before anyone could seize control of the group a giant blast came from the wall blasted apart and he heard a young yell, and then smoke filled the room. When it cleared, Harry was standing in front of everyone with his wand drawn, and Dolores Umbridge was looking at him triumphantly.

A small groan was heard nearby, and Harry realized that someone had been caught in the blast as Umbridge had blasted the wall in, and quickly discovered it was his friend Collin Creevy. He attempted to move towards the boy to free him, but Umbridge held her wand up at him, "Ah ah, Mr. Potter I think you should best be still."

Harry looked at Collin for a moment then back at the pink toad, "He is in pain, and he needs help. At least allow me to pull him out of the rubble."

Umbridge looked to see who was under said rubble, but then grinned viciously when she saw who it was, "I think Mr. Creevy will be fine just where he is. "

Harry felt a cold fury grip him, "I will come quietly, but let me help him."

"I think not Mr. Potter, you are violating maybe a dozen educational decrees and I will see you expelled for it."

Harry shrugged, "Don't do me any favors, but I am going to pull Collin out of the rubble."

"Not a move Mr. Potter."

Without listening Harry moved forward to help the boy up, but a spell came flying towards him, but Harry raised his shield quickly, and growled, "Cursing students Professor is that what it's going to come to." Many people were looking very angry, and he could see that many wands

were itching forward as if a spell was on the tip, "I asked you not to move Potter. Now everyone put your wands away, and come quietly."

No one moved to put their wands away, in fact many people inched forwards to stand by Harry. Harry shook his head whipping his wand around and blasting the rubble off Collin, and all wands were now pointed at Harry from the other side. No one said anything though at the tense moment, and Harry called out, "You okay Collin?"

The young blonde boy nodded looking sheepish, "Yeah thanks Harry."

Umbridge looked furious, "Put your wands down or I will call the aurors."

Ernie McMillan however stepped forward bravely, "I think we will lower our wands when you do Professor Umbridge. I have never had a professor point a wand threateningly at me, no matter how much trouble I was in, and I don't think me or my friends are going to lower our wands until yours are lowered first. You injured one of our friends with your blasting charm, and I think it is lucky that spell fire was not immediately traded upon your entrance."

Umbridge gave the boy a patronizing smile, "Now Mr. McMillan be reasonable, by educational decree number-"

Neville shouted out, "We don't give a bloody hell about what educational decree you were given this power by, lower your wands, or we aren't going anywhere with a bunch of snakes who would love a chance to curse us all in the back."

Shouts of agreement went up behind the group, and Harry began to wonder if this was going to be it. The moment the battle would start.

Harry thought they had a good chance. The numbers were even, but he wasn't for sure, "If you don't turn yourselves over then I will be forced to have my students and I take you by force."

Harry stood tall, "Is that a threat professor?"

Umbridge stared at the boy coolly, "Indeed it is Mr. Potter, one I promise that will be backed if you don't have your little minions drop their wands."

Everyone looked at Harry, and he knew that they were going to follow his lead. Harry wasn't going to be the reason anyone got hurt, and he slowly began to lower his wand. As soon as he did several lights came flying towards him, but his wand came up and deflected a few of the curses, and felt his shield begin to collapse but soon it was being enforced by two others, that helped hold the spells back, and then there were shouts of cowardice, and Susan practically screamed, "You cowardly bitch! He was lowering his wand!"

Outcry was going out across the DA, and Harry fumed, "Is that how it is going to be professor? Curse a fifteen-year-old who was lowering his wand."

Draco Malfoy stepped forward aggressively, "It's your word against ours. Everyone knows you're just a liar Potter."

Some people bristled at that, but Harry merely stared at Umbridge, "You don't scare me anymore Umbitch. Expel me I have a family at home, and other schools who would be happy to have me. So I will attempt to end this here and now. Voldemort has returned, and you and your coward of a Minister is causing more damage than good. Not teaching these kids how to defend themselves from what's out there. You're the worse kind of coward, and with the help of Fudge you are going to get us all killed."

"LIAR!"

"I must not tell lies Professor."

With that the woman raised her wand, and Harry matched hers, and blocked a curse that came sailing towards him, and this time he didn't just stand there, his wand was a furious motion of forward striking,

completely taking the women by surprise. However, it was not enough to disarm her or stun her.

Draco Malfoy attempted to engage him, but Neville stepped forward and began raining spells upon Draco, and suddenly a battle emerged. Spells were being traded with rapid speed, and before things could get out of hand a man appeared in front of them in a bright ball of flames, and the spells instantly stopped, "Harry that is enough."

Dolores Umbridge fumed, "Dumbledore! I have caught the students red handed in breaking multiple school rules."

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow, "Oh? And what rules are those?"

Umbridge went on to list several educational decrees that were being in fractured upon, but Dumbledore held a hand up, "Actually Dolores Mr. Potter started this group under my strict instruction. It was clear that students were going to struggle on their OWL's and I had absolute faith in the boy's skill with a wand and instructed him to start this little group."

The women turned red with fury, "It is not Mr. Potter's job to teach practical magic! In fact, magic is forbidden in the corridors."

Dumbledore looked around confused, "This does not look like the corridor to me Dolores. The only infraction of the rules I see here is that you are trading spells with students. Did you not perhaps think to consult with me first, before coming in upon students who were practicing for their OWL's. It is clear you knew something was happening in here."

"You can't be trusted Dumbledore! You and Potter are conspiring against the Ministry, and I have proof now." The women said ecstatically.

"Do you?"

The women looked ready to erupt, "Dumbledore you have gone too far this time."

"With that I do agree Ms. Umbridge."

A man with a bowler hat came storming into the room with a few large men in auror robes following behind, "You deliberately went against a ministry official who was trying to help your school. It is merely unacceptable. You are committing conspiracy and sedition against the government and will spend the night in Azkaban and wait for a trial." Dumbledore merely smiled at the advancing aurors, "Is that what you believe Cornelius? You are truly blinded by fear. I thought we might eventually hit this little snag though. You see I have many plans that need to be executed if I am no longer going to be Headmaster, and believe me I have no intention of going to Azkaban."

Without any other words being said he turned and winked at Harry, and then disappeared in a bright red flash. Cornelius Fudge looked aghast that the men had escaped so easily, and then turned to his aurors, "Go search the grounds. You can't apparate in or out of Hogwarts. GO GO!" With that Cornelius began exiting the room, but Madame Umbridge stopped him, "Minister what about the boy?"

Cornelius turned and looked at the teens that still had all their wands drawn, "Let them go. It is clear they were all working under Dumbeldore's order, and without him they are nothing. But make it very clear any further infractions will result in immediate expulsion.

Congratulations Madame Umbridge I am issuing executive order right now that you are to be Interim Headmistress of Hogwarts. Good luck."

With that the man quickly hobbled out of the room, and the women looked at the group in front of him with a sickly smile, "Off to your common rooms. We will have a very interesting discussion tomorrow, but I believe that is enough for one night."

With that she withdrew from the room and took her squad with them. The DA watched in shock at what had just happened, and how quickly

everything had gone to hell. Harry turned to face the group, "Keep your heads down. This isn't over. I will be in touch with everyone, but we have lost our protection from Dumbledore, and we need to watch the situation, we are only 3 weeks away from summer, let's see what happens from here before we decide to act."

Most of the group was still pumping with adrenaline, but nodded not putting their wands away as they left the room in big groups. When it came down to just Harry's inner circle, he carefully checked Collin over, and then said to stick to his side until they get back to the common room. Harry however sighed, "Everyone go back to your common rooms. We were lucky tonight, but we can't push our luck any further, give me some time to think over all this."

Susan looked at her defeated looking boyfriend and kissed his cheek, "Don't worry Harry, it will all work out."

Harry gave his girlfriend a weak smile, and then watched as she left the room with what was left of her housemates.

(A/N) I'm back! With the next 13 chapters already written out, will try to update every 3 days or once a week depending on the feedback. Cheers!

15. Open Rebellion

Chapter 15

The next day brought the month of June to Hogwarts, and there had never been a more downtrodden day for the students. Their last great joy in Hogwarts, the Defense Association, had been ruined. Some of the students were annoyed with Umbridge for just taking another thing away from them, while others were disappointed because they truly enjoyed the meetings. However, one young lady was nearly apoplectic with rage having remembered the night before a Hogwarts Professor and her

stooges had attempted to attack her boyfriend as he was lowering his wand. In the wizarding world that might as well have been a surrender, but the cowardly swine's still attacked him anyways.

What irritated the young Hufflepuff even more was that she could not confront the women, or even speak to her boyfriend as they had inquisitorial guards and an auror outside each of the houses that had DA members, and they were being escorted around like they were some type of criminals. Susan had wanted to write a letter to her Aunt to let her know what was happening at Hogwarts, but Umbridge had even confiscated that this morning citing that she would make sure that it went through the appropriate channels.

It was that evening in the great hall when Susan felt like they had truly lost the battle. It had been confirmed by some miracle that the Hogwarts board of Governors were granting Dolores Jane Umbridge the spot of Headmistress which meant she could basically create any educational decrees that she wanted. This gave her the literal power of being able to make up rules on the spot, and basically being able to enforce them with the might of her squadron of goons, and the teaching staff no matter how willing or unwilling they might be.

The only silver lining in it all was that Fred and George Weasley seem to be giving the women absolute hell, and have obviously been unleashing everything they had on the tyrant. These events caused the school to edge closer and closer to open rebellion, and Susan was starting to think if her boyfriend didn't do it, she might!

Defense against the Dark Arts class had been even more boring and dull than usual. Susan and Harry would steal glances at each other the whole class, and they even tried to send messages, but this proved to be unsuccessful as every other thing they had tried.

Umbridge was watching the class in the great hall one day with her usual hawk like techniques. Today they were taking an exam which made everyone uncomfortably quiet, because they had not been reading the garbage that the old bat had been supplying. Even Harry who usually was the best in Defense Against the Dark Arts on any topic was struggling with the ridiculous concepts the Slinkard was trying to convey.

Harry glanced throughout the room periodically to see everyone else was struggling as much as he was, and he even caught his girlfriends eyes and gave her a reassuring smile. It was this that caused the teacher to swoop down on her unsuspecting prey, "Mr. Potter, please quit giving lecherous looks to Miss Bones, it is quite unbecoming of her stature to even associate with you, and you will no longer pull her down with you. I think detention in my office tonight will-"

Susan was about to get up, and give the cow a piece of her mind however, it seemed like something more interesting was happening outside. Loud blasts of noise were being heard from nearby, and Umbridge immediately straightened up, and glared at Harry for a moment before walking towards the door to see just what was happening. Before she could open the doors however they were blasted open, and two young men with flaming red hair came into the room on broomstick shouting, and throwing magical fireworks high towards the ceiling causing explosions that shook the hall, and made some people even duck down in fear. The twins then brought out their wands and summoned all the papers into the air, where they threw firecrackers, and other assortments of low powered explosives at them causing them all to burn up.

The students who were familiar with the Weasley twin's pranks were ecstatic, but even they knew the boys had gone too far. Umbridge

however had enough. Her horror and shock only lasted a minute, when she then proved that she may have been better at Defense Against the Dark Arts than everyone had thought when she fired a stunner at one of the Weasleys, downing him from his broomstick, and causing him to crash towards the floor. Quickly she followed that with another stunner towards the other Weasley, and had them both downed before they could cause further damage. Harry however was not going to let them hit the ground too hard, and thankfully Hermione was right behind him in helping him catch them, "Arresto Momentum!"

The spells barely hit the two boys, and prevented them from crashing into the ground. Harry couldn't believe it. This woman just cursed two of his friends off their brooms, and caused them to almost crash into the stone floor. They could have been seriously hurt.

The women however looked gleeful, "Finally a stop to all this madness. I have known all along that these two were causing everything to stop working in my office, and causing all this mayhem in my school. I think it is finally time to let Mr. Filch test out his punishments. Draco please go fetch Argus and let him know he has some targets."

The hall merely watched in stunned silence as Umbridge stared at the two downed boys with serious malice. Harry was being careful not to move. He was clearly very angry at what the women had done, and it was not very surprisingly Ron who broke the silence, "You cursed two of my brothers off their brooms! You could've killed them."

The women merely scoffed, "Please Mr. Weasley, your family will be in enough trouble as it is. I am a Ministry official, and I knew that no serious harm was going to come from the two miscreants I just stunned. They were making a ruckus, and disturbing your education, you should be just as outraged as I am."

Ron made to start again, but Harry silenced him, "Enough Ron. Your brothers were in the wrong, and they deserve to be punished."

Everyone now turned to Harry as if he was off his rocker. Ron bristled and looked like he wanted nothing more than to hex his best mate at that moment, but couldn't seem to believe he had just heard what was said. Susan herself could not understand her boyfriend's words, and merely watched the scene unfold.

Umbridge smiled, "Very good Mr. Potter, it seems without Dumbledore in the castle perhaps you have learned your lesson and your place."

It was only a few seconds later that Argus Filch, Draco Malfoy, and a few other members of the Inquisitorial Squad came storming back into the room. Umbridge turned to the caretaker, "Mr. Filch, I believe your whip will finally see its first blood today. These two stormed into my testing room, and caused a serious ruckus, ruining all these students testing day which they have prepared so hard for."

The women flicked her wand and a desk that had been thrown aside in the initial onslaught of fireworks was transfigured into a tall pole, and with quick whips of her wand she had chains transfigured and ready, "I believe 15 lashes each will do them both some good. Don't awake them until you have them tied."

"And the rest of the student's ma'am?" Argus asked gleefully

"They may watch the example we will make of these two."

Argus again looked like it was his golden day, however when he took two steps forward Harry said, "Not another step."

The power and rage in his voice was palpable. Umbridge looked up, and gave him a patronizing smile, "Now Mr. Potter that is not your decision to make. Argus please continue."

The man took a step forward, but Harry was much faster than the squib,

and stunned him with the lightning fast reflexes that his life had given him. Umbridge raised her wand at the boy, and so did many of the others gathered, however it was nothing compared to the number of people that raised their wands back at the women whom had clearly gone too far, "No Umbridge. I will not allow you put my friends on a pole and whip them. I don't know about the legality of it all, and I don't really give a damn either. I thought you would just threaten them, and scare them, but no, you have gone too far this time."

"No Mr. Potter it is you who have gone too far this time. I will have you arrested for assault against a Hogwarts Staff Member, and held in Azkaban prison for crimes that I will be able to convict you of on my day in court. Mark my words." The woman said angrily.

Harry barked back his magical aura swirling with rage, "No you mark my words. You will not touch my friends, and I will not let this go quietly. Expel me Madame Umbridge, but don't for a second believe I am going to let you do this."

With that the women swirled her wand around and ropes shot towards Harry, but he quickly threw up the protego charm, and started the open rebellion, "Reducto!"

A powerful blasting charm flew from his wand, and slammed into the women's shields, and spells began raining towards Harry, but in this moment the rest of the hall had drawn their wands and chosen a side. Neville and Susan were at Harry's side in a moment helping him raise shields, while Ron, Hermione, Hannah rallied the other fifth years into an attack.

It quickly squared off into lots of people getting stunned out of the fight. It was immediately noticeable to someone who was looking in on the situation that mostly everyone in Harry's defense group was still

standing. Neville was fighting with Draco Malfoy, and the Gryffindor was giving the boy absolute hell, while Susan was standing with Harry trying to knock Umbridge out.

Hermione had managed to take on Pansy Parkinson and Millicent Bultstrode at the same time and quickly managed to stun and bind them.

Ron had taken on Crabbe and Goyle, and did it with practiced ease.

Compared to fighting Harry they didn't throw up much of a fight. The others were all knocking out Slytherins whom had tried to interfere, and even had their wands pointed at people who ran to the sides in hope of not getting stunned.

Harry and Susan however were still dueling against the Ministry Official.

It could easily be said that Harry did not believe this woman was a worth a damn until now, but having been able to hold back himself, and Susan for even this long was not a feat a poor witch or wizard would have been able to accomplish. Just when Harry thought things were going their way Umbridge whipped her wand towards Susan and a disturbingly familiar red curse launched towards her barely allowing Harry to jump in front of the curse taking its effect on himself. At first no one knew what the unknown red spell was until they heard the young man's cry of pain.

The scream didn't last long however, because what could have easily been thirty spells flew quickly at the witch who was holding their leader under the crucitas curse, and the women raised a decent shield, but nothing that was going to stop the full range of what was left of the duelers.

Harry gasped with breath when he felt that the curse was released from his body. He couldn't have been under the spell for more than few seconds, but it still hurt like the devil. Harry stood shakily and for the first time observed the carnage. Susan quickly however ran over to him,

and looked like she wanted to jump into his arms and give a hug, but had more fear of breaking him further if he did that, "Are you okay? I can't believe you took that spell for me! You stupid, stupid man."

Nodding slightly and opening his arms to the girl as she closed the distance between him, "I am alright. It hurt, but it was nothing compared to what Voldemort's could do, and I could not stand to think of you in that kind of pain."

He twitched a bit, and he heard a slight swear word come from the side as a Slytherin who was hiding against the wall approached with her hands up, "My mom is mediwitch for Saint Mungos I can help you with the twitching."

Harry looked distrustfully at the girl for a moment, but then nodded and let her come over, and no one managed to curse her in the back as she stood next to him slowly drawing her wand, "Definitely the cruciatus curse. Though I don't know how the High Inquisitor is going to hide the fact that she cursed the boy who lived with an unforgivable curse. Even with your reputation at all time low, people aren't going to take a liking to that."

It was clear to Harry that the Slytherin girl was just nervous with all these eyes on her, and Harry did not comment on it. However, a few short seconds passed when a voice entered the hall, "Dear God, Ms. Granger what happened here."

Professor McGonnagall had arrived with a few other professors, and it was obvious that a battle had taken place from their perspectives. Many people began to lower their wands at the site of the friendly professors, Harry however rose his, "Your boss just started a fight she couldn't finish. She then used the cruciatus curse on me when she realized she couldn't take Susan and me, at the same time."

"That is a serious accusation Potter, mind that you lower your wand from its current position." The stern transfiguration teacher asked, but more commanded.

Harry almost complied instinctively, but shook his head instead, "Not until we know that no one else is going to come in here and start flinging curses. No one else will be hit by an unforgivable today."

The women rose to her full height now, "Right you are about that Harry, but I ask that you trust me, and believe that if you are not going to lower your wand it will look quite bad when Ministry officials arrive.

Particularly given your prior circumstances."

Hermione came over next to Harry quickly, "She's right Harry the fights over."

Harry stared for a moment before lowering his wand and turning back to Susan, "Are you hurt?"

"You just got hit by the cruciatus curse, and you want to know if I am okay?" Susan asked in exasperation.

Before Harry could answer, Harry heard Hermione telling the deputy Headmistress just what had happened here. It was not embellished, but it was just a simple accurate retelling of what happened today. The members of the Defense Association were still standing with their wands drawn as if expecting that another round of curses was going to come in, but they were more apprehensively watching the downed members of the inquisitorial squad, and the Slytherins that had tried to foolishly attack them.

Harry surveyed the scene once more. The great hall was a disaster. Many of the desks were destroyed. Leftovers of the exams, and the damage the Weasley twins had done were evident, and it was clear that the other Professors were just going around making sure everyone was okay, and

reviving those whom had been downed, but taking care to ensure they had all been disarmed. Fred and George were also revived and looked furious as if they wanted to cast curses they had not yet perfected on the women who blasted them off their brooms. They were making their way out of the Great Hall, and Harry wondered briefly if he would ever see them inside Hogwarts again.

When the telling of the story was over the transfiguration professor looked grave, "I think we will see some serious trouble out of this. I can easily see Dolores getting exempted from using the curse on you Mr. Potter. It will come down to self-defense, and the fact that she is such a high ranking ministry official it is possible that Minister Fudge will issue his undersecretary a pardon. Without all that I don't think we are going to like the results of this."

Harry stared at the women in shock, "We have all these witnesses, and you still think that we are in trouble?"

The professor looked around for a moment, "All the witnesses I see are school children though Potter. No one is going to take your word over a senior Ministry official."

Wanting to scream Harry all but shouted, "I will make a magical vow, I will do whatever it takes to see that women tossed out of here, but I promise you I will be out of this school by the end of the day if she is still here. With Dumbledore gone, and being close enough to take my OWLs I will take my chances with testing out and going to France and finishing my education, you relay to the Ministry that decision, and let me know what I can help you with from there. If they need my statement you know where to find me."

With that Harry began to stroll out of the room. For a moment, no one followed, but then as one the members of the Defense Association began

to follow their leader right out the door. It was more than just walking out the door though. It was also a stand showing that they supported his decision, and hell they might even follow him right out the door to France if this was it was going to be. No one was any longer going to be in fear of punishments that can physically scar their bodies, or their minds. No one was going to stand for Dolores Jane Umbridge any longer. Susan ran to catch up with her boyfriend, and gave him a light smile, "Well it looks like we still made a pretty good team out there."

Harry shrugged still feeling very upset about how Professor McGonagall told him of their chances, and the probability of them still getting into trouble. Susan detecting his agitation said, "I am not just saying this to make you feel better Harry, but I think considering just who your girlfriend is, and who the women who raised her is, I don't see Umbridge getting away with this. Once I tell auntie what happened, and then she confirms it from you under veritaserum, and a memory, I don't think McGonagall will be right. I think charges are going to stick to the women like glue!"

Looking at the girl with a bit of a hopeful look, "You think so?"

Taking the boys hand gently in hers, "Yeah I do think so. Have some faith Harry, and let's take all these people who are following you right now and talk in the room of requirements before the Ministry comes looking to arrest all of us."

Neville who wasn't to far behind shouted ahead, "I hope they bring a lot of people if they plan on arresting you Harry, because they are going to have to arrest the whole lot of us if that is the case."

Some shouts of approval came from those words, and Harry smiled at the boy who had clearly found his Gryffindor courage this year.

When they got to the seventh-floor Harry saw Colin Creevy, and Luna

Lovegood standing with maybe fifteen or more students that ranged in age from fourth year to seventh year, "Blimey Harry, we heard what happened downstairs, and with Fred and George. What happened?"

Susan stopped Harry from speaking and said, "Let's get everyone inside and talk. Let's not stand in the corridors where we might be ambushed by Ministry Officials who may or may not come for Harry."

This caused the fourth years' mouth to drop open, as Harry raised his wand to open the room of requirements, and performed his usual act. In a moment, everyone had advanced inside to the room. Once everyone was there Harry began to explain just what had happened down in the great hall without leaving out much detail in why they had done it.

"Then McGonagall showed up and said that they probably would still get Umbridge off. So, I don't know honestly. There is always hope, but I think if Umbridge stays here then we are all in danger. There are only two weeks of school left, and something must be done if I am going to consider coming back to Hogwarts next year."

Harry let the silence swept into the room, and Colin asked, "You would leave us like that Harry?"

Looking at the young man he considered a friend, he saw desperation and fear in his eyes. He looked across a few of the younger faces and saw the same thing. He immediately began questioning his decision. No one was speaking while he thought, and he did not know that his inner circle was watching with baited breath. This was something that could make or break him even in his leadership spot of the Defense Association. He looked at Susan who just stared at him waiting for him to come to decision, and he saw doubt in her eyes for the first time in him, and he was keen to see that look go away.

"No, I won't leave you like that Colin. I won't leave anyone like that. I am

going to do everything in my power as the future Lord Potter to make sure that this foul..."

Someone called out from the back, "Bitch!"

Harry smirked a bit, "Bitch of a witch is thrown out of our school, and if she isn't I will personally lead us into a revolution against her. I will make sure that we throw her out of the castle next time, and we won't let any teacher, or Ministry Official stop us from doing it. I won't let anyone else get hurt, and I won't run from this coward."

Ernie McMillan in the front started a notion, and soon everyone followed it as they raised their wands slowly into the air. The sign of allegiance in the wizarding world, and soon every wand in the room was raised with a small light ignited at the tip of their wands. The room of requirements even darkened a bit to add to the effect of the matter. It was clear to Harry that the DA was going to stand with its leader no matter what he decided on how he was going to deal with the problem.

He looked to his side, and saw that Susan was standing next to him with a proud smile and her wand raised, and with her other hand she gently took his. This was going to be there stand. Together.

(A/N) Thank you so much for all the reviews! Sorry it took me a few days longer to get this up then I thought. I live down in Texas and the storms have been messing with me power. Hopefully will get the next chapter out soon, please let me know what you think of the most recent chapters, and where you think things are going!

16. A Cowards Way

Chapter 16

It wasn't long before the Ministry Officials arrived. Unluckily for them, Sirius Black, and Amelia Bones were in toe with them. Minerva McGonagall tried to appease everyone, but in the end they wanted to

Speak with the students, and Sirius loudly exclaimed that he wished to see that his Godson was alright after having to deal with an incompetent idiot of a Headmistress.

Harry found himself summoned to the Headmistress' office with Susan, Neville, Hermione, and Ron, with the rest of the DA and the fifth years waiting outside of the office as if they were expecting a battle to break out.

In the room, Fudge was bristling, "Potter are you still trying to lead an open rebellion inside my school?"

Sirius however was on the man in a minute, "I resent that accusation Fudge! My Godson has not even had his chance to tell his side of the story yet you accuse him of a very serious accusation. I remind you that this young man is not only the Heir to House Black, but also Lord Potter, and I suggest if you wish to remain Minister for another day that you just remind yourself who you are talking too!"

Fudge looked at the man with anger, and began to retort, but Amelia Bones stopped the man, "Harry if you will please tell me your side of the story, so that way we can hear all sides of this case."

Harry quickly began to delve into his explanation and when he finished Sirius was drawing his wand, and beginning to fire a very unfriendly curse at the Ministry official, however Remus Lupin whom had been quiet the whole meeting stopped him. Sirius screamed out, "Fudge if you don't have this woman arrested I will challenge her to a duel right now and kill her myself."

Fudge looked a little frightened at how fast things had gotten out of control, and looked to his auror guards to make sure they were still there before saying, "Now Mr. Black-"

"It's Lord Black you fucking idiot, or have you forgotten just who I am!"

Sirius said in a bellowing rage.

The Minister bristled, but Sirius was on a role, "Madame Bones, as a member of the Wizengamot and a Lord of our Nation I demand that this woman's wand be tested to see if the Cruciatus Curse has indeed been used on my Godson."

Madame Bones immediately stepped forward to carry out the command, but Fudge said, "Bones you will be out of the job tomorrow if you take one more step. If Madame Umbridge did use an unforgivable it was in self-defense, and I will be issuing a full pardon if it is true!"

Sirius roared out, "Against a minor! A student that has not even taken his OWLs yet, are you or are you not the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher?"

Umbridge bristled, "Considering all the infraction of the rules your Godson has committed, I think you should count yourself lucky he still has a school to attend."

Letting his animalistic side get out a bit he barked, "Well you can forget that. I am pulling my Godson from this school tonight, and I am taking your head with me. By the ways of magic itself I invoke the right of challenge, as my house has been wronged. Only a duel to the death will bring my house and honor satisfaction so mote it be."

Harry wasn't familiar with anything that just happened, but many people in the room paled as Sirius' wands glowed a bit, and Fudge now cowered a bit realizing that he had gone beyond the point of repair. Magic itself had accepted the challenge, and he had no authority on these matters. To go against Magic, would cost him, and possibly his future generation of witches and wizards in his family.

Not allowing for anyone else to speak Sirius demanded, "Who will be your second? Why don't you choose the worthless man beside you, and I

will kill two birds with one stone!"

Umbridge blindingly furious yelled out, "You will not be dueling me. I am Undersecretary Delores Jane Umbridge! Headmistress to Hogwarts. I am above such laws."

Sirius laughed with an evil sound, and Amelia Bones spoke softly, "Delores you must accept his challenge. Magic itself has accepted it. If you were to deny his challenge it is possible that you could lose your magic and be reduced to a squib or worse. Had magic denied the challenge you would have had a chance."

Harry speaking for the first time in a while said, "Magic itself accepted his challenge?"

Remus spoke, "The glow at the end of his challenge indicated that magic was dissatisfied, and that it would allow the retribution to be sought out. It is old, but still very legal. Had it been denied then obviously, it would have classified as a legal blood feud, but you being his son by magic and law, it easily accepted it, which to me is magic itself admitting that Umbridge used a dark curse against you Harry."

Umbridge looked to the Minister who looked grave, as if he was seeing his life flash before his eyes, or worse his career, "Madame Umbridge, you must select a second."

The woman let fear show on her face for the first time, "Minister surely there is something you can do. I have done so much for this admi-

"I'm sorry Delores there is nothing I can do. Laws much older than the ones even the Wizengamot wrote are at stake here." Fudge said apologetically clearly trying to think of away to get his champion out of this nightmare.

The woman stood up straight, "Very well, I will take Auror Dawlish if he will assist me."

The auror stood up at full height at this, "I will assist you Madame Undersecretary."

This caused the women to smirk triumphantly and Harry stepped forward, "I will be your second Sirius."

Before anyone could protest Remus stepped forward, "Sorry cub, but the spot has already been spoken for. Padfoot and I have been dueling together since we were school boys, and besides I owe you this fight."

Sirius nodded approvingly throwing his arm around the man, "I will teach you all I can this Summer pup, but today we will show you how it's supposed to be done, and we will get rid of your toad problem here."

This caused some chuckles from Ron and Neville whom had remained quiet through the whole meeting, and for the first time his eyes went to Susan who seemed to be deep in thought over the whole situation, as if she was calculating the ramifications of it all. Giving the girl a bit of a wink he turned back to face Fudge who said, "Let's take the night and let heads cool, and we will have this duel take place in the auror department at-"

"Not so fast Minister. I was the challenger therefore I pick the time and the place of this excursion, and it will be in ten minutes down in great hall. Filius Flitwick is a dueling champion, and circuit qualified judge. He will be able to set up the platform, for some his old favorite students, and be willing to officiate." Sirius proclaimed.

The Minister looked to protest, but Amelia proved to be on their side one hundred percent by saying, "It's the law Minister. The challenger reserves the right to dictate the rules of the fight, and the setting."

"This is a school you madman!" Umbridge cried out.

"Yes, and someone will need to inform Minerva that she will be needed as Headmistress for the remainder of the year." Remus said with a bit of a

joke.

This caused Umbridge to pale a bit, but Dawlish merely smirked thinking that he was the big bad auror, and was clearly forgetting that at one point Sirius was a senior auror before things went to hell in the first war. When the group of people descended into corridors again a group of students were milling about with wands drawn, Umbridge was about to rage at them before Ernie McMillan stepped up, "Minister Fudge, Headmistress Umbridge used an unforgivable curse on Lord Potter today. As an ally of House Potter I demand satisfaction, and will see this women arrested, with the backing of House McMillan."

Hannah stepped besides him, "Also backed by House Abbot."

A few other kids from pureblood houses stepped forward and Fudge seemed to pale a bit more with each person stepping forward, clearly realizing this battle was lost, and it had not even started yet. Harry grinned at the others, "My father seemed to be thinking along the same lines, and he has challenged the Headmistress to a duel to the death which was accepted by magic itself."

This caused whispers, but the entourage that came from the Headmistress' office merely carried on towards the great hall, while Neville was sent off to get Professor Flitwick so he could officiate the duel.

Susan had taken Harry's side and whispered into his ear, "You look awfully cheerful for someone who is about to watch their dad/godfather kill someone?"

Smirking at the girl he shrugged his shoulders, "No adult has ever stuck out up for me like this before. It's nice to see someone outraged on my behalf. Besides Sirius isn't going to kill her today. You forget the stories I told you about the Marauders, they are notorious pranksters, not killers. I

just don't think Umbridge and Fudge know that just yet."

Sirius and Remus were chatting up ahead about what they were going to do for dinner, and even joked that Headmistress McGonagall will let them have dinner in the great hall with the rest of the students. Each word they exchanged seemed to infuriate Umbridge more, but it didn't matter, because when they arrived in the hall Neville and Flitwick were rolling in right behind them. Fudge stood before the assembled students claiming, "Anyone under the age of 15 must now return to their common rooms, as this is a duel to the death, and we do not wish young faces to witness this."

This caused some murmurs of discontent to sweep the halls, but many of the students left, including some of those who were over 15. However, Harry was walking up with his group of friends to the platform that Flitwick and McGonagall were transfiguring. It was just a few short minutes before everything was ready, and Harry was standing on the platform with his dog father, and Remus. Remus spoke softly, "Just don't panic Harry no matter what you see. In these duels, all type of magic is allowed. Even unforgivables."

Harry gulped a bit, and asked, "Is that auror any good? Dawlish?"

Sirius shook his head, but Remus gave the man across the hall from him a wary look and said, "He is an auror so we won't underestimate him, in fact we will take him out first."

"Mooney old chap I like the way you think!" Sirius exclaimed.

Harry asked, "Aren't you two in the least bit worried?"

The two men exchanged looks and then gave Harry a soft smile,

"Something we will teach you this summer about the art of dueling is nothing but confidence on the outside, and I do mean nothing. It can unnerve your opponent even if you are scared out of your wits!"

Taking his voice to an absolute whisper he asked, "Are you?"

Before either Marauder could answer the referee, Flitwick, called the match to begin. Harry watched as the bows were called through, and then with bated breath listened to the countdown, and at one he blinked, and suddenly spell fire rang throughout the room.

Watching the duel with a bit of amazement Harry could not help but admire the way the two men dueled together, and how they complimented each other, and protected each other in the fight always. It was almost like they had discussed a very extensive strategy, and that they had planned this duel for days, but that was impossible and Harry knew it.

Remus was a blur of wand movements, and he was also seemingly throwing out a different spell every second, as his wand was pushing out spells of all colors and sizes. It was obvious that the Marauders were hardly even giving Umbridge the time of day as they blasted Dawlish and his defenses to shreds.

Sirius was a site to watch too, for someone whom had been in Azkaban for 13 years he was still in incredible shape, and his reflexes that rivaled Harry's. He had only seen the man shield once, and he dodged everything else, and countered with amazing speed. His power was also a little more pronounced than Remus', but the duel was impressive.

Harry even had to tip his hat to Dawlish. The Marauders were giving this man absolute hell, yet he was still standing, but to the experienced duelist, and even Harry recognized that the man was running out of steam. Whispering soft words to his girlfriend he said, "Dawlish is about down for the count."

Amelia Bones who was standing right next to Susan heard the boy, and raised an eyebrow at his proclamation. She was a very experienced and

veteran duelist, and of course she recognized that the man was almost down, but this was the first time she had seen firsthand of Harry's prowess and knowledge in the dueling arena, and admitted to herself that she would like to see the young man in action.

The duel turned around quickly when Umbridge who was clearly tired of being ignored screamed out, "Avada Kedavra!"

It came out in her usual girlish voice, but that didn't stop the chill that ran down everyone's spine when the green curse sailed towards both men. With amazing speed, Remus conjured a brick column, and Sirius raised a metal shield. The Brick wall shattered effectively stopping the curse, but the debris sailed towards them and impacted Sirius shield, and at this they both took offensive steps forward and began using the five chain spell that Harry recognized as a finisher, Expulso, Defodio, Confrigno, Reducto, Bombarda.

Harry honestly didn't believe for a second that anyone other than maybe Voldemort or Dumbledore would have found their way out of that combination when two people are throwing them at the exact same time, and incredible speed, and for a mediocre Auror like John Dawlish it was too much. The man barely deflected the first five spells, and the last five easily through him off the platform with undoubtedly injuring the man greatly. This left two Marauders vs. an ugly Toad the boy who lived thought.

Sirius grinned at the woman who was not even attempting to fire curses, "Expelliarmus. Levicorpus. Diffindo. Flipendo."

The first spell disarmed the woman before she could even raise a shield. The second spell hoisted her into the air. The third spell caused a small gash to appear in the woman's shoulder, and the fourth spell made her swing on the ceiling comically her pink cardigan falling off in the

process."

Sirius marched just below the women, while Remus fired about a dozen jinxes changing the women's physical appearance, and then looked angrier than Harry had possibly ever seen him. Sirius roared at the women, "You used the torture curse on my Godson who has done more for this nation than you or your pitiful Minister will ever do. He saved us all from a Dark Lord that was on the brink of victory, and would've conquered our nation. People like you half-blood would have been hated, and discriminated against. Yet this is how you repay him. He tries to tell you the Dark Lord has returned, and this is how you repay them. You are the worst kind of Witches and Wizards, and that is a coward, and I would love to strike you down where you are right now."

Remus spoke now, "Your lucky our brother in all but blood James Potter is not here today, because I promise you would be dead where you stand, and that is if Lily wouldn't have gotten to you first, because she would've made you beg for it had you hurt her son, and thought you were going to get away with it."

"But they aren't here right now, so please give us a reason we should not uphold their wish to protect him, and not kill you, and you better make it good, because my patience is almost gone." Sirius growled.

Harry watched in awe as the men magically man handled this woman, and bullied her into a perfect position for manipulation.

The woman who was now panicking said, "Please I will do anything, just please don't kill me."

Sirius who raised his eyebrows at this said, "Anything? How about resigning as Headmistress and Madame Undersecretary?"

"YES!"

"How about admitting that you sent the Dementors on my Godson this

Summer?"

This caused silence to ring throughout the hall. Everyone had heard about the dementor attack on Harry, and while even now some did not believe him, this accusation brought all right back to the fronts of their minds, "How did you-"

"Know?" Remus said coldly, "There are only a few members in the Ministry who can control dementors that well, and they are all in this room. Madame Bones being one of them, and I seriously doubt an ally of house Potter for over 12 generations would attack their heir, so that ruled her out, and then there was Minister Fudge who wouldn't have had the balls to do it, and then there was you."

"Sweet vindictive little Delores." Sirius growled, "Do you admit to it? I am an accomplished Occulmens, and I promise right before I kill you I will rape your mind to the point that I will know every little dirty secret you ever told your imaginary friend at the age of five."

The women cowered in fear at the thought of her mind being raped before her and said, "Okay yes I did it. I sent the dementors to little whinging! I had hoped to get the boy on trial and have him silenced, but the old fool Dumbledore interfered with that totally ridiculous squib witness. We had no record of a squib being the area. It was supposed to be full proof."

"Who all knew of this plan?" Amelia Bones said now standing on the platform that the woman was hanging just above.

"No one just myself." The women said with tears streaming down her very red face. All the blood was clearly rushing to her head, and she was starting to lose control.

Sirius however cursed the women causing her to cough violently, "Liar."

"I swear."

"If you aren't going to tell the truth I have no further use for you, and since magic has granted me permission to-"

"Fudge knew..." It was all but a whisper, but it was a whisper that caused half the great hall to erupt in anger. Students who were friends of Harry, and even some who were not were outraged that their government had allowed something like this to happen.

Sirius turned to look at the man, but before he could start flinging curses Amelia drew her wand, "Aurors place Minister Fudge under arrest for corruption, and the attempted murder of a Lord to a Most Noble and Ancient House of the Wizengamot. Also, charge him with Purgery for lying under oath, and sedition for abusing his position as Minister of Magic."

Kingsley Shacklebolt and Gwain Robards immediately stepped forward and grabbed the man by each arm as he bustled his protests and began to issue threats, and just as Amelia was getting ready to have them all of, but Sirius stopped her, "I want one more confession Umbridge, and I may allow you to live. If you lie, if you even think about lying you will find out just what kind of magic they teach in Black Family and why we get our name as a dark family. Are you ready?"

The woman was barely conscious at this point, but she nodded in clear desperation, "Good, are you aware of the Dark Lords return? Let there be no mistake, are you aware of the Dark Lord Voldemorts return."

The woman choked out a sob, and then nodded her head, but Sirius roared out, "YES or NO!"

Harry was shocked. They had done it. They cornered Umbridge, and now she was going to have to admit it, "Yes...Yes I know he is back."

"Are you a death eater?" Amelia Bones asked with her eyes wide.

"No, but I had an informant let me know this Summer, its why I had the

dementors attack Potter, I had thought I would be rewarded." Umbridge sobbed out.

The hall roared with anger, and clearly some were shaken with fear, but not the DA. Sirius shook his head and flicked his wand up towards the ceiling, and the women fell with a loud thunk, "You have twenty-four hours to leave Britain, and if I ever see you again I will kill you where you stand. Do I make myself clear?"

The women did not even answer, but Sirius grabbed her by her stupid pink jacket screaming, "Do you understand?"

The women nearly screamed with fear, but said, "Yes."

Sirius nodded, and stood, "Amelia do you have all you need?"

The department shook her head with a wicked smile, "More than I ever needed actually. We will be in touch soon. Someone get in touch with Dumbledore if possible, and let him know Hogwarts wants him back as Headmaster."

"My honor and my families is satisfied, so mote it be." Sirius said in a near whisper with his wand in hand.

Harry hugged the man when he approached, and said, "You were brilliant! But, how did-"

Sirius ruffled the boys head as they separated, "We are Marauders pup, if you think for even a second that Remus and I didn't have a very specific plan in place when we heard about what happened from Amelia we have a lot more to teach you than I thought."

Remus came over, and Harry hugged the man tightly for a moment, and separated from him with affection swelling for both men. They had cleared his name, and now everyone knew Voldemort was back. No one would call him a liar anymore, or think he was crazy, or think he was a murderer.

The voices in the hall had still not been subdued, and it was clear that people were afraid, but Harry was not going to let it go quietly, with a feeling of bravery he shouted, "Everyone listen up."

Silence immediately rang throughout the hall, and even the aurors who were escorting Fudge out turned to stop and listen. The professors were watching him, the students were watching him, and with the bravery he felt in the moment he felt that his parents were watching him too,

"Voldemort is back. I know some of you didn't believe me, and possibly some of you still don't believe me, but it's true. I swear it upon my very magic."

A glow came from around the boy, but he didn't even stop to acknowledge it, "I fought this man, and He killed my parents, and most likely he may have killed some of yours too. If he didn't maybe he killed some of your family members, and like me maybe some of you want some revenge, and because of that I say this. A fight is coming. He may be taking cover now, but when the Ministry Convicts Fudge, and the truth comes out, he won't have to hide anymore, and he will strike."

This caused some more mutters of fear to spread across the way, "If you were in my defense meetings this year then you learned a little bit about me, but if you weren't let me tell you this. That madman killed my family, and he killed a lot of people who would've been my whole world, and I will not let it go. I have a family now, and the people in this room are it. When Voldemort strikes, and prepares to go to war with our Ministry I am going to be there fighting him with everything I have, and I can't do it alone. I don't ask anyone to fight, but I ask you to think about what really will happen if he returns, and how it will affect you. Are you going to tell your kids one day when they ask you what did you do when the Dark Lord took over, are you going to tell them you just stood there

and watched it happen? Because I won't, and maybe that means I won't have kids, but it doesn't change the fact that I will not rest until he is dead, and I hope I am not alone in that."

Silence was in the room first, but Neville jumped to his side first, as he had done many times this year, "I owe the Death Eaters for my mum and dad, and I will be with you Harry. Anytime anywhere."

Susan next, "Voldemort killed my parents, and if my boyfriend, and friends are going to fight, then I will too."

From there people began raising their wands. This was the second-time Harry had this happen, but this time it wasn't just members of the DA, and it wasn't just kids. Sirius and Remus had their wands up. Kingsley and Tonks had theirs raised. Amelia Bones. Harry looked around gratefully, and began to say something, but before he could he heard a scream, "AVADA KEDAVRA!"

He turned and saw a killing curse sail towards him, and he expected it would be the very last thing he ever saw.

(A/N) I will only say this...he was hit. Thanks for all the reviews love the feedback! Cheers.

17. A Powerful Reunion

Chapter 17

Harry opened his eyes and look around in amazement. The world before him was extremely white, and he was suddenly very confused. He looked around some more and noticed that he was in a familiar location. He was at Kings Cross Station, but there were no trains, and no people.

Standing slowly, he felt a little shaky, but none the less he could stand on his own two feet. He wasn't sure what was going on, but as he thought about what the last thing he remembered was, he knew he had been taken by the killing curse, and wherever he was now, must have been

what ever happened after life...

"Hello Harry."

Harry spun around at the female voice, and turned to see two people standing in front of him. One was a beautiful young female with red hair, and stunning green eyes that immediately left no question of who the woman was. The other was a male, which looked like an older version of himself with different colored eyes, "Mum, Dad."

Harry rushed forward and hugged the two with such ferocity they laughed lightly, and Harry felt tears sting his eyes, "Is this real?"

The first tear fell, and when it hit his mums shoulder she pushed him away, and immediately wiped the tear away, something that no one had ever done in his life, and he wanted to cry more. James spoke, "It's just as real as anything else. The question of how real everything else might be is always a question of life."

Lily smacked her husband gently, "Don't confuse the poor boy he has a pretty big decision to make and we were sent here to help him in any way we could."

Harry looked at the two bewildered, "Decision? Who sent you?"

Lily and James exchanged looked, but James shook his shoulders, "I don't know. No one does. Whoever is command of the next great adventure as Dumbledore calls it I guess. We have been at peace for 14 years though, but when we looked down upon you today we knew something had to have happened, because we thought you would join us instantly, but you didn't we had to be summoned to you."

Harry looked like he wanted to understand, but Lily shook her head, "Don't try. I spent the first five years, and I gave up. Now I just kind of go with it. I think the Marauders wore off on me a bit in my last few years." At this Harry felt a desperate feeling of lost clutch at him, "I am so sorry.

I never meant anyone to die for me. I never would have wanted you two to sacrifice yourselves for me."

James shook his head with a smile, "You're my son. I would've died a thousand times for you. Besides never fear, if I have to spend eternity in this adventure, at least I have your mother with me."

"Don't ever think we regret our decision. Your destiny is so great, and you are going to do such great things in the world." Lily said with a bright look.

"I guess I was? It doesn't matter now, and we are all together, like we should have been."

James said softly, "It's not your time Harry."

Looking at the man oddly, and then looking around as if it was all in his imagination he asked, "But I am dead, just like you two."

Lily shook her head, "No it seems that is not true. If you were really dead you would be in the next Great Adventure, but as to where we are now... It looks like Kings Cross. We think you still have a decision, and a destiny to face."

"But I don't understand I was hit with the killing curse?" Harry asked puzzled and almost alarmed.

James put his arm around his son and walked him in a direction a few steps towards a nearby bench, and then pointed out to underneath it where a disgusting creature that looked disturbingly familiar was writhing in pain, "What the hell is that?"

Lily smacked him in the back of the head, "Language young man."

James rolled his eyes, "It's Voldemort's son. Or at least a part of him. I believe when you faced him in the Graveyard you saw him in a form similar to this."

"So you two were there in the Graveyard?" Harry questioned excitedly.

Lily shook her head, "No spell can awaken the dead Harry. Dumbledore told you that."

Casting his head in disappointment a bit she added, "But we are always there watching. We saw the whole thing happen in the great hall, and are grateful our friends finally pulled their heads out of their asses, and I fully expect them to delve you into Marauder training this Summer if you are to return."

James nodded approvingly, and looked at his wife with much affection, while Harry asked, "So I have to go back?"

The parents just looked at their son sadly, "You don't have too. It's our belief that a train will arrive soon. If you take that train I think it will take you to us forever."

"But if you ignore it," James Potter said, "We think you will go back. You will wake up and no time will have passed."

Harry held his head in confusion, "None of this makes any sense."

Lily looked at the boy consolingly, "Look Harry. We will do our best to explain, but let me start with this. We are so proud of you. You have done so much, and believe me there are a lot of people who are going to answer to us when they finally face us in the next world, and Dumbledore is at the top of the list, because I think he knew all along, but Voldemort is in all practicalities immortal."

Harry stared at the women in shock and fear, but James started in without letting anytime pass, "Voldemort during the first war, and possibly even his young adult hood created these magical items called Horcruxes, they are basically containers in which you can put your split soul. As long as these objects remain basically those parts of your soul will never die, hence making you immortal. The process of creating these are very vial and evil though."

"To split your soul you must commit a true act of evil, and murder an innocent. We never knew until now, but we believe you were his accidental horcrux, and that he never meant to create you as one, which makes us believe he had created several for this to happen." Lily explained.

"The diary in your second year, Harry, you have already destroyed one of the Horcruxes with the basilisk venom. We have no idea how many he created, but obviously at least 3." James said carefully.

"I believe he created 7." Lily said with a bit of fear in her voice, "In my seventh year Arithmany class, I delved into magical numbers, and seven is definitely the most powerful. Three would not be bad, but I think that would be simply wishful thinking. The diary is a destroyed Horcrux, and he would've had to use one to regain his body, and then Umbridge just destroyed the one in you Harry."

His head was swimming with all the information, "I don't understand. So Voldemort committed seven murders to split his soul, and put each piece in a container to make himself immortal, that's..."

"Disgusting?" James Potter said, "Yes I agree. However it does not change the fact that he did it. Harry you were one of these things, because I can help you understand a few things and how I know... No Potter in History, and believe me it's an extensive history, has ever been a parselmouth, and Lily is a Muggleborn so you didn't get it from her, and it is hereditary. Also the visions you have been having by peering into his head, that will all be over now. You won't be able to speak to snakes, and he won't be able to peer into his mind, and vice versa. This is actually a good thing, because as Dumbledore warned you without being a master Occulemens basically one day he was going to rip your mind to pieces." Harry stared at the man with incredulity, "Fantastic. So what now? I go

back, destroy these Horcruxes, and hope he doesn't kill me?"

James put a hand on his shoulder, "Son there is a prophesy. It is because of this prophesy that one day I am going to hit Dumbledore so hard his head is going to spin around, but this prophesy is very important."

Lily spoke softly, "This prophesy predicts that you will be the one to defeat Voldemort. It is why he came after us Harry. It is why he wanted to kill you as a baby. It is why we went into hiding."

"But divination is a sham! Hermione says so all the time." Harry exclaimed.

Lily gave her husband an I told you so look, but then said, "I thought so too, but Dumbledore believed it, and Voldemort believed it, and that was enough for us to try and protect you. Oh how I wish we would've just stayed at Potter Manor, and fought, at least there we would've stood a chance, but we had no way of knowing Peter would do what he did."

James growled, "That's another person that better hopes they can permanently dodge me in the next life."

"Regardless. Harry this prophesy has been very much legitimized by Voldemort, and he will not rest until you are dead because he believes you are the only thing that stands between him, and the world."

Harry was beginning to feel a little dizzy with all the information, but James kept talking and put his hand back on his son's shoulder steadying him, "It's going to be okay son. You can beat him. You have my blood and your mother's as well. You have our skills, and more leadership than either of us would have ever dreamed of having. Harry twice now you have had witches and wizards give their allegiance to you, that's huge. I never had that happen, and neither did your mother. You are a symbol to the wizarding world whether you want to be or not, and I really think after your Marauder training you will be able to use it to the best of the

worlds possibilities. I have faith that you can do this son."

"It's okay to be scared sweetheart. It's okay to cry. We've got you."

Harry was scared. He did want to cry, but the best thing about those two things was that in this moment he had two parents who wanted nothing more than to comfort him, and help him through this moment, and to him the emotion that produced was way more powerful than the fear, "What do I have to do?"

Causing the two parents to smile Lily said, "Voldemort does not know his half of the prophesy. Go to the Department of Mysteries and remove it. Train with Sirius and Remus this Summer, and give it everything you've got. Go to school, and see how things play out. You may or may not get to finish. Voldemort will not attack Hogwarts for as long as Dumbledore is alive so you have some time to prepare. Once things go to hell, and you are out of options go and hunt these horcruxes and destroy them. I wish we could tell you what they are, but we don't know."

James looked his son in the eyes taking his attention, "And you give him absolute hell. No matter what you fight. You fight until you have nothing left. You are a Potter and that is your duty. You don't stop until he is dead or you are dead. Harry I don't give a damn if the prophesy is real or not, but what I do know is that he believes it, so you might as well too, and not let the bastard get you first. It breaks my heart to say this, but I don't want to see you again for many years, and I hope we can talk about the many Potter heirs that will bless our family with life again."

Lily smiled at her husband and son, "You go back and live your life, and follow that romance you are in now. So far I approve, and think you have been perfect gentlemen. Don't give up on it until you think there is no future there. Be a better friend to Neville, because that boy is showing you some fierce loyalty, and Harry please give those idiot Marauders of

mine a hug, because I love them and miss them so dearly."

James looked at his wife and was blinking back tears, "You do the same for me. One day we can be family again, and that will be a glorious day, but it's not today."

Harry looked at the two, and asked feeling very small, "Couldn't I stay."

The two smiled at him, "Of course you could, but we all know you won't."

Harry tried to gather the courage to say he would stay, but he couldn't because it would actually be the opposite of courage, it would be cowardice, and if there was anything in the world Harry James Potter was, it was not a coward.

Standing again the boy who lived pulled his parents into a hug as he heard a train coming in the distance, "I love both of you so much."

Lily embraced her son tears falling slowly, "We love you too son."

"More than you will ever know Pronglet." James said quietly in his ear.

When they separated, the train pulled into the station, and Harry turned to face it, but not before taking one last glance at his parents, and not before taking a disgusted look at Voldemort. He watched the train and admitted to himself that Sirius was right, but not quite at the right time... this was the turning point.

(A/N) Thank you all so much for the reviews, here is an early update as promised! Cheers!

18. Calling Out The Man

Chapter 18

For the second time Harry opened his eyes slowly, but unlike last time there wasn't silence, there were roars of anger, and sobs filling his ear. He felt two small arms around him, and felt wet drops touching his shirt. He took a moment looking and realizing that only a few minutes could have passed in this world since he was hit, and whispered, "Sue I really like

this shirt, please don't ruin it."

The girl immediately froze, but no one else seemed to be noticing what was happening, and she looked up to see two beautiful green eyes staring at her. They seemed different, but they were perhaps even more beautiful to her now, "Harry?"

"Who'd you expect?" The boy asked grinning slightly feeling pain in his body.

She hugged the boy tightly, and sobbed, "I thought I lost you."

"Not today." He whispered.

With that he tried to sit up, and someone nearby screamed, and a lot of people were turning to look at him, and it was only a moment before he heard running footsteps, and he saw Sirius standing in front of him with wide eyes, "Harry?"

"Padfoot?" The boy asked with a slight smile.

Susan backed up just a bit for the man to be able to dive bomb his pup.

Harry felt the strong arms grip him, and heard the man sob, and he heard Remus say, "That's not possible."

People were watching him now with shock, and some with a bit of fear.

Harry whispered to Sirius, "I saw them Sirius. My mum and dad. I talked to them."

This caused the man to freeze, and he pulled out of the hug and looked his son into the eyes, "What?"

"I have a lot to tell you, but people just stopped thinking I was mad, lets not change that by telling them that I think I can talk to the dead." Harry said with a bit of a smirk.

Amelia was at Harry's side a moment later, "Harry you need a healer. We saw the killing curse hit you directly in the face. There was a shock wave that through all of us back to. A shock wave of magic, as if a bomb had

gone off. We don't understand it; did you do some kind of wandless magic?"

Shaking his head, "I don't need a medic, not yet. I feel fine, actually the longer I sit here the better I feel."

Susan whispered, "You survived two killing curses. Maybe you are immune!"

Harry shook his head, "The next killing curse that hits me will be the last. I can swear to that. I think we have been luckier...I think fate has been on our side a lot when it comes to that curse."

He winked at the girl a bit, and she smiled slightly at him, but her eyes were still puffy and red from the sobbing and heart break she experienced earlier.

Neville approached offering a stick to him, "Harry here is your wand, you dropped it when..."

"It's okay Neville thank you." Harry said

When his hand touched the wand, he felt a disgusting rush of power shoot up his arm, and he dropped it in surprise, and he quickly yelped.

When the wand fell to the floor it broke in two, and Harry stared at it in shock, but not as much as everybody else. Sirius looked confused between his son and the wand, "What just happened?"

Harry looked at the wand a little sadly now, "I think my magic has changed, and it is rejecting the wand because it is a brother to Voldemorts."

Harry then thought for a moment then thought of a way to test to see if he was going mad, "If what I know is true it won't be the only thing about my magic has changed. Sirius summon a snake."

The man looked at the boy like he had lost his mind, but Sirius murmured something about slimy snakes, and when the snake appeared

Harry stared at it, and then said, "Can you understand me?"

The snake however merely stared at him and moved towards him, but now Harry scrambled back a bit, "Sirius kill it!"

The man without hesitation struck the snake, and Harry grinned at his girlfriend who also looked a bit worried about her boyfriend's sanity, "I am not a parselmouth anymore."

Everyone looked at him with more shock if that was possible. Sirius said, "You have a lot of explaining to do."

Agreeing with his father he said, "Yes I do, but not here."

The man nodded, and ducked under one of his arms, while Remus gently pushed Susan aside and did so on his other side helping the boy stand up. For the first time he realized his vision was really blurry, and felt around for his glasses when he realized he was wearing them he said, "Susan will you take off my glasses please."

The girl nodded thinking they were stabbing him somewhere, but when she took them off he said, "Please find some way to blow those out of existence I won't be needing them anymore."

Thinking her boyfriend was still coming out of shock, she just held onto them as his surrogate fathers took him out of the great hall and away from all the gawkers. The aurors that were supposed to take Fudge away had already left, and Harry asked, "What happened to Umbridge after she hit me with the curse."

Sirius looked furious at the question spitting, "She got what she deserved, and will not be a burden to anyone else in this world ever again."

Harry nodded not feeling the slightest bit sorry for the women who had cursed him in the back. In a way however he should thank her. In this moment he felt happier than he had ever been in his life. He had gotten a chance to talk to his parents, and get some invaluable information.

Things were going to change now, and hopefully for the best.

Harry said quietly, "Someone please make sure, Neville, Ron, and Hermione find their ways into this meeting. Susan your aunt needs to be there too. This is going to be important."

Susan nodded running back towards the great hall before they got too far. Harry's head was still spinning from everything that had happened, it has been a busy twenty-four hours after all. Everything was going to change. Well he hoped not everything.

It was only a matter of minutes before they made it to the Headmasters office, and sure enough Dumbledore was sitting there with Fawkes in his chair as if he had never left the school, "Harry..."

Remus and Sirius did not look that surprised to see the man, but Harry spat, "You have a lot of explaining to do headmaster."

The man smiled at the boy, "I fear I do as well. I hope you trust all the company you have invited to this meeting with your life, because it very well may depend on it."

The two marauder men just watched the verbal volley between their pup and the most powerful light wizard alive with interest as they helped him take a seat at the headmaster's desk. It was only a moment later before Susan came in with Neville, Ron, Hermione, and Amelia Bones.

Harry started, "Headmaster I won't bother to ask why you didn't tell me about the prophesy, because I am sure if you tell me I might try and curse you, so save that explanation for yourself, however I do want to know why the FUCK I was not told there was a Horcrux in my head."

Amelia Bones was almost appalled at the young man's language, but considering she knew exactly what a horcrux was she gasped instead, "That's what that was. The explosion, the dark magic, the killing curse ripped the horcrux out of your scar."

Harry couldn't turn to see Amelia, but he did look to Susan who was at his side holding his hand softly, "You were right love your aunt is brilliant. Madame Bones I guess you know what a Horcrux is, and for those who don't they are a soul container that one could place split their soul into, and basically achieve immortality. Voldemort created seven of them."

Dumbledore looked up alarmed at this, "How did you come across all this information, specifically that last bit."

Harry glared a bit at the man, "I think I am going to withhold some information for now to see just how much you are going to cooperate with me."

The man looked at the boy imploringly, "Please Harry, if Voldemort truly did create seven Horcruxes and you know this for a fact then it is far graver than I ever feared."

"Tell me this headmaster did you know I was Horcrux all along? And if you did how did you plan on getting it out of me?" Harry spat with venom.

The man looked into the eyes of Harry and he felt something brush his mind shields, that were small, but there, "Don't try and force it out of me damnit, use your words old man."

Dumbledore shook his head instantly, "Forgive me, I did not know for sure you were a horcrux. I had my suspicions, but they didn't really add up to that until your vision with Arthur Weasley, and you told me you were the snake that was the first big indicator, but you have my word I never knew for sure. I even had doubts because Voldemort never actually tried to control your mind."

Harry spoke sharply, "Well he will never be able to either unless we are face to face. The connection has been severed, and I can no longer even

speak parseltongue."

Dumbledore only looked minorly surprised by this, but Susan asked,

"Harry, why did your wand snap?"

"It's because Voldemort and I had twin wands, and I think my magic was always in tuned with the Horcrux since it had been there for so long, and now that it's not there, and there is no longer any inhuman connection to Voldemort, my birth magic is coming forward, which means all of my magic may have changed, as I have noticed I no longer need my glasses. My vision is perfect."

This caused Dumbledore to look fascinated now by this development,

"Interesting. I wish I had theorized more on you being a Horcrux, however I feared to do it too much, because every time I thought about it I feared I or Voldemort would have to kill you to expel that part of the soul. I never even thought you might survive the encounter its why I never tried to do anything about it, or try and prove my theory. You were quite the powerful young wizard, and I thought if it was true, then you would be at max potential with it in you, and we would have to approach the possibility at you being at Horcrux after there were no remains of Voldemort left in the world. I even theorized that if you were the last one he would never be able to return."

Harry looked at the man as if trying to detect a lie, but sensed none and sighed, "My mum thinks that Voldemort created seven Horcruxes, because of some arithmancy project she did in her seventh year over magical numbers. She also told me that the Diary, myself, and whatever he used to come back to life indicates that he had more than 3, but she did not believe he could separate his soul more than seven times without it fracturing, and him just killing over."

Dumbledore looked at the boy with wide eyes, but everyone was, "Harry

your parents are-

"Dead. Yes, I know. I saw them on the other side. I was there for only a few minutes. I got to speak with them at Kings Cross Station. I remember every detail of it. Whether it was real or not does it matter? I have information that even you can't deny is true, and I would have had no way of knowing it. The prophesy, and the horcruxes."

Dumbledore looked amazed, but Sirius stood in front of him now on his knees, and stared at his Godson, "You got to speak with them? Were they okay?"

"Happier than any of us. Dad said that there were worse ways to spend eternity, and that spending it with my mum would be great. Mum also said that you were to finish my Marauder training at all cost. She told me many other things, but it's all personal stuff that only a few of us need to know. I never knew dad called me Prongslet."

Remus stared at the boy in shock, "He only ever called you that when Lily wasn't around...He only ever said that to two other people other than myself..."

"I don't know if it was real Remus, or if my brain did something funny and reached for memories when I was a baby, but it was enough. I know the prophesy, what it says, and that Voldemort believes I am the one that is standing in his way of domination. Neither can live while the other survives. Does that sound accurate headmaster."

The old man looked a little sad, but nodded, "Yes. I guess I don't have to fear information leaking now that the connection has been severed. It is a little relieving; I swear it to you Harry that I will not keep things from you about yourself. I swear it."

Harry wanted to yell at the old man, but merely said, "You must face my parents for your sins, and I would avoid being punched by my dad when

you see him, because he really wants to. I also don't forgive you just yet, but hopefully you can reach that point by sharing what you have gathered over the years about Voldemort. We have to start somewhere about stopping him."

He then turned to Susan, "It seems you and I also have a few things that we will need to talk about in private later if you will grant me a chance?"

The girl looked sadly at him, and patted his hand, "Of course Harry."

Harry then turned to his Gryffindor friends, "Ron, Hermione, Neville, I think we could all use a good private talk too, so please don't think I am ignoring you all. I just want as much information as possible, and I can fill you all in on the holes later. I promise."

The three nodded and smiled at him. Hermione still had red eyes, Harry guessed she had cried when she suspected that he had been killed, and that made his affection swell for the girl despite their many fights of their over bearing attitudes sometimes, he really did love his friends.

Turning back to Dumbledore, "What can you tell me headmaster?"

The old man thought for a moment before saying, "It is my belief that Voldemort began creating Horcruxes right out of Hogwarts. Starting as young as seventeen. I have belief that he was looking for artifacts of the founders of Hogwarts to use as his horcruxes. I can't confirm this yet, but I have been digging around for people who may spoke to him from the time he left Hogwarts to the time that he rose to power. I am doing the best I can. I ask that you give me a few days to compile everything I have, and let me get back to you. Can you give me any hints as to what the objects may be?"

Thinking for a moment he said, "The Snake. Something my mum said, I think the Snake is a horcrux. Other than that I don't know. I can't even swear that the snake will be one, but it is my belief."

Dumbledore nodded, "I have had that suspicion since the attack on Arthur as well. Very well. I ask as your headmaster and your friend that you go get some rest Harry. It has been a tiring and traumatic day. Ms. Bones I grant you permission to enter the Gryffindor Common Room tonight so that way you may watch over young Mr. Potter until Curfew, where I expect you to return to your own common room with the escort of Mr. Weasley and Mr. Longbottom, Madame Bones do you find this acceptable?"

The stern women nodded clearly having remained respectfully quiet during all this, "Yes, and Dumbledore you have a lot to answer for. It seems you have kept a lot of information from my department, and we will be racing to catch up for information. If there is a hunt for Voldemort's Horcruxes, I want to assign a special team to help you with it. You can help me hand pick them if you like. I know you are partial to Kingsley, Mad-Eye, and Tonks, perhaps we can pick a few more, and get this hunt started."

The man bowed his head slightly, "That would be excellent Madame Bones, we will be in touch."

The women nodded and looked over at everyone, "May I use your floo network to get to my office, I fear there will be a mountain of paperwork to do, and a case to prepare against Fudge."

Dumbledore nodded, "Of course."

The women turned to her surrogate daughter, and walked over to her kissing her on the head, "Stay safe Suzie."

The girl beamed at the women, and watched as she disappeared.

(A/N) No cliff hangers this time around, the next chapter brings the end of the year and the start of the Summer. Cheers, and please review!

19. From Bad To Worse

Chapter 19

The end of the school year came and went quickly. With Dumbledore back as the head of the great historic school things went much more smoothly within the castle, however on the outside it was a firestorm.

With Harry having been hit with another killing curse in front of a hundred witnesses there was no keeping it quiet that the Boy-Who-Lived will be keeping his title for life. Of course, no one offered a reasonable reason for how he did it, and Harry and his friends intended to keep it that way forever if possible. The way they saw it was that if the enemy didn't want to throw killing curses at him in case he was immune or something ridiculous like that then that was fine by them.

At the Ministry there was currently a power vacuum happening within the Wizengamot and the heads of the departments. Fudge was convicted without even having to drag Harry into the trial, and was sentenced to Azkaban for 3 years. Nothing too bad, and Harry honestly felt the man had gotten off easily.

The announcement that Voldemort had returned had so far been met with silence from the Dark Lord and his followers, which left doubt in the minds of the slower people in the Wizarding Community. It was even speculated in the Daily Prophet that Harry Potter and Dumbledore had managed to usurp the Ministry, and have changed the tides of the Wizarding World. These articles had many of Hogwarts students bashing their heads onto the table or burning the newspaper with frustration.

Harry however was happy. Umbridge was gone. His friends were standing closer by him than ever. They had even gotten official permission to continue the DA under the restriction that a Hogwarts Professor must supervise it every meeting in case anyone was hurt. This

mean that Professor Sprout, Flitwick, McGonagall, and Hagrid were going to alternate watching over the group. They had only had two meetings in which professors attended, and they were amazed at just what the DA was capable of. They were even going to accept a new group of students next year and run two different groups for advanced and beginners.

When asked if they accepted students from all houses some were quick to say no Slytherin's but Harry remembered the girl who had helped him after being hit with the cruciatus curse, and thought that everyone had a right to know how to defend themselves, but he added into that he had the right to kick anyone out of the group that was not behaving with the level of etiquette that he expected in the group. This was agreed on by Dumbledore which left no room for anyone to question the final decision.

There was currently no Minister of Magic in Britain, but there are currently several names in the running. The one that Harry was pulling for was of course Amelia Bones, and Harry could not wait to talk to the women, and ask if this was something she really wanted, and if she did he would publicly support her, which according to Sirius would be almost a guarantee foot in with his backing right now.

The only other thing of note that had happened was the end of the year exams. They had been canceled for most of the students, but NEWT students and the OWL students still had to sit the Ministry exams, which had most of them studying hard over the past few weeks.

The test had gone pretty good Harry thought when he walked out towards the express with his arm around his girlfriend gently. They were already talking about when they could visit each other during the Summer, and had plans to do a lot. Harry told her that his Marauder training was going to be very important, but he was going to keep as much time for her and his friends as possible, because even though it

wasn't said aloud, the group had talked war strategy, and Ron who was the best strategist, assured them that they had probably a little more than a year before things went into an all-out war. That didn't mean there wouldn't be skirmishes, but war wasn't going to happen right away. That meant this was their last summer without war taking over their lives, and they were going to do their best to make it the greatest summer of their lives.

There had been a minor shock among the older students after seeing the thestrals for the first time, but it was quickly put to rest when Harry approached one and pet it with some friendly words, and then boarded a carriage with his friends. This seemed to convince most people that they were friendly, and they boarded the carriages to the express.

Harry was looking forward to a peaceful train ride, and meeting Sirius on the platform. He had never had someone waiting for him before, and it was kind of exciting knowing that big things were in store for him this summer, and that he would be well cared for this time around.

When they boarded the train they all got comfortable in a compartment with a similar setup from after the holidays the only addition was Colin Creevy, because he wanted to talk with Harry about hanging out over the holidays, and Harry didn't seem to mind the boys company as much. He had really changed over the past year, and he thought that Colin might just be his protégé one day, and he knew when they left the school he hoped someone would continue the DA and Colin may not have been a bad candidate one day with his guidance.

Sitting closely together in the compartment was Hannah and Neville whom had still not become anything official yet, though Harry and Susan both expected it was only a matter of time before the two hit off a little bit better. Susan even had hopes for this summer, and Harry couldn't help

but smile at the girl's enthusiasm. Just like Harry Susan was very much looking forward to an adventurous summer with her boyfriend, which she hoped would include lots of swimming, and dates, and dinners, and just time to be regular teenagers which sounded like her boyfriend hadn't had a lot of. She was excited for the experiences they would have together.

Harry asked, "So Ron, Neville you boys are going to come over this summer for a bit of fun right? Sirius promises entertainment and all kinds of new stuff this summer. He even wants to go to a quidditch game, and since he is a Puddlemere fan I suggested when they played the Canons, because-"

"You're joking!" Ron asked excitedly jumping out of his chair.

Harry and Neville laughed, while the boy blushed a bit realizing there was no need to shout, "Yeah Ron, I have only seen one professional match, and Sirius thinks that if I am good enough I should try and go pro once everything settles down."

Susan giggled, "Dating an international quidditch star does sound like fun!"

Kissing her on the cheek lightly Ron asked, "So we are going to see one of the best games of the year with our old Captain playing my favorite team...Bloody fantastic...just bloody fantastic!"

Ron seemed to be more excited than Harry had seen him since the Quidditch World Cup, and was happy that he could make his friend seem so chipper. Harry then turned to his favorite book work, "He also wants your help this summer Hermione to go through the Black Family Library and value some of the books and maybe sell some of them, or see what definitely needs to be kept. I think he was looking to pay someone to do it, but Remus reminded him that you were probably just as good for the

job, and would enjoy it more than someone else, while also getting paid."

Hermione's eyes lit up knowing that the Black family was very old, and became instantly excited. Neville just grinned at his friends, but Harry said, "Neville you will have to come over to Potter Manor, apparently we have a greenhouse, that I don't know anything about, and Sirius told me honestly that he doesn't have much interest in it, so maybe I can part with some of it. Who knows there might be something valuable in it."

"That would be brilliant Harry!" Neville said gratefully.

"Hannah you would be welcome to join him, from what this old boy tells me you are quite a green thumb yourself."

This caused the girl to blush a bit, "That would be awesome Harry, thanks!"

Susan huffed, "So everyone gets surprises and cool stuff, but me!"

Knowing the girl was playing he whispered into her ear, "You get a more special and private surprise."

This caused the girl to instantly heat up, and she knew her face must be matching a color that was close to her hair, as Hannah laughed, "Breath Suzy!"

This caused everyone to laugh a bit, and Susan gave Harry a look that said he was going to pay for that comment later, but he merely winked. He found it so much easier to be happy these days. He just felt honestly lighter than he ever felt in his life. He also fingered the brand-new wand in his pocket, and felt the warmth of it reaching out to him. Holly type wand was still good for him, but instead of the Phoenix feather he used hippogriff heart string, and it was a great match to him. He had never felt more powerful, and his spell casting was currently out of control powerful. He hadn't even wanted to duel with Susan as hard, because he was afraid of hurting her.

Collin asked, "So what are you looking forward to most this summer

Harry? Sounds like we have lots of great stuff coming up!"

Harry nodded, "Well other than spending time with my favorite people I really look forward to this Marauder training. I don't really know what it entails, but I know my dad, Sirius, and Remus were all brilliant with charms, and transfiguration, but personally I am hoping they are going to train me to become an animagus. I don't know how long something like that takes, but I would really like to be one."

Susan said, "That would be so cool! Do you think if you are one, and can complete the transfiguration you can teach all of us too?"

Harry saw that everyone in the cabin looked at the young leader with hope and he grinned, "I sure can try!"

This caused some short cheers, and Colin asked, "What was your mum good at Harry? Do you know? You always talk about the Marauders, but never about your mum? From what I have heard about her from Flitwick, and McGonagall she was just as smart as Hermione!"

Before Harry could answer Hermione said, "Lily Potter was a Runes prodigy. Professor Babbling raves about her all the time. They went to school together."

Harry raised his eyes at that information, "I didn't know that."

Hermione nodded, "Professor Babbling is always comparing Susan to her, because she is the best in our class!"

Susan immediately protested, "We go back and forth all the time

Hermione, you are just as good as I am!"

"But you are more creative in the area, which I think makes you a bit better. Runes aren't always done by the books, sometimes you have to experiment, and you are definitely better in that field." Hermione said modestly.

Susan blushed at that and Harry smiled, "I didn't know you were so good!

Maybe this summer I will look for my mum's old journals, and let you and Hermione look over them. Sirius said he has a trunk full of some of their old-school stuff."

Susan and Hermione both lit up at this and Susan snuggled his arm, "That would be great."

Harry kissed the top of her head, and then looked out the window thinking nothing, but blissful positive things. That all changed however when he felt the train lurch, and looking outside the window he knew they were nowhere close. Immediately he drew his wand standing up, "We're under attack."

These words sobered everyone up as they stood drawing their wands. Ron spoke confidently, but still had a bit of a shake to his voice saying, "We have to outnumber them ten to one. It doesn't matter, and they would have to aboard the train. We would slaughter them in tight corridors."

Harry merely shook his head, "Not if Voldemort is out there."

Hermione spoke sharply, "We haven't even seen a Death Eaters yet let's not jump to conclusions."

That did not encourage anyone to put their wands away as he opened the compartment door, and saw his friend Heidi Macavoy who was head girl last year marching towards the front of the train to get a better look. He called out to her, "Heidi did you know about an extra stop?"

She turned to look at Harry, but when she did a voice entered the train, and it was a deep voice saying only two words, "HARRY POTTER!"

Harry felt his skin crawl, and he gripped his wand tighter in suspense.

The voice was not that of Lord Voldemort's which made him feel little better, but it was clear they were here for him. He flicked his wand out,

"Expecto Patronum."

Prongs appeared in a brief moment, and he said, "Sirius we are under attack on the express. I don't know exactly where we are, but we need help. Please hurry!"

Harry turned to Susan saying, "Get a patronus to your aunt, we are going to need all the help we can get. Heidi, keep everyone in their carriages, and I will approach him."

The girl nodded, but looked at the boy in fear, "You're crazy Potter, but I have always liked that about you. I will keep everyone down."

Harry followed the girl forward, but his friends were in roars of protest, "Harry you can't go out there by yourself you will be slaughtered."

Shaking his head, he responded with, "No you all would be slaughtered. They only want me, and they probably know he must kill me himself. If we stand here he comes in and there will be a death toll. If we run we die. If we stay we die. If we fly we die. The only option is to fight, and I am the safest bet to reduce this turning into a blood bath."

Before anyone could argue anymore, Neville said, "Damn it! He's right. I hate that he's right, but he is."

Some looked at Neville in surprise having never heard the boy curse, but Harry looked at him, "Keep them safe, and move towards the front of the train. If it comes to it, then maybe you can lay down some cover fire."

Neville nodded, "We will be ready to join the fray if reinforcements arrive."

"HARRY POTTER COME OUT OR WE COME IN!" Came the same voice from before

Harry shook a bit in anticipation, "I won't be able to hold them forever, and this is only until backup arrives. Susan get that Patronus out. We don't have much time."

Harry kissed his girlfriend quickly, and ran out of the train. When he stepped out of the train he saw dozens of faces appear in the windows to watch their savior go confront the many masked death eaters.

(A/N) Next chapter is the confrontation!

20. The Battle of The Hogwarts

Express

Chapter 20

Nothing was said as he approached however one Death Eater stepped forward, "Harry Potter. I find it my displeasure to be back in your company again."

Recognizing the voice Harry spat, "Lucius Malfoy I find it my displeasure to be among a coward in a mask, why don't you take it off, you aren't fooling anyone."

This caused a slightly chuckle, and the man moved his wand in front of his face removing his mask slowly, "Very good Potter. Now we need you to come with us. We need a little favor, and then we will take you to our lord."

Harry shook his head, "No I don't think so. If you want to retrieve the prophesy you are going to have to tell your half-blood master he will have to go retrieve it himself."

This caused the only unmasked death eater to step forward, "How dare you insult our master like that. CRUCIO!"

Harry quickly dodged the curse and flung one back at her, with rapid speed, however Lucius merely flicked his wand to absorb it, "Now now Bella, we were told to bring Potter to the Dark Lord unharmed. He wishes to do all the harming himself."

Harry laughed, "I've escaped him three times so far, you think I can't do it again."

Trying to buy as much time as possible, Harry hoped to keep them talking, but Lucius grinned, "You're stalling Potter, and there is really no longer a need for that. Come on or we are start killing people on the train."

Harry took a defensive step back as if he was prepared to defend the whole train by himself, but a voice from behind him said he wasn't going to do it alone, "If you want to take Harry you are going to have to kill us first!"

Susan Bones was standing with her wand out and a group of at least twenty other students, and a few adults that he did not recognized possibly undercover aurors. Among them were all DA members, Neville, Ron, Hermione, Colin, Hannah, most of the Gryffindor Quidditch Team, Luna Lovegood, most of the fifth year Hufflepuffs, and of course Susan herself.

Bellatrix laughed, "These little ones know how to play, itty bitty babies."

Neville spoke with fire in his voice, "Bellatrix Lestrange."

Bella looked up, "Neville Longbottom right? Recognize the voice, though I am not used to hear a Longbottom not beg for their lives."

Neville quickly raised his wand shouting, "Reducto."

That was all it took, and the battle begun. Harry and Neville quickly paired off against Bellatrix Lestrange in hope of stopping her from going on a rampage, while Ron and Hermione began blasting at Lucius Malfoy.

The others paired off against the Death Eaters and it was a fire fight.

Harry was grateful that killing curses were not being chucked around, but had the feeling that if they lost to Bellatrix it would be shortly behind it.

Bellatrix was a demon. She fought with such speed, and returned her spells with such ferocity that Neville and Harry were struggling. Never

had Harry felt his wand move so fast, and answer his commands so quickly, and he could tell his spells were wearing on the witch, but also knew they couldn't keep this up forever. They had to put her down.

Harry summoned it up inside of him and let his magic loose, "Bombarda Maxima!"

The spell was so powerful coming from his wand that he barely saw Bella's eyes widen as she threw up a shield, and Lucius Malfoy was not so lucky. The spell was so wide he caught most of the impact, and he screamed in pain as the spell hit him and chunked him backwards, while now four casters were pounding Bellatrix's shields breaking them quickly, and taking the women out.

Neville wanted to charge at the downed Death Eater, but Harry grabbed his arm, "We have to help the others come on!"

The rest of the DA wasn't doing so great. Several had been stunned and clearly injured, and it seemed that they had defeated Bella, and Lucius at the perfect time, because their main group were quickly engaging the others to balance the battle. It didn't go on for much longer though as sheer numbers overwhelmed the death eaters and a few more from the train had poured out to help.

Harry was dueling quickly with one Death Eater, and then found himself fighting another, and another until all were either stunned or otherwise knocked out of the fight. Neville was heaving for breath nearby with cuts all across his body, "I think we did it."

Harry looked around and surveyed the battlefield. They had done it.

Twelve Death Eaters came in, and twelve Death Eaters were now stunned or otherwise out of commission."

Neville began marching forward, and Harry knew what he was going to do, and knew he had no business stopping him. He approached Bellatrix

Lestrangle and stood over her in what seemed like triumph. He pulled his wand back to blast the women, but suddenly Harry knew something bad was about to happen. He ran towards Neville, and summoned a nearby chunk of ground that had been uprooted during the duel and chunked it towards Neville. Some people were surprised, and shouting at Harry.

Neville himself looked at Harry in surprise, but in perfect timing a green spell connected with that part of the ground creating an explosion that hit Neville dead on and threw him backwards into the ground clearly unconscious. He heard a screech, and saw Hannah try and run towards him, but he grabbed her, "No wait!"

He didn't want to stop the girl, but he now saw a lone man standing in the field among his unconscious death eaters, "Hello Tom, I wondered when I would be seeing you again."

Voldemort growled, "No portkey to run away with this time Potter, and I have reliable sources telling me you can't apparate just yet."

Harry nodded, "That's right. No running this time. The prophesy foretold this moment."

Voldemort's eyes flashed, "So the old man has finally told you the prophesy."

"I have learned of many things Tom."

Voldemort roared, "Stop calling me that."

With a flick of his wand a red burst of light sailed towards him, but remembering the pain it caused him last time he was quick to shove Hannah out of the way, and dive into a roll on the ground behind her pushing himself back to his feet, "What happened to the formalities of a duel Tom! Or have you been shaken by the rumors that the killing curse doesn't hurt me!"

Harry knew this was a lie of course, but he didn't have to tell the dark

wizard that. Voldemort merely spat, "You want to duel Potter, is that what you want?"

Gulping Harry whispered to Susan who was standing nearby, "Get the others out of here...now. Go."

Susan looked at her boyfriend in fear as he stared down the Dark Lord.

Knowing she had no other choice she started shouting to the others, "Get the others and get back!"

Harry raised his wand to his face, and Voldemort did the same. They walked towards each other, much more formally than last time. They were face to face and Harry said, "No tricks this time Tom. Just you and me."

The Dark Lord grinned manically, "Finally the day the boy who lived dies."

They put their wands at their sides, and began pacing backwards. Harry thought it quite honorable that the man did not curse him in the back, and was grateful everyone had been moved back safely with the train covering them now. This was it.

Once they reached the appropriate distance Harry spun around not letting formalities dictate shit anymore, "Reducto!"

Voldemort didn't even bother shielding this curse as he dodged it and a killing curse sailed towards him. Knowing that this spell would be the last he ever saw he tried to dive out of the way, but found that he didn't need to as something had intercepted the spell, and a man was standing between him and the Dark Lord.

Before Harry could say anything his savior spoke, "It is not his day to fight you Tom...It is mine."

Turning to face the voice Harry nearly collapsed with relief. The young man was running off adrenaline, and trying to stall the dark wizard, but

now he had a chance, "The aurors are on their way Tom." Dumbledore said resolutely.

The students nearby shuffled anxiously sensing the Dark Wizards rage, and Voldemorts eyes merely seemed to turn a darker shade of red, and barked back, "By which time I shall be gone, and you shall be dead!"

With that the Dark Lord flung a killing curse at the two of them, but with agility that a much younger man ought to have possessed the headmaster twirled out of the way, and returned several quick jinxes. The battle quickly became one to the death, as stunning and lethal magic was being traded at speeds Harry never could have attempted.

He watched as charms he never could have even imagined were being thrown around. A basilisk made of fire, a conjuration of water that nearly drowned the Dark Lord, it was all so fast.

Harry knew that he could not let Dumbledore fight his battles forever, and thought if there was ever a time to buy the light some time it was now, "Bombarda! Reducto! Confrigno!"

No one was as shocked as Harry when his spells flew towards the man and connected. It was clear to the outside spectator such as Colin Creevy, whom had just made wizarding history by catching a picture of this feat, that the young wizard had cast his spell at the perfect time that Dumbledore had all of the Dark Lords attention. It was not due to any skill or power, it was just a miracle that he had fired his spell at the perfect moment.

Voldemort roared in pain as he felt several of his bones shatter, and he was thrown backwards. Dumbledore looked at Harry in surprise only for a moment, but a voice screamed behind him, "ATTACK NOW!"

This snapped both student and headmaster out of their shock, as dozens of spells flung towards the Dark Lord however; it was not to be today

that he would be defeated because he quickly got back to his feet, and apparated back to the center of the field looking positively livid.

However before he could cast a spell dozens of pops were heard from all around, and Dumbledore had been right, the aurors had arrived.

Roaring in anger that the Dark Lord threw a curse so fast Harry almost missed it by blinking, but Dumbledore was ready, and prepared to counter, but the man was gone. Only a second later multiple pops were heard, and the unconscious death eaters on the ground had followed undoubtedly by Portkey.

Dumbledore who looked very tired turned and patted Harry on the shoulder, and looked about ready to share the wisest words ever said, but before he could get them out two arms enveloped him, and red hair was all he could see, "That was the bravest thing I have ever seen you do."

Holding the girl tightly he laughed, "Brave? I was so scared."

Dumbledore nodded, "And that is what made it so brave Harry. Courage isn't about standing up to something you don't fear, it's about standing up to fear itself."

Amelia Bones ran her way to the front, "Dumbledore what the bloody hell happened here. We have injured students, and-"

Before the old wizard could say anything Harry spoke, "If not for the headmaster we would all be dead right now. He only arrived a few minutes before you Madame Bones. That was after the students and I had taken down a dozen Death Eaters, and dueled Voldemort."

Amelia paled, and when she looked to Susan she nodded her head quickly confirming everything Harry said, and she shouted behind her, "We need medics from Saint Mungos here now!" Turning back to Harry she said, "I am going to need your statement Harry."

Nodding slowly he said, "Of course, but perhaps after we get everyone

back to platform 9 and three quarters. We have injured Voldemort he is done attacking for today."

Amelia looked once again sharply at Susan, and she said, "Yes Auntie he is telling the truth."

"Harry!" Another voice came from nearby.

The green eyed boy turned to see a medium sized man running towards him, and he took a few steps towards the man embracing him, "Can't you stay out of trouble for just a few hours!"

"But then I wouldn't be a Marauder, would I?" Harry asked cheekily.

This caused Dumbledore of all people to laugh, "He does have you there Sirius. Now I would like to inquire who yelled to attack, I believe that was you Ms. Bones?"

Harry turned back to the girl having completely forgotten that part of the battle, and she was blushing bright red, "Well were all just standing there and Harry had hit him, there was never such an opportunity to hit him.

For a brief foolish moment I thought we had him."

Looking at the girl in awe he said, "You commanded my defense group to attack the most feared Dark Wizard, and even had the nerve to think you were going to kill him for me?"

The girl looked a bit abashed, but Harry grabbed her by the waste planting a smooth kiss on her lips surprising her, "I love you!"

This caused a smile to appear on the girls face that Harry had never seen before, and planned in his mind just how he would get it to appear more often, but Dumbledore interrupted, "While I am sure Mr. Potter's reward is most satisfying Ms. Bones just know I would have awarded you 100 house points if we were still in school. In fact I may still give you house points upon return. That was some astounding bravery and leadership. Madame Bones you have raised an incredible young woman."

Amelia stood a little taller, and gave her niece an approving smile, "Well she does have that Bones blood in her, but we need to get this train moving again. Students you can get back on the train we are only about an hour or two from Kings Cross, and I believe Harry is correct. If the Dark Lord has been hit, and they have taken out a dozen Death Eaters I think the chaos for today at least is over."

Harry nodded gratefully at the woman still having looked forward to getting off the train to see his godfather he turned to Sirius, "See you in just a few hours. Madame Bones we will come by your office as soon as we get off the train. I will bring Susan with me."

She nodded, as a medi-witch came up telling her that no one needed immediate medical attention except Neville whom had several broken bones, and some cuts across his body. Harry cursed at himself having forgot Neville in all the chaos he surveyed the field and saw him being dragged off by two aurors that he recognized as Gawain Robards and Kingsley Shacklebolt, and knew he was in good hands, "I will need to visit Neville too as soon as our meeting is over to know he is going to be okay. He was so close to getting Bellatrix Lestrange."

Sirius yelped, "You took down Bella?"

Susan shook her head, "The four DA Gryffindor leaders did. Harry, Neville, Ron, and Hermione took her down after Harry probably killed Lucius Malfoy."

Harry grumbled, "I don't think we were that lucky."

Before anything else could be said Tonks came running out, "Madame Bones there was some trouble on the train, Savage is having to arrest a few kids who were trying to lead a revolt inside the train to apparently help the Death Eaters. They were being led by Draco Malfoy, but were crushed by the head girl, and the seventh year Hufflepuffs."

Dumbledore sighed, "What a mess."

It seemed he had half a mind to find a way to get everyone to platform 9 and 3/4s without the train, but merely said, "Do what you have to do Amelia, but as you said we need to get this train moving again."

With that Harry hugged his godfather, and Susan hugged her aunt, and followed whom had followed them out into battle back onto the train.

Ron and Hermione appeared uninjured, but very tired, while the rest of the group still had their wands in their hands as if preparing for another attack.

When they reboarded the train as Harry and Susan were the last ones applause immediately broke out. It started with a few, and then even the defenders of the express were applauding with what had turned into a roar of approval. Everyone had seen Harry go forward, and risk his life to keep the Death Eaters off the train, and even saw him push everyone back as he went toe to toe to fight the Dark Lord. He was preparing to sacrifice himself, and they all knew it. They all saw it. People were applauding Susan as well for her bravery, and her defiance to attack the Dark Wizard, and Harry wouldn't let her shy away from the attention this time as he took her hand and held it in the air as a show of unity, and to show most students Hogwarts now had its new golden couple, and new champions.

(A/N) Hope you guys enjoyed that! I believe the next 4-5 chapters are the summer, cheers! Please review.

21. Summer Dreams

Chapter 21

"Well Susan any hopes you had of keeping Voldemort away from you died today." Hermione said with a bit of a satisfied smile.

This caused a reaction no one outside of this room would have expect,

and that was that the red head merely smiled, "Yes, but hopefully Harry will always be there to defend me, and get a good hit on him. If all I have to do is rally over a dozen people to throw spells at him I think I will be okay."

Harry grinned at the courage in his girlfriend, while she was holding her shaking friend Hannah whom was shaken from the battle, and seeing her long-time crush almost get killed. Everyone was a little shaken, but it was over, and they would be arriving at Kings Cross shortly. The green eyed boy hoped the press had yet to get a hold of what happened, but with so many students and aurors involved he had a feeling it was just wistful thinking.

Everyone in the compartment minus Neville looked relatively unscathed, and Ron shook his head, "I don't understand how you-know-who ever got this far. Today a bunch of school kids stood up to him and his Death Eaters, and while we didn't win, we didn't lose, and no one on our side died. If the auror department struck them with fully trained wizards I don't see how they couldn't do it."

Hermione looked like she was going to nod in agreement, but saw the look on Susan's face and asked, "Thoughts on it Susan?"

The girl bit her lip a bit before replying, "This was the first time anything like this every really happened even in the last war. In the ten years Voldemort rose to power he never led a massive assault during the daytime, and no one ever fought back they just ran. That meant when the aurors arrived they had to fight through the crowds of runners, and trying to defend themselves from the incoming Death Eaters. Today happened because Voldemort thought if regular full grown witches and wizards were too afraid to fight him and his followers, then children would just tremble in his presence. I don't think we will be so lucky a

second time."

Harry looked at the girl, "You mean no one ever resisted him? No regular witch or wizard tried to fight them?"

Shrugging the girl said, "Not everyone has your bravery Harry. It was also rare that he attacked hugely populated areas. He would raid wizarding communities, but there was no rallying point, so the Death Eaters were the only organized force, and they would do to those people what we did to them today, overwhelm them by sheer numbers. I don't think you lot could have taken Bellatrix if all four of you had not attacked her. At least judging by my aunt and Sirius' reactions."

Harry flippantly said, "Bellatrix used to be a Black, so I guess if anyone knows what she is capable of it would be Sirius. From what he has told me of his family they are very well rehearsed in the Dark Arts too so if she's got power and that she is formidable. She did also duel with Neville and I with practiced ease."

This silenced the rest of the group, and Susan grabbed Harry's hand comfortingly, as he was still clearly a little shaken from his most recent encounter with the Dark Lord.

Arriving at Kings Cross it was Harry expected. Another political firestorm was clearly in the process, and now no one could deny the return of Voldemort. He had been seen by well over a hundred students and aurors, and there was no more hiding. Stepping off the train Harry had Susan safely behind him as he drew his wand, and began walking towards the crowd the reporters were swarming him and his girlfriend calling out questions and shouting to be heard. Harry however was just becoming annoyed with the incessant people and was thankful for seeing Sirius at the end of the platform waiting to apparate the pair away from the platform.

They had already said goodbye to their friends when they stepped off the platform, and as they approached Sirius Susan yelped and Harry didn't even to think as he turned around and smashed his hand into a man's face who had attempted to pull her away from him. His wand was leveled at the down man as he barked out, "My friends and I just took on Voldemort and his followers what chance do you have. Don't touch my girlfriend."

Harry then put his hand on Susan's hip and gently pushed her to move forward, as he turned his back on the reporters who took down every word he had, and someone shouted something about an assault charge and the young man merely shouted behind him, "Bill me!"

As soon as they got to Sirius he grinned at his Godson and then took him and his girlfriend into his arms, and apparated away.

"That's it Madame Bones. I was lucky. I had some brave friends, and we took on the Death Eaters. We didn't do anything amazing we just stood together."

Harry had just finished his retelling of what happened on the Hogwarts Express, and the adults in the room were dumbfounded. To hear this young man tell it a little less than two dozen teenagers and a few adult volunteers stood up and fought the Darkest Wizard in a century and his henchmen, and not only lived to tell the tale, but seemingly won the battle. After Susan explained her theory on why she thought they had all survived the adults did give some nods to the idea, but truthfully none could get their heads around the fact that a group of teenagers did something all of them didn't do in 15 years of the last war.

Gawain Robards proclaimed after the prolonged silence, "The boys got ten times the balls Godric Gryffindor himself had, and the power to back up. If Voldemort doesn't kill him he would make a hell of an auror one

day."

Susan said, "It is Harry's ambition to be an auror."

Harry grinned at his girlfriend saying, "At least it is now. After learning everything I know now, I may be done hunting Dark Wizards if we ever survive this whole war."

The adults in the room took a grim look of understanding, but Susan frowned as if she didn't suddenly like the idea of dying in the war. Sirius however sighed, "Amelia we will keep the kids safe this Summer. Bones and Potter Manor are practically indestructible. It would take dozens of Death Eaters to take the wards down at either of our homes. They will be safe there. If they want to venture out they can do it by portkey in the muggle world, anywhere else I will hire hitwizards from America or the continent to escort them in case they need help in a fight. What I mean to say is I don't think we should let this dictate how our kids live their lives this summer."

Taking a moment Amelia took a long sip of whatever she was drinking and nodded, "I agree with you Sirius. I just think this has all been a bit much. In six months we have had the attack at the Ministry, the Greyback incident, the battle at Hogwarts, twice, and now the attack on the Hogwarts express."

Susan however countered with, "The battle at Hogwarts was going to happen as long as Umbridge was in power. You can only suppress people so much before they lose their cool and go into uprising. The spell at the Ministry could have been anyone. The Death Eater wasn't aiming for anyone in particular he was just hoping to kill a blood traitor. It's possible had Harry not run into me that day the spell still would not have missed, but he didn't take that chance. All things considered I think things could be a lot worse."

The adults didn't seem to like that line of thinking, but agreed. Amelia was clearly hinting that Harry was putting her niece in too much danger, but she was right other than the attack on the express all of it was merely imminent, and more than likely Susan would have dragged herself into each of these situations whether she was dating Harry or not. Susan also chose not to address the Greyback situation, as she did not have a good counter to that truth.

With the adults not saying anymore Susan said, "I was still hoping Harry was going to be able to come over for my birthday, is this still going to be possible?"

Harry and Sirius both looked to Amelia with blank faces. It was clear that her niece was challenging her, and neither man wanted to look like they were indicating support that would get them into trouble with the head auror.

The women sighed after a moment, "Of course he will be darling. It is as Sirius says, you will both be safe on the grounds of our homes, and we don't have any right to take away your lives to live as teenagers."

This caused the girl to grip Harry's hand again, and squeeze it a bit.

Harry merely squeezed back to comfort her, but then stood to ask, "Madame Bones, I have been meaning to ask you this for a few weeks now, and I need to know before I speak to the public about anything. Do you want to be Minister of Magic?"

The women looked surprised at his question, "I don't know what you intend by asking that question."

"I want to know if you want to be Minister, because Sirius and I believe that I need to back someone when I talk to the public about what has happened this month. We also think that with the influence of everything that has happened on top of everyone now knowing for a fact that

Voldemort has returned people are going to listen to me. Now I know your name has been thrown around for Minister, and I didn't want to support you if it isn't something you actually wanted."

The women merely stared at the boy as if she was trying to uncover some sinister plot in his offer, but said instead, "I do not honestly know if I would like to be Minister. I would not be the first Bone's to be one, however I would be the first female Bone's Minister, however I like my job as an auror. It is a tough decision, because I feel I could do a lot of good for the war effort as Minister, but I can also do a lot as Head Auror. I would also have to be careful because I certainly don't want Pius Thickenese to be head auror he could do a lot of damage as a Death Eater Sympathizer in that position. The truth is Harry I really don't know. If you want my honest opinion I think someone else would be a better choice. I think Minister is someone who must be ready to commit everything to the job, and now I don't think I am quite ready to do that."

Harry nodded, "Thank you for your honesty Madame Bones I suppose this means Sirius and I will find a different candidate to back."

Madame Bones thought for a moment before looking at Robards, and another auror Harry had never met before, "Rufus, Gawain?"

Gawain Robards shook his head, "Not me ma'am, I hate bloody politics. I honestly barely put up with being a senior auror, it is much easier taking commands than giving them."

"Rufus?"

"Perhaps ma'am. I would have to speak with my family about such matters, but I do perhaps believe I would like to be Minister. I had thought I wouldn't take the position for a long time yet, but-

"You can also see the advantage to having two veteran aurors leading our government in a time of war." Amelia answered for him.

The man merely nodded, and Amelia turned to look at Harry expectantly, while the young man eyed the auror across from him, "Forgive me for not accepting right away, I think I will have to get some counsel from people I trust on your character Mr.?"

"Scrimgeour, Rufus Scrimgeour Mr. Potter. I was the head of your father and Godfathers auror command when they started." The tall man with mane like hair said.

Harry looked to Sirius for confirmation while he smiled and nodded clearly remembering the good old days. Nodding Harry said, "I will get back to you soon. I would love to even sit down and talk with you some afternoon."

"Let's make it soon if you are going to speak with the public lad."

Scrimgeour said.

Harry nodded, "If it is okay with Madame Bones we could meet here at the auror office Tomorrow night? That would give me some time to talk it over with a few people I trust."

This seemed to satisfy everyone and Harry prepared to depart the Ministry and go back to Potter Manor for a nice reunion with his home.

Before he left however Sirius handed Susan something that looked an awful lot like a vanity mirror, however Harry gasped when he saw it,

"Sirius you managed to recreate the mirrors?"

Susan looked confused, but the old dog looked smug, "Well I didn't do it all by myself, Remus helped a bit."

"Brilliant!" Harry exclaimed.

Susan however retorted with, "Well what does it do?"

Sirius handed Harry another mirror, and Harry spoke to it, "Susan."

The girl gasped as she felt her mirror warm up, and Sirius helped her out,

"Say his name to answer it."

The girl nodded doing as she was told and then in the mirror it she saw her boyfriend looking down at her with a grin, but was much happier looking up to see the real thing, "This is wicked!"

Sirius threw two hands behind his head and continued looking smug, "Thanks Padfoot. Now I can know when you're in trouble, or you can call me before you come over. This is great."

This caused the red head to smile at her boyfriend's enthusiasm, and kissed him on the lips gently before saying, "You better get home so you can finally find out what your training schedule will be like this summer, maybe then we can plan a little better."

Giving the girl one last smile and kiss he grabbed onto Sirius as he portkeyed them back to Potter Manor.

"It's going to be a long summer pup, and we want you to have as much fun free time with your friends as possible, but we also want you to train as hard as you can so this won't be your only great summer, you understand, that right?" Sirius asked his godson with a bit of pleading in his eyes."

Placatingly Harry said, "Please Sirius this is already the best summer ever since I don't have to go back to the Dursley's what have you and Remus worked out so far."

Remus pulled out a small piece of paper and said, "There are three different regiments we came up and you can take any one of them. Its six days a week, and the hour choice is flexible. One choice is to get up at 5:30 every morning and workout till 12:00 with of course several breaks with Lunch and Breakfast in there as well. Another is you can start at 12:00 eat lunch, and then workout till 6PM. The third is to start after dinner which we say is at seven and work till 1:00Am. The first few weeks will be tough, but after that you will break into your own routine

and you can alternate on those schedules depending on what you're doing that week with your friends you understand?"

Harry took a deep breath feeling for the first time just how serious these two men were taking this, "Yes. I think it would be best to start in the mornings for now until I can get used to it. Maybe sometimes I will do lunch or dinner schedules, but I think morning is the what will work best for me, and I will have the whole day ahead of me."

Sirius said, "If you do the morning one, we want you to be home by 10PM every night, because we don't want you to exhaust yourself is this agreeable?"

Harry nodded and Sirius clapped, "Good, there will of course be exceptions to that, but you could also always just sleep in and down the lunch shift the next day if you had too, but Harry...Remus and I interviewed some of America's best and most expensive Hitwizards over the past few weeks, we told some of the one's we liked our situation, and they told us this was the best way to make you a dueling beast as fast as possible. I am sure you can imagine that none of the Death Eaters train like this, and most of the aurors don't either, but I'd eat Mooneys old sock if Voldemort doesn't start whipping his Death Eaters into shape after that embarrassing ass whooping you and your mates put on them today."

Remus nodded gravely, "Voldemort was injured at the end of the battle, and that means someone if not all of the Death Eaters that were in the battle are likely dead. He has been known to kill his own people in fits of rage, and I would not be surprised if that happened today."

"Considering the fact he expected to be the cleanup crew when he got there today, and instead he faced nearly two dozen teenage witches and wizards prepared to die fighting him, I also imagine he was not exactly the color pink." Sirius said admittedly.

"I understand, so what kind of workout will I be doing?" Harry asked

"Dueling training for an hour everyday with one of us, and hopefully a few extra people we can bring in to give you some outside help a few times a week." Sirius said

Remus continued, "An hour of running, an hour in the pool, and another hour doing calisthenics."

"And an hour of occulemency. Which leaves about thirty minutes or more where we want you to be researching new curses, defensive spells, and other things that might be useful to you. Our man Remus here used to be a book worm, and your best friend is a witch who could likely recommend you a library full of books, you have good resources on that hand."

Whistling lowly the slightly overwhelmed teenager said, "That's a lot of none magical work outs in there."

Remus agreed instantly, "Yes your core has taken a huge expansion. Because of this we want it to grow up to its fullest potential, and your previously impressive stamina we hope will pale in comparison to what we are going to build. You will also have two rest days of your choosing every week. You could take it in the middle, the beginning the end, we don't care. Every calendar week though you only get two, unless special circumstances are happening."

"Idealistically we would like you to do six days a week, but we still want you to live." Sirius added at the end.

Holding his head high he said, "I just hope this will help. Today I caught a glimpse of just how hilariously outmatched we are out there."

"Don't feel discourage pup. You stood up against the best and lived. Not many can say they have done that, and no one can say they have done it as many times as you. Just remember to be young, and on weekends

maybe you, me, and your boys, can party hard. Even Remus likes the occasional hammering of alcohol. Plus you have a very fine young lady that needs to be shown the finer qualities of men, so just be careful because her aunt is still head auror."

Harry blushed and Remus laughed at the boy, "It is going to be a fun summer. We are going to do our best to keep it fun and entertaining. Just keep your head up."

"What do we think of Scrimgeour?" Harry asked.

Remus spoke first, "I honestly have never known the man that well.

However, from what I know of him he is a light wizard, and a good auror. Dumbledore has worked with him on a few things over the years."

"Scrimgeour was a fair and tough teacher in the auror trainee program. I honestly never liked the man till I was done being a trainee. As a Jr. Auror we really didn't like him. But after he was funny, and ambitious, and he really liked to give our old head Barty Crouch hell. Which made us like him even more. He was also super liberal about using whatever magic it took to get his team out of it alive, which may be a good philosophy considering what may happen next."

Harry nodded at his words thinking, and Sirius added, "If he has Amelia's support to that ought to mean something to all of us. If she knows you could be one of the deciding votes in the coming election she wouldn't have offered a name that she didn't think would do well in the position, or someone she didn't trust."

"So, we are going to trust Madame Bones on this?" Harry asked.

"It looks like the best course of action for now. I hate to say it, but the next Minister will likely not be Minister for too long if Voldemort gets on a roll again." Remus said darkly.

Harry sighed, "Okay I am going to bed since we have to be up early. We

will train, and talk to Scrimgeour tomorrow. I need to let Susan know the current plans, and I also need to check on Neville I keep forgetting with everything going on."

Remus said, "I was already at Saint Mungos they said he will be fine, just needs some rest, and maybe some company tomorrow from his friends."

Harry sighed with a bit of relief, "Okay night Mooney, night Padfoot."

(A/N) Hope you enjoyed the chapter, and please review!

22. Press Conference

Chapter 22

The first few days of summer had gone within the blink of an eye.

Meeting after meeting, training regime after training regime were harsh, yet entertaining and productive undoubtedly. Harry Potter had been having the most interesting few days starting with his first day of training, which had been tiring and draining. The push on his body and magic seemed to be welcomed by his enlarged magical core as if he was years behind of practice.

Also a note of great importance was his meeting with Rufus Scrimgeour. He seemed to genuinely like the man, and his political aspirations were quite mild compared to what Percy Weasley might try and do given the support Harry could put behind him. Rufus wanted to bulk up the auror department immediately and open up applications to anyone that had slightly less standard of NEWTs than previously desired. No one was going to kid this man, and he knew the war that was coming would be ugly, and that the Dark Lord Voldemort was going to recruit massive numbers of not just witches and wizards, but several dark creatures that they would have to be prepared to fight. Harry admired the man and his belief that he could do this, but did have to concede to a few of the man's needs beyond just his verbal support. He made the request that Harry

dropped in and out of the Ministry a few times a week, and make public appearances that way he would appear to be in full support of the Ministry. Harry agreed to this, but said that he would only do this if Rufus upheld his promises. Gawain Robards even said that he would love to put Harry through the paces when he came in just to give him a benefit to it all.

All this led up to the end of his first week of summer where Harry was fidgeting with his dress robes, and Susan was straightening him up every time he did this. His tie was something he just kept playing with, while the red head smacked his hands this time, "Harry relax love. You are going to be fine. You did brilliant last year with the DA, and now we are going to stand in front of the press and talk about it. I have absolute faith in you, just keep breathing. You may be leading this conference, but the others and I will be right beside you just like we always are."

Hannah chimed in jokingly, "Merlin Suzie just take him back to a room and shag him senseless for a few minutes, that ought to take his mind off of things!"

Harry blushed deeply, while Susan glared at the girl, "Not helping Han."

Harry nodded shaking his head, "This is different. The people that gathered before were willing to fight in the Hogs Head. These people are just gathering for information to gossip, and quarrel with us."

"Don't think of it that way sweetheart. Think of it as recruitment for the Defense Association. We are going in front of witches and wizards who are going to spread the word of resistance, and defiance of Voldemort.

Harry...if you convince even one witch or wizard today to stand against them then this is a huge success, and I think you can convince a lot of people." Susan said patiently with her nervous boyfriend.

Nodding his head and sighing in acceptance Harry didn't say anymore as

the others slowly began trickling into Ministry of Magic.

Today was the day Harry was holding a press conference with the help of his godfather where they were going to tell the public the truth about the uprising at Hogwarts, the attack on the express, and even about the prophecy that Sirius and Remus helped Harry swipe just a few short days ago. They won't of course be telling the content, but when the inevitable question came up they would answer it carefully.

Neville, Hannah, Ron, Hermione, and Collin Creevy were standing staring expectantly at Harry and Susan, and Harry addressed them, "We are just going to stick with the truth today, and I will try and get us all of this as quick as possible. Thank you everyone for your willingness to help."

Collin smile at his role model and friend, "Of course Harry, here to help!"

Neville agreed with the sentiment, while Ron said, "I am just glad we aren't doing this just the three of us anymore. That would have made this whole thing pretty uncomfortable; at least there are seven of us now days to spread the joy around."

Harry agreed with Ron at this, and squeezed Susan's hand a bit, when Sirius came into the room he looked like all smiles, and said, "Are we all ready?"

Everyone in the group nodded, and Harry led the way behind Sirius into the floor network, where each teenager one at a time flooded into Madame Bone's office as planned. The press conference was going to be held in the auror department section of the Ministry of Magic, and hoped that this would allow them protection, and an escape if they needed it.

Rufus was waiting in the office, as he spoke immediately shaking Harry's hand and talking fast, "Madame Bones is talking to the public, she will be ready for you at my signal, do you have an idea of what you are going to say?"

Harry felt his throat go raw, and was silent for a moment, before Susan said, "Yes Rufus we practiced a speech, my love here is just nervous."

The green eyed boy felt his heart swell a bit, and smiled at the girl, and then nodded at the man, "Yes we have a speech prepared."

Rufus smiled at the teenager very quickly reminded that the boy was still young, and not infallible, "You will be fine lad."

At this the man turned and walked towards the door, and Sirius came over to his godson, "Here take a drink of this, it will help more than a calming draft."

Harry took his dog fathers flask, and took a swig, and immediately new what his guardian had given him, firewhiskey. This caused the man to wink at him and said, "Liquid courage, good luck pup."

Harry grinned at the man, and looked at Susan who looked at him unsure, but the young man said, "It's going to be okay."

At this he heard Madame Bone's voice clearly as the door opened, "Harry Potter and his friends as agreed are here to answer some of your questions and tell you just what has been going on at Hogwarts."

Harry led the way out to the open room where dozens of photographers, and reporters were all calling out questions and exclamations, but when Harry shook Madame Bone's hand and stood at the podium with his friends taking seats on each side of him he said, "My name is Harry Potter, and I have news that may change the course of history."

This brought silence to the crowd, "Many times over the years I probably should have attempted to come before all of you to crush rumors, and whispers, but I think my ignorance of this world has cost the people at this table a lot, and now I stand before you with nothing but the truth prepared. I don't want questions until it's over, and after that I promise to do my best."

No one said anything else, and Harry began his tale. He started with the first confrontation he had in Delores Umbridge's defense class, and the detention that he suffered and being forced to using a blood quill. He talked about how his brilliant best friend beside him had suggested that he start a defense group, and that led to the first time he had spoken to people about what had happened in the maze over a year ago now. He was then only partially truthful about how Susan and him had become a couple, and that he visited her on boxing day to talk with her aunt at dinner where he had told the head of the DMLE the truth about Sirius Black, and many other things including the return of Voldemort. He proceeded to talk about the Defense meetings, and the part all the people behind him played in the events that transpired leading up to where Dumbledore fled the school, and the battle that took place in the great hall. The next topic he breached about being hit with the second killing curse led the first eruption of questions, but Susan stepped to Harry's side, "Shut it!"

This caused everyone to stop, and she said, "He said no questions till the end. We will sit here all day if we have too, but let the man finish."

Harry grinned at the girl, as she winked at him and stepped back as he continued with what happened after the battle and his resurrection, and then finally what happened on the express. Then he was finished with the disappearance of the injured Voldemort.

Then the eruption began, and Harry inwardly groaned, but Susan stepped forward to help him, "Mrs. Boot?"

The crowd went quiet, and the women asked, "Thank you Susan, Harry, I am Victoria Boot, with the Wizarding press, you have now faced and survived an encounter with you know who more than perhaps anyone alive, and some people are calling you the chosen one, what is your

reaction to this nickname?"

Harry could tell everyone was raptly paying attention to the young man as he said, "Voldemort killed my parents. I believe that one day Voldemort and I are going to face each other, and only one of us is going to walk away. If someone else gets a hold of him before I do, I will of course be ecstatic, but as I get older the more I feel that I will be the one to fight him to the death, and I do not fear that moment. If that makes people want to put their faith in me, and make me a rallying point then I will do my best to kill the bastard one day. At any cost."

This caused Neville to use his mic for the first time, "Here here!"

Then the questions started again, and Susan said, "Lord Greengrass."

The man stood tall, and Harry thought he looked vaguely familiar, "Mr. Potter, Daniel Greengrass chief editor and commentator for the wizarding wireless who are listening to this interview live, and I believe all my listeners are wondering just what makes you special as you believe you can fight the Dark Lord?"

Before Harry could answer Collin Creevy spoke, "What makes him so special you ask? Maybe it's that he has more guts and courage than every wizard in this room combined, that he stood in front of a dozen death eaters and then their master prepared to die just so that they wouldn't attack the Hogwarts express. Maybe it's that he could teach 14, 15, 16, and 17 year olds the patronus charm, maybe it's that he is a beast of a duelist. Maybe because fate ordained it when that monster gave him the scar, does it really matter though Mr. Greengrass? He is brave enough to rise to the challenge which is more than I hear of anyone else doing since I stepped foot into this world, and it is why I stand at his side today, because I have faith."

Harry gave the boy a grateful nod, and thought that his 15th birthday

present was going to be something pretty spectacular to Colin this year, and waited for Susan to let the next question come in, "Ms. Bones, do you feel that you have placed yourself in more danger than before by placing yourself at Mr. Potter's side?"

Susan merely shrugged, "My friend Hermione over here said that to me just after school started back after the Christmas break, and I will tell you all the same thing I told her. Voldemort attacked my family in the first war. The Bones have always been a light family, and nothing is ever going to change that as long as I am alive. I believe myself the safest witch in this room, because I know for a fact if Voldemort came in this room right now my boyfriend would duel him to keep me safe, and give me time to run if I want to, but I would not. I will say it now, and I hope it gets to that creeps ears, if he is going to kill Harry he is going to have to kill me too."

This caused quick scribbles to be jotted down by everyone, and Ron added, "Me too, and I doubt anyone at this table is going to let Harry walk into that battle alone."

Neville added, "Just a few days ago Harry did what no one has ever done before, and that includes Dumbledore, he injured the man behind the monster, and it proves that the devil does bleed."

Collin added in excitement, "And I got a bloody picture of it!"

This caused uproar, and a demand to see the picture, and Harry merely smiled at all his friends as they had clearly riled the press up into a frenzy, "Mr. Potter who are you going to support for Minister now that you have ousted Fudge?"

Harry spoke calmly feeling his courage well up with all his friends standing beside him, "I am under the impression that my friend Rufus Scrimgeour is running for the office, and as he was an old family friend,

and even my dad's senior auror commander, I will be supporting him in the coming election. I have high hopes that he will do the most for our country in the fight against Voldemort."

This caused some interesting reactions, as some looked disappointed, while others looked thrilled by the news. Someone that Harry recognized as Elphias Dodge asked loudly, "Harry what do you comment about the special Hitwizard training you are receiving from the America's and the continent?"

Harry wasn't sure just who leaked that bit of information, but he shrugged, "I will only say that if you find out the Darkest Wizard in history is after you and your family, and you don't take some extra defense lessons from some people who have made their careers out of hunting Dark Lords then you are crazy. I am training with many people currently, and not to fight, but to defend my loved ones if the Dark Bastard comes calling again."

Harry calling Voldemort a dark bastard seemed to shock many people, but left others with a huge smile on their faces as they wrote their reports down even faster. Susan said, "More questions?"

Instantly half the room raised their hands and Harry sighed, "Ms. Skeeter, please make it good or Hermione will be making a public service announcement here and now."

The women shivered a bit in fear and looked down at her notebook as if she was searching for a different question, "You said you survived a second killing curse, and that there were dozens of witnesses for this obviously, why do you believe this happened?"

Harry cleared his throat saying, "No one in the history of our world has ever survived the curse once, and of course that means no one has ever survived it twice either. We are unsure why the curse does not affect me,

but we understand now that my mum was a Rune's prodigy, and have not discounted the fact that she did something for me at birth that made the first curse rebound, and the second one I absorbed, so the honest answer is...we have no idea. I definitely won't be jumping in front of the curse just in case, but anything is a possibility at this point."

"What about your business you conducted in the Department of Mysteries the other day? Would you care to give more insight perhaps on your title as the chosen one?"

This caused silence to ring throughout the room, while Susan asked,

"Who are you, and where do you get your information."

The women grinned maliciously, "Sadie Parkinson, and my informants are merely some old friends that may or may not have work in certain areas of the Ministry, are you going to answer my question?"

Everyone stared at Harry for a moment, while he thought on his answer,

"We agreed on the truth when we arrived, and that is what we will give.

In October of 1981 there was a prophesy made, and I am not going to tell you who gave it, or who received it, but I will say that the Dark Lord believes this prophesy to be true, and that he only knows half of it. It was the reason his Death Eaters came for me first in matter of fact. He wanted them to kidnap me, and take me to the Department of Mysteries to retrieve the prophesy for him, but obviously, that did not work out. This is the part he knows, and the only part I am going to share, The power to vanquish the dark lord approaches. Born to those who have thrice have defied him, born as the seventh month dies...and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not..."

Silence was like an explosion in the room as clearly, he had shocked everyone that was in front of him. Those of which were behind him merely grimaced a bit, clearly thinking of the rest of prophesy in which

mostly they knew. Harry spoke from the heart, "I am the chosen one. At least per the prophesy. The ending is not of much importance, but Voldemort does not know it, and I will keep it that way. I am the only one alive that knows it in its entirety, and that will not change until he is dead. I don't know why, and I don't necessarily like it that fate has ordained this death match, but I have accepted it, and I will do everything in my power to stop him from destroying anymore families. Or from taking any more loved ones from us, but I can't and won't do it alone. Every witch and wizard in this room has a wand, and I say this now, if you are not with us then you are against us. If you cross us out there from this day forward then I will only say we duel to kill."

Sirius Black came forward, and said, "No more questions...Harry."

At his pause the man reached out for him to gesture his way out of the room, and Harry wasn't sure who started it, but somewhere in the press someone started the applause, and Harry didn't turn around to see that some were even pulling their wands out. It didn't matter to him anymore, he just hoped he convinced some people to fight, because he and his friends were more than prepared for such a thing to happen. Harry grabbed his girlfriend's hand with a smile, and one by one he and his friends left the Ministry, and returned to his home.

23. Celebrations

Chapter 23

Susan's birthday had come upon Harry like a lightning storm, which means to say it was fast and furious. With the girl turning sixteen now Amelia Bones had insisted that they throw a formal party at Bone's Manor, and then at least informal party for just her friends and family at Potter Manor with the consent and help of Sirius and Remus whom were of course the only adult occupants at the manor. This had thrilled the

two marauders whom had been doing nothing, but research and doing their best to aid Harry in his training for the summer.

Harry himself was glad for a bit of a break because he had been training very hard, and it was getting to be more than he thought when his friends after the press conference asked if he would hold a class for some of the DA this summer at Potter Manor, twice a week, once for everyone, and then a private meeting with no more than ten to fifteen people including himself. Harry was at first reluctant to accept, but then Susan managed to convince him that one of those classes he wouldn't have to do much, and the second class is when he could just help the teachers of the DA, so they could learn some of the advanced dueling he had been practicing and sharpening their skills to help teach.

This had led to some of the finest days of Harry's life. There was one afternoon where over thirty kids from Hogwarts had come over to train with Harry on the grounds of Potter Manor, and the entertaining thing was that some of the parents had even come to watch. Harry loved teaching the big group outside of Hogwarts, and he even loved training with his friends, because they mostly did it late at night. There were some nights that everyone would come over at about ten PM, and then they would stay up training till 1 or 2 am having fun and working on their spell work. It wasn't all seriousness all the time, and the adults seemed to realize that when a few of the parents of his senior members came to watch their practices.

It was after all pretty at ease, and Harry was not harsh with any of them, and they all seemed to genuinely enjoy using their magic, which was exactly how it was supposed to be.

The party at Potter Manor for Susan's Birthday was spectacular and in full swing. Most of the DA members were there, and of course all his

senior members were there helping his girlfriend celebrate with style. Madame Bones was evening seeming to take off her working hat and enjoyed having good fun with Sirius and Remus, along with many other adult parents that were good friends of the Potter's and Bone's family. The group had even set about to playing sand volleyball in a court that they had conjured earlier that day with lots of help, and the teenagers were having a right blast. Harry couldn't even help showing off to his girlfriend as he prepared to serve the ball, and had it levitate above him as he stretched his arms and acted like he was getting into the zone. This had some catcalls come from some of the girls, that Susan merely grinned at and Harry called out, "Its coming to you Longbottom think you can stop it?"

The boy whom had grown quite a bit since his days as a small quiet Gryffindor shouted back, "I don't have to think about it Potter I just do it."

Susan who was standing to Harry's left winked at him when she called at, "Yeah, tell Hannah that!"

The boy blushed and lots of people laughed, but Harry took this moment of distraction and leaped into the air pounding the ball over the net towards Neville who was unprepared merely bumped up into the air where Hannah tried to get some vengeance and blast the ball back with a bit of unnatural power, but Colin who was guarding the front of the net jumped back to stop the ball from being spiked onto his side, and managed to get it back into the air for Heidi Macavoy to jump and smash the ball down onto the other side of the net effectively ending the game 25 to 23.

This led to great cheers, and for Harry to grab his girlfriend and give her a searing celebratory birthday kiss, and some cat calls followed, but

Harry just grinned as they separated. Heidi whom was walking by said, "Are you going to pass some of that love around to the rest of your teammates Potter or does Bones not like to share."

Susan flashed a wicked grin at the girl, "Bones does not like to share."

This caused some uproarious laughter, and Harry threw his arm around the girl, and Colin who ran over and high fived him hard in celebration of beating Ron and Hermione's team. The trio walked up to the campfire with most of their friends in toe. Chatter was light and friendly while the party came together up at the top of the hillside in which Potter Manor lied on. It had been a good day for Harry and his friends, and the night was still going a few hours later when the sun had gone completely down, and they were sitting around a bright fire with smiles on everyone's face. Susan said, "So what are we going to do for you and Neville's birthday Harry? I think you two are next in line, right?"

Neville shrugged saying, "Probably do exactly what you did Sue, will have a formal party at Longbottom Manor, and then something a little less formal, probably either somewhere in the muggle world or something I don't know for sure. It seems like every day these days is a blessing, and I will gladly celebrate it anywhere as long as I have you guys."

Harry raised his butter beer toasting the boy, "I'll drink to that mate!"

This caused everyone to raise their glasses, and Harry said, "Speaking of drinking too, I want to propose a toast...To the witch beside me, we have only been together about seven months, but she has given me everything I have ever wanted in life. She gave me my family that I have with Sirius, a home that I may never have been able to get too without her, and she has shown me something that I only heard in fairy tales...everyone here knows I love this girl, so please raise your glasses to Susan Bones, or as

they are calling her in press these days, the girl who stood."

Ernie McMillan stood shouting, "To the girl who told us all to curse Voldemort while he was injured!"

Roars of laughter and approval rang throughout the campfire as people rose their glasses in a toast to the girl who blushed hard. Harry however turned to the girl and gave her a kiss on the cheek, and reached into back pocket in his cargo shorts, "And this is your birthday present my lady."

The girl smiled at him, and took the black velvet box, and she opened it and gasped, "Is this..."

"A real charm necklace? Yes. The last person to wear it was my mother I believe. It is passed down from Lady Potter to Lady Potter."

The girl looked at him shock written on her face, and she looked at him in almost disbelief, "Are you asking me..."

"No not yet, but not because I don't want to. Sirius explained to me how Wizarding culture works, particularly among purebloods, and that should keep any unwanted attention coming towards you or your aunt. That necklace says you are with the Potter family, and I promise you one day I attend to make it legitimate, but we are still young, and it is soon, so I hope you will take this as a promise that it will come one day, and that if not it was because I left the world earlier than I intended and didn't get to make it official. Never take it off if you believe in us, because now it stands for our relationship, and my promise." Harry said quietly.

Everyone around the fire watched in serious interest, and a few with even broken hearts. Not because they wouldn't have the boy who lived, but at the thought that perhaps no one would. It suddenly became very real in the minds of even the youngest of what Harry was sacrificing, and what he was prepared to sacrifice. Susan looked like she wanted to cry, but instead she took a huge smile saying, "Put it on me."

Harry's smile lit the rest of the dark night, as he fastened it around her neck, and gave her hand a soft kiss, while she laughed, "You've been talking to Sirius too much you cheese head."

A gruffer voice however came from nearby as it exclaimed, "Ms. Bones I will have you know that I was quite the ladies' man growing up, and I intend to pass it on to my Godson, so that way he knows his way around the gentleman's vocabulary!"

Madame Bones, and a few women close by to him that had followed rolled his eyes, and even Remus had joined them while the kids laughed, and parents started calling for the kids telling them that it was time to head back, and that they would all be returning for training or future parties soon. Susan however was staring at her necklace, and noticed something odd, "Harry I am pretty well acquainted with the history of your family, and some of symbols on the necklace, but what is the dome building here?"

Madame Bones laughed behind her and said to her niece's boyfriend with a bit of incredulity, "You didn't tell her the part of your gift that you went the most trouble to do."

This caused the boy beside Susan to blush as he said, "I was going to tell her in private, but she was too clever for her own good."

Susan looked confused while Harry explained, "My family owns a little villa outside of Rome, and with your Aunt's permission Sirius and I are going to go there and power up the wards, and even stay for a little visit, and of course I wanted you to come with me, so we could do some sight-seeing. You know it might be our last chance before everything hits the fan."

Harry had known from several of their conversations that Rome was Susan's most desired place in the world to visit, and the girl looked from

shock to her aunt to Harry multiple times before asking loudly, "Are you serious?"

Sirius took the perfect time to announce, "No matter how hard my son may try Miss Bones I promise you he can't beat the original!"

This however just confirmed it with her aunt nodding with a smile, and she launched her arms into her, and then turned and launched herself like a catapult at her boyfriend who made it all possible, and whispered in his ear, "Think about all the fun we can get up too in the most magical city in the world.

Harry grinned at the girl and kissed her on the head as he wrapped his arms around her, "Happy Birthday Susan!"

"Duck down you are way to slow Colin."

With those words, Colin barely dodged a hex that Neville had flung at his head, as he took cover behind a nearby tree, and then began returning spell fire the moment he felt safe.

Harry was surveying the battlefield, as the final few people were still standing. Harry liked to break the senior members up into groups and have them duel to disarming in different locations and environments, and today they were in the forest by Potter Manor. On one team was Colin, Susan, Ron, and Hannah, while on another team was Hermione, Neville, Ernie McMillan, and Ginny. Luna whom had hurt her ankle a bit during training was standing next to Harry watching as he did and said, "Oh dear I think Ronald is going down."

Sure, enough as she said this Hermione and Ginny flanked him on both sides, but Harry said, "Don't count him out yet."

Most people would have looked at Harry as if he was crazy after saying that he thought Ron wasn't out of a fight against his fire cracker of a sister, and best mate whom knew more about magic than most of them

ever dreamed of, but Luna merely smiled respecting Harry's insight.

When the spell fire began towards Ron, he quickly dove behind a tree and cast the gemino charm on himself to create two extra clones of himself, as he had all of them dive out of the way and fire at the same time, "Stupefy."

Three spells flew, but two of them went towards Ginny whom spent so much energy to bat the first curse that was a fake away that the second curse caught her in the shoulder and downed her instantly. Ron however had a fully irate Hermione on him who was blasting him to shreds for taking out one of her teammates, and just when Luna was going to say I told you so, Susan came out from nowhere and began blasting Hermione with stunners, disarming hexes, and body bind curses. Hermione however was too smart to be overwhelmed, but cried for help which proved to be a bad decision as Neville came surging forward to have to duel with Ron while Susan was trying to destroy Hermione's cover to bring her out.

Susan quickly found herself against Hermione and Ernie whom had come from nowhere. Neville had managed to take down Ron at the end of this, which quickly turned into a three on one duel and the tides had turned rapidly. However so caught up in taking down the skilled witch they didn't see Hannah whom had managed to flank them from behind come up and take out Ernie with ease and square off against Neville whom she had partially hit with a stunner, and more importantly forced Hermione out from her cover. This allowed Susan to properly duel the girl, and not allow her to retreat behind anymore trees for cover as she was now freezing the ground around Hermione so that way she could not try to run on the slick ground. This led to a fierce duel with excellent charm work, and Luna in a sing song voice said, "They are going to win."

Knowing who they were Harry shrugged, "Susan can handle Hermione,

it's not like it used to be."

Proving him right Susan managed to push Hermione back onto the ice caused her to slip onto her bum and catch an immobilizing charm in the chest and disarming her with practiced speed. This brought it down to Neville whom was trying to get Hannah out of her hiding spot having to fight spells coming from two different directions, and eventually the two witches caught him with their spells and brought him down in ropes, and binded him tightly.

Harry grinned at the girl, but she smiled back, "I was still right about Ron."

However, the boy shook his head, "Ron sacrificed himself to take one of his opponents down, and to give his friends a chance to flank the enemy, it wasn't my favorite strategy because he could've been killed, but it did work for the purposes of the game, and situational practice. I could see many Gryffindors attempting to make this move."

Harry walked over and helped revive the downed members, and then walked over to Susan, "Congrats on the win, you lost two of your teammates, but I am not sure you could've won without their sacrifices.

Let me ask you though did you know where Hannah was?"

Hannah grinned at the girl who blushed, "No we were split up at the beginning, I thought she was out of the fight."

Harry nodded, "Well good job concealing your surprise in her interference, but what were you going to do against all three of the duelist? Your good, and I think with some luck you could've taken two of them, but there is no way you were going to take Neville, and Hermione." She shrugged, "Survive as long as possible, and hope that reinforcements would arrive. For the sake of the game I just thought I had lost and was preparing to make a stand and like you said try and take two of them

down, and leave only one standing. Of course, we all know how the power goes in this group by now, so I was going to take Ernie out, and try to take it down to two on one and attempt to take out Hermione next."

Neville asked with bewilderment, "You thought I was the bigger threat than Hermione?"

Hermione patted the boy on the shoulder, "You've got more raw power than me Neville, and she could easily match me in regular magical prowess, so she would beat me with her admittedly very creative tricks."

This seemed to make sense to Neville, but still surprised him none the less, "Blimey."

Harry laughed a bit then said, "Hannah Susan may have taken out more opponents, but I think you got the MVP you wanted. Had you not gone around and flanked she would've gone down almost certainly. You may have only stunned one for sure, but you are responsible for 3/4s of the team going down. Well done."

Everyone patted the girl on the back at this as they began walking back to Potter Manor grounds, and Harry gave more words of encouragement, and Ernie said, "Would love to see you back in there with us Harry. Teach us a lesson or two."

Ron snorted, "Harry has more instinctual tactics than any of us combined, if he entered the fray even against four of us at once I think he would win. Not because of his power, but his trickery, and ability to give anyone the slip."

Hermione agreed having seen a lot of Harry's tactics first hand, "Ron and I have almost beaten him dozens of times, but never actually managed to do it, even with Susan's help a few times we couldn't take him down."

Collin then suggest, "Well why not ask Padfoot and Mooney to have a go

with us to even it up. Maybe have just one of them at first, and if he still wins then we throw both into the match."

The idea had some credence, and Harry was feeling more in tune with his magic than ever. He had even dueled his dog father to a standstill the other day for nearly five minutes when he slipped up just a bit and caught a stunner to the face. Ever since they had started his animagus training he had felt more in the zone with his magic than ever before.

Before Harry could offer a suggestion, a voice came from behind them, "What if I offered my assistance instead for one round."

The whole group turned drawing their wands and pointing it at the new arrival, before they all lowered them seeing someone they hadn't expected to see, "Headmaster, what are you doing here?" Harry asked inquisitively.

The man smiled jovially, "I came here to speak with you my boy, and your godfather sent me out here, which led me to see you and your friends engaging in that wonderful game of tactics. I would love to play myself as this old wizard does not get to experiment much with such things anymore, but I assure you in my youth I would have loved something like this."

This caused some excited chatter, but Harry shrugged, "I don't know if there is any fair way to divide up the teams Headmaster."

The man frowned for a moment before shaking his head, "The 9 of you vs. myself, your godfather, and Remus Lupin. That allows you three to every one of us. Just for a bit of fun I assure you."

At first Harry just stared at the man, and most of the group thought he was going to tell the man to bugger off, and perhaps when he had a Horcrux in his head he might have, but he was not that man anymore, and proved it by smiling, "You get to tell the two old men the rules, while

I prepare my troops. You are on Professor."

This caused cheers to go up on his side, and Harry smiled at his friends as the man apparated away. Hermione however breathlessly said, "We are in way over our heads, you all saw how he dueled Voldemort right?"

Susan however said, "That was for real though with lethal magic, and anything that goes. I actually think we are at the advantage here."

Everyone but Ron and Harry looked at her like she was crazy, but Ron agreed first, "She is right. Dumbledore must seriously limit what he does to us, and he will not have done anything like this before. We all however know the forest and know the rules and tactics. I think we have a chance if we can gang up on him quick enough."

Harry agreed, "If we try and fight the three of them or let them gang up on us were going to get wrecked, so this is what we are going to do."

The green-eyed leader started quietly talking over his plan with his friends and they all grinned evilly when he finished and asked, "Well?"

Susan put an arm around him, "I think its very sexy, when you get all smart and tactical."

This caused some groans for the group and Colin to laugh, "Get a room you two."

That is when Dumbledore appeared coming from the house with two marauders at his side.

(A/N) More to come!

24. Living Life

Chapter 24

"Ernie get down!"

Harry was the boys side in an instant blasting his godfather back with the reinforcements of Susan and Neville who had stuck to him like glue since the battle had started. "Remus on our left, Reducto!" Susan cried out.

Harry turned and saw the man had his shield up and threw a shield breaker as Neville threw stunner after stunner. This caught the werewolf by surprise, but instead of doing advanced magic, he apparated away to safety, while sounds of loud spell fire rang out.

To the untrained ear they would have missed it, but Harry was not untrained as he whirled around to catch a stunner that Albus Dumbledore had fired at him, and his two friends besides him, along with three others who were running together all fired spells at Dumbledore who threw his wand in a sideways slashing motion creating a massive shield that went almost all the way around his body from head to toe, everyone gasped and stared, and this cost Ernie his part in the duel as he was stunned by Dumbledore in the blink of an eye. Harry growled talking to Neville, "Go fill Ernie's spot and protect Hannah as if your life depended on it, Susan and I can handle Sirius."

The boy nodded and went to fill in where the fallen Hufflepuff had been, and the group of Hannah, Neville, and Ron were now trading rapid spell fire with Remus who was clearly getting tired for all the apparating he had been doing.

Sirius on the other hand had begun his attempt to snipe his Godson from faraway with advanced stunners, but Susan has his back covered well, and even returned a few spells of her own, and this time when Sirius apparated Harry barked out, "NOW!"

As planned the five closest duelists all turned towards the direction that Harry shouted and blasted Sirius off his feet hard, when over a dozen spells overwhelmed him and left no time for him to escape. This meant it was now 7 vs 2 with Colin and Ernie already out of the duel.

Harry grabbed Susan's arm tightly, and said, "Back to back we can do this. We have to at least take out Remus, and if all 7 of us fight

Dumbledore he can't win."

Harry began trotting with Susan right on his tail towards what was left of the two other groups, and suddenly two pops were heard, and Remus managed to appear, and stun Hannah to the ground hard, and then apparate away only to reappear and stun Luna as well. This however cost the man as when he reappeared to stun Neville he was taken down by three separate stunners with no time to block at all.

Harry didn't like these odds as well, five against one to beat Dumbledore. Ron, Hermione, Neville, Susan and himself against the greatest light wizard since Merlin himself. Even with sheer numbers this couldn't go as well as he hoped it would.

They all quickly fell into a formation where every direction was covered, and Neville roared out, "I've never felt so alive! We can take him Harry, even if four of us go down I think we can take him. If four of us had to die for you to kill Voldemort I would be happy with that."

Harry shook his head, "I wouldn't. I think we need to treat this like it is Voldemort, let me go forward and attack him, and try and throw him off kilter, and then you four can sweep in and help me when he least expects it. Follow my plan, and maybe this will work out."

They all looked at him wildly, and he just grinned as he imagined himself with destination, deliberation, and determination, and with the image in his head he willed himself to appear in the closest known location where Dumbledore might be hiding and when he landed he shouted, "Come on Dumbledore. One on one! This is what you wanted right."

Dumbledore appeared behind the young man and said softly, "In fact Harry there is nothing less in the world I want. I hoped we would never have to cross wands, and I still pray we never do, but I believe I can help you, and if I can do anything in your fight against Voldemort then I will.

You don't have the Horcrux anymore, which means there will be no need for your sacrifice, I now pull for you to walk out of this and live a long happy life. Allow me to demonstrate just what I can teach you."

The man raised his wand, and Harry raised his just as fast, and at once went on the defense as jets of red light, and bits of sharp fire flew towards him. The old man's hand was a blur of wand movement, and Harry could hardly comprehend the speed. However, he rolled behind him to dodge a scary looking fire whip that came towards him, and then fired out, "Expecto Patronum!"

The patronus hit the ground fast, and the spells immediately stopped coming towards him, and Harry shouted, "Get him prongs!"

The stag made a sharp exhale and darted off towards the man, and Harry popped out on the other side of the tree and attempted to take the offensive stance from the man, but it was no luck. Dumbledore conjured some type of dark shield that enveloped the patronus and stopped it in its tracks, while also shielding the first of Harry's spells and then transfiguring an entire section of trees into a dragon, and Harry just stared in awe as the creature formed and then stalked his way towards him.

Diving behind larger cover Harry swore where were they. Turning his wand towards nearby tree branches he quickly began turning them into swords and levitating them as he felt the presence of Dumbledore's magic approach he knew he had to act quickly or his cover would collapse, and he would go down to soon. With a prayer and the hope of a final stand he grabbed his newly transfigured swords, and apparated once again to the other side of where Dumbledore had been standing, but as he expected Dumbledore had moved, but this allowed him the chance to fling the swords at the man's dragon and stick the beast hard enough where it

crumbled to the ground. Thankful for having listened to his head of houses lectures in transfiguration he knew that while the creature may have looked like a dragon it was still in fact not a dragon much like his swords weren't swords, but they were sharpened transfigurations of sticks that allowed him to destroy his enemy with the force of his magic. Now to execute his plan. He quickly began waving his wand around, and whispering quietly to himself, and finished his incantations, and then peaked up behind his covering looking for Dumbledore. Now he just had to...

Before Harry could even finish his thoughts, Dumbledore was on him, and this time Harry knew he was screwed. The man was moving towards him with a flurry of jinxes, hexes, and curses, and Harry's legs were dancing, he felt his body being knocked backwards a bit as he was doing his best to stay on his feet, and then before he knew it he had lost control of his wand, and stood there weaponless in front of Dumbledore, "You did splendidly my boy, but what you lack is variety."

Harry merely grinned as he held up his hands in surrender, and suddenly from four different directions spells were flying towards the old man, and he looked concentrated and acted as if he was going to apparate away, but he seemed unable too, and instead flicked his wand around to block all the spells, but he could not. Harry had planned it all down to the T, and when the headmaster was disarmed, and bounded Harry smiled at the man, "But what you lack Headmaster is creativity."

The man just stared at the boy in awe, and said, "An anti-apparation ward, how on Earth..."

"Did I manage it? I had help. You see I sent off Hermione and Hannah two brilliant ancient Rune's witches to begin setting up the ward at the beginning of the fight. Then I had Susan go by and make sure it was all

working before she rejoined me. After she told me all I had to do was activate the ward I apparated over here and began to duel you one on one while everyone else began running in their own directions to surround you. You see I am the only one that can apparate, and admittedly, I haven't done it enough to try and side along anyone yet, or maybe I might not have been disarmed, but it was a trap all from the beginning. Our hope was to only lose two to Sirius and Remus, that way Susan and I could power the ward together, but we managed when we had just the five of us. Had you been Voldemort we would've all been firing lethal magic at you in the center, and of course the obvious thing to do is to apparate away, but by the time you realize you couldn't it wouldn't be too late, and it would force you to the shield. I told everyone to use different curses though that way no one basic or advanced shield would work on it."

Dumbledore looked at each of the teenagers, and then just took a deep breath, "Well it seems the students have become the teachers. I should have disposed of you all much quicker, and in a group. Not fall for the bait."

Harry smiled at the old man for the first time and canceled all the spells, "To be fair we had a pretty solid plan, and you haven't ever been in these woods before. We had the location, and everything planned from where we usually have our duels. This would only work if there was an attack on Potter Manor in which case I don't think anyone could beat all nine of us if we had a few minutes to plan."

Sirius whom had just arrived on the scene merely laughed, "They got you Dumbledore?"

The old man looked jovially at the old prankster and said, "Certainly. We were just pranked I believed and made to think that our knowledge

would be superior to developed strategy and tactics, and they humbled us by reminding me that we should've worked a bit better together instead of trying to thin them out. I am most impressed."

Susan spoke to the headmaster carefully, "Harry has planned out dozens of scenarios that we might fight Death Eaters in and we have practiced some of them, and we try and of course keep the casualties as light as possible. We would love to do this at Hogwarts sometime while no one was in the school. I think we all know one day Hogwarts will be attacked..."

Dumbledore looked at the girl for a moment and sighed, "You are right Ms. Bones I will see what I can do about letting you all run one of these training practices in the Hogwarts grounds, and let some of my teachers and staff watch, and perhaps have the bases of a plan in case of invasion."

Harry quickly said, "Not Snape sir."

"Professor Snape Harry, and I have told you before that I trust him with my life." Dumbledore said seriously.

"I am not saying you shouldn't tell him because I don't trust him headmaster, I am saying that if it ever got to Voldemort's ears that we had developed a strategy to fight his invasion then he would force it out of Snape at any cost to make it an easier shot at me. Professor Snape is in enough danger as it is and telling him these tactics would only endanger him more." Harry said defensively.

The man thought for a moment and then nodded, "Yes I do believe you are right actually. We shall discuss this more over a one on one training session where I will do my best to teach you some spell variety, and perhaps even a thing or two about your enemy that I am certain you are not aware of. I will also give you notes that perhaps you, Ms. Granger, and Ms. Bones can decipher to teach yourselves, however I caution you

against teaching to many, as you never know who your enemy might one day be."

With that cryptic message the old man asked, "Do you accept my offer Mr. Potter?"

Harry glanced around to his friends whom all had excited looks on their faces and just grinned, "Of course headmaster that would be great, but only if you call me Harry outside of school."

The man smiled, and then clapped his hands, "Excellent, then until our first lesson Harry...Sirius...Remus...Students."

With his farewell, he suddenly disappeared with one of the loudest cracks of apparition Harry had ever heard and Susan and Hermione just gawked, and no one had to comment to realize that Dumbledore had just gone right through their anti-apparition ward.

It had been a long day of training for Harry as his first month of summer had already passed, and all was well. He would have to rectify that thought, because all was only well in his world, because on the outside things were not going as well. Dementor attacks had been happening in mass numbers out in the muggle world, and random disaster had been triggered by Death Eaters no doubt. Also, the disappearances had gotten worse and worse.

These were things that Harry was trying not to let bother him. He was only a few days away from leaving for Rome with Susan for a week, and that was going to be awesome.

Over the past month, Harry's dueling prowess had likely doubled. All his training with Gawain Robards and Kingsley Shacklebolt had been helping a lot anytime he went in for a meeting with newly appointed Minister Scrimgeour, and of course Harry through his backing behind most of the things the Minister did. There was one incident that Harry had read

about in the paper that caused to major argument to happen between him and the old auror, but after both heads had calmed Rufus had agreed to release Stan Shunpike, and make sure that he was given protection from the Imperious curse just in case.

Also, the training he had been receiving with Dumbledore was quite educational and not just magically. Harry had been shown some memories of every encounter the headmaster had with Voldemort along with a few from Severus Snape whom had just seen him action. Now that the old man new just how great at tactics Harry and his friends were he was determined to show him as much as the dark wizards fighting style as he could and attempt to allow them to create some tactics against the man, but each time Harry watched he just thought the man was overly powerful, and quick to the draw. He thought the fact that the man had underestimated him each time they had met was the only reason he was still alive, and after watching the duel between Dumbledore and Grindelwald he thought the same thing about the headmaster as well.

It was only yesterday when Harry had managed to beat his godfather in a best of three duel, and he had yet to get there with Remus who was a bit craftier than Sirius. It was odd how certain types of dueling styles worked against others, because Sirius beats Remus nearly every time, but Harry could hardly ever beat his old Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher.

Susan had also on intimate night told him how much she loved his training affected him, and his body, and of course that had made the boy reach an all new level of scarlet, as she was making a habit of touching his chest and arms a lot. He knew she was mostly teasing, but secretly also hoped she did enjoy all his hard work, and how it affected him physically, after all he did very much appreciate her physically.

It was nearly 2am, and Harry had just finished his short training session

with his guy friends, and they were all hanging out up in his room now as he was packing for his trip in just a few short days. The day before had been a long one as they had finally gotten to see the Cannons take on Puddlemere United, and they even got to go on the actual field and go into the Puddlemere Locker rooms, after Harry had written to his old quidditch captain Oliver Wood, and the man was ecstatic that his old star player was coming to watch him play.

Neville, Ron, and Collin had joined him, Sirius, and Remus, while Ernie was the only one who was unable to go since he was up in the far north with his Scottish side of the family for the rest of his summer. It had been a real blast even when Puddlemere thrashed on the Canons. Ron wasn't too happy, but he was also pleased because Oliver had been the star player and was unstoppable and on a high as Chudley could just not get any goals in against him.

Harry decided he was now going to be a Puddlemere United Fan for as long as Wood played for them and even bought a Wood Jersey when he was out at the stadium, and asked jokingly if Wood would sign it, but the Keeper whom was so happy after his win did it in a heartbeat, and thanked the boy for coming up and supporting him, and even graciously allowed Sirius to fanboy over him as he had been a Puddlemere fan since he had met Harry's dad in the sixties!

Neville whom was just talking with Ron with a goofy grin on his face asked slyly, "So Harry any chance you and Susan are going to be sharing a room in Italy next week?"

Ron who caught Neville's wink said, "Ah come off it Neville we all know Harry can barely keep his hands off her, I think he is finally going to just figure out all the Bones' secrets."

Harry who went red merely fake laughed, "Ha ha, Sirius and Remus will

both be there, and I doubt we will have too much private alone time.

Sirius and I are going to power up the wards the first day, and then we are going to do some sight-seeing in the city and visit the magical area that they have. It isn't going to be much, and then we will be back on Neville's birthday for the party at Longbottom Manor."

Colin whom had matured a lot thanks to hanging out with an older group of boys said, "Just something about red headed girls man."

Ron seemed to agree with this only for a moment before saying, "OI! My sister is a red head."

Neville and Harry both laughed as Colin flinched and reached for his wand in case he had to defend himself, "Oh yeah that's right, speaking of which, Ron I would like permission to ask your sister out to Hogsmeade." Silence rang throughout the room, Neville and Harry exchanged nervous looks as Ron seemed to turn an interesting shade of red, and when he jumped out of his chair towards Colin, Harry and Neville jumped in between them holding Ron back from killing the poor boy, but Ron merely laughed while drawing his wand, "Creevy if you think I am going to let you take out my sister..."

Collin looked instantly downtrodden and Harry and Neville glared at the red head, but he winked at them surprising them both, "Then you are absolutely right. You better treat her well though or you are going to answer to me plus five more just like me. Not to mention that bat boogey hex hurts like the devil."

Sighing and taking a deep breath of relief Harry and Neville stepped away while Ron laughed, "You two should have seen your faces, you actually thought I was going to kill the kid!"

Neville shook his head, "You turned all red, and we thought for sure we would be picking up pieces of Colin."

Colin protested, "Hey!"

Ron laughed however, "At first I was mad, but then I realized that she could do worse, and I here that Seamus fantasies her, and so does that git Michael Corner, I would rather another Gryffindor steal her heart you know."

Giving some nods approval the door opened and Sirius snuck in with an innocent face, "What's going on up here boys? Anything exciting?"

Neville casually said, "Oh just watching Ron almost murder Colin nothing to big."

Sirius looked at Harry, but Colin said, "Ron gave me permission to take Ginny out."

Sirius grinned at the boy, "Good on you lad. I wish you the best, she is pretty young witch, but I just wanted to give you boys a little gift that my friends and I would've killed for at your age. We will call this the guys celebration of Neville and Harry's sixteenth birthday before anyone else gets to celebrate it."

Sirius pulled two bottles of fire whiskey out, and all four boys eyed the bottles in awe, and Harry just grinned wickedly, "You know what this means?"

Neville looked at Ron, and they all looked at Colin who looked thrilled, and Sirius didn't have to be a marauder to know that a prank was about to be pulled.

25. One Love

Warning. Lemon at the end. A final warning will be giving before it begins. It holds no storyline relevance, and can be skipped to those who would not like to read it. Enjoy!

Chapter 25

When Harry awoke the next morning he felt quite groggy and

considering how early he had been getting up this Summer it was unusual. What set this morning apart from others was the fact that his best mates were lounging around the room gripping trash cans and looking much worse than he was. At this he smiled, and stood up stretching carefully and loudly announcing, "Good morning chaps." Colin flinched at the sound of his voice, "Harry please keep your voice down."

Grinning Harry swept through the room and threw the blinds back in his room letting the blinding sun into his room, "Come on boys it's going to be a good day, on your feet."

Neville spoke quietly in the corner with a magazine now in front of his face, "Harry you know I like you, but I don't like you enough that I won't hex you into oblivion if you don't close those damn curtains."

Laughing a bit, the young man said, "I don't think you could even lift your wand towards me Longbottom. I think you got lost in our little prank last night and over indulged."

Groaning he threw the magazine at Harry which he easily deflected with his front hand and banished in the direction of Ron who was still trying to sleep. This caused the boy to barely grumble and roll over to his other side, and Harry rolled his eyes as his oldest friend looked dead in the corner, "Come on mates get up I'll make breakfast, I am thinking sausage and bacon, I have grease that I used last week, and I bet it will be a fine meal."

His sarcasm was leaking through in his voice, and Colin gagged a bit, and leaned over his trash can so he would be a little closer.

This caused Harry to chuckle and shuffle out of the room as the boys tried to gather their mental bearings. Harry however walked through Potter Manor, and down to the first floor where Remus and Sirius were

drinking their morning coffee, and Remus looked surprised to see him,

"Morning cub, I didn't expect to see you this early."

Harry drifted his eyes to a clock nearby from behind him and it read

10am, "It's pretty late Mooney, I wanted to be up at 8 and really annoy

the boys."

Sirius chuckled, and Remus looked amused, "How are the champions of

the light?"

Grinning Harry said, "Peaky, I am going to make some bacon and sausage

for breakfast do you guys want some?"

Sirius laughed out loud this time, "You are a cruel leader Harry. I am glad

you have a bit of James in you after all these years."

Remus smiled at this as well, "I'll take some food Harry thank you."

Sirius just nodded the same as Harry went over to the stove and began

making his food. He had to argue with house elves at first to allow him to

work in the kitchen. The deal was that he had to make as much of a mess

as possible, and he wasn't allowed to touch it. Also, he was only allowed

to make his own meal once a day. He tried to make himself two one time,

and Mips almost blasted him out of his own kitchen saying that Potters

don't cook their own meals.

Harry enjoyed his interaction with the house elves, so he messed with

them from time to time, and they will freak out having never seen certain

behaviors out of wizards.

The green eyed young man was about halfway through making breakfast

when Mips popped in, "Your missus is in the fire master Harry."

Rolling his eyes at his title he asked Mips to take over breakfast for a few

minutes, while he walked out of the kitchen towards the living room

where his floo network was. He saw what resembled a face in the fire,

and said, "Morning Sue, what's up?"

"Just bored over here. I woke up a few hours ago and auntie went in early. Can I come over for a little bit?" She asked patiently.

"Yeah come on through I am making bacon and sausage for breakfast."

Harry said with a smile.

"Brilliant!"

With that Harry watched the fireplace expand a bit as a full grown teenage girl appeared out of it, "Hey beautiful."

With that he pecked the girl on the lips, and took her hand towards the kitchen, where she was greeted by the two Marauders and took a seat at the table, "Where is everyone else?"

Sirius laughed a bit, "They are recovering from Harry's prank last night."

Susan looked at her boyfriend with a smirk, "What'd you do this time?"

Harry pushed Mips gently out of the way and went back to his frying pan, "It was really a joint effort between Sirius and myself, he just didn't know he was involved until-"

"I saw the look on his face. His dad used to have that very same look when he was planning a masterful plan." Sirius said with a mischief written all over his face.

"So, don't leave a girl in suspense, what did you do?"

At this Neville came stumbling into the room and Susan instantly laughed while he said, "I'm going to murder your boyfriend Bones."

Shortly after Colin and Ron followed him and took a seat at the quickly filling breakfast table, "Merlin Harry, these three look like they were toasted last night, and aren't having a good morning of recovery."

Harry grinned at the girl as he brought the two pans over to the tables placing breakfast on them, "Sirius brought us a little gift last night, and let's just say there is none of it left after this lot started playing exploding snap with it."

Suspiciously the girl asked, "Why don't you look as bad as them."

Neville groaned, "Switching charms, and really fast ones, wandlessly probably too. He was pretty gone at one point, but not nearly as bad as the rest of us."

Ron took one look at the food, and for the first time in Harry's friendship with the boy he watched the Gryffindor push it away, "I hate you Harry." The only one who wasn't talking was Colin and Susan asked, "You okay Colin?"

Neville sympathetically patted him on the shoulder, "It was his first time with Firewhiskey."

Susan cringed, and gave her boyfriend a bewildered look, "You couldn't have broken him in easy, and then beat them into submission another night?"

Harry shook his head, "I'd rather him learn his lesson here among friends, and mostly just guys so he doesn't embarrass himself in front of the others. I think I was actually quite merciful, if I were Fred or George I would have saved this prank for everyone to see."

Colin cringed, and spoke, "Thanks Harry. It was a lot of fun. I just didn't know I was going to pay for it this badly in the morning."

Sirius and Remus chuckled, while Harry and Susan just grinned at the boy. Breakfast was a usual thing with Susan, as she usually popped over on the mornings she knew her boyfriend wasn't training, but this was everyone's day off, and it was their last one before Italy, "Are you all packed for the trip Harry?"

"Of course, Luv, the guys helped me finish packing last night before we started the party."

Smiling approvingly the girl patted him on the cheek, "Good boy."

Harry grinned, "Do I get a reward?"

Neville protested at once, "Not at the table man, were all sick enough we don't need you two snogging to throw off our appetites even more."

Susan winked at her boyfriend, "I guess I will spare Neville's stomach for now, so maybe later."

Smiling at the girl he settled for a kiss on the cheek, and just continued to eat his breakfast. All the guys went home after breakfast claiming they were going back to sleep, and resting for the rest of the day, while Harry and Susan spent the day around Potter Manor hanging out and having fun. There was a lot to do on the property of course with being so close to the lake and the woods. The grounds of Potter Manor were far more impressive than the home itself, and Harry enjoyed just strolling through them thinking at one point his mother and father might have walked the same steps he was taking each day.

The day was winding down and Harry and Susan were walking hand in hand around the lake, and Harry had a small smile on his face. The girl seemed to take notice and bumped his shoulder gently, "What's got you smiling so big today?"

Pondering his answer for a moment he said, "Things are so good right now, and with our trip next week I am just really excited, and happy, it's kind of a weird feeling."

Looking at her boyfriend sadly the red head put a small hand on his cheek, "I know you may have had a rough beginning Harry, but things seem to really be turning around for you. Embrace it. We don't know how long we have before things start going desperately wrong. Today we are happy, so let's just do our best to love every second we have it. I for one am very much enjoying a handsome boy's company and look forward to enjoying it even more in a foreign place tomorrow."

As she said her words she was leaning closer to him, and when she

finished she gently captured the boy's lips. Harry now being more comfortable with her initiated physical contact he deepened the kiss and brought the girl closer to him, which left no room for even a sheet of paper in between them. He felt her tongue gently touch his lip, and he opened his mouth to allow her access and have a slight battle for dominance. At this point his hands were sliding down to forbidden territories, and she moaned slightly once they arrived. At this point the boy was so turned on he would have taken her right there at that point, but when she broke the kiss and he pulled his hands away she slowly slid them back down, "They were fine where they were Harry, I just didn't want you to take me out in this field. While the sunset is pretty I think there are more romantic gestures."

Grinning at the girl, "So then was that my reward?"

Laughing slightly, she leaned in to whisper into his ear, "Where your hands are Harry, that is your reward."

The boy blushed a deep red, and she winked at him as she separated, but then she started to come back in for another kiss, and the green-eyed boy who lived closed his eyes and prayed for salvation...but was not in luck when he felt a rough push that through him backwards into the pond, and intense giggles that followed once he surfaced. It had been a warm day, so the water felt good, but he was wearing some decent clothes and he looked incredulously at the girl in front of him whom could not stop giggling, "I am going to get you for that!"

Before the girl could even turn to run he flicked his hand forward and used a wandless summoning charm, making the girl stumble straight into the water. He laughed as she came up and her hair was soaking wet, and she looked shocked beyond all belief, "The look on your face made whatever happens next worth it!"

Then the boy just laughed and after a moment she joined him, and in that moment, Harry felt that the girl had truly stolen his heart.

"Come on Harry put your power into it."

It had been a long day for Harry Potter so far, but most of it had been great! They had arrived on the Potter villa property in Rome around mid-day, where they spent most of the afternoon exploring the property and meeting the house elves who were beyond thrilled to have a master back in their home.

Pesky, the head elf, went on and on about all the excellent things to do in Rome, and went into a very lengthy history about the property, and the special rune design that defended the houses wards. It was all very interesting, and Susan was just swooning at the view. It was the top of the city, and you could overlook a beautiful site that gave hold to some of Rome's most beautiful architectural wonders.

Harry himself was very impressed. The whole property had to be charmed with some seriously high-powered expansion charms, because from their position muggles would have to see something, but he was quite unsure what they would see. Considering the property were just inside a long tree line on the north side of town it wasn't exactly in a remote area. In fact, standing in the master bedroom on the third floor of the home you could see the coliseum and the government buildings that were quite simply a marvel to look at.

At the current time however, Harry was powering up the wards so it would be safe, and it seemed to be taking much more magic than Potter Manor did, "Protego, Bombarda, Relashio, Expecto Patronum!"

Like at Potter Manor with each spell the dome around the home seemed to solidify and after another 20 or 30 spells it finally seemed to stick, and Pesky confirmed that the wards were fully functional!

At this the small group applauded Harry whom was heaving for breath, "That was a lot more draining without Dumbledore's help."

Sirius laughed, "Your coming along nicely in the power shoes Pup, but you are still a way behind the old man."

Remus consolingly added, "One day though this will be a lot easier, and as long as you live the wards will too."

With that he just smiled at the group, and then Sirius said, "Well Remus and I are going to go into town to get a drink and be merry. You two may do as you wish, but don't leave the property tonight. Remus and I will stumble in pretty late tonight so don't want wait up. When we wake up we can all go out to the town and do a few sightseeing things together, and then I think you can be on your own to do as you wish. Let's all meet in the breakfast hall at around 8:00...Good evening!"

Sirius winked at his son and grabbed his best friend by the arm in excitement while the wizened old werewolf merely rolled his eyes at the man's antics followed bidding them both a pleasant night. This left the two smiling as Harry asked, "So want to pick out the rooms? If you want the master bedroom upstairs I will give it up to you."

Susan shyly looked around for a moment which Harry thought was odd, but then she said, "Let's go check it out. Are you feeling okay, do you need food first? I know the ward powering must have been pretty draining."

Harry shrugged his shoulders, and rolled them back, "Nope I am good. Still full from lunch to be honest. Pesky made a hell of a lunch. Let's go." With that the couple ascended through the house to the top floor which consisted of the massive master bedroom. The room was beautiful, and basically just an attic that had been turned into a wonderful modern room. The view was still as breathtaking as ever, as Susan wandered over

towards the windows and looked out with a sigh, "I can't wait till tomorrow. This has literally been my dream since I was a baby to come here. Auntie had planned to take me a few times but work always got in the way and she couldn't take off long enough to come down and see everything."

Harry came up behind the girl wrapping her up with his arms, and kissing her on the side of head, "Well were here now, and anything you want to see we will. I think you should sleep up here, it's a beautiful view, and I know you really love it."

Not turning to face the boy she said, "Well it would be kind of lonely up here. Its big for just one person."

Not catching her meaning Harry said, "I can stay up here till you fall asleep if you want."

"And then what?"

"What do you mean?"

Still not breaking her eyes from the view she said, "Then what will you do once I fell asleep?"

Confused at the girl's words he said slowly, "Go back to my own room?"

Susan didn't say anything for a moment, but then turned to look at him, "I don't like that plan Harry."

Bewildered now at the girl he said, "What did you have in mind then."

"This..."

She took the boys hand and dragged him over towards the bed where she stood in front of him, and then pushed him over roughly where he fell onto the bed with a thud. She slowly climbed on top of him mounting him like a horse, "I think I would you rather you just stay in the bed tonight Harry. We are in one of the most romantic cities in the world with a view so beautiful most people couldn't even comprehend it."

"But what about Remus and Sirius?"

Smiling at him as she wiggled her way closer to him, causing quite the effect on his body, she said, "They will be gone till late and roam into the house drunk, I thought you caught Padfoot's innuendo he practically gave us permission to sleep together."

"He did?" Harry asked nervously.

Whispering in his ear now completely draped over his body, "Yes Harry, and we have the whole house to ourselves for the next few hours."

With that she began nibbling on his ear, causing a slight moan to escape the boys mouth, and then she went to his neck and began making slight sucking sounds causing him to squirm even more, "Sue what are you doing to me?"

With that she sat up and threw off her shirt exposing a nice black lace bra that Harry was instantly turned on tremendously by, "Harry, you have saved my life more times than I care to count, you have brought me to my dream vacation spot for my sixteenth birthday, and have done so much for me, I won't even waste time telling you all about it. I want this night to be special. Our first night in bed together, and I can't think of a better place or time. The war is coming, and I don't want to die a virgin to be completely blunt about it. It could happen to either of us at any point, and I want to be made into a woman, and I want to make you into a man."

Harry just stared at the girl in wonder for a moment, but then took his left hand and swung it towards her body making her roll over, to where he was now on top, "Are you sure that's what you want?"

Feeling brave the girl reached a hand down south and gripped his lower regions, "I can tell it's what you want, and I want nothing more than to give you what you want right now."

Lemon Scene (Can skip has no plot details)

Harry gasped as she quickly unbuttoned his jeans, and reached into his pants gripping his manhood, "Merlin..."

"What's wrong?" Harry asked in almost a panic.

Inwardly the girl was cursing herself for not mentally preparing more for this. She had felt his excitement towards her many times before but having never seen it she never realized it would be so big, "Nothing, I just think you are going to make me hurt a little, and then give me pleasure like I've never felt before. I think some girls are going to be very disappointed when they hear about your endowment. In fact, I think some girls will even have lost some money."

Confused Susan just grinned and ran her hand up and down his shaft a few times, "Forget it, just touch me."

With her free hand she put it on one of her nearly exposed breasts, and she captured Harry's mouth as he gently massaged her breast making spikes of pleasure go through the girl.

Noticing her hand was dry against the young man's cock she quickly broke the kiss and licked her hand moistening it up and then sliding it up and down his erection once again causing the boy to moan even louder this time. It was such a slow motion that Harry thought she was going to drive him insane with it and feeling a bit of animal instinct take over he pushed her hand away and put his mouth around what her exposed chest showed him as he gently reached around the back and undid her bra clasp with a little help from wandless magic. He then ripped it off her, and instead of ogling like he wanted to he immediately attacked them with his mouth. He noticed as he sucked on her tits, which was something he heard Seamus Finnegan did to Lavender when they were doing it, she moaned the loudest, and he was determined to keep hearing

that sound throughout their first experience together. He learned even more when his tongue touched her pink soft tit, and she said, "Oh shit!" This convinced Harry he was doing okay and went between sucking and licking each of her tits for several seconds each, and then slowly went down on her kissing each part of her smooth flat stomach, and getting to her jeans and undoing the button where he looked for confirmation that he was doing the right thing where she almost laughed, "Harry just rip them off, I want to feel you down there."

Harry didn't have to wait to be told twice, and immediately removed her pants and getting a great look at her thighs which were admittedly pretty large, but that was honestly what he liked them. Her underwear was nothing to frilly or sexy, but when he touched them, and she shivered, and lifted her legs a bit to get him to take them off her he almost had heart attack with how fast his heart was racing. However not wanting to slow down and make it awkward he quickly removed them and then took a moment to stare at his completely naked very sexy girlfriend whom was blushing a bit under his stare, "I think you have to much clothes on Harry."

She sat up for a moment, and this time helped him pull down his jeans where he was just wearing underwear that had a huge tent in it. She smiled and pulled those down, and her eyes widened again, "Merlin."

Harry was about to say something but then she said, "I've never done this before, but I have been told by the other girls in Hufflepuff that this feel really good for you, so I am willing to try it."

Before he could ask her what she was going to do he saw something that would likely power a patronus that could blind the world. She pulled her hair back, and then immediately grabbed his cock, and placed it straight into her mouth. Pleasure shot up through his body at this and felt at first

just the head go into her mouth, and then she tried to take a bit more with each suckle she did. Harry was in the clouds as he watched the girl do this, and he almost lost his balance a few times, so placed a hand behind her head helping her keep her hair out of her face. The feeling was incredible and intense. She did this for several moments, where he then heard her gag, and only have about three fourths of it in her mouth where she pulled out, "I can't get the whole thing in my mouth, the other girls said they usually can, but."

She tried a few more times, and each time she tried she got a bit more that made Harry feel his dick pulsate, "I think I am going too..."

Before he could say cum she quickly stopped and grinned, "I learned this little trick too."

With that she jumped back on the bed, and away from him, but feeling a bit animalistic and the overwhelming desire to make her feel the pleasure he did he followed her. At first, she looked confused, but he went straight in between her legs, and gently put his face at her entrance, where she gasped at the mere sight. He had learned this one from what Dean Thomas said that he did to Sally Anne, and he briefly wondered if Susan had heard the same story. He didn't question it though as he took his tongue and run it straight into her vagina. At first it was kind of unpleasant for him, as she was really wet down there, and he got a lot of thick cum in his mouth, but the sounds she made...made any unpleasant feelings go away. He sliced his tongue through her, and even sucked a few times on it, making the girl grab his head and practically scream with pleasure. Harry couldn't believe that he was doing so well, and just willed his tongue to go as fast it could. He even briefly wondered if it had something to do with him being a parsemouth before. Whatever it was it had put the redhead girl almost out of commission.

However, he heard her say stop after a few more minutes, and he looked up confused. She gave him slow finger that told him to come to her, and he did climb up to where they were face to face, "Harry this has all been amazing so far, but I want you to come inside me. I want you to experience every bit of me, and I want us to have that connection."

Still feeling a little hazy from his hormones, he nodded his head, "I love you Susan."

She smiled at him, but didn't say it back, as she grabbed his dick, and whispered, "Go slowly Harry. I think it's going to hurt me at first."

Harry nodded and positioned himself. She then slowly guided him in, where he felt instant warmth. As he slowly pushed through her he noticed how wet it was down there from his tongue, and her cum, and it was really warm and felt amazing on his shaft. At one point he hit a bit of a wall, and she said, "Now I want you to shove it in Harry just one time, and then give me a moment okay."

She reached for her wand that was on the bed nearby and nodded at him to go through with it. With a quick thrust he felt his dick go straight through something and the girl yelped, and then pointed her wand at her stomach, and the pain seemed to ebb away off her face. After maybe a minute of him being inside her she said, "Okay I want you to move but slowly Harry please."

Harry did as he was told very afraid to hurt her. He slowly slid half of it in and out of her for the next minute, and listened to her moan, and watched the look of pleasures flit across her face. He loved every second of it, and even began sucking a bit on her neck as he slid in and out of her, undoubtedly leaving a few marks.

The minutes passed, and she whimpered, "Deeper Harry, I want more of you."

Harry did as we told and slowly slid a bit more of himself in her, and she moaned loudly, and then said, "More Harry."

At this point Harry was almost all the way in, and her eyes shot wide open as he pushed the rest of himself in there, "Oh god!"

Harry felt how tight it was down there, and nearly blacked out with pleasure himself, and then she took his face, "Harry make love to me please. Go faster, harder, and deeper into me. Make me yours and only yours."

Immediately taking that command he withdrew from her and quickly reinserted the whole thing into her causing her arms to snake around quickly and roughly, as he did this several times causing the girl to moan and moan. He felt himself quickly coming to an orgasm, and he drilled into her harder letting primal instinct take over. As he did this he finally accomplished something that Seamus said was perfection in the bed...a scream of his name, "HARRY!"

Susan then slumped a bit, and he continued shoving into her for only a few more seconds before he said, "I'm going to cum!"

However instead of pulling out of her she screamed, "Cum in me Harry fill me with your seed."

Harry not knowing if this was a good idea or not was far too gone to do anything other than what he was told so fucked her to the point that his cum shot deeply into her as she moaned softly clearly exhausted from the pleasure she felt.

When he was done and feeling sensitive in his dick he pulled out of her and laid next to her where she snuggled up in his arms, "That was amazing. You were amazing. I am not sure I believe you anymore that you have never been with a girl Harry."

Merely kissing the girl on top of the head panting for breath, "I swear to

you were my first. I just listened to what Dean and Seamus told me."

"I should write them a thank you card." Susan mumbled softly.

"Sue, you let me go off inside of you, does that mean..."

"No Harry not this time at least. I cast the charm at the beginning that works like muggle pills. I can't get pregnant as long as I cast that charm."

Susan said gently.

Harry nodded at this and just let his mind replay the wonders he had just experienced. She then said in almost a laugh, "You have to do all that to me again every night we are hear you know."

"With silencing charms, I agree. You were quite loud."

"Did you like it?" Susan asked almost nervously.

"Too much, I almost lost it a few times way to early." He said grinning.

This caused the girl to smile though he couldn't see it, "Let's get some sleep we have a big day tomorrow." Harry said.

She nodded and pressed her body up against his where she was spooning him with her naked body, which almost made him want to do it all again. They laid in silence for a moment, before she said, "I love you too Harry."

(A/N) Hope you enjoyed. Please review!

26. The Slug Club

Chapter 26

The rest of the trip had been an amazing experience as if it had been from someone else's life. Harry and Susan had explored Rome to the its very depths in both the magical and muggle world and had been utterly amazed by it all. The Coliseum and the Roman architecture were truly amazing, and Harry admitted he wanted to come back to Rome every year to visit what may now be his favorite place in the world.

Also of course it would be where Harry and Susan shared their first

special moment together, and if the boy was being honest it had been his favorite part. The two were very passionate, and very grateful for the experiences, and were completely relentless to each other each night. Harry wasn't even sure how they would manage when they went back home without sleeping together every night, and that feeling went well beyond just the desire for intercourse.

Each night Sirius and Remus went off, and never came to check on the two of them, but instead met them in the breakfast hall at 8:00Am sharp. Not wanting his two surrogate parents to come looking for him Harry of course made sure that they were in the dining hall by then. Harry knew it would come up between him and Sirius one day, but the Marauder never saw fit to bring it up to his son/Godson, so Harry never saw a reason to bring it up either.

The trip was over before he knew it though, and they were back in Potter Manor celebrating his birthday which came and went far too quickly for his liking. His gifts had been nothing spectacular but compared to what Susan gave him on the night of he figured nothing compared.

The time to return to school had returned, and Harry considered himself very lucky to get to experience an entire Summer of peace, and fun without the interruption or attacks from Lord Voldemort. Since the day on the train where Harry, and his friends had nearly defeated the Dark Lord he had been deathly silent.

The friends and leaders of the DA had all given Harry some brief speculation on why they thought Voldemort had remained silent, but Harry was unsure if any of them were correct. Harry figured that if Dumbledore remained in power at Hogwarts, he would be safe, but the day that ended would be the first day that Harry would be in some serious trouble at Hogwarts, and in the real world.

Speaking of Dumbledore Harry's training with the man had really taken off as the wizened old man claimed they had covered everything he knew about Voldemort, and now it was just a matter of preparing Harry for a final confrontation, and of course hunting down the Horcruxes. He had even helped the man recruit their new potions master Professor Slughorn whom was apparently an old friend of Dumbledore's and his mother's potion master. This of course meant that Snape was going to be moving to another position as the Defense Against the Dark Arts Teacher, which meant anyone and everyone who asked Harry if he was going to be continuing the DA this year got a definite answer of yes.

It had been a relatively normal day for the Hogwarts Express as they were trekking their way across the countryside towards the ancient school, and for once no interruptions had come in the form of Draco Malfoy which was the most surprising thing of all. After all Harry killed Malfoy Senior in the duel for the Express, and Draco had been arrested and released after being warned about following the paths of Dark Wizards.

It came up in the conversation brought forth by Ron finally, "So you think Draco Dearest has finally had enough Harry? He has been awfully silent on this train ride?"

Hermione barely looking up from her book said, "Well with him losing his prefect badge, and four prefects being in this carriage alone he decided the smart decision was to stay away."

Ernie shrugged, "Since when has Malfoy ever made a smart decision?"

There was some chorus' of agreements, when a door slid open to reveal a young second- or third-year girl who squeaked a bit, "Excuse me...Professor Slughorn gave me these invitations to hand out, I think all of your names are on this list? I think it's for lunch!"

Hannah stood up asking the girl for the list being very kind as she squatted down to her level reading over it, "She's right we are all on here. Thank you Kimmie."

Taking the invitations from the girl Hannah politely dismissed the girl, and turned to her friends, "Should we go to this?"

Looking at everyone in the compartment Harry sighed, "Well we were all invited so I don't see why we shouldn't?"

The group seemed to take that in agreement while Susan patted the boy hands, and took it dragging him to his feet and out of the compartment with the rest of the group falling behind the golden couple as they were now being referred to as.

When they made it to Slughorns cabin they were among the last to arrive, and were greeted merrily, "Oh ho ho, I should have known you would come with the clan Mr. Potter, welcome to you all!"

Harry smiled at the professor offering his hand, "It's good to see you again professor."

"And you my boy, and you! I saved you and Ms. Bones a spot right next to me, please!"

With that they were all seated in the spots that were left open with Susan taking the seat right next to Harry. He took a brief glance at everyone and recognized the Slytherin girl from last year that helped him after being hit with the cruciatus curse. A seventh year Gryffindor whose name escaped him. Blaise Zabini, Ginny Weasley whom was looking fidgety in her chair, Terry Boot who greeted the group as they came in. Once everyone was seated however Slughorn clapped his hands, "Ah now before we eat, I want to make sure everyone is well acquainted with each other. On my left is the ever so charming Daphne Greengrass, her mother is quite the established mediwitch at St. Mungos, and her father Lord

Greengrass is the editor and chief of the Wizarding Wireless."

Harry's eyes lit up, at recognition of the name Greengrass, and the name of the girl who had tried to help him last year, "Lord Greengrass is your father? I met him over the Summer..."

Daphne nodded her head, "Yes he told me about that incident Potter, I think your friend over there embarrassed him pretty good, but I did warn up to be more tactful with his questions."

Collin whom had been the friend that Daphne referred to shrugged the comment off, "We didn't mean to be disrespectful we had just agreed before the meeting that we weren't going to let anyone walk all over Harry or give any implied insults. The way your dad phrased it sounded like Harry wasn't good enough or something."

Daphne held her hands up in defense, "I know, and he gave me some of his questions before the interview, and I warned him that with Bones being there no one was going to be able to walk all over him. He hoped to catch you off guard and sneak several questions in there. It was a foolish attempt."

Harry shook his head, "I never got to thank you. Last year. You helped me after Umbridge put me under the Cruciatus...So Thank You Ms. Greengrass."

The pretty blue-eyed girl gave him a dazzling smile, "You're welcome Potter."

"Please call me Harry." The young man offered.

The girl nodded, "Daphne then."

The two shared a smile and Slughorn grinned at the two, "Well this exactly what these meetings are supposed to be out. Strengthening connections! Well done you two, take ten points to each house respectively for school cooperation."

"Let's continue with introductions. We have Cormac Mclaggen a seventh year Gryffindor whose Uncle and Father are both quite respected Wizards in the Ministry. Blaise Zabini whose mother I taught back in school many years ago, the woman was quite the hand in potions."

Harry saw some of his friend's exchange looks at that. It had been a nasty rumor, but also a fact that Blaise Zabini had lost several step fathers in his life, and the popular theory was that his mother was a very talented Black Widow.

"Terry Boot is a sixth year Ravenclaw, and also related to Anthony Boot whom as some of you may or may not was one of the main developers of Firebolt!"

Harry actually did not know that and gave the boy a surprised look that he never brought it up to him during any DA meetings, over the Summer, or during the school year, "Ginny Weasley whom I realized was a witch to be reckoned with when I saw her blasting some poor boy with a bat bogey hex charm. I invited her to this meeting instead of issuing her a detention because I am always on the lookout for young people with guts and gusto!"

That explained why the girl looked so twitchy. If Harry had been caught by a teacher hexing someone, and then been invited to lunch he would have been nervous too, "Then there is Marcus Belby his Uncle invented the Wolfsbane potion. Now for some of you only your reputations got you into this room. Starting with you Ms. Granger, Mr. Creevy. I read the paper over the Summer and saw that you, well all seven of you, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Longbottom, Ms. Bones, Mr. Weasley, and Mr. McMillan, had been the leaders of the defense of the Hogwarts Express back in June, and the revolution that took place inside the school."

Harry taking a chance to show his friends off a bit said, "If you don't

mind professor, I could tell you a bit about each of these people, as I have come to know them over the years."

Slughorn patted the boy on the back, "Please do Harry my boy I trust your judgment without doubt!"

Harry nodded, "Collin Creevy is about as Gryffindor as they come. He is a Muggleborn who was the most annoying child I had ever met about five years ago."

This caused some chuckles through the group and a blush from the young boy, "But he is also one of the bravest among us. Fiercely loyal to his friends, and a very quick learner if you just give him the right push. He has stood out among even the best of Hogwarts duelist, and I think he would give any seventh year a run for their money in a duel."

Blushing at the praise he turned to Hermione, "One of the brightest witches of our age Hermione Granger. Saved my life with her brilliance more times than I can count. The overall number one spot in my class. This girl will blow you away with how much she knows, and how easily she can recite text that she reads. She is as magically powerful as my mother at her age, and intelligence wise everyone tells me she would have been a great competition to Lily Potter."

Slughorn gave the girl a smile, "I could think of no higher compliment Ms. Granger, if people even Mr. Potter who does not know his mother as well as some, would compare you to her then take it in high pride. She was the most brilliant student I ever had!"

Harry gave the potions master a grateful nod, "Hannah Abbott and Neville Longbottom I will give together. A power couple that compliments each other beautifully. Both are prodigies in the Herbology field, and I have no doubt that they will do great things in that field once we get out Hogwarts, Neville as Lord Longbottom also follows his

ancestry well. His dueling skill is among the most powerful in my defense group and has definitely come the longest way since we got on this train last year. Hannah also comes from a long line of Purebloods and will be helping me teach the Defense Association this year."

Daphne interjected, "I hear it is going to be open to all houses this year?"

Harry nodded, "Yes anyone is welcome. I am the leader of the group though, and I have been given permission to remove anyone that attempts to abuse the teachings we as a group give to each other."

The girl asked almost timidly, "So you would even welcome a Slytherin?"

Quickly putting her doubt down Harry said, "I would gladly accept any Slytherin particularly one who attempted to help me in a time of need. I would welcome you and any Slytherin who was serious about learning to defend themselves Daphne."

The girl smiled prettily at him, "Good to know."

Harry didn't see the glare his girlfriend was giving him, and instead moved on, "Ron Weasley my best friend since first year, and my first friend I made at Hogwarts. A brilliant Chess master, and overall strategist. A very capable duelist. A Chudley Cannons die hard fanatic and has the ambition to become an auror now that we don't have Professor Snape's outstanding requirement to get into Potions."

Slughorn tipped his hat to the boy, "I taught both your parents. Neither had much of a knack for potions, but I promise I will do my best to ensure you get the required score for NEWTs to become an auror if that is your ambition!"

Harry grinned, "And this beautiful young woman beside me is my other half. Susan Bones. Hufflepuff, and Runes prodigy in the making. Fiercely loyal to her friends and family, a fair hand at potions herself, and extremely compassionate to all those she comes across. The press has

even started referring to her as the girl-who-stood. Not to mention she is also quite the fierce duelist these days."

"With your help I don't doubt?" Professor Slughorn asked merrily.

"Yes Professor, when the Dark Lord put a price on my head, and Susan didn't run away screaming I figured I better teach her everything I could just in case the time ever came...but that is everyone, my closest friends in the world, whom I would trust with my life. I don't think you would go wrong with anyone in this group." Harry said looking at his friends with pride.

Professor Slughorn then looked at the young man approvingly, "More leadership than even your mother I daresay because the best are for last introductions wise, though I doubt anyone needs one. Harry Potter the man behind the legend. Survivor of two killing curses, Triwizard Champion, and the Chosen One as now people throughout the country are calling you."

Harry shook his head, "I don't know about all those things sir, but you forgot my most important title."

The man looked bewildered at the boy, but he merely grinned, "Leader of the Defense Association at Hogwarts."

The man boomed with laughter and the boys in the group including Terry and Ernie banged their hands softly on the table in agreement, "Might I add with enough charisma to incite rebellion against the Ministry. Though I hear you get along with them quite well these days?" Harry nodded, "Minister Scrimgeour and I see eye to eye on this coming war, and that it needs to end before it begins. Voldemort is hiding under a rock somewhere after my friends and I nearly put an end to him, and while he licks his wounds the rest of us have trained everyday preparing for the next confrontation. The Ministry and I will stand together in this,

because while we may not believe the prophesy, we won't discount the fact that Voldemort does."

Blaise Zabini snorted, "Do you really think you can defeat the Dark Lord Potter?"

Everyone looked at him curiously when he laughed saying, "No, not a snowballs chance in hell. He would kill me in an instant if we were to cross wands again one on one."

He said it with such conviction he shocked some people, but Susan placed a hand on his in front of everyone smiling, "But he won't face him alone. He will face him with every wand the Ministry and Defense Association can offer him."

Ron Weasley then added, "Along with every member of the Order of the Phoenix."

Cormac asked, "Is that a requirement to be in your defense group? Swear allegiance to you Potter?"

Before Harry could answer Neville answered, "No. Harry teaches us so if the horrible occasion were to arise and the Dark Lord or any Dark Wizard stood against us, we could survive. A lot of what he teaches us isn't even actual magic, but instinctual defense. He teaches us how to survive by any means necessary, even if it means standing against your enemy."

Hannah added, "Harry has never once pressured me about my side of the war, in fact he has never even asked me. But when each situation arose against him, I found myself standing beside a friend and many others trying to help him."

Susan grinned at the others while saying, "Does that answer your questions Zabini? Mclaggen?"

Slughorn laughed some more, "Merlin Harry my boy I think you have quite a group here. It seems you inspire loyalty in people and that's a

very admirable trait. Treat them well!"

With that lunch was served, and the conversation was much more civil without talks of the war or Voldemort. After a short while Slughorn looked out the window and seen the time had gone, "Great Scott! I think I have capitalized to much of your time. I will be holding various dinners throughout the year with more students, and such it would be my honor to have you all back for those, and around Christmas time I will my hold annual party with some of my more interesting past students. I hope to see you all there."

With that Slughorn greeted everyone goodbye, and the group of DA leaders made their way back to their compartment to get ready to depart from the train. Harry whispered to Susan quietly, "If Mclaggen keeps eyeing you the way he did in that meeting I may blast the boy off his broom at a Quidditch practice this year."

The girl grinned slyly, "He is pretty good looking, but I would hate to see my favorite captain suspended for killing his Keeper."

Harry shrugged, "Ron may end up replacing him this year. He practiced a lot with Ginny and the twins so hopefully he can stick it to Mclaggen.

Then I could just toss him off the Astronomy tower."

Susan shook her head, "Your impossible!" But then whispered in his ear, "And incredibly sexy!"

This caused the boy to grab the girl by the hips, and she squealed darting her way down the hallway trying to get back their compartment in a hurry. The train arrived back at Hogwarts within a few moments, and the group left quickly enjoying the cool fresh air. The carriages took them all to the castle with relative ease where they had Filch, and a few Aurors running some type of dark magic detectors over the luggage and students.

"Wothcer Harry!" A familiar pink haired auror greeted the boy as she ran the detector over his luggage.

"Hey Tonks. What are you doing here? New station?" Harry inquired.

Nodding the girl stood up to her full height, "Yep! We are actually stationed in Hogsmeade in case of trouble, but we will be making pretty regular trips up to Hogwarts."

Grinning the boy said, "I'll buy you a drink at Hogsmeade sometime. Just come find me!"

The girl winked, "I don't think Susie here would like you buying another girl a drink."

Susan however looked up and down the girl before saying, "No I think I wouldn't mind if you bought this particular girl a drink Harry."

Susan taking a chance winked at Tonks causing the girl to blush a bit, and Harry to laugh. He had noticed since Susan and himself had taken their relationship to a sexual level she had been a lot more confident with him, and others in general as well. With this thought quickly passing through his head they were waved along and approached the castle.

The feast was as extravagant as usual, with the presence of a few Aurors included walking around the great entrance hall randomly not speaking with students, but just pacing like they were expecting something to happen at any moment. Harry could tell it made some people nervous, but as for him he felt more at ease. If it came to a firefight at least he had the Aurors to back him up as he recognized almost all of them from his Summer training.

The feast went by, and Dumbledore began his starting announcements.

He started with the announcement of the new Potions Master Horace Slughorn. Harry led the applause in this one as he felt he genuinely liked the man and enjoyed the stories he had told him about his mother as a

young student. The applause was well met, and the following announcement that Snape was taking over the Defense Against the Dark Arts post was certainly not. The applause barely even came from the Slytherin section. It was the following announcement that shocked Harry though, "For those who have been unaware of the most recent phenomenon at Hogwarts we are officially sponsoring a Defense Club led by our very own Mr. Potter, and he will now come up and give a few words about what the aims of this club are, and its importance."

Dumbledore took a step back from the podium, and everyone looked at Harry expectantly. He exchanged looks with Ron and Hermione who both looked at him questioningly, but the look he gave them assured them that he had no idea this was coming. Harry quickly stood up and walked across the great hall and took the offered hand from the Headmaster, and the man winked at him as he turned to face the entire population of Hogwarts. Swallowing his nerves down a bit he spoke softly, "Okay so last year some friends of mine decided it would be a good idea to start preparing for our OWL's and what else was out there. As we all remember we didn't have the most useful Defense Teacher, but we thought we would do our best among ourselves. I also want to make it very clear that we are not going to try and usurp Professor Snape's lessons. We are going to do our best to coordinate things that are completely different from what he is teaching us this year, so we are not interfering with his classes, or our own practices."

There was no talking in the hall just silence and stares, "Without giving you all the history, and the reasons let me tell you how it is going to be this year. I am going to run two groups. One will be Monday Wednesday, and the other will be Tuesday Thursdays. It will be separated by beginner and advanced and let me stress that myself and the leaders of this

Defense Association will determine where you belong, and you will only advance with a majority vote among the already established leadership, but you can be placed down if you cannot keep up. Everyone starts in the beginner group until they prove themselves otherwise. That may happen in the first class, first week, or first month, but if we think you can keep up, we will move you up even if you struggle because we want to push you to be your best."

Looking across the hall Harry eyes wandered upon nearly every person, "This group is about learning how to defend yourself. We have decided as a group we will turn no one away no matter who your family is, but I promise you this...if you can't leave your house ties, your personal problems, or even your personal relationships at the door you will not make it in this group. I have been given the power to kick anyone out of the group that does not keep up with the standard we set, and when I say that I don't mean a power standard. The first meeting will be tomorrow for the beginners, and I hope to see a lot of new faces there, along with all of my familiar faces."

Harry turned to the headmaster who began clapping, and applause swept across the hall. Harry gave a slight wave and awkwardly went back to his seat, where Neville clapped him on the shoulder, "Breathe mate. You can stand in front of Voldemort and the press but put you in front of your peers and you looked like a nervous wreck."

Harry gave the boy a dirty look, "I was, I didn't know Dumbledore was going to put me on the spot like that or I would have prepared something."

Hermione shook her head, "Don't worry Harry you did fine. You got the important stuff across. Days of the meetings, everyone is welcome, we expect a certain standard, it could have been delivered with a bigger

smile on your face, but other than it was fine."

Harry shook off the stares he was still getting from across the hall as Dumbledore talked about the sign-up boards for the club and the heads of house who would rotate watching over the club one day a week. Katie Bell looked over to Harry asking, "How are you going to do Quidditch and the DA Harry?"

Smiling at his star chaser he shrugged, "With whatever Susan and Hermione put together. I won't be teaching every class. The leaders of the DA worked with me a lot over the Summer and they are certainly capable teachers, but of course I will be there as often as I can. I was assured that they would take care of my scheduling since it was there idea in the first place."

The girl nodded, but Harry asked, "Would you be interested in Co-Captain? You have been on the team as long as I have and are just as talented. I would welcome you to hold practices on days that I can't, after all pretty much everyone on the team will be in the advanced class for DA so it may work out that way."

The girl gave the boy a brilliant smile, "Whatever I can do to help Harry. Just make sure I get the password to the prefect's bathroom. I would love to take a nice bath every now and then."

Harry grinned at the girl, "Thanks Katie, I will make sure you get the password when I get it from McGonagall."

Given the girl a nod of appreciation he focused on the rest of the announcements and was prepared to get up from the hall when a messenger charm landed on the table in front of him. He easily picked it up, and opened it looking around for who may have sent it, "Ice-Mice" Looking up at the head table he saw Dumbledore smiling down on him, and giving him a slight nod, and then turning to walk out of the room

allowing Harry to do the same.

(A/N) I'm back in action, and I am hoping I will bring you all the epic conclusion to this story in the coming weeks. Look for my next update next Wednesday, and please leave a review. It has been a while since I touched this story so if I mix things up please politely send me a message or leave it in a review, and I will fix it ASAP.

Cheers!

27. A New Tragedy

Chapter 27

Harry was standing in front of the headmaster's office in no time at all. He had dismissed himself from the Gryffindor group that was heading to the common room and had headed over across the castle with his wand and invisibility cloak on hand.

Giving the password to the gargoyle allowed the boy entry to the headmaster's office for what felt like the hundredth time. Harry hoped there was good news waiting for him in the office when he went through the door, "Good evening professor."

"Good evening Mr. Potter, we have a few things to discuss about this year, and I wanted to get your opinion on it before I executed my plans."

Dumbledore said pleasantly.

Harry walked to the man's desk taking the offered seat, and even the lemon drop that was offered, "I appreciate that headmaster. What is on your mind?"

The man looked at the boy and began to speak, "You have a lot on your plate this year. With running the Defense Association, being the Quidditch Captain, taking lessons with me, keeping up with your own training, and your own classes. I just want to do something that may help you in your journey."

"What did you have in mind sir? The Quidditch Captaincy I have decided to Co-Captain with Katie Bell if that is okay? She has been on the team just as long as me and has a real shot at going pro next year. She is capable if that is okay with you and professor McGonagall."

The man nodded his head, "That sounds like an excellent idea. I will inform Minerva of your decision and I am sure she will support it. She gave you captaincy because she thought you were the most talented player on the team but worried it would be too much. I am glad she gave it to you however so you and Ms. Bell can split the responsibilities. Now about the rest of it."

Harry shrugged, "I will just have to do my best."

"And maintain your relationship with Ms. Bones?" Dumbledore inquired. Looking at the old man sadly he said, "Susan and I have agreed that the best thing we can do is be patient with each other. We both believe that there is a really good chance that we have the rest of our future together to spend time together, but if we don't treat these responsibilities seriously there may not be a very long future."

The headmaster nodded his head wisely, "That is a very mature decision, so I would like to offer you a very mature option."

He reached in and pulled out a sheet of paper that Harry noticed had Sirius' signature on it, "I had spoken to your godfather at lengths about your options, and he liked this one the best. Hogwarts used to house a Lord of the Wizengamot every now and do to unfortunate circumstances like your own, and they were given private quarters because they would at times have to leave and not come back till late in the night or for other reasons. They would also have some added stress then the average student, so the founders thought given their circumstances they would extend some help to these students of special circumstances."

Harry looked at the headmaster in surprise, "You are offering me private quarters?"

Dumbledore nodded, "To come go as you please. You will still be given the password to the Gryffindor Common Room, but your head of house and I thought that considering all that you are trying to take on this year we would give you just a little bit of help. The fact of the matter is we will hopefully find a Horcrux this year to destroy, and we would like you to come along on these adventures. That may involve pulling you out of your common room in the middle of the night and we would like to avoid the rumors circulating about what we may or may not be doing. The living quarters are also quite large which will allow you and the heads of the Defense Association to meet and plan out lessons or make sure all the classes are covered."

Harry shook his head in amazement, "I can see the benefits. What do I tell people?"

Dumbledore shrugged, "Whatever you wish my boy. We could simply tell them nothing and let the rumors circulate. Or we could come up with something."

"I think we need to tell people something. I get enough accusations of favoritism, and I don't want people to think it's actually true." Harry said calmly.

"Then let's do this. We have told the world that you are actively pursuing Voldemort. If anyone ask you have been given special accommodations to come and go as you, please in order to help the Ministry in any way you could. I will pass that message on to Rufus and our reasoning behind it, and I am sure he would be happy to throw fuel on that rumor."

Dumbledore offered.

Harry quickly agreed to this, "I like that. We might as well take

advantage of all the publicity help we have been giving them."

"Very good I will be in touch with Rufus tomorrow. Now I am going to pass it among the professor's and the prefects that you have permission to be out after hours, and I ask that you do not take advantage of that unless you have too. I also ask that you and Ms. Bones respect curfew, and other school rules that may be in place." The old man said offering his conditions to prize.

"I assure you headmaster that I am a perfect gentleman with Susan, and that I would never do anything she didn't approve of." The young man said with a bit of a wicked smirk on his face.

The old headmaster bit back a laugh at the boy's response, and merely raised his glass to him, "Of that I have no doubt Mr. Potter. Go and inform your friends of the news and meet me on the third floor at 10pm tonight."

Harry stood giving a slight bow to the headmaster and walking out of the room with a big smile on his face.

The start of term had been better than Harry would have dared even pray for. With his own room he had been sneaking Susan in most nights to allow them some real peace quiet, and privacy. They of course abused it as any other teenager would, but no one else had to know that.

The start of the DA had gone over splendidly there were a couple of Slytherins he was worried about, and some that he was already becoming quite close with. Namely Daphne Greengrass. She had been a complete natural duelist and was being quite successful in his group so far. She had already been moved into the advanced class and was quickly climbing the ladder in there. Harry wondered just what he could have done with this girl had he had her last year. Malfoy had been kicked out by an overwhelming vote of the entire leadership of the DA after he called

Hermione a Mudblood for trying to help him with a curse. With that most of the other Slytherins had left as well.

Harry had become suspicious of Draco Malfoy in the weeks that would follow. The boy was being sneaky, and he wasn't quite sure why. It was clear he was trying to gain access to the room of requirements, but he was simply unable to. Harry figured it had something to do with the wards that Susan, Hermione, and Hannah had placed on the room, and knew/hoped that it would keep the boy away from whatever he was planning.

The only thing that wasn't just great in his life with his Defense Against the Dark Arts class. Snape seemed to take personal insult to the fact that Harry was leading a Defense Group, while he was the Defense Against the Dark Arts class, and took points from Harry for literally everything. The boy however did not complain and merely understood that he would not have been much different were the situations reversed.

The first Quidditch game was upon the group quickly and Harry was leading his team out onto the field with his head held high. The team was looking good under Katie Bell's instruction, and Harry's gentle guidance. Truth be told she was definitely carrying most of the weight for the team, and Harry was going to do his best to ensure she got MVP this year at the end of the season.

As the team walked towards the pitch many Gryffindor fans from his house, and Harry Potter fans in general were applauding and whistling at their arrival. Harry couldn't help but notice quite a few girls were wearing his Jersey number, but they were all cheap knock offs compared to the real practice Jersey that Susan was wearing. He gave the girl a wink as he walked past her and his friends who were all smiles. Things were so good at the moment he should have known that things were

imminently going to have to start going wrong.

The game was played like any other. The only oddity was that Draco Malfoy had at the last minute resigned from his spot as the team Seeker, and another young Slytherin had taken his place. The boy was no match for Harry's experience, and the young green-eyed boy had captured the snitch in under an hour, which allowed his team to score a considerable amount of points already leaving them in a good position to win the Quidditch Cup right off the bat.

That night the party was taking place in the Gryffindor Common Room as always. Harry was hanging out near the back with some of the DA leaders he had invited into the common room and were just relaxing having a good time. Harry was a few butter beers and a couple shots of firewhiskey in him, so he was feeling good, but not exactly to the point of intoxication.

For the most part the party was rather relaxed as Harry had his arm around Susan tightly as the two talked among the group, "Hell of a catch today Harry. Great timing too. Left the field making Katie look pretty great scoring 8 of the 14 goals." Ron said enthusiastically.

Hannah Abbott who was surgically attached to Neville's hip ever since they became a couple after the attack on the Hogwarts Express said, "Don't forget to give yourself some credit Ron you were outstanding on the defensive side of things today, and that pass you made to Ginny across the field was awesome. I know there were some scouts in the stands today, and you keep that up you may actually end playing reserve somewhere for a few years before getting a spot on the starting rotation somewhere."

Ron blushed a bit at the girl's praise, and Lavender Brown whom was nearby listening in accidentally on the groups conversation caught onto

this, "Ron would you want to be a pro in Quidditch?"

The boy looked at the girl with a startled look, "Honestly I never thought I would be quite good enough, but it's been my dream to play for the Canons since I was a kid. I can't think of anything better."

This got the two talking and Susan and Harry exchanged looks knowing that Ron was about to be captured by Lavender Brown. The girl did like her famous blokes. She made a pass on Harry at the end of the year last year and Susan all but hexed her and reminded her to keep her hands to herself.

Colin Creevey was getting cozy on the couches nearby with Ginny Weasley whom had accepted his offer to Hogsmeade and had even kissed the boy quite soundly after their first date cementing the two as a couple. Harry looked around and for a moment he forgot there was a war, and just thought that they were all young teenagers with a lot left to live for, and a whole future ahead of them.

Suddenly Harry felt a little weak, and he felt his knees buckle. Susan quickly yelped and got the attention of most of the people in the common room who saw their brazen leader fall. Harry felt a pounding sensation enter his head, and saw a green light go slamming into a barrier. Harry was on the ground clenching his head and nearly shouted in shock of the sudden intrusion in his mind.

Susan quickly asked, "Harry what's wrong? Is it your scar?"

Shaking his head quickly he grunted out, "I don't know what's wrong. I saw a flash of green light hit a giant shield, and my head just started killing me."

Neville was at his side again, "Was it another vision? I thought you were done with those?"

Harry was just about to retort when a patronus shot into the room at that

point in the shape of a lion, "Potter... Your Ancestral home has been attacked. Please contact me at once...There were casualties."

Harry felt a stinging sensation on his heart, and dread set in. He had gotten to comfortable. To use to things going right. He wasn't ready for this. It was Sirius...It had to be.

The Gryffindor Common Room was silent, but Harry stood back to his feet, "If you all will excuse me. Try to enjoy the rest of the party. I will come with news when I can."

Many people looked grim, and some could even hear the hollowness in his voice, and his closer friends knew he was preparing for the worst.

Harry made his way out of the common room with Susan at his side.

Some of the others asked if he wanted them to come, but Harry cited that the battle was clearly already over, and everything else could wait till tomorrow. When he made it to the Headmasters office he said the password and ascended the stairs. Dumbledore was waiting for him and Susan with a grim look further cementing the fact in Harry's mind that Sirius was gone.

Dumbledore sighed, "I trust you know of the attack already. I felt it just earlier."

Harry raised his eyes, "That's what that feeling was. It just about knocked me over with the sickest feeling."

Dumbledore looked puzzled, "Yes. Voldemort himself must have ripped through your wards. I felt it myself even as I only helped you power up the wards. Fortunately for my health that it was not I who finished them, or it might have killed me in my age."

Harry felt slightly bad about this and did not know such a cost could come for putting up wards, but it made sense as they were tied to each person's magical core. Dumbledore continued, "If you did not know the

wards were ripped apart how-

"The Minister sent me a patronus. I got the message in the Gryffindor Common Room. He wanted to speak to me straight away." Harry said calmly as if he was already coming to terms.

Dumbledore nodded, "They are all at the Minister's office now. They had to abandon Potter Manor. It is lucky but unknown why Voldemort attacked it while you were not there."

Harry shook his head, "I know exactly why he did it. He wanted to crush my spirits."

Susan tightened her grip on Harry's arm, but Dumbledore sighed, "I hope you will not allow him too."

Shooting back a quick retort he said, "I will wait to pass judgment by what I find out from the Minister. May I use your floo."

"No, I think it is best we all go together. Fawkes can get us out of Hogwarts and straight to the Minister's office." Dumbledore explained.

The old man quickly stood up and walked over to the young couple offering his arm to Harry, "Take my arm Harry. Ms. Bones don't let go of Mr. Potter."

The girl nodded having no intention of letting go of her boyfriend and the group fire flashed across the country to the Minister's office.

Upon arrival it was clear that quite a battle had taken place by the number of injured that were present. Nothing life threatening, but it was clear at least a dozen were hurt in some form or another. Harry spotted Gawain first, and ran to him, "Gawain, what happened?"

The man looked down trodden when he saw Harry, which is contrast to how the man normally looked when he saw the green-eyed boy and Harry's stomach dropped further, "An attack on Potter Manor. The Aurors, the trusted Aurors were having a meeting there, but someone

must have leaked the information. We were attacked by Voldemort, Bellatrix, and some other Death Eaters. We fought as best we could, but in the end, there wasn't much we could do. They had a goal, and it was assassination. It was quick in and out. I am sorry Harry, Susan, but-" Rufus Scrimgeour took that time to appear, "Harry! Susan. Please come in to my office."

Gawain looked apologetically at the two and put a hand on each of their shoulders, "Stay strong you too."

Harry almost couldn't stand the apprehension anymore as he walked towards the Minister's office whom had his door opened to him. The young green-eyed man instantly dragged Susan into the room, and he thought he saw a ghost when Sirius, Remus, and Kingsley were all sitting around. Harry was so happy to see his Godfather he didn't even stop to register the grim looks on their faces when the young man rushed his Godfather bringing him to a tight hug, "I thought it was you Padfoot. I thought you were dead."

Harry felt like crying but was glad he didn't when Sirius separated the two after a quick embrace, "Harry you and Susan need to have a seat. I am afraid it's going to be a long night."

The young man was confused though he had seen everyone already, except, "Where's Auntie?"

All the men flinched at that question, and Harry suddenly felt his gut sink again, and he now knew why everyone looked so grim. The young man's hand at once dropped into Susan's and took a seat bringing her into his lap quickly allowing the Minister to close the door and take a seat at his desk before addressing Susan, "Your Aunt Susan...She was one of the bravest woman I ever knew. She fought till her last breath, and even managed to help get us all out of the Manor. She was a hero Susan, but I

am sorry she...didn't make it."

The silence was harsh for several moments, and then Susan just stuck her face in Harry's neck and the tears began to come. She didn't scream or sob, she just let the tears fall out, and Harry knew they were coming as they touched his neck. Harry held the girl tightly and whispered into her ear, "It's going to be okay love. Let it out. She wouldn't have wanted you to suffer silently."

Even with his words of encouragement the girl didn't do more than just let the tears run silently down her face, and Harry honestly much rather would have dealt with the sobbing Susan than this agonizing tortured girl he was holding on to.

Harry asked the question next, "What happened Rufus? Gawain said there was a trusted Auror meeting, but that someone leaked it."

Sirius nodded and quietly said, "We aren't sure who, but the information got back to Voldemort somehow. He attacked us with two dozen Death Eaters and there were only about fifteen Aurors. We lost at least six, and the house...it's gone. Burnt to the ground by Voldemort himself. I am sorry Harry. We tried to defend it, but it just couldn't be done."

Harry shook his head, "I don't understand. How did he get through the wards so fast? I felt him break them and it felt like he did it with a single curse."

Remus shook his head, "I duelled with Augustus Rookwood out there. He must have had something to do with it. He was an unspeakable, and if anyone would have known how to bring wards down in record breaking time it was him. I honestly thought they been weakening, but when I checked the stones they seemed fine. I honestly can't tell you how it happened, only that it did."

Harry felt torn. He couldn't believe this had happened. Not to Susan. She

was just like him now. She was the last Bone's and he was the last Potter. He wished there was something he could say. Something he could do for the girl he loved, but he knew there was nothing. The only thing he could do in this moment was be there for her.

Susan after several more moments of silence spoke, "How did she die.

Was it...was it him?"

Everyone looked uncomfortable by this, but Sirius sighed, "No it wasn't Voldemort. Bellatrix and Amelia dueled for several minutes. For most of the attack actually she kept her back from drawing blood, but at the end Amelia stood in the way of both Bellatrix and Voldemort so some of the Aurors could escape through the back of the house, but she couldn't hold them both off. Bellatrix dealt the final blow after she had been disarmed the only thing I will say is that it was quick. She didn't feel a thing."

Remus mumbled sadly, "Quicker than falling asleep."

Susan was shaking at this point as she strongly wrapped her arms around Harry gripping tightly and the tears returned, but this time there was light sobbing, and Harry was only slightly happier that the girl was grieving properly.

It hurt Harry to see the love of his life hurt this way, and he wished there was something he could do for her. Hell, he was even coming to see Amelia like a future mother figure. Stern and respectable. Wise and kind. Another great soul ripped from this Earth by the Dark Lord.

Harry spoke again, "I don't understand. If he wanted to break into Potter Manor, destroy the home, break my spirits, then why not kill Sirius. Why kill Amelia..."

Rufus looked at Harry and then back at Susan, when he spoke softly, "We think he is trying to use psychological warfare against you Harry. He no longer has access to your mind through the horcrux you had in your scar

so now he wants to hurt others around you, especially those closest to you."

Harry looked at the man puzzled, "That doesn't make sense. He could have hurt me personally a lot more had he gone after Sirius, or Remus, but-

Susan snapped, "It wasn't about you this time Harry."

All the men in the room looked at the girl in surprise, and she pushed off Harry standing to her feet, "Did everyone invited to this meeting know Auntie was going to be there?"

Rufus looked slightly surprised at the girl when he answered, "Yes...it was common knowledge among the invited group."

Susan shook as she said, "This wasn't vengeance at Harry. Burning his home down was enough to hurt him. The assassination of my aunt was a strike against me. I called the attack against him on the express, and I have declared myself to Harry. He was hoping to break me, and hopefully split Harry and I so he could get to me later. You are saying psychological warfare and I agree, but I think it goes a lot deeper than that."

Harry nodded his head, "He knows that losing you after all that's happened would break me. It's like he left the message in blood. He is going for Susan next."

The men all looked at the two teens in shock. Rufus scratched his head, "Its a plausible theory, but I don't think we should put too much stock into what that mad man thinks. Our main goal must be to stop him from getting everyone, but especially you two. You two are basically the golden couple of Britain. You stopped Voldemort on the train and exposed him. He will want to kill you both publicly and loudly. It won't be behind some back-door meeting, this was personal."

Harry growled, "Then let's make it personal. Minister I would like to put out a bounty of the Ministry's number two most wanted."

Rufus looked at the young man in surprise and asked, "How much?"

Harry looked at Sirius and the man said, "One Million Galleons. 500,000 from each the Potter and the Black funds. If Voldemort wants to make this war personal, then we will take out his most trusted ally. I see where you are going with this Harry, and while it's a Dark Place it would help us deliver a blow to the heart of the enemy."

Remus skeptically asked, "You think killing Bellatrix will do anything, but piss off the Voldemort."

Susan shook her head answering for both men. Harry had never heard her voice sound like this, but it sounded hallow, and he didn't like it one bit, "That's exactly what we want it to do."

Everyone went into silence, and when Harry looked into those beautiful blue eyes he had looked into so many times he saw nothing but pain. He knew the girl he loved was going to hurt until her aunt's killer was brought to justice, and he would do everything he could to help bring that peace.

28. Recruiting a Snake

Chapter 28

The weeks that followed Amelia Bone's death started very hard. Susan wasn't herself at all, and disturbingly quiet, and Harry was really worried about her. Around the third week of her mourning however she woke up one day, and the girl was ready to go on with her life, but in a completely new direction.

Susan had really dedicated herself to the DA and training with Harry. She trained harder than anyone, and as hard as Harry. Her progress was immense, and her training was intense. She also no longer really cared

for her grades, her future career, and anything that didn't involve the war or combat, but that didn't extend to Harry.

The two had become closer than ever. Susan would sneak into his quiet quarters at night...well after a while she didn't even really try to hide it. She was caught after hours by Professor Snape one night and she asked him to fuck off as she slammed Harry's bedroom doors on the old bat. She skipped his two weeks of detention with the man, and instead went to the Headmaster, and told him to expel her at which point she walked out. Needless to say, the Headmaster wasn't going to kick out Susan. Mostly because she was one of the most popular students in the school, and she was a leader of the DA, and she was Harry's girlfriend, and the DA probably would have thrown HIM out of the school had she been forced out.

Harry secretly loved the new Susan. She was driven. She woke him up every morning, and they went on a run together, and when they came back, they would shower together, and she would reward him for working hard with her. Then they would go to classes, go about their day, run the DA, then train after hours in the room of requirements which afterwards she would reward him again. Needless to say, Harry was loving it. The girl was shining with confidence, and she worked hard, and while her motives were definitely questionable Harry hoped that he could protect her through any coming conflict. He only hoped she wouldn't try and run off to do anything stupid on her own.

It was December before anything of noteworthy significance would occur. Susan was running the advanced DA class and Harry was watching the girl admirably. It was the first time he had turned over the advanced DA class to anyone, but Harry had told her right before class that night that he wanted her to walk them through the shield and counter offense,

because she was quite exceptional at it perhaps even better than Harry.

So, he turned it over to her willingly and was watching how she did the in the big leagues. He could tell she was excited, but also a little nervous that her closest friends in the world were basically watching her and trying to get the instruction.

"The key to this drill is speed. I don't care how powerful you can fling blasting curses, exploding hexes, or the unforgivables. If you can't get this timing right, and the spell off then you are going to lose, and that could cost you your life. So, I am going to demonstrate for you guys, Hannah, Ernie if you please."

The two Hufflepuffs stepped forward from the group and simultaneously cast the stunning spell at Susan, and with lightning speed the girl had she shield up and returned fire to both taking out Ernie in surprise, and almost catching Hannah in crossfire. The DA clapped politely at this, and Susan said, "I was lucky. I don't think Ernie was expecting my response to be real speed, but demonstration speed. Harry trusted me however to teach this lesson, so I wanted you guys to see the practicality of the speed in this. More than likely you won't catch a Death Eater or a Dark Wizard off guard with this, but this could change the tide of a one on one duel for sure. Imagine you are being overpowered by someone like Dolohov, Lestrangle, the Dark Lord, but then you surprise them and the blitz of spells they were firing at you has now been turned on them. Then you can gang up on them and turn the tide, but not if you can't even get an attack in. Now partner off in pairs of threes and let's see it. Take your time, and pace yourselves we don't need to see anyone getting hurt here."

The young red head nodded to Professor Flitwick who was over on the side grading papers hardly even looking up. After the first the several weeks of professors sitting in on the lessons they learned to trust and

respect the DA's control they had on the students there, and how well they ran a lesson. The man would sometimes go around the room and help correct people or make a good teaching point connecting it to the practical lessons that he may or may not have taught to the classes before. It very much legitimized the group, and Harry loved it.

This lesson was a struggle for people at first. Many were getting stunned right off the bat trying to catch the shield at the perfect time, so it was a moment too late or a moment too soon, and they would hit the ground.

However, some were getting it on the first try namely Daphne Greengrass. She was fast, and her consistency was on point. She got stunned a few times, but she always recovered and came back fast and on the ball. She was also dueling with Colin Creevy, and Anthony Goldstein. Anthony wasn't anything special, but Colin had become Harry's little protege. The boy was fast, and he had some good power to back up his speed. Nothing immense in power, but he made up for it in speed. Faster than Harry some speculated, but definitely not as concise, and certainly not as powerful.

Daphne was on a roll though after stunning both of her partners however, and Colin had yet to touch her. Harry was impressed with the girl's wand work, and wondered if perhaps next semester he would invite her onto the leadership board of the DA. That would mean Private Training with Harry and his group, but she also had to prove trustworthy, and being in Slytherin he knew he would face resistance in the group to bring her in. But at the end of the day they all respected Harry's decisions for the most part.

After Daphne took down all her partners down for the third time Harry called her out, "Daphne...Will you come sit with me."

Susan gave the boy a look, but he winked at her and she just grinned

going back to helping out a pair of younger Gryffindors. Daphne came over and took a seat next to him, and she asked after only a minute of silence, "What's up Potter why'd you take me from the lesson?"

For a second Harry stared over the group just watching the progress people were already making under Susan's gentle guidance, but then he said, "You're good..."

Daphne looked surprised at the compliment, "Thanks, but-"

"Really good." Harry said now looking at the girl.

The girl looked flustered for a moment, and even blushed a bit. Harry then decided to try an approach, "Are you here spying on my group?"

A flicker of shock crossed the girls face, and then she stood up turning to the boy, "Are you accusing me of being a snitch Potter?"

The boy remained calm and looked back over the group, "Don't make a scene. Sit down."

Daphne eyes flickered to the seat, to Harry, to the door. Harry nearly chuckled, "You wouldn't make it towards the door. Even with Flitwick over there. Please sit-down Ms. Greengrass."

Considering her options, she seemed to realize she had few, so she sat back down, "Am I in trouble?"

Harry asked calmly, "That depends. How much of my meetings have you been leaking, and to whom?"

She quickly said, "Just my parents and my sister, who is a few years younger in Slytherin."

"I know Astoria Daphne she is in my beginner Defense Class, and she is promising. I am glad I got her young, and perhaps she will be great by the time she gets out. If I can find some good leaders to follow this program up behind me. Or who knows maybe they will hire me right out of Hogwarts, and I will continue it myself once I have killed the Dark

Lord." Harry said with a bit of a smile on his face.

Daphne looked at the boy shocked for a second but didn't say anything.

Harry then looked at her, "You see Susan out, there right? Commanding the DA? She's doing great right?"

Not sure why he was asking her this she figured honesty would be best,

"She is a little too quick in her lessons. She could go more in depth on her explanations of the lessons. Her practical explanation was great, but I think some of the younger years are struggling because she was vague, but I think she does pretty good for a witch my age at only sixteen."

He looked lovingly at the girl, "She could be a great teacher. Once I take her away from this war for a few years, and she some time to delve deeper into the magics I am teaching her now, but that will be after I kill Voldemort."

He kept saying it, and she was only now starting to understand why, "You think that I am leaking information to the Dark Lord?"

The boy looked her dead in the eye, "Are you?"

She looked hurt for a moment, but then steeled it over, "No. My parents aren't Death Eaters, nor am I. I believe in the Pureblood society, but I don't want people to die for it. I want it to be accepted as a culture, and I am no way in line with the Dark Lords beliefs. I resent your accusation. I have never told anyone about what you teach us in these classes, outside of what my classmates have seen in duels that I have had in the Slytherin Common Room."

"Duels?" Harry asked.

The girl took on a sad smile, and seemed to age a little, "You aren't a popular side to choose Potter, but I trust you, and you have taken me in. From one chance encounter where you allowed me to heal you after the attack from Umbridge, and you took me in and made my formidable

dueling skills exceptional."

"So, you have had to duel just to stay safe and in the DA?" Harry asked.

"I do what I have to. No one tells me what I can and can't do. Besides I aspire to taking Madame Bone's job one day. If I am on your side, and I served your team loyally I figured I would get a hell of a recommendation from the future Minister of Magic." Daphne said honestly.

Harry laughed softly, "Me, Minister of Magic? I think I would rather not."

Daphne shrugged, "Then you will be our generations Dumbledore, and basically pick every Minister by hand until you die, which means it could even be me one day. I am a Slytherin, and I am nothing if not ambitious."

Harry took his turn to look the girl in the eye again, "How about loyal?"

"I am no Hufflepuff Potter. You already have your gorgeous loyal Hufflepuff leading your Defense Group right now." Daphne said with what sounded like a little disdain.

Harry chuckled, "She is beautiful, but you misunderstand me. I want to offer you a chance at being on the leadership team of the DA."

The girl looked positively shocked now, "What all does that entail?"

Knowing the girl was a Slytherin Harry gave his sales pitch, "Private training with myself, and the other leaders in the Defense Association.

Access to each of the families' libraries in the group. A network of connections in the Order of the Phoenix, the Ministry, and Hogwarts itself. You work tactics with my group in and basically prepare for the war. It is here at our doors, and we have to fight back. I won't ask you to fight on the front lines just help us prepare too."

"You want a spy in Slytherin?" Daphne asked carefully.

Harry looked around the room grinning, "No I don't need one of those.

That position is already filled, and you can't replace them. No, I want

something much more valuable than a spy. Your mind. You are creative, you are crafty, and we need a Slytherin in our group to give us that different perspective. We need the mind of a Slytherin. If it won't be you, we will pick someone else, but if you want that nice cozy office and easy way to get there you pick my side right now, and you give us all you got to get to the finish line."

Susan was calling an end to the Defense meeting, and it looked fairly successful. Harry stood up grinning at his girlfriend, while not even looking at Daphne, "It's your choice. I haven't even run it by my group yet. I had to know I could trust you first."

As Harry was walking towards Susan Daphne called out, "How did you decide?"

Harry stopped turning to look at the girl one last time, "I read you like a book."

With that he winked at her and walked towards Susan throwing his arm around her grinning and talking about how great she did and kissing her on the cheek. All the while leaving Daphne Greengrass to her thoughts.

The group discussed Harry's plan that night. Susan was at first very quick to deny Daphne Greengrass entry, but after the night Harry gave her...she decided there was nothing to worry about and accepted right away. Once Susan was on board the rest were easy to convince.

Harry approached the girl with the offer once again, and she too accepted the offer with no further questions.

It was the first day of the Christmas holidays and the whole Defense Leadership was at Bone's Manor, and that included Daphne Greengrass. Most of the group was divided into groups. Boys and girl for the most part. Ron, Neville, Ernie, Collin, and Harry were in one group while Luna, Hermione, Daphne, Susan, Ginny, and Hannah were in the other.

That made the group basically eleven strong. They were going to start the Holiday's with a bit of situational duels to and Harry was going to sit out and let the girl's vs boys 4 v 6.

Harry knew Daphne was good, but he wanted to see how the girl held up in a real combat like scenario. Where she has to defend herself and the people around her. The DA doesn't practice anything like this on this level, and the boy was curious to see how she would hold.

He walked over placing a hand on Daphne's shoulder before he began the match, "How do you feel? Confident?"

The girl grinned, "Yeah I think this is going to be fun. All the other girls are excited, but I will just have to see for myself."

"Did you have any trouble convincing your parents to let you come?"

Harry asked curiously still not knowing the girl's parents outside of his problem with Lord Greengrass during the last press conference.

The girl snorted in a very unlady like manor, "Are you kidding I told them just who was on the invite list today, and I basically had to plant my feet from getting shoved into the floo network. I think they said something about not coming back without a betrothal contract. They definitely wanted me here, and I think I will be determining today if these private training sessions are worth my time."

Harry grinned at the girl, "I hope it proves itself to you, but let me give you some advice before we start the match...don't underestimate anyone in there. Battle brings out a different side of you, and while this may be a practice match these guys play for keeps. Keep your head out there, and do your best to protect your teammates, because if you don't, they will see you as a liability, and you will be out faster than you can say stupefy. Go out there and have fun, but keep in mind these guys are playing just under lethal, and they know this could save their lives one day."

The girl's eyes went to each of those who were out laughing and having a good time, and only getting a brief idea at how serious things were about to get on the practice field of Bones Manor.

Harry called the teams together, and the girls came over with smiles and the guys came over all touching knuckles looking confident. Harry announced, "Today's rules. You cannot revive your teammates, you cannot cast any spells that could cause lethal damage, you cannot transfigure my battlefield into dangerous magical creatures...Colin."

This caused a lot of groaning, and Neville to smack the young Creevy brother in the back of the head. One of the last duels before the School years start Colin attempted to do Harry's spell work against Dumbledore and it didn't work out to well nearly killed Hannah Abbott.

"Other than that, there are no rules. Fight till one side has no men or women left standing. The girls will attack from the west side, and the guys will defend from the east creek, and-"

"May the best witches or wizards win. We plan too." Susan said coyly winking at Harry.

The girl cheered, and all followed Susan as she ran towards the woods, while Ron lead the guys all to the other side giving the team times to plan. With the guys on the defense in this going around it left them with a slight advantage, but with Susan in the midst and her power change in the past two months Harry doubted the guys could pull it off and that wasn't even accounting for Daphne Greengrass. Also, the number difference of being outnumbered by two extra people.

Harry's thought process ended up correct. Neville was ganged up on by Luna, Ginny, and Hermione, and immediately lost. Ron got overwhelmed by the force and so did Ernie single handedly by Daphne. Susan went into a very long and intense duel with Colin Creevy, while he managed to

fight off Susan, Daphne, and Hermione. He didn't last long, but he did not give up until he hit the ground. Harry watched in puzzlement. The teams were too uneven. The girls had too much power, and too much brains.

Susan came over and sat next to him with an innocent smile on her face, "You must get so bored not competing with us anymore Harry. Have the girls finally managed to scare you off, too much young power for you to face?"

Harry grinned at the girl's confidence, "You know I would join the fray, but it wouldn't even be fair."

The girl purred at that in his ear, "I still think its very sexy when you get all confident, but I don't buy it. I think even with you couldn't make the difference of stunning all six of us. The boys didn't take down a single one of us, and we need a really stretch of our skills. What do you say...lover?"

Harry shook his head at the girl contemplating his answer, "I don't know Sue, I don't think the girls would like it."

Susan called out, "Hey Daphne what do you say we run it again with Harry on the other team?"

The other girls looked stunned for a moment, while Daphne shrugged, "After the embarrassing whooping we just gave these boys I think they could use a little bit confidence boosting even if they will lose either way."

Hermione looked nervous, but the other girls were grinning. Looking at his girlfriend Harry couldn't quite figure out his girlfriend's angle, and he did actually have a surprise he wanted to show the group today. Actually a few surprises he had been waiting on, "Alright if the guys will have me then let's do this."

This caused the whole group to cheer as they all rushed off to their

original sides. Ron asked Harry immediately, "What's the plan?"

Harry looked at the boy confidently, "Distract the rest of the girls and force them to separate Susan and Daphne into the middle I will handle them."

Ron looked at the boy skeptically, "You're good mate don't get me wrong, but Daphne's speed and Susan's power that could be a little much too handle."

Harry grinned, "I have some tricks up my sleeve for this, and it will only work once."

Ron nodded once again remaining clearly skeptical but did as he was told.

Harry had been training just as hard as Susan, but two times a week he was leaving the school to Marauder training that he had just finished, which meant she had no idea what he had been doing in these training's, and she had been respectful enough not to ask, but that meant his next trick would amaze.

The duels ran its course with ease, and Harry predicted most of it. It took most of his team to take down Hermione, Luna, and Ginny, but that meant Colin and Hannah were likely engaging in what could be a lengthy duel. Neville was hiding around back somewhere in case things went south for Harry, but he wasn't counting on that.

It was time to engage. With a gentle pop Harry apparated across the grounds and directly in front of his favorite girl, and her MVP teammate. Harry grinned at Susan as she spun around firing a single curse at him, but he deflected it wandlessly, "Oh come on babe you aren't even going to let me draw my wand. I will remember that tonight."

Daphne was looking at the boy with determination. This would be the first time the two properly dueled, and she would have the advantage of

Susan. However, she had seen him duel many times, and knew how he worked, or at least she thought she did. Susan smiled at her boyfriend, "This is exactly how I planned it. You fell for my trap love."

Harry just smiled easily at the girl flipping his wrist causing his wand to fall into his hand, "Well we know how you like to be the dominant one so feel free to start it off."

Daphne gagged a bit, "Too much information Potter."

Both wands were pointed at him, but Harry's was at the ground, "You're move my love."

Susan nodded and swept her wand in a wide motion, "Accio Tree."

Daphne pointed her wand with a flick and a heavy blasting curse that Harry recognized as *bombarda*, and he whipped his wand out in wide arcing shield that was solid and resounded across the grounds with a mighty bang.

Before Harry could move to counter both girls were flooding him with different offensive spells that were needed to be blocked by different shields. It was already becoming quite difficult for him to both dodge and block the appropriate spells with the correct shield, but he was hanging in there just as he always did. After a minute passed Harry knew he was basically playing God with how lucky he had been that he had not been hit, so he decided to put his plan into action.

He waited to time the two girl's spells at the same time, and as soon as he had it, he whipped his wand in a slash like motion across his body hitting both spells with perfect precision and ducking under the next coming spells while he drew a second wand from his dueling robe. Suddenly Harry was shooting two spells at once at the two girls and the initial shock almost ended them both, but it wasn't quite enough. Harry needed some more skill.

With a new plan already being set in motion Harry reflected a spell straight back at Susan making her roll out of the way in which time he blast Daphne with six curses and had the girl tied up and petrified in the few seconds it took Susan to get back up and return spells, but with Daphne down the girl stopped cursing and so did Harry.

Susan breathlessly said, "How long have you been able to do that?"

"Successfully? Maybe a few weeks. Attempting? Since the start of term. I was hoping to use it in a situation like this to surprise you." Harry said cheekily.

Susan grunted, "No one has been able to do that since Grindelwald himself."

Harry shrugged, "No one ever survived a killing curse either, and I have survived two. I have kind of gotten used to being the exception. But I do believe we have a duel to finish. Drop your wand, and I won't stun you."

Susan looked at the boy incredulously, "You think I am just going to surrender?"

Looking at the girl with a bit of a smile, "I know you will. Just depends on what I am going to have to do to make it happen."

Susan tightened her grip on her wand, "I am not the same girl you made an example of in the DA a year ago. I am stronger, and I have become your greatest fighter. I may not be able to take you down, but I will show you that I am force to be reckoned with."

Before she could start casting, Harry smiled at her, "I love this girl that stands before me now more than I have loved anything in my life, but it isn't a question of that. I know what you have become, and I am so proud of it, but there is still so much for me to teach you. Allow me."

Susan was about to raise her wand in the defense, but then Harry closed the distance between the two, and where the boy she loved and admired

stood now stood a 180-pound timber wolf that had pounced her over before she could even move. She was so shocked she didn't move or say anything. She just admired the beast that was now on top of her ready to easily kill her if that was its desire. It growled threateningly for only a second, and Susan had dropped her wand in surprise because she knew there was nothing she could do. Instead she reached her hand up and ran her fingers through his soft fur, and the creature whimpered and looked down at her allowing her to see the same green eyes she fell in love with over a year ago, "You're beautiful."

The wolf reached its head back and howled to the world, and Susan was in awe. It stepped off shortly, and as quick as the creature appeared it disappeared and there was the young man once again in his dueling robes smirking triumphantly with her wand in his hand, "I think you should go let the others know it's over. Neville is standing nearby just in case you guys were going to beat me, everyone else is probably scattered."

Susan nodded and with a shot of red sparks into the air the guys left started cheering in victory while the girls were being revived and joining them in the middle. Harry then explained to the girls the final moments of the battle, and Hermione said, "I can't believe it. Two such rare gifts exhibited in one duel."

Daphne agreed with her, "Believe me Granger, I saw it and I still don't believe it. Part of me thinks Potter stunned me so easily because I was so shocked to see a successful spell come from that second wand. Much less six of them."

Harry sighed, "Another skill to add to the arsenal with each one that is added we are one step closer to victory."

The others all nodded in thought, and wondered just where the next

battlefield would be, and hoped they would all be safe over the remainder of the Christmas Holidays.

(A/N) That was a fun chapter to write! Let me know what you guys thought in the comments section down below. Cheers!

29. The Cave

Chapter 29

Staying at Potter Manor had been great for Harry. Sleeping with Susan every night was also great for Harry. It was the first time in his life that he felt so loved, and so at home, and he couldn't honestly quite get enough of it. He counted the days until graduation, and the end of the war where he could live his life in peace, but until then he knew he couldn't lose focus on the end goal.

Susan and Harry were working on start of her Animagus abilities which were coming along smoothly, but admittedly slowly. Harry did it just under six months which was considered incredible, but now with Susan he was guessing it was going to take at least 10, and he knew she wasn't happy with that thought.

The young lady had actually been struggling with a lot, and with the first holidays passing by without her aunt he knew that she needed something. He wasn't sure what, but he hoped something could help bring his girl a bit of peace.

School started back, and the second term had begun. Things were going as well as they could be. Harry had been attending Professor Slughorn's meetings, and Dumbledore had begun his private tuition with him. They had been covering mostly advanced defense and stayed away from offensive magic. It was clear to Harry that for whatever reason Dumbledore would not teach him anything lethal that he could kill someone with, and that went well with the headmaster's style of always

giving people second chances, and a shot at redemption, which Harry would respect for now.

The DA of course was going along fantastically, and Harry was about ready to promote several in the beginner group to the advanced group. In the advanced group Susan and the others had been doing really well at leading it, while Harry took a back seat and really began focusing on his training. The time was coming, and they all knew it.

It was a cold night in February, and Susan, Harry, and the other couples of Hogwarts had just finished celebrating Valentine's Day. It was a few days after when they were all in the Great Hall having dinner, and a small note found its way to Harry at the Hufflepuff table. Looking around to see who sent the note the young man picked it up, and read it carefully, "I have found one of the seven. Please come to my office after dinner, and we can discuss what is to happen next. Ice Mice."

Harry knew the short and sweet message had to be from the headmaster, and he grinned in triumph hoping that he was taking another small step towards the defeat of The Dark Lord. Susan peered over his shoulder reading the note, and said quietly, "I want to come with you...to this meeting."

Thinking for a moment the boy wanted to say no but knew that would only invoke the red heads wrath. Knowing there was no point to that he agreed with a slightly forced smile. He did not want Susan to be involved in the Horcrux hunt, but there was no reason she couldn't be in the meetings to start it off.

After dinner Susan and Harry went arm and arm to the Headmasters office. Arriving at the Gargoyle Harry spoke the password that would grant them access and followed the ascending staircase to the Ancient Wizard's office.

Opening the door two young magical teenagers saw the wizened old man smiling benignly on them, "Good evening Harry, Ms. Bones, I was unaware you would be bringing company."

"Susan insisted to be a part of the meeting, and with everything that has happened I figure she has just as much of a right to know what's going in the war and the hunt as anyone. Now what did you find headmaster?"

Harry asked not trying to dance around the subject tonight.

The Headmaster gave a slight nod in understanding and did not push the subject, "I have found a location. The Orphanage that I believe your friends and yourself watched me meet young Tom Riddle at all those years. I went there again and begun having a look around and found that out that a field trip that they used to take back then was to a set of cliffs and overlooks. I started my investigation there, and begun searching for signs of magic, it wasn't easy, but we found a cave where we believe young Tom Riddle was taking children and torturing them. Not necessarily with normal curses and hexes, but with mind magic and psychological warfare."

Susan gasped, "You think he was using Legillmency on them?"

Dumbledore shook his head, "Not a type you would be familiar with Ms. Bones, but I believe he was planting images in their minds and making them have visions of terrible things. Of course, Tom was so young back then, and he was so different it is not hard to believe, but something more important to note in all this is that we believe a Horcrux is in this cave somewhere."

Harry nodded his head, "If we were to destroy it then that would be four down, with the snake, that would just leave two more out there that we are unsure of. It's a great start. When can we go investigate?"

Dumbledore leaned back in his chair gently, "I wish for us to go tonight

Harry. The sooner we can get this done the closer we can either destroy another piece of Voldemort or begin our search in a new place."

Harry immediately stood from his chair, "Let's go then."

Susan however shot this down, "I think we should stand back and plan a little more. Headmaster do you intend for just yourself and Harry to go this cave where anything could happen, and I would be the only one with the faintest clue of where you two went off too. Can you imagine how catastrophic it would be if something were to go wrong and we lose both of you? The war would be over, and we will have lost without taking a single Death Eater down with you."

Thinking for a moment Harry swore, "She has a point Professor."

Dumbledore looked at the two in surprise, "What do you two propose then? This piece of Voldemort's soul must be attended to immediately."

Susan shook her head, "There may not even be a Horcrux there professor. Are you willing to risk both of the lights best chances of winning this war for what may not even be there? I propose you send yourself and a few others down to the cave with you. If something happens then Harry can continue fighting the war without you, and while it will be difficult we will not have lost everything in one night. Or vice versa, and you send Harry and a few others down there."

Dumbledore thought on this for a few moments before countering, "I value your insight on the matter Ms. Bones, but Harry and myself must do this together. I do not believe Voldemort knew of anyone alive knowing his secret, and while I am expecting some defenses to be in place I am not expecting anything that myself AND young Mr. Potter could not handle."

Susan argued, "Then let me and a few others go along with you two. We don't need to enter the cave unless we have too, and that way if

something does go wrong then we can act immediately and begin a rescue mission of sorts. It can't hurt."

Harry looked from his girlfriend to the headmaster, and thought Susan was making perfect sense, while the old man did not seem so convinced, "The less people the better Ms. Bones. If you insist on this I believe if I invited Professor Snape to go along with the three of us, you would be satisfied?"

Harry immediately protested that decision, "I am not letting Snape anywhere near Susan without me there at her side. I know you may trust him with your life sir, but I trust very few with hers."

Susan smiled slightly at the boy and Dumbledore sighed, "Who would you trust to take on this adventure. I cannot recommend anyone in the DA, because it could bring serious-"

"Sirius!" Harry said excitedly.

Dumbledore looked between his two young pupils, and then nodded, "Very well. Sirius should have been made aware of this anyhow as you are his responsibility. Forgive my oversight on this matter, I will contact him at once."

It was several minutes later where Susan was nervously holding Harry's hand in anticipation. She did not like the idea of him doing this. Not in the slightest. It was dangerous, and her boyfriend could get hurt, but she also knew there was nothing she could do to stop him, that however didn't stop her from worrying.

When Sirius arrived, he looked grave and very irritated. Sirius turned to Harry before even addressing anyone else in the room, "Are you sure you want to go through with this?"

Susan looked at her boyfriend and prayed he would say he changed his mind, but instead she saw the same fire in his eyes when he dueled

Voldemort on their last outing, "No I have to do this. Every step we take, every horcrux we destroy brings us closer to ending this war. If there is a chance we can do that tonight. Then it has to be done."

Sirius sighed, and looked to Susan, "Any chance you have tried talking him out of this?"

Not meeting the man's eyes whom had been so kind to she said quietly, "Even if I could stop him I wouldn't. He is right. He has to be the one to end this and having anyone else try could be a waste of life. Harry and the Professor are the best chance we have."

Harry squeezed his girlfriend's hand softly and kissed her on the cheek, "Sirius your job is to protect Susan while we are in the cave and provide reinforcements to myself and the Professor in case something is to happen. I think we could hold a reasonable defense for as long as it takes for you guys to help us, but let's pray it isn't too difficult."

Dumbledore nodded wisely at the young man before him, "We will apparate just outside the cave system where Harry and I will then go for a swim and attempt to infiltrate the cave. I have already discovered that you cannot apparate directly in. It was quite painful in my first attempt to do so."

Sirius argued immediately, "The water will be freezing. Anywhere in the isles this time of year. You will both die of hypothermia before you even reach the cave."

Dumbledore shook his head, "I have had professor Snape prepare myself and Harry an antidote that will help keep our body temperature up, however it will not help with the fact that it is going to be quite cold."

Susan and Sirius both looked at Harry, but he looked resolved so they both sighed this time, and Dumbledore motioned for Fawkes, and the phoenix flew over to him giving a happy trill bringing a slight feeling of

hope to the room, "Sirius...Susan, Fawkes has agreed to transport you just outside the cave system. If all goes well, we will meet at the three broom sticks with a drink for celebration."

Susan then asked, "Where are you guys going to apparate from?"

Dumbledore took a soft smile with the girl, "Right here Ms. Bones. Say your goodbyes now, it is time to go."

Susan looked questioningly at Dumbledore and was clearly going to state that you can't apparate out of Hogwarts, but Harry wrapped her into a tight hug instantly saying, "Stay safe Susan. We won't be gone too long. Just watch for the red sparks."

Susan embraced the boy whispering into his ear, "Just come back safely to me Harry. I love you."

The two separated and shared a short kiss, and Harry walked over to the old leader of the Light whom offered an arm, "Good fortune too you Ms. Bones, Lord Black."

Sirius gave the man a dirty look, "Just keep my godson safe Dumbledore."

The man gave him a short nod, and then the two disappeared on the spot.

As soon as they touched the ground Harry knew they had crossed a long way. The ocean was at their backs, and they were facing a large set of cliffs, with waves crashing onto the rock they were standing on.

Dumbledore stared in a straight line, "Follow me into the water Harry, but first drink this elixir. It will help keep you alive."

The headmaster then pulled out two vials offering him one and saying, "To your health Harry."

Then downed the contents of the vial, while Harry did the same.

Dumbledore shivered just a bit, and then motioned for Harry to follow him as he dived into the water with the grace and speed of a much

younger man.

To say the water was cold would be an understatement. It was so painful on his body, that he wanted nothing more, but to shut down, but he knew he couldn't. He had to keep going. He followed the man he looked up to for years as close as he could for what felt like hours, but what could have only been a few minutes as they crossed the water and approached the cliff. As they got closer Dumbledore dove full head under the water, and Harry followed after him as fast as he could with a deep breath. It only took a moment of descending to find a fissure in the cliff, and Dumbledore went through it with Harry right behind him.

After a moment of ascension, they came out of the water and they were in a much warmer place with no wind beating down on them. Both student and teacher quickly got out of the water and began performing warming charms on themselves repeatedly. Dumbledore took a deep breath, "Well that was certainly unpleasant."

Harry snorted, "I think that was putting it mildly Headmaster."

Dumbledore nodded, "I think on our way I will teach you to apparate out of wards. Going into these things is near impossible. Coming out of them, well you have seen me do it on many occasions."

Thinking the skill would be useful in the future Harry just nodded looking around the cave for the first time. Dumbledore too seemed to be examining the current room they were in and spoke, "Do you feel it?"

Harry stretched his senses for only a moment and felt the familiar presence, "Yes, this cave has known magic. I recognize it as Voldemort's."

Dumbledore who seemed to agree didn't say anything as he stepped towards the wall on the far side of the room, "Oh how barbaric. I expected better of you Tom."

Harry stepping closer to the old man was trying to see what he saw, but

before he could Dumbledore said, "It requires payment."

Drawing a wicked looking knife, the man cut himself right across the hand and touched the wall while Harry barked out, "Sir!"

But before he could protest any further the cave wall began to fall apart in front of his eyes, and there was now a massive cavern before them with what looked like a lake that surrounded a small island in the middle, "It required a blood sacrifice as payment? Why didn't you let me do it sir?"

Dumbledore gave the boy a small smile as he stepped into the room, "While I appreciate your assistance here today Harry I still find your blood to be infinitely more valuable than mine. Also, your blood runs in the veins of Voldemort, and I did not want to trigger any unnecessary traps or precautions that he may or may not have placed."

Understanding, but still not completely agreeing with the man Harry followed him into the next room. As they approached the water Harry asked, "Another swim?"

Dumbledore shook his head, "I fear the consequences of touching the water before you would bring something highly unpleasant. Much more so than the cold water we previously faced. I believe there is another solution."

Dumbledore walked over to what looked like a small dock and scanned the room once more before holding his hand out of the water for a moment, and then smiling as the water began to bubble slightly, and a chain shot out of it towards his hand, "And he continues to disappoint me. Who I once thought was my greatest student is now quite disappointing? Harry your help please."

Listening to the older man Harry immediately grabbed the chain and began trying to pull the boat from out of the water, and after merely a

minute or two he was successful. Dumbledore pulled out his wand for the first time that night, and slowly ran his wand across it saying, "I think we should both be safe to cross. I believe it will sit one adult wizard. Your magic is great Harry, but I do not believe it will recognize you as a true adult yet. I also don't believe Voldemort predicted that an underage wizard could get this far. His arrogance will be his undoing."

Harry nodded taking a seat in the boat with the Professor wondering just how much time had passed since they had begun their journey. The boat began to move once Dumbledore had sat down and they crossed the lake quietly, as Harry continued to survey the place. Looking over the boat he suddenly became very uncomfortable and knew something bad was below them, "I sense something terrible Professor."

Dumbledore nodded, "The Darkest of magic if I am right. We must do our best not to awaken the cave's defenses."

Harry shook his head in agreement as he began to lower the anchor as they got ashore. As one the two wizards stepped out of the boat and approached the stone basin that was directly centered in the middle of the room. Dumbledore approached it first, and looked saddened, "I fear I was starting to underestimate you Tom. The potion must be drunk Harry."

Harry looked at the potion with a worrisome feeling, "Is it poison?"

"No, I do not believe so. I think it will make the drinker suffer a terrible pain, and possibly see terrible things. I believe it is intended to weaken, not kill." The man said taking the pale and scooping up some of the potion.

"Allow me to drink it then Professor. If something goes wrong, you are much more capable of defending us against whatever Dark Magic we just went over. If it was a duel I would trust myself, but that's not what the

obstacle in front of us is." Harry said convincingly.

Dumbledore looked at the young man and seemed to consider his offer, but shook his head, "No. I cannot be sure what this potion is. I believe it is a nightmare draught, but I could be mistaken. The young man that placed whatever is at the bottom of this basin was cruel, and he could easily have brought any person to this cave and poisoned them, so he could retrieve or place this item here."

Harry looked at the potion, and then to the headmaster, "We should strategize with the others and come back."

Shaking his head one last time, "It must be done now. If we leave Tom will be able to realize that someone has been here, and he will recognize your magical signature immediately, because he has attempted to invade your mind in the past. We must play with the cards we have been given."

Dumbledore lifted the potion to his lips, and before Harry could protest further, he said, "Harry I must make a final request of you. No matter what happens. No matter what I say. You make me finish this potion. If you were to help me drink any of it, I fear that every defense in this cave will come to life, and I am only certain of one of them, and it alone would be unpleasant. Your word Harry."

Looking at the man he once looked up to he nodded, "My word."

Dumbledore held the potion too him, and then tilted his head back drinking it quickly as if it were a shot of alcohol. The man quickly scooped up more, but then potion took effect and he stared in front of him in what looked like complete horror. Harry slowly walked towards the man asking, "Professor? Drink the potion."

Clearly still slightly in his right mind the man slowly lowered raised the potion back to his lips and took another drink.

This time he drops to a knee and continues to stare ahead, but this time

with a tear in his eye. He doesn't go to refill the pale, so Harry grabs it from the man fills it up, and takes it the headmaster, "Lets end this quickly sir, drink more."

Harry looked and realized there was at least four or five more doses left so quickly went back to the man, but Dumbledore looked angry as he tried to get it do go down his throat this time. The next time the man spat at him, "No I won't! I won't hurt her!"

Harry begged the man, "Please Professor lets end this."

On the next Dumbledore physically shoved Harry away, "No! I hate you. You can't bring her back."

With a bit of wrestling Harry gave him the next dose. Bringing the next Dumbledore begged, "Please...no more...please. Have mercy."

Harry felt the tears sting the back of his eyes as his idol had fallen so far. Whatever he was seeing it wasn't good. It was destroying the man from the inside out. Two more doses as Harry tried to feed it to him, "Please don't kill her. Please don't hurt them. Don't tell the Dark Lord please. Spare them."

Harry had no idea what the man was talking about, but when he filled up the final pale he turned and saw a wand pointing at him. Dumbledore was on his feet pointing his wand aggressively at the boy, "You told him. The boy will never forgive you! He will kill you!"

Harry froze. Dumbledore thought he was someone else. He didn't understand, what did he tell..., "The Prophecy Severus. You promised to protect the boy. It is your fault."

Harry stared at the man in cold horror. Snape had been the one who told the prophesy. Why hadn't his parents told him? Snape tortured him with every mental jab and probe that could possibly be made, but he was the reason his life was as messed up as it was. Feeling the anger swell up

inside of him Harry whirled his wand around the man disarming him with ease and surging forward practically forcing the last dose of potion down the man's throat.

With disgust Harry watched the man drop to the floor, the man that had defended the man that cursed his family. Harry went back to the basin and looked inside to find a locket. The locket looked slightly familiar to him, but when he grabbed it he knew something was wrong. This wasn't a horcrux. He opened the locket by breaking the clasp and found a small folded up piece of paper:

To the Dark Lord - I know I will be dead long before you read this, but I want you to know that it was I who discovered your secret. I have stolen the real Horcrux and intend to destroy it as soon as I can. I face death in the hope that when you meet your match, you will be mortal once more. - R.A.B

Harry read the note. Then he read it again. The locket was a fake, and whoever this R.A.B person was he apparently had it. There was no way of knowing how long ago this note was written. Harry turned and looked at Dumbledore who was still wheezing on the ground but seemed to be coming around. Harry approached the man dropping the necklace at his feet, "It's a fake, but it's not the only thing. Were you ever going to tell me about Snape."

Dumbledore stared at the locket on the ground and without looking up said, "Water."

Harry looked at the man slightly in disgust but didn't say a word as he went to the basin and cast the water charm in it but could not put the water in the pale. Slightly annoyed at the cursed thing Harry walked over and held his wand at the man, "Open your mouth. This is the only way."

Dumbledore nodded slowly and slowly opened his mouth, and Harry wanted to douse the man, but knew it wasn't right as he gently cast the

water spouting charm into his mouth allowing just small drops to go into the man's mouth.

After a minute Harry summoned the boat and helped the man onto it without saying a word. As they crossed Dumbledore spoke for the first time, "I will need you to apparate both of us out of here. I do not have the strength."

Harry looked at the man as he helped him out of the boat and nodded, "How do I apparate through wards anyways?"

Dumbledore smiled, "It is actually rather simple. Just imagine a force field. Those are the anti-apparation wards. Then pinpoint a spot on the imaginary force field, and expel your magic onto it, and then apparate like normal. It will be incredibly draining I am sure, but you must do it."

Harry nodded, and as he crossed the threshold back into the cave, he arrived into he turned and pointed his wand at the lake, "Fienfyre."

A giant eruption of fire roared out of his wand and shot across the room.

Harry quickly stopped the spell as the fire quickly spread and engulfed the lake and the rest of the room. He grabbed the headmaster's hand and did as he was told as he forced his way through the wards, and with a cannon like pop the student and teacher were gone.

30. The Sacking of Severus Snape

Chapter 30

Arriving in Hogsmeade Harry felt incredibly drained. He was helping carry the headmaster with one of his arms, and immediately went into the three broomsticks nearby. Thankfully the bar was mostly empty, and as he carried the wizened old man into the building very few even gave him a second look. Madame Rosemerta the usually upbeat Bar maiden came over to them looking to serve, but saw the state of the headmaster and gasped, "What's happened?"

Harry sat the man into a booth as he groaned, "We have had just a bit of a rough night. Would appreciate if you don't say anything to anyone about this."

The young man wasn't in the mood for games, so pulled a few gold galleons out of his back pocket and placing them on the table, "I will pay anyone in this bar off to keep this quiet."

Madame Rosemerta's eyes widened, but quickly swept up the change, "Is there anything I can get you two?"

Harry shook his head, "Send word up to the school somehow, and send for Madame Pomfrey, and Professor McGonagall."

She nodded, and Dumbledore grabbed Harry's arm, "Severus Harry."

Quickly shaking off the grip of the old man Harry spat, "I don't really want to see that man right now. I may not be able to prevent myself from doing something we will all regret. I think right now you should be fortunate that I didn't leave you in that cave. Now sit there and shut up."

Harry took a deep breath feeling the rage quench his body but thought of Susan and began to relax as he drew his wand, "Expecto Patronum."

The stag appeared, and Harry instantly thought of Susan and basked in the warmth his father's Animagus brought him, "Susan, Sirius, we made it out. We had to apparate out of our last location for safety. We are at the three broomsticks please meet us here."

With that the Patronus shot out of the bar and disappeared. Harry stared where the creature previously was and tried not to look at the old man as the next few minutes passed. The door swung open after some of the longest minutes of Harry's life bringing forth a red head that shot towards the boy wrapping him in a tight hug, "Oh thank Merlin you are okay."

Harry gently wrapped his arms around the girl and felt himself slowly begin to calm down. When the two separated the familiar black-haired

man that had taken care of Harry over the past year stepped in and also brought the boy in for a hug, "What happened Pup? Did it all work out?" Looking at the Headmaster with a bit of disgust he said, "It didn't go according to plan, but forgive me I would like to get as far away from that man as I can. Just waiting for Madame Pomfrey to arrive."

Susan and Sirius both recoiled at the boy's frosty tone, but neither said a word as they all waited in possibly the most uncomfortable silence possible.

It didn't take much longer for the school matron, and the deputy headmistress to arrive, "Potter! I heard Dumbledore was here with you injured."

Harry nodded stepping aside to offer access to the patient, "He drank a poison Madame Pomfrey, but I cannot tell you what it was or how it came to be here. We need to get back up to the school now preferably. His strength seems to be returning."

Both women looked ready to protest, but Harry said, "This requires the utmost confidence. It has to do with the war."

This silenced both women, but before they could say anything else Fawkes the Phoenix arrived, and Dumbledore smiled at his familiar, "Ah thank you for coming old friend. Will you please take me back to my office? Madame Pomfrey I will await you there. Harry...we will talk another night."

Harry spat venomously, "Don't count on that headmaster."

With the man gave a tired sigh and then disappeared in a small column of fire. Harry wanted nothing more than to scream or pull his hair out but knew this wasn't the time. He was finally starting to trust the old man again, but then he went and did something like this, and he couldn't see straight he was so angry.

Everyone in the small party was looking at him curiously, but he merely shook his head, and walked towards the door with the only hope of pulling him out of his current mood right on his heels.

As he made it outside, he simply stared at the castle. He wanted nothing more than to go in there right now and tear the castle down brick by brick until he got to Snape, and he was about ready to reach for his wand when he found a soft hand take his hand away from the temptation, "Remember that last day in Rome."

Harry continued to stare at the castle in burning fury, but the question threw him off, "What?"

Susan smiled, but said nothing for a moment merely looking off into the distance like he was, "That last day in Rome? We woke up next to each other that morning. We had breakfast with Mooney and Padfoot. We went into the city and visited the coliseum. You do remember that day, don't you?"

Feeling for the ring on girls finger he found the memory right there and smiled for the first time in what felt like a long time, "Of course I do."

The two teenagers were walking in front of the Trevin Fountain for probably the fifth time that day. It was a beautiful area in Rome, and it went way beyond basic beauty. The two walked with no purpose, just happy to be by each other's sides.

The girl bumped the boy's shoulder gently smiling wide, "You know I think I want to make this trip every year. Until we have kids."

The young man's eyes widened as he looked at the girl who was admiring the beauty in her area, "Kids?"

Susan nodded, "Yes as many as we can handle, I think. I think our family lines have suffered enough, and we can revive them then I think we should as much as we can."

This was the first time a conversation like this had really happened between the two, and the boy was nearly breathless with the thought, "How many you think?"

Susan shrugged her shoulders, "I don't know. I know money won't be much of a problem between the Potter's, Bone's, and Black fortunes. I would say as long as the first three don't make me hideously over weight then maybe four to six. I just won't ever want you to lose your attraction to me."

It was clear to Harry that the girl was feeling slight self-conscious, but he put an arm around her, "I couldn't imagine you being unattractive Sue, I don't think you will ever have to worry about that."

The girl laughed, "You say that now, let's see how you feel when I am a balloon."

Harry stopped stepping in front of the girl, "Susan I don't think there is anything you could possibly do to be ugly to me. In fact, the idea of you carrying my child one day sounds extremely wonderful. I can't think of anything more attractive."

Susan smiled a little wider at the boy and raised her fist to his cheek softly, "You need to lighten up a bit Harry. Geez Ernie was right, fatality level low, party level high. I know you wouldn't find me unattractive just like I know I wouldn't let me my body get to a level where it could even be possible."

Glad the girl wasn't seriously worried about his attraction to her he laughed, "How about where to live?"

Susan looked at the fountain for a moment then smiled, "Maybe here in Rome. Maybe somewhere else in the world. I think when all our problems at home go away, I think I would like to leave for a while, and maybe come back later."

Harry nodded, "This is my first real vacation, the idea of more sounds really nice. As long as you are by my side forever."

Susan walked a few more steps and without looking at him said, "Forever is a

long time Harry."

The boy shook his head grabbing her hand and making her face him, "Not long enough."

With that he dropped on knee and pulled a small box out of his back pocket, "Susan Marie Bones. You have made me happier in the past 9 months than anyone has made me in my whole life. You have made me feel love when I wasn't even quite sure what it was. I will fight till my last breath to bring us all to peace, so that way we can have our children and live in a world that our kids can be proud of, but I don't want to do it with anyone else. We could easily die in the next year, and the thought of passing on into the next life without you being my wife makes my chest hurt. We don't have to get married today, or tomorrow, or this year, or next year, but please agree that one day you will be my wife, and wear this ring until your last day? Susan will you marry me?"

The girl's eyes filled up with tears and the box opened showing a beautiful diamond ring, "Who did you tell?"

"No one it's just between you and me." Harry said honestly.

The girl stared at the boy on one knee for a second longer, and slid the ring onto her finger, "Yes Harry. I will marry you."

Harry smiled and stood up sweeping the girl off her feet into a powerful hug and causing the girl to laugh. When he sat the girl back on the ground, he kissed her gently, "To forever then my lady."

Zoning out of the memory Harry kissed the girl's hand that was holding his, "I doubt I will ever forget it. It was the happiest day of my life."

The girl smiled at him with that same beautiful smile she was always gave him, "It's going to be okay isn't it?"

Nodding Harry looked back towards the castle, and his rage was not forgotten, but subdued. Another person entered the scene and the young

green-eyed man turned to face his god father, "We need to talk about what happened tonight. Remus...Remus should be there."

Sirius nodded, "Let's go to Bones Manor for the night, and talk things over."

Harry nodded, and didn't say another word as he grabbed Susan's hand, and apparated away.

Returning to school had been a task. It was a few days that had passed, and the only word the school had gotten was that Harry and Susan were on personal leave. Of course, no professor pushed it, because McGonagall had let them all know that something big had happened between the Headmaster and the Hero of the Wizarding World. No one knew what it was either, because Dumbledore refused to speak on it. Many were hoping the Potter boy would return soon however, as his followers and disciples were starting to get a bit restless.

When Harry and Susan returned, they were both in very formal clothes. Harry was wearing his Lord robes from the Wizengamot with his family's symbol stamped on the back, while Susan was wearing her Aunt's former dress robes. They had a plan, and it was going to be executed publicly and officially.

It was lunch time at Hogwarts, and the morale was somewhat down recently with more attacks being executed throughout the Wizarding World, and without the support of their leader's things were starting to look rather grim. When Harry and Susan walked through the Hogwarts gates Susan was nervous, "Are you sure it has to be done this way? Harry, Snape is not going to be some slouch or average run of the mill Death Eater."

Harry shook his head, "It does not matter. He took my family from me, and the magic of House Potter must be satisfied. Besides there is always

hope he will go quietly."

Susan grumbled about how unlikely that was as they approached the castle doors. They had informed their heads of houses that morning that they would be returning at lunch time, and that they would be coming through the front gates. They checked in with some Aurors upon arrival, and they faced no problems regaining entrance to the castle.

Standing at the entrance to the castle Harry stared towards the Great Hall which was open allowing students to come and go for lunch. He had already laid eyes on the man, and he took a calming breath trying not to lose his temper. Susan took his hand assuredly, "I support you on this Harry...just remember not to lose your cool, and if things go from bad to worse remember to play to your strengths."

Harry nodded squeezing the girl's hand and strolling forward into the hall. Upon seeing him there was immediate whispers and excited shouts of greeting. Colin even stepped forward to greet his mentor, but Harry coldly said, "Step aside Colin. We will speak later."

His eyes were on Dumbledore, and the man instantly looked sad to see him, and seem to know where this was about to go. Colin moved aside clearly confused, and Harry continued on forward eyes never wavering from the table. Susan had gone beside Colin and put a hand on his shoulder giving him a sad smile.

When Harry reached the staff table Dumbledore spoke, "Welcome back Lord Potter."

Harry gave a slight bow, "Your welcome is appreciated Headmaster."

The boy stood their unwavering for several moments, when the great hall suddenly got quiet, and whispers spread around the hall. Dumbledore sighed looking at the boy, "Is there something the staff can help you with Harry?"

Harry nodded, "Yes actually. Forgive me Headmaster. But I would like to ask my head of house a question out here in the open with everyone to hear. Professor McGonagall will you swear to answer it honestly?"

The observant student could see Dumbledore looked saddened, but also almost accepting of what was about to happen. Professor McGonagall however looked to her star pupil saying, "What is it Mr. Potter you have a question of?"

Harry stared at the women directly and spoke from the heart, "November 1st, 1981, I am left at the Dursley's. My parents are dead because of a prophesy issued about someone with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord. You were there, you were a part of all the action, but do you know how Voldemort got his hands on the prophesy? Did you ever question just how he find out as much as he did?"

McGonagall looked surprised at the inquiry, "You-Know-Who had many eyes and ears Potter I would assume you know that. He could have gained this knowledge from anywhere."

Harry shook his head, and looked directly at Snape for the first time, "You have been terribly misinformed, and probably lied to. I am sorry to be the one to tell you professor."

The women sputtered for a moment then asked, "What are you insinuating Mr. Potter?"

Harry crossed his arms behind his back and began to reach for his wand just in case, "It was Summer of 1980. Our Headmaster was holding an interview for a Divination Professor, and-"

The Headmaster stood at this point, "That is enough Harry."

Harry shook his head his eyes now burning with rage, "No Headmaster I am just getting started. The truth comes out today, and the publics outcry will be executed, and there is nothing you or your precious Order can do

to stop it."

The coldness in the young man's voice stopped everyone, "The woman the Headmaster was interviewing gave a prophesy during this interview. It was fate and chance at the same time. There was no one else in the room, so the only person to officially hear this prophesy that would dictate my life for the past 15 years was the headmaster...If only that were true. A young Death Eater was spying just outside the door, and he overheard the beginning of the Prophecy and was caught before he could hear the rest. However, that did not stop him from relaying what he heard to his master."

Harry turned to Snape who seemed pale, but angry, "This coward got my family killed. The Longbottom's were attacked because of this, the Potters were wiped out because of this. Is this a big deal? Is this some grand revelation? No... of course not. Anyone with enough deduction could have figured out that something like this must have happened. After all there is no way the Headmaster would have leaked this information on purpose. Not at the cost of so many lives..."

Some whispers were once again spreading across the room. Harry heard the words privacy wards going around at many points, but he continued, "No the shocking revelation is who this young coward was. Who the young death eater was that cost me my family? He is in this room, and I wish to challenge him...Snape, draw your wand and face me you coward."

An explosion of yells erupted from the great hall from all tables, but they weren't all on Harry's side. Harry however blasted an explosion like sound out of his wand silencing everyone as Snape stood up, "You don't know what you are talking about Potter."

Harry glared at the man, "Tell them how it happened. Tell them how you

have looked me in the eyes for years and taunted me, and goaded me, and held a stupid grudge over my father who you got killed. Tell them how you got your childhood best friend killed. Tell them."

Snape looked at the boy with hatred, but the headmaster spoke, "Severus I would like you to leave for now. Harry we must speak. You must know that Professor Snape proved himself invaluable before the war was over. We proved that in a court of law."

Harry shook his head, "You proved his innocent without all the evidence of the crimes he committed. Professor McGonagall they were your friends. Your favorite students. A man who has sat beside you at dinner for years got them killed. How does that make you feel?"

The women looked from Snape to Harry many times, and she drew her wand pointing it at the man, "Draw your wand Severus, if Mr. Potter doesn't blast you I will, but I will not curse an unarmed man."

Snape looked at the women in shock, but drew his wand and pointed it at Harry, but Harry spoke, "It doesn't have to be this way though Snape. Surrender your wand to me. Confess your crimes, to the auror in the back of this room. Allow her to place you under arrest and go peacefully. If you do this I promise no harm will come of you from my end of things."

Snape walked from behind the great hall staff table and held his wand at his side, "What if I don't go peacefully?"

Dumbledore spoke warningly, "Severus."

The potions master barked out, "Be silent you fool. I warned you this would come out one day. I told you the boy would not understand. I will not let him believe that he can best me. Is it a duel you want Potter?"

Harry spoke menacingly, "A duel to the death would satisfy my families honor and magic."

A slight glow emitted from his wand to show the acceptance of the

challenge. Snape growled, but looked predatory towards Harry, "I accept."

Before anyone else could say anything, the man whipped his wand around, and a violent red curse came sailing towards the boy, but Harry was fast and ready whipping his wand around in a shield, and responding back with perfect timing.

A loud series of bangs were traded between Snape and Harry within just a few seconds, and most of the hall watched in horror as things spiraled out of control so quickly. Harry was grateful that Susan was keeping everyone from drawing wands, and helping, and most of the Slytherins were supremely confident in their head of house's dueling skills.

The duel did not however go on for long as Snape was disarmed from the side by none other than the headmaster himself, "Severus that is enough. Harry...this will not bring the peace you seek."

Harry stared hatefully at the potions master with his wand pointed at him still, "Give it back to him headmaster, he wants to continue to be dishonorable I ought to just strike him down where he stands."

Shouts of agreement went up through the hall, and wisely most of Slytherin house remained quiet knowing they were dreadfully outnumbered.

Harry looked at the man, "I want to know why. Why did you torment me? It's obvious to even me in my rage that you did not mean to get my mother killed. I have seen the memories I know you cared for her, but why?"

Snape looked at the boy with hatred, but behind it all Harry saw something else deep in his eyes, and it was a shameful regret, "I do not have to answer you Potter."

"I will kill you where you stand. In front of all these people you will be

executed, and I don't really give a damn. I want to know why. Explain it to me, and I may just let you go. I may just let you walk away from it all, if not the curse that comes out next will decorate the wall behind you in blood." Harry said viciously many gasps were around the halls, and surprisingly Dumbledore said nothing.

Snape looked from the Headmaster to the boy, to all the people around, many of whom were staring at him in discuss, "You wanted to humiliate me one last time boy? Then just get it over with."

Harry shook his head, "I don't want to kill anyone. I didn't want to humiliate anyone. I want the world to know the truth. If you give me that you may just live to see tomorrow. Don't you dare lie."

Snape took a deep breath, and for the first time saw the young man who survived the many encounters he had with his former master. There was no longer a doubt in his mind that the young man before him would strike him down, and that the headmaster of the school was going to allow it, and that this was his last chance at redemption. He knew the score, and had to decide what to do, "It wasn't just the worst day of your life Potter. You lost your mother...I lost the woman I cared about most in the world. A girl whom had been in my heart since I had met her ten years earlier. A girl I lost to a man that I hated. You remind me of that man, because you look just like him. Every time however I look into your eyes I see the women that I loved. I betrayed the Dark Lord, I went against him for years. To this day even."

Many gasps were heard, and some of the Slytherins looked murderous, but Snape kept talking directly to Harry, "You must know had I known. Had I thought for even a moment that this prophesy would have put your mother in more danger than she was already in I would've rather cut out my tongue. I am sorry that it cost her life. That is the only thing I can

say."

Harry stared at the man, "The last time I let someone live they threw a killing curse at me. Swear to me that you will leave the isles, and that you will not harm anyone in my family again. Swear to it or I will kill you here and now. I don't need your help to end this war. I don't need your help to win this war. Swear the oath and leave the country, and never come back, because I assure you many will come for you, including my godfather and friends of the Potter's and Longbottom's."

Snape looked from the headmaster back to the boy, "You would offer this even knowing that I got your mother killed?"

"I don't want to see anyone else die because of this war, and my mum really cared about you. I wouldn't want to send you to her knowing that her son did that to her best friend. Just because I don't want to doesn't mean I won't though. Make the oath Snape." Harry said demandingly his wand sparking a bit with anticipation.

Snape nodded, "I Severus Snape swear to leave the country within twenty-four hours, and never to return to England. I also swear to never raise my wand on a family member of Harry Potter or Harry Potter himself, so mote it be."

Harry lowered his wand, "I don't forgive you. I won't ever forget this. If we ever cross path's again I will kill you."

Snape nodded, and looked to the headmaster who offered his wand to him, "It seems that we have somethings to discuss Severus. Let us finish this in my office, before we say goodbye."

Harry nodded, and turned to leave the great hall, and no one tried to stop him, but Susan and a few others followed their leader out the door hoping to get the true story of what just transpired.

(A/N) This is not the last we will see of Severus Snape. That is all I

will say. Please review and I hope you enjoyed!

31. The Great Game

Warning Lemon in this chapter. Can be skipped. No important details related to the story. Enjoy.

Chapter 31

The disappearance of Severus Snape had made the front page of the Daily Prophet the next day. People were questioning the sanity of it all that The Boy Who Lived could threaten a man like that, but the majority of the country was behind him, and some were even angry that he was allowed to live. It left no doubt in the minds of Harry and Susan that Snape would be a hunted man until the end of his days, and that the only safe place he might find would be away from their current side of the world.

Harry wasn't sure of a lot of things, but he was certain that he wished to have been a fly on the wall in Voldemort's hideout when the news reached him that he was never his man. He was sure that the betrayal would sting the Dark Lord, and possibly even force the man to seek vengeance, but Harry could care less whether the maniac extracted it or not.

In better news once, Harry and Sirius had done some investigating on the locket they quickly discovered that it was Regulus Black, Sirius' brother, that had stolen the locket. This led to an intense conversation that ended with Kreacher appearing and explaining that he had done everything he could possibly think of to destroy it but failed. This led to elation on the part of Marauder's and it was quickly disposed of. Harry had even gained the young elf's favor by gifting him the fake locket in honor of keeping it safe.

This meant that there were only two unknown horcruxes currently out

there. They may not have had a clue as to what they were, but they were getting that much closer to victory, or at least to having Voldemort mortal once again.

Harry had informed Dumbledore about the destruction of the Horcrux, but other than that Harry had refused to cooperate or even communicate with the man, and the rest of his family supported the decision. No one was happy with Dumbledore at the moment, but he had somehow retained his position as Headmaster of Hogwarts though he had lost his head of the ICW, and his position as Chief Warlock as the public opinion of him had turned. Harry had even answered some questions in an interview and told the world that he wanted Dumbledore to stay in as Headmaster for as long as this war lasted because it was the only thing that was keeping Voldemort out. This seem to convince the public to keep him in charge for now, but when the war was over Harry had a feeling that the public would be singing a different tune.

Susan and Harry were up late training in the Room of Requirements one night when Susan called for a break and the two took a seat on a bench that popped up and gave them a chance to hydrate and catch their breath, "Harry? Do you think it might be time to take some political steps to blockade Voldemort? He practically controls the Wizengamot with the Dark Faction, and with their being a lack of a Longbottom, Bones, or Potter they could practically force any law through they wanted too, and we wouldn't be able to do a damn thing about it."

Harry took a long swig of water and shrugged, "Is there really anything we can do about that, and don't you think if they could have done that they would have already done so? Voldemort is getting desperate I think after so many unsuccessful attacks and raids."

Susan shook her head, "I think he fears that if he makes it a political war

then you will step forward and create so many alliances that then they would be back tracking. I think it may be time to take a seat in the political arena and start an offensive. I have some ideas, but they are bold, and they could turn a lot of the modern pureblood families against us, but I also think it will help keep some factions of the magical world neutral and may even tip some to our side."

"Well we could always use a few more allies, but I think we have enough enemies. Your plan sounds risky, how long have you been thinking about it? Harry asked curiously.

"Since my Auntie died. It's a huge plan, and I think we really need some more information, but I think it could have some serious implications, but it depends on how serious you are about changing the world when this is all over." Susan said calmly.

"Changing the world? That sounds like a pretty hefty goal I thought you were more content with just living a quiet life once this was over?" Harry questioned clearly puzzled.

"I just want to make sure we win Harry. Whatever it takes, and I think this could help. Our families all have seats on the Wizengamot's council, and Dumbledore went ahead and gave you the Lord's room, and I don't think he could've done that if the castle didn't recognize you as a Lord, and if the castle does then magic must as well." Susan explained.

"I don't know a whole lot about magical politics in this world Sue, I don't know if I would be cut out for that." Harry said honestly.

Susan smiled gently placing a hand on his, "I think that's the best part of my plan. I want you to take your Lordship, but I want you to assign some interesting proxies. Historically the Potter family can claim the Gryffindor seat, the Peverell seat, and the Potter seat obviously. That's three pretty important houses to our world, and they could command

respect. With the sword of Gryffindor at your side I think no one could stop you from claiming it, and your father claimed the Peverell Lordship somehow, and if we could figure out how then we could control all three, which hasn't been done in your family in a long time, but it has been done."

Harry followed her thought process, but questioned it further, "So all I really have to do is take these positions, and then hand them out to people who will ally themselves with us, because we give them power. Sounds easy enough, what else would I have to do?"

"Just make sure they are enforcing an agenda we can stand behind. Let them do what they want, but obviously we would have to take some oaths to ensure they didn't turn on us, and of course you could remove them at any point if they found a loophole. Then it's just follow the paper trail every now and then, which I could help you with, but I would do the same with the Bones family, and I think we could convince Neville to possibly take it depending on how he feels about it." Susan explained.

"Okay who are you thinking? If you think that it would make that much of a difference to play these cards, then you must have some pretty brilliant ideas of who we might want to choose." Harry asked curiously.

Susan nodded happily standing on her feet now pacing around, "I do have some ideas, and they are radical believe me. I think we will rattle a lot of cages, but I think we could also gather a lot of allies, and actually change the world for the better in the long run. I mean what I am suggesting is historically unprecedented and-"

"Susan love you are rambling. I am on your side but tell me what you are thinking."

Susan blushed, and sat down in front of him on her knees, "I want to go to Gringotts and talk to them and see who they would like to choose

among their ranks to represent the Goblin Nation on the Wizengamot to give them a voice. If we choose a goblin then we can keep them in neutrality, and maybe even quietly convince them to slowly edge to our side, but if we didn't have to worry about them turning on us right before we win that would be great."

Harry whistled, but didn't see any immediate problems with the idea, "That does sound radical. Admittedly I may not understand how much, but I like the idea. Plus, we could even begin a possible investigation to see if Voldemort hid a Horcrux inside of Gringotts. Perhaps this favor would be big enough that they would just look into it for us."

Susan lit up at the thought, "I honestly didn't even think of that, but that is brilliant!"

Harry grinned, "What else are you thinking?"

"Well honestly, I think the goblins would most appreciate the Gryffindor title, but I was thinking we could go talk to the Centaurs' for the Peverell family. If we could convince them to join us in battle on Hogwarts grounds, they could help us turn the tides, but all conflicts outside of Hogwarts we could allow them to stay out of it. I know you told me the story of meeting a friendly one in your first year. If we got in contact with them and their tribe then maybe, we could convince them to our side. They have always been light sided creatures, and defenders along with also being great warriors. They have historically sided with the goblins so if we got them on our side, then I think the Centaur's would be even easier to convince, and then they would have a voice in the Wizengamot." Susan explained looking very thoughtful.

Looking thoughtful Harry nodded, "Interesting thought. If we could take any potential of the goblins starting an uprising at the end of the war, and having the Centaurs even just keep the acromantula out of the fight

for Hogwarts then that would be a huge victory. The giants are a lost cause anyways, and the werewolves don't have any leadership after we dealt with Greyback. The Vampires are probably to cemented with Voldemort however to help us, so who could you possibly think to give the other title too. The Potter one is probably the most important should I just control it?"

Susan shook her head with a vicious smile, "No. I have been raised to be politically savvy I will take the head of the Bones family and sit on the Wizengamot sessions and make sure things are going our way, but I have a better idea for the Potter family seat. I think we should give it to a Muggleborn. No Muggleborn has ever sat in a Wizengamot position." Harry's jaw dropped at the cunning plan that his fiancé had just given him, and he shook it off quickly, "But who? I would say Hermione without a doubt, but she is young, and I don't think she would turn me down, and her school work would suffer, and that would make her miserable."

"Oh, my love you have much to learn in the political arena still. Your Godfather is very close to Tonks yes? Well I don't know if you know, but Nymphadora Tonks, and her mother Andromeda were cast from the Black family a long time ago, because Andromeda married a muggleborn."

Harry quickly filled in the blanks, "Ted. Ted is a solicitor, and an absolute legal genius. He would be a brilliant pick."

"There is that brain I fell in love with." Susan said with a smile.

Harry took another big gulp of water and asked, "So what is the first step then? I like your plan, and I want to start it immediately just in case Voldemort decides to make some political moves. The faster we can box him out the better. We need to get Neville, and others in on us this too."

Make alliances that's how it all works right?"

Susan grinned happily, "Yes! We have some good alliances between the two of us too. Plus, we can make some new ones with our current friend's head of houses. The Greengrasses would be a huge help, plus the Black family, the Abbots, the Longbottom's, the McMillan's we could form a massive blockade if we could get everyone behind us."

Harry just looked at the girl and smiled, "Merlin you are so unbelievably sexy to me right now."

Susan just looked at the boy in surprise, but then grinned seductively, "Is that right?"

Harry stood up and immediately grabbed the girl roughly by the hips and picked her up and looked her in the eyes letting his inner animal out a bit, "I don't think I want to wait to go back to our room to take you."

Lemon Scene.

With those words Susan immediately captured the boy's lips, and Harry aggressively pushed the girl towards the closest wall, which her back impacted roughly and she moaned at his aggression. This was far from their first time together, and with the amount of practice they had been getting they had been getting braver and braver with their foreplay.

Harry was already nibbling around her ear, and slowly running his tongue across her neck, and whispering parseltongue in her ear occasionally which she had confessed to the boy was extremely sexy especially knowing just what he could do with his tongue when he was going down on her. Speaking of that Harry was groping her ass tightly, and anxious to get her down on a bed that way he could start taking some of these clothes off of her, and really get to the fun part.

As if the Room of Requirement read his mind a bed appeared nearby, and Harry immediately took her over to it, and threw her down gently on it,

which caused the girl to wickedly grin as she wrapped her legs around the boy's knees and brought her closer to him reinstating the heated kiss between the two.

Harry was not one to waste much time however as he quickly just ripped shirt off of her, which caused the girl to smile into the kiss. Magic would fix the shirt later, but she was so incredibly turned on by just how badly he wanted her that she didn't even care regardless. His mouth was quickly finding every bit of flesh it could, and she leaned her head back a bit as Harry teased her body with his hands as they came up her breast and massaged them gently. It wasn't long before the boy had undone her bra, and quickly taken off his own shirt before practically attacking her nipples and breast this time causing a bit louder of a moan to escape her mouth.

Harry had put his hands to work on which ever nipple he wasn't swirling his tongue around and leaving love marks on her skin, while even deciding to pinch her a bit caused her hips to arch into his allowing them to grind ever so slightly, which caused Harry to push against her even harder.

This caused the boy to lose what little patience he had left and went for her pants deciding that they were too much and took them off her quickly revealing a very sex pair of red underwear that the girl was wearing, but honestly it covered so little she might as well not have been wearing anything at all. However, it was enough to make Harry want to rip them off of her, but he didn't. Instead he decided to continue playing with her breast and kissing the girl while slowly taking his hand and massaging in between her legs.

This time the girl moaned a little quieter, but the look on her face said it all as far as the pleasure she was experiencing. Harry was gently

prodding her body, and slowly even bringing a finger into her center every now and then only to pump her at a rapid speed, and then slow back down again continuing to give the girl fits of passion.

Harry had decided within their first few times of having sex that the girl had a sex drive he just could not match, but that didn't mean he didn't want to give her everything she wanted. So, he learned to play with her a lot, and even sometimes when she was really horny, he would make her orgasm twice before he even gave himself any pleasure. Usually by the end of it the girl was a shaking mess, but also ready to give him the ride of his life regardless.

Susan groaned out, "Fuck Harry. Please just take me."

Harry grinned as he kissed her gently a few times and pressed himself at her entrance only to slide it in her to soaking wet pussy, "My Susan aren't we a little horny. You are soaked love."

With this he bit down on her collarbone roughly causing the girl to moan as he buried himself in her full length, "But I don't think I will give you what you want. Not yet."

With that Harry pulled out and the girl looked at him in surprise, but instead of disappointing her he quickly pushed her away from him and quickly grabbed her legs and roughly went after her wrapping his arms around them and placing his face right in between her legs and assaulting her soaking wet pussy causing the girl to instantly yelp in pleasure, "Oh fuck Harry."

"Yeah baby you like that?" He said it quietly and kept assaulting her with a ridiculous speed that possibly only a parseltongue could go.

Susan moaned louder in approval, "Oh yes I love it."

"You like it when I run my tongue through your soaking wet pussy just swallowing all the cum I can possibly get out of you." Harry asked with a

hint of mocking in his voice.

The girl either didn't mind being a bit submissive, or didn't care, "I love it when you talk dirty to me."

Harry just grinned deciding the time was approaching, and admittedly his own hormones were getting in the way as he pulled his face as far into her snatch as he could and just assaulted her pussy with everything his tongue had making her roughly grab his head and pull his hair as he used his tongues full reach and speed, and within a moment her legs were shaking and an orgasm just rocked her body.

For a second Harry stopped and took a few last long licks were his tongue and then going back to the girls' lips and capturing them allowing her tongue to touch his and get a taste of how much he had just swallowed.

It was then at that he whispered, "Are you ready?"

The girl quickly nodded, and turned him over quickly straddling him, and grabbing his manhood and positioning it over her entrance as she immediately dropped down on it. With how wet she was in sounded kind of floppy, but hell Harry didn't care he was practically in heaven. He currently had the most beautiful girl he knew bouncing on his dick and riding him back and forth like her life depended on it causing her breast to bounce around and cause a sexy site that had almost ended the round too short like it had many times before. She rid him for what felt like hours before she got a little winded, and Harry took the hint and rolled them over throwing her legs over his shoulders as she wrapped them around his neck while he stood up a bit and immediately penetrated her causing her to moan his name loudly, "Harry!"

The boy just grunted as he forced his eight-inch cock in and out of her causing her tits to continue bouncing, and he embraced just how tight the sexy red head was. It wasn't long before he felt his orgasm coming and he

picked up speed leaning over body now making her knees come to her head, and her legs go past it testing her flexibility. However, this made her pussy stretch a bit as he penetrated further testing just how tight she was. As Harry approached his orgasm he moaned out, "Baby I am getting close. I don't think I can go much longer."

Susan merely moaned, "We aren't done by a longshot."

It was the look in her lusty eyes that almost had him begging for salvation when he emptied his full load into her. He took a few deep breaths as he pulled out of her as he finished emptying his seed and laid back. Susan only gave him a moment however before she crawled over to him on the bed with a seductive grin. His cock had gone limp a bit, but not lost its size, "Too think how hard you pound me with this thing right now it doesn't look very effective."

She played with it in her hand, and she could tell he was still sensitive as she stroked it and he struggled a bit. However, when she immediately began playing with it around her breast his hormones slowly started to turn back on as she put her mouth on the tip gently sucking on it making sure she had gotten all his cum either in her mouth, or her breast and she flopped his dick against both of them a few times trying to get him to full mast once again. Feeling brave she even pressed her elbows together a bit and rubbed his dick in between her breast, which had been back standing at attention in no time, and she wasted no time in trying to take the dick in her mouth as far as she could. She had told him one night in a confident manner that she would get his whole dick in her mouth eventually. She just had to stop gagging, and while she wasn't quite getting it her attempts were extremely sexy.

It was this that set him as he leaned forward and turned her around and laid her aggressively on her stomach and pulled her up to him where she

was on all fours, and he came from behind her slapping her ass hard and drilling her with his dick at full force. The girl immediately cried out in shock. She was obviously still soaked but wasn't ready for the assault not that she was complaining. He came at her so hard and fast it was only a matter of maybe thirty seconds before she was screaming his name, "Fuck Harry. Fuck me. Shove that big fucking cock inside me."

Harry only gave the girl what she wanted as he pushed harder and harder into her. Even at one point he pushed her body out to where it was flat, and he just rammed her with it repeatedly as she felt tighter in this position perhaps than any other. She certainly seemed to love it as he was practically lying on top of her just literally pounding her ass over and over again causing the girl to orgasm powerfully as he refused to give up. They were both now sweating, and Susan was on the verge of straight up blacking out from all the pleasure as Harry grunted and leaned over her where they were once again in a kissing position however it was from the side and awkward as he refused to remove his position to being on top of her and refused to slow down. After another moment Harry grunted against and just laid flat on top of her moment both panting for breath.

Harry rolled off of her for a moment and just laid there as her naked body curled up next to him happily, "I will never get used to just how good this is."

Harry just stared up at the ceiling thinking this sex could just be what he was put on this world for. He may not have really believed that, but the he felt right then it might as well have been true, "I will never get used to hearing you scream my name, and I doubt I will ever get tired of it."

Susan just smiled as she curled into his side tighter, "I love you Harry, and I hope this all works out."

Harry just kissed the top of her head gently, "We will begin tomorrow!"

(A/N) A new addition, and this will be the start of a temporary HIATUS on this story. I need to write out the next few chapters, and I am kind of stuck on 32 for a while now. So please be patient, and I promise I won't abandon this story. Cheers, and thank you for everyone who has been here since the beginning. I hope I will disappoint with what will be truly epic conclusions!

32. The Potter Alliance

Chapter 32

The Potter Alliance

Unprecedented. Unprecedented readers is the only word I can use to describe what has happened over these past few weeks. In a Special Spring Session that will undoubtedly be left in the History books Lord Harry James Potter announced that he was claiming his title as his right for winning the Triwizard Tournament just two years before. That's right readers, Harry James Potter, the boy who lived, is now sitting on the Wizengamot, or he would have been. For those who don't know the Potter family is one of the oldest most ancient families of our government, and it is said that they are descended from the Legendary Peverell family, as well as Godric Gryffindors noble house.

Throughout our history an occasional rare Potter has claimed one or another, but not in centuries has anyone claimed all three until today, and while this in itself may not be unprecedented young Harry Potter's decisions on who will proxy for him while he is in school certainly was. Goblins, Centaurs, and Muggleborns. Those were the representatives that Lord Harry James Potter chose to represent him on the Wizengamot.

From the Goblin Nation, Goblin Elder Ragnok was chosen to represent house Gryffindor, and Harry Potter himself in the coming times. Ragnok, was chosen by the heads of Gringotts, as he himself is considered to be the most esteemed

Goblin in the entirety of the Nation. This was the first appointment, and it was met with pure outcry and rage from some of the followers of the more traditional views of our government. Lord Potter however assured them that it was not illegal for him to choose a proxy that was not a witch or a wizard, he even suggested that perhaps if they had such a problem with it that "(he is) friends with a few muggles that would love the position)." Silence was met by the statement, and many are certainly looking to find a way to block Lord Potter from this attempt at revolution.

If that wasn't enough however Lord Potter went onto choose Centaur Firenze who is apparently a long-time friend and ally to Lord Potter himself, and terms were agreed upon, but those terms are currently unknown to the general public. When I attempted to question Lord Potter about his intentions he rebuffed me and smiled saying that time would tell. Centaur Firenze will represent house Peverell, and even came into court wearing the legendary symbol of the Deathly Hallows around his neck. Many were outraged at the site of Dark Lord Grindelwald's symbol, but Lord Potter assured the council that it was the symbol of the Peverell family for many centuries long before the crazed Dark Lord.

Lastly and possibly the most controversial choice was that of Muggleborn Wizard Ted Tonks. The Tonks family has been in alliance with the Potters for just over 20 years now, and Lord Potter assured that this was him merely honoring an alliance with a man he very much respected and was going to allow to represent him. Ted Tonks is an independent legal solicitor and assured the Wizengamot that he would uphold the law and ensure that no back-alley tricks were conducted while he was representing House Potter. While most of the traditional community is floundering at the young mans attempts to shape the current government other things were happening behind the scenes, but they hardly gathered any attention from the Wizengamot after

Lord Potters appointments. Two other parties also took their seats in the Wizengamot for the first time, and they are both sure to make waves. Lord Neville Longbottom of House Longbottom has taken the seat from his Grandmother after emancipating himself from her care, and has decided to follow Lord Potters footsteps, "The alliance between house Longbottom and house Potter is Centuries years old. Lord Potter and I are friends, and he asked me if I would consider following in his footsteps and helping him revive our alliance to its former strength and glory."

If that had been all my rabid readers, I think it would have been fairly exciting, but that nothing compared to the stunning new Lady Bones who took her seat. Susan Bones age 16 took the mantle of Lady Bones just merely 3 months after the passing of former Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Some are crying that the girl is too young, but she is the last surviving Bones and his this to say, "My friend Neville and intended Lord Potter are both setting a great example for some of us who have lost it all in the last two wars. If they are brave enough then I will gladly follow their lead and continue an Alliance that will last for generations to come."

It was shock and awe that the Potter Alliance put forth. It silenced the entire chamber with the Greengrass family a notoriously neutral family declared their names to Lord Potters Alliance, and they weren't the only ones. House Abbot, House Black, House McMillan, and several minor houses have all come forward to join this coalition. What is going on in our community? This coalition is the most powerful possibly seen in the Wizengamot in many generations, and one must wonder just what they will do with all this power! Susan smirked as she closed the newspaper and put it back down on the table before her. Whispers were going on throughout the great hall, and her closest friends were all sitting around with the smuggest looks on their faces. Shouts of outrage even came at the breaking news headline,

but a few glares from Neville and Harry was enough to silence even the most adamant and offended person in the great.

Dumbledore himself raised his glass to Harry when the two had made eye contact. Things had been on very rocky terms between the headmaster and who most would consider his star pupil. The Snape incident had left a bad taste in both of their mouths, and when a paper airplane landed in front of Harry with only two words on it Susan squeezed his shoulder and nodded; it was time to break this ice.

Harry and Susan found themselves walking once again to the Headmaster's office in high hopes that this meeting would be better than their last encounters. When Harry gave the password of 3 Musketeers the gargoyles quickly slid open for the duo and allowed them entrance into the office.

Fawkes the Phoenix was always going to be the first thing that grabbed Harry's attention anytime he entered the Headmaster's office no matter who was in there, and the bird gave the happiest of trills when the young man and his fiancé entered the room. Susan was the first to speak, "Good evening headmaster, I hope things are well?"

The wise old man gave the young girl a smile, and nodded his head, "Certainly not as well as things have been going for the two of you. You both look fantastic, and I must say I was more than a little impressed with your moves to down the Wizengamot. I thought for sure that the more traditional minded thinkers would have a conniption about yourself and Mr. Longbottom getting into the Wizengamot without being of age, but the fact that the two of you managed to your emancipation without my knowledge is astounding.

Susan gave the man a wicked smile, "It certainly does help when the love of your life has connections in very high places with allies that touch

every corner of the Ministry."

At this Harry took his eyes off Fawkes and for the first time turned to face the Headmaster, "Forgive my rudeness Headmaster. It was very good to see an old friend, and I am happy we can try to be in the same room again and leave things in the past. Where they belong."

The tone in Harry's voice made it very clear to Dumbledore that he did not wish to speak on past discrepancies, but that he wished to forget they ever happened. Dumbledore smiled lightly, "I agree with your wisdom Harry and thank you for coming. There are many things we must catch up on."

Harry nodded and reached for his pocket tossing an item on the Professors desk, and when it landed it made quite a thud. Dumbledore didn't move for several seconds and then he merely laughed, "When I saw that you two were busy, I don't think I had any actual idea just how busy that might be. I am to understand that this is the true locket of Salzaar Slytherin?"

Susan smirked at the man taking a seat in one of the two offered spots, "Of course it is. Once cooler heads prevailed in the situation Harry and Sirius sat down and started actually brainstorming on who this RAB character was, and it took all of five minutes of clear headed thinking for Sirius to realize that he not only recognized the hand writing, but he knew exactly who wrote this note."

Harry remained standing but came up behind the girl and put a calming hand on her shoulder, "she's right. It took only the mention of Regulus Arcturus black for Kreacher to come wiling into the room daring us to speak poorly of his former master. When Sirius asked what the elf knew of this locket, because it was Ron actually who recognized it. He had worked with Sirius on the decontaminating of Grimmauld Place and

came across a locket nearly identical to this one."

Dumbledore leaned back in his chair, and looked astounded with a mad twinkle in his eyes, "So young Mr. Black turned on his master right at the end. So, what happened? Did Kreacher know where the locket was or was there some grand quest involved? Please spare me no details!"

The two teenagers shared a smile, and Harry clearly becoming more comfortable with the man once again decided to take a seat, "It was all much simpler than we could have prayed for. Kreacher wailed and wailed about how Regulus died to retrieve the locket, but he was never able to destroy it. The poor sod was distraught with himself that he was never able to fulfill his masters last command, and when I told him it was my every intention in the world to seek out the object and see it destroyed the elf looked at me like I might be some sort of deity."

Susan picked up from there, "I had never seen a house elf move so fast and when he reappeared with the proper Horcrux it took us all of five minutes to dispose of it with a basilisk fang."

"Remarkable." The old man said.

Harry triumphantly grinned, "That only leaves 4 horcruxes remaining, with the destruction of my scar, the necklace, and diary."

This is where Dumbledore decided to look especially pleased with himself, "3 Horcruxes actually."

Susan and Harry both stared at the man dumbstruck jaws open. Susan quickly broke the silence, "You found another?"

"And you destroyed it?" Harry asked quickly adding to the question.

Dumbledore nodded opening a drawer and dropped a ring on the desk, "And you may be more than a little interested at what I found because it was more than merely a Horcrux."

Harry and Susan stared at the ring curiously but then Dumbledore put a

stone on the desk, and both looked at the man in confusion. Susan broke the silence first, "So it's a rock?"

Dumbledore chuckled, "That might be the grossest understatement in history my dear, this isn't just any rock. Might you two allow me to indulge in old habits and put my teaching hat back on. Harry you in particular might find this piece of Wizarding history quite fascinating, as it relates to your family."

The two young sorcerers waiting patiently as the old man took a small smile upon his face, "Can I assume that the two of you are familiar with the story of the three brothers?"

Susan and Harry both nodded their heads. It was one of the things Susan had insisted on when they were spending the summer together was that Harry read some basic famous wizarding literature with her. They made it quite the activity and had many interest conversations about it, particularly about the three brothers. Dumbledore smiled at the knowledge of his two students, "Very good. Then you know of the three objects. The cloak of invisibility the very first in history, with claims that no charm could detect its presence. The Death Stick otherwise known as the Elder Wand was said to be unconquerable. Then there was the resurrection stone. A stone that was known to bring the dead back among the living."

Susan and Harry both now stared stunned at the stone in front of them. Susan wanted to laugh, but the look on Dumbledore's face made it very clear to him this was not a joke. Harry wanted to ask some questions, but Dumbledore continued, "The Wand can be traced throughout history changing hands from dark to light wizards in different time periods, but the stories of its power are legendary."

Dumbledore then placed his wand on the desk next to the stone. Then

looked at Harry with what was possible just raw emotion, "The cloak of invisibility was passed down from father to son just as Ignotus Peverell intended for."

Susan gasped, "The stories of the Peverell brothers being the brothers in the story are they-"

"True? I am certain of it. Which means at one point in my life I have had in my possession all three of the Deathly Hallows." Dumbledore said with quite the triumphant smile.

Harry stared at the man, but Susan whom had stood to look at the wand and the stone a bit closer sat down in shock. Harry asked, "This was why you had my father's cloak on the night Voldemort attacked Godrics Hallow?"

"Yes. James and I began to expect something was different about his invisibility cloak. I had told him once in his second year when I caught him out of bounds attempting to slip the cloak on that it was a rather powerful family heirloom and that when the charms wore off that I would love to help him or his father attempt to renew them. Much to my surprise when James graduated that the charms had never faded even in the slightest. I had brought this up to Fleamont Potter your grandfather Harry shortly before he passed, and he merely smiled at me saying it was a family secret. James never knew, it was why he allowed me to study the cloak to see if I could uncover the secrets and duplicate it, or if it was possible that this was indeed the legendary items from the story."

Dumbledore explained carefully.

Harry shook his head, and pulled out his moleskin pouch and dug through it only for a moment when he pulled out his cloak and placed it on the desk. The three sorcerers all stared at the objects in clear reverence. Susan asked, "The wand. Where did you get it?"

Dumbledore shook his head, "The history of the wands starts with Antioch Peverell. It was said that Death gave him this wand, and he was murdered for it in his sleep. It then passed hands of many great and terrible wizards until it ended up in the hands of Gregorovitch."

Harry looked up sharply at this, "The wand maker? Didn't he make Viktor Krum's wand?"

Dumbledore nodded his head at the statement, "From there it was stolen by Gellert Grindelwald, and he used it during his reign of terror. For nearly twenty years."

Susan gasped, "Then when you defeated Grindelwald you took control of the wand."

This made the man smile sadly, "Yes, but it was only because Gellert respected our friendship as boys that he decided to use his original wand in our battle. When I bested him however the wands allegiance changed. It was one of the many reasons I did not take the man's life, and instead along with ICW sentenced him to Nurmengard prison for life."

Harry then asked, "The stone how were you sure?"

Dumbledore sighed, but gave the boy a sad smile, "I used it to summon my sister Arianna. For many decades I have held the burden of guilt that her death was my fault. Regardless of whose spell might have taken her life in the three-way duel between myself, my brother, and my friend, it was my irresponsible nature in my youth that brought about her death. I only wished to see her, and give my apologies. I learned through much studying that while the stone may bring back the dead it only brings back a shade of them. They are less than a ghost, but they can speak and they do recall. I believe if we called upon someone whom had more recently died it would perhaps work better, and if one were to delve deeply in dark magic and necromancy one might be able to fully revive a recently

deceased person, but of course I would never advise you to disturb the dead."

At one point in Harry's life this would have been the greatest gift imaginable, but now he had his chance to speak with his parents. His chance to hold them, and be held by them. It was not his place to test this magical artifact, "Go ahead Sue."

She looked at him in shock, "What?"

"I've had my chance to speak to my parents when I was hit by the killing curse. It's your turn. You have never gotten to speak to them or hear their voices; wouldn't you like to change that?" Harry asked kindly.

Susan looked back and forth between the Headmaster and her fiancé, "May I really professor?"

Dumbledore nodded to the girl, "Of course. All you must do is hold the stone and think of whom you wish to see. It is my belief only you will see them, and hear them. If you wish Harry and I can give you a moment of privacy and allow you to make an attempt. If it fails merely come find us, and I will attempt to instruct you further, but it is my belief that you will be successful."

Harry held the girl's hand for a moment, and spoke, "We won't go far."

With that Dumbledore passed the stone to Harry who turned gave it to Susan and kissed her on the head as he followed the older man out the door. The last thing he heard Susan say was, "Mom!"

Harry smiled and continued after the man who was leading the way down the staircase. Harry spoke calmly, "That was very kind of you headmaster. It is every orphans dream to be able to speak to their parents, and you just granted that to Susan. That was infinitely kind you, and you have my thanks."

Dumbledore smiled as they made it into the courtyard underneath the

moonlight the man looked older to Harry than he had ever seen him, "It was honestly not my decision to allow her the use of the stone it was yours."

The boy blushed mistaking the man's purpose of the statement, "Forgive me if I was to forward with my request headmaster. I saw the opportunity, and thought of the amazing gift that we could give Susan tonight."

Dumbledore chuckled lightly, "You misunderstand me Harry. It was not my place to decide how the object is used because it is not mine. It is yours. It is your birth right."

Harry stared at the man in wonder, "It hasn't been in my family in many generations, and it was far closer to Tom Riddle's family line than it is mine."

Dumbledore took a grave look, "And we are very lucky that Tom did not quite realize the power of the Gaunt Family Ring. I can only imagine what kind of horrors the monster could have dredged up with one of the Deathly Hallows in his hand."

"What will I do with the stone sir? I have no desire to bring back my parents and speak with them. I know they are happy, and I know what they expect of me. I feel- "Harry inquired before he was cut off.

"You may feel this way now Harry, but the war is only just reaching a point of further conflict. Many more could die, and you may have the wish to apologize or speak to some of the dead before they move on. Make promises, or give final thanks. The stone in a time of war will be invaluable to you, perhaps not in the fight, but in the aftermath."

Dumbledore explained wisely.

Harry nodded in understanding as the two walked around the courtyard, "Thank you for your counsel and wisdom headmaster I have missed it."

The man smiled, and put a hand on the boy's shoulder, "You have proved to be a far wiser and generous leader than I ever could have been Harry. You were born to lead, and I feel confident that you will win this war with or without me."

"But I will have you through it all right sir?" Harry asked suddenly suspicious in the man's wording.

"I am an old man Harry. You never know what my fate could be in the coming days. While I assure you I am just as spritely and powerful mentally it is clear to me that my body is not what it used to be. Our night in the cave was a very painful reminder of that. The Hunt for these Horcruxes has also taken a toll on my body."

With that Dumbledore displayed his other hand, and Harry noticed for the first time that there was a powerful glamour on it, and he could see the magic swirling around it as he took a deep breath and felt the familiar presence of it. Harry waved his hand over it dispelling the magic to reveal that the man's hand was deeply rotted and black. It looked like it could fall off at any moment. Harry was bewildered, "How-"

"I was a foolish old man. Without your company I decided to continue my leads and suspicions of other Horcruxes alone. I stumbled across the ring to realize it was dreadfully cursed, and it cost me." The man said with a resigned smile.

Harry ran a simple diagnostic charm, and realized it did not look promising for the old man, "How long? I can tell the poison is spreading." Dumbledore sighed, "In my youth I could have perhaps cut this arm off and stopped the dark magic from spreading through my body, but I am old and Professor Snape told me that I would not survive the losing of a limb at this age."

Harry whirled on the man, "Snape is still-"

"My dear boy he made the magical vow to you. He is gone. However, with your godfathers' rather brilliant invention of the mirror I was able to contact the man, and get instant help. It is only because of him I did not perish that night." Dumbledore explained sadly.

Harry took a breath feeling guilty that Snape might have been the only person that could have saved Dumbledore from the darkest of magicks, "What of your wand?"

Dumbledore unsheathed two wands one in each hand. One was clearly the wand Harry had seen many times before. A spiral like design of at least 15 inches, and Harry could feel its power unlike ever before. The other wand he had never before, and wondered its origin, "I suppose I have seen the Elder Wand many times before, but I have never seen you carry this other wand sir."

Dumbledore smiled lightly, "This is the wand I carried in my youth. The wand I defeated Gellert with many years ago. Truth be told this wand serves me just as well as the Elder Wand these days, which is why I now give it to you."

Harry looked at the man in awe, and not completely understanding, "Sir you still have time left don't you think you should hold onto it until your last days?"

Dumbledore chuckled, "This wand no longer recognizes me as its master. Do not get me wrong Harry it is still a very powerful wand, and in my hands if I were to be so modest it is as powerful not recognizing me as it master than my true wand which holds my sole allegiance."

Harry shook his head, "I don't understand. You won that wand. It should serve you, and if it doesn't serve you it definitely won't serve me."

Dumbledore's eyes were very clearly twinkling once again, and Harry knew that the man was being mischievous, "You will find that you are

refreshingly wrong in this case Harry. You see I have not been defeated in a duel in over 50 years, that is until this recent Summer came to pass where a group of extraordinary young individuals bested me in Magical Combat. It is unclear to me who might have disarmed me though I believe it was Ms. Bones, the magic in this wand recognizes intent above all else, and it senses your power, and bloodlines. I believe every time I have come in your presence since that fateful Summer day the wand has hummed its allegiance in a completely different tune. It respects me and my power, but it longs for a new master with young power."

With this Dumbledore handed the wand over to Harry, and the young man carefully took it, and the wind immediately picked up. The leaves around the two immediately began swirling, and when the wand touched Harry's hand a small blast of power happened, and sparks shot in the air from the wand as Harry grasped it. It was unlike any feeling he had ever felt. He had truly felt power before many times, but never like this.

Dumbledore sighed, "You are now the Master of all three Deathly Hallows Harry. Many would now refer to you as the Master of Death, but I hope you will forgive me that I remain on a first name basis with you?" Harry laughed at this, and actually laughed. The two enjoyed this moment between the two of them perhaps longer than they should have. It was a very innocent joke, but for some reason it was hilarious.

When the night seemed to change Dumbledore said, "We should return to Ms. Bones. I believe her conversation is over, or soon will be. You will understand that I think you should keep your new title and power a secret. I think this could be the surprise you need when you face Tom next. I also believe I have discovered what the last three horcruxes are even if I have no idea where they could be."

Harry nodded carefully in understanding, "The snake of course, what else

have you discovered?"

Dumbledore sighed, "I did some deep digging and found out that Tom was in deep pursuit of the Cup of Helga Hufflepuff. I believe like the Diary, and the Locket he entrusted it to one of his faithful death Eaters. I had to do some tracing through some old memories, and even speak to some of his old employers at Borgin and Burkes, but he was for sure in pursuit of the object when the owner suddenly died and the artifact disappeared."

Harry nodded seeming suspicious of the Dark Lord knowing that his plans were usually successful as a young man, and had no doubt he had at least come into possession of the artifact one way or another, "What of the other?"

Dumbledore took a breath, "One of these two Horcruxes I believe could be here in Hogwarts I fear. I am unsure as to its location and have set the house elves to be on the lookout. I also wish to search the Chamber of Secrets with you one day in hope of possibly discovering more of the Legendary chambers existence, and to possibly find our missing links. However I believe the final Horcrux to be the Diadem of Rowena Ravenclaw."

Dumbledore acted as if he had just said something rather spectacular, but for the first time in a while Harry disappointed the man. Dumbledore chuckled, "I am guessing by your lack of wonder and surprise, you are unfamiliar with the object."

Harry nodded his blushing a bit feeling embarrassed, "You see Harry this would be quite the feat for Tom. It is considered one of the most powerful magical artifacts ever created, but more importantly it has been lost for several centuries."

Harry sighed deeply, "If anyone could have found it, I don't think we

could count Tom out."

"I was of similar opinions."

It was this that ended their conversation as they walked into the office to see Susan smiling sadly. Harry greeted the girl with a tight hug and a kiss on the forehead. Dumbledore asked the girl gently, "Was the experience everything you hoped for Ms. Bones?"

Susan smiled at the man, "And so much more. I spoke to both of them, and my Aunt."

Dumbledore returned the girl's smile, "I am happy to hear you got the closure you so very much deserved. Of course, like Harry I will caution you with sharing your experience with anyone else. I believe I will leave you two to it for the rest of the night. Harry has much to catch you up on."

Harry understood his dismissal and offered his hand to the wise old man, "Thank you for everything headmaster. We can begin our search starting immediately, and I will even put the DA on it to search anywhere they can think of. I won't give anything too specific as far as details, but we will do what we can. Including taking a tour of the chamber together."

Dumbledore grasped the boy's hand gently, and patted it with his glamoured hand gently, "I look forward to it my boy. Get some rest. We have a war to end."

(A/N) The next chapter is being quite tricky for me as I have written it about 4 times and deleted the whole thing not liking it. I promise the story will not be abandoned, but I can't promise when the next chapter is coming. Hang in there with me, and tell me what you think Harry should do now that he is the fabled Master of Death. Cheers to all of you, and thanks for sticking with the story. -Spit

33. The Orphans Charge

Chapter 33

It only took a matter of days when Harry and Dumbledore compiled their resources to find the Diadem of Ravenclaw. The two sorcerers called upon every ally, house elf, and trusted former student to ask about places where things could be hidden in the castle, and the answer was so obvious it smacked the two genius level wizards in the face. The Room of Hidden Things had been another name over the years that the Room of Requirements had adopted, and from there it took a small search party of the DA's leadership to waltz through the room and bring destruction to the Horcrux. This left Voldemort down to only two pieces of soul, and Harry was all but ready to go on the offensive.

The leaders of the DA had all agreed on something that the Headmaster did not see eye to eye with, and that was slaying Nagini the snake. The group for the most part believed that Voldemort was fully aware of them hunting Horcruxes, but it was much too late for him to act upon it. At this point the Dark Tossler wasn't going to let his final Horcrux out of his site, and that meant they needed to lure Voldemort into a target area, kill the snake, and possibly overwhelm the Dark Lord with numbers.

Dumbledore thought this presented to high of a risk, and that many could be lost in such an attempt. The rest however felt that this could bring an end to a war that could go on for years if they let this opportunity slip away from them.

Harry and Susan with the help of the rest of the DA had pushed the Dark Lord into a political corner. They had made it essentially illegal to have a Dark Mark on any person's arm, and the only way to escape conviction was to submit themselves to veritaserum and answer questioning under the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement Gawain Robards who had absolutely no love for Death Eaters.

Together the power couple had also pushed a few other laws into place. The Child Protection Act that would not allow Pureblood families to abuse their children, or to punish them with more force than reasonable. This was made with Harry in mind mostly, and in hope that if child abuse was going on at the fundamental home level like Daphne Greengrass assured the group it was, then the notion needed to die. There was also the Muggleborn protection act that with the help of many wealthy light families the government was going to offer a hiding place for Muggleborns till the end of the war.

These little laws were clearly supremely pissing off the Death Eater faction if the number of attacks across the country meant anything, but the public had never been so happy with their government. Half the news articles around the globe were about this Potter Alliance, and the group that the youth of England had assembled. It was unprecedented, but the people loved it.

It was a quite night in June when the school year was coming to a close. Harry was training with the leaders of the DA, and the young fearless leader was unstoppable. The green-eyed young man that had trained all the people in the current room from scrap was currently handling them four at a time. Susan, Hermione, Neville, and Daphne were all trying to put the boy down, but not a damn one of them could even land a hit.

With the Elder Wand in his hand he felt completely unstoppable. Harry had even bested Remus, Sirius, and Tonks all at the same time just a few days before, and it was quickly becoming clear that Harry controlled this wand better than even Dumbledore. The Master of Death Harry was, and it was clear that the Hallows were singing with power in the descendant of their previous masters.

Hermione went down, and Ron stepped in. Daphne and Neville went

down at the same, allowing Luna, and Ron to come in. This went down until only Susan was still left standing fighting for her life against the boy she loved.

Susan had said it best just a few short months ago on the grounds of Bones Manor. She was Harry's greatest fighter, and she had proven it time and time again. There was just no quit in the young woman and everyone pitied Bellatrix Lestrange or any Death Eater that the girl came up against. Even with all her work, power, and progress though she was no longer a match for Harry as he disarmed the girl, tied her in rope, and summoned her to his arms where he planted a kiss on her cheek smoothly, "I think that will be a win for me my love."

The girl rolled her eyes, "Nothing new there, but I lasted the longest."

Ron groaned as he stood up, "That's because your boyfriend has that stupid wand in his hand. It used to be fun and fair matches, but now he just wipes the floor with all of us."

Neville chimed in, "You won't be complaining Ron when he has that wand against Voldemort."

This caused the red head to chuckle, "Bloody right you are Neville. I think we should just go hunting for the Dark Tosser tonight, and not come back till Harry has his head on a Gryffindor Red platter that we can mount in the common room."

More laughs followed this, and Harry just released Susan continuing his beaming smile at her, "They are right you know. You have always been the most powerful among us Harry, but we can't even make you draw your second wand anymore. With the Elder Wand in your hand, and the hard work you have been into until this moment I think at the very least you are a match for him."

Harry considered the girls words, "I think you could be right, but he is

still invincible as long as the Snake lives."

Collin chimed in, "That may be true Harry, but I think for the first time in his life You Know Who is actually being hunted instead of the other way around. Whether or not he realizes this or not I'm not sure, but there hasn't been a full-scale attack in weeks. The moment he pops his head out we are going to be there to try and stop him, and maybe even end this war before it really gets ugly."

Suddenly an ethereal light entered the room, and a familiar bouncing silver fox came prancing towards Harry, "Harry we are under attack. The Dark Lord is here. The Ministry will fall in moments. Help us."

Everyone froze for a moment, but before Harry could start running towards the door Neville smacked Collin, "You just had to go taunting the Dark Tosser about not poking his head out."

This melted the tension a little, and Harry said, "I don't expect anyone to follow me but-"

Of all the people who interrupted him it was Daphne that started walking past him, "Come on Potter save the bullshit speech for later. We have a war to win, and we need to get there before the Ministry falls and all our hard work is undone."

Harry wanted to protest, but no one cared to listen to him really as they all started in a full speed run towards the Headmaster's office, and this made the young man beam with pride and anticipation as he followed behind them quickly overtaking the leaders. Dumbledore met them halfway with Fawkes on his side, "You have received word the Ministry is under attack?"

Nodding Harry said, "We are on our way to help out."

Dumbledore nodded looking over the group, "Stay together and protect each other. You have all trained very hard together, and work as a team."

It is your greatest strength. The Order has been notified, and I am expected a full-scale battle to be in place by the time we get there."

Harry surveyed the faces of each of his friends and expected to see fear in at least some of their faces, but all he saw was determination. Even Hermione, and Hannah who Harry considered some of the least violent people he had ever met look ready. So much violence was done at the hands of these Death Eaters I think everyone was ready to see this war end before they could start getting any real traction. Taking the government tonight would undue all their hard work.

"Fawkes will take us all to the Ministry. I am afraid he will be unable to help us after that, but he can get us there. Form a circle and take each other's hands." Dumbledore commanded.

Harry took Neville and Susan's hands as the group quickly formed up in a tight circle. Harry spoke before the Headmaster could, "Let's end this. No one fight alone, and everyone stick together. Let's go kill this son of a Bitch."

Neville let out a hoot, and everyone yelled their defiance as Fawkes flew to Dumbledore outstretched hands, and an eruption of flame shot out towards everyone. The feeling was much more pleasant than apparating, but when the feeling passed Harry was already conjuring a chair that intercepted a killing curse, which Susan shielded the rubble and Hannah banished it back in the direction of the attackers.

The atrium was alive with battle. Bodies were laying on the floor, and dozens of black robed men were spread out across the area battling with different Ministry Personnel. Harry immediately caught site of Sirius, Remus, Gawain, and Kingsley all attempting to hold back Voldemort and his snake Nagini, while Tonks, Emmeline Vance, and Rufus Scrimgeour were all trying to hold back Augustus.

Dumbledore was a blur of action as he spurred forth stunning Death Eaters who were so tied up in their fights that he quickly began turning the tides of the battle almost single handedly. Harry roared out to his group, "Follow Dumbledore, and let's get closed to Voldemort. Duel to kill."

This was the order that told everyone this was it. Leave it all on the line. It originally started with Collin asking how he knew it was time to end the war, and Harry had put a hand on his shoulder and told the group that he hoped none of them ever had to be killers, but if it came to that then it would happen on the very eve that war would end, and that they would do whatever it took to win the day. The group roared back their approval at Harry as Neville, Ron, and Collin began throwing around heavy duty blasting hexes at the gathered groups of Death Eaters. A small group of Death Eaters intercepted them as their own reinforcements began to arrive, but the group matched them man to man, while Harry continued to follow Dumbledore through the hole in the crowd the two were creating.

Harry screamed out, "TOM!"

This caused the man to scream out in rage and flick his wand in devastating array of the darkest black magic throwing his three attackers back and knocking them all out of the fight. Dumbledore spoke quickly, "I will hold off Tom find the snake, and take out Bellatrix and clear up some of our best fighters."

Before Harry could argue Dumbledore and Voldemort began their dance.

Harry frustrated turned back to his group, "Ginny, Collin, and Luna I need you go get the Minister, my God father, and Remus out of here. You three are the youngest, but we drilled apparition so hard this Winter break, and I know you guys can do it. Do not come back to this battle.

Luna, Ron, Ernie I want you to cover them, and be ready to provide assistance with taking down Bellatrix. Daphne, Hermione, and Hannah take Augustus Rookwood we need to free up our fighters, and if the battle isn't looking good get out."

They all recognized the man from the battle of the Hogwarts Express he was picking off Ministry Personnel marching towards the group. The group surged forward following his command and Neville asked, "Harry what are we going to do?"

Susan answered for him, "We are the three-best duelist in the group. We are going to thin the numbers and get the snake."

"Brilliant, but how are we going to kill it?" Neville asked curiously.

"Without basilisk venom we only know of one way to defeat a Horcrux currently. It isn't just because you are my best mate and Susan is the love of my life, or because you two are the best duelist. Its because you both hold enough hatred in your hearts to make the curse work. You have to mean it." Harry said feeling the anger well up inside him.

Susan and Neville both just nodded in understanding, "We kill the snake then we kill Voldemort. Let's go end this."

With a barrage of curses coming from the three they joined in the fight against Voldemort. It was a miracle the man had survived the three entering the battle making it a four on one fight, but Voldemort likely could've kept this up for a while, but he realized he was backed into a corner, and even attempted to apparate away, but Dumbledore pointed his wand to the ceiling shouting at Harry, "I will keep him here Harry, but I can't do anything else."

Harry nodded at this and surged forward attempting to lead the orphans in his charge. The three who now battled with the man and blasted at the snake were possibly the three who lost the most to the mad man, and his

followers, and it was going to be them that fought him till their last breaths. As their families had before them. It quickly became Voldemort Vs. Harry as Dumbledore trapped the two with a powerful shield in a dome like area as Neville and Susan pushed towards the snake and Bellatrix who had joined in on the protection. Voldemort was like a caged animal at this point, and he was deflecting Harry's power that was eclipsing with Elder Wand flashing in his hand, while also trying to protect Nagini and by extension Bellatrix.

Harry was pushing towards the monster, and when he caught heir of Slytherin with a severing charm to his left shoulder the man roared out in pain, but this was all Susan and Neville needed as two jets of green light soared towards Nagini. Harry wasn't sure which curse ended the beast, but it cried out a horrible cry, and it erupted into black dust. Harry stopped for a moment as Voldemort screamed in pain, and anger. During this time Susan screamed out in triumph as she hit Bellatrix with some type of piercing hex that dropped the woman forever.

Harry shouted to Susan and Neville behind him, "Go finish the fight. I have to do this."

The two didn't try, and argue, because when Voldemort got back to his senses he was angrier than any living person had ever seen him. He was a dangerous flash of deadly magic, and Harry matched him curse for curse, speed for speed, and power for power. Harry at one point even two years ago wouldn't have been able to comprehend this speed, but with his training, his hard work, and his determination he was doing more than comprehending it he was beating it. The duel went on and on, and Harry was unsure yet that he would be able to defeat the man when suddenly he screamed and dropped to his knees. The last curse that left Harry's wand was a piercing hex, and it went straight through the man who was

now legless having been struck from behind. Susan was staring across the battlefield with a determined look on her face. Voldemort screamed with rage, but he was a dying wounded animal at this point. Harry walked to the man as the battle around them had ceased.

"You marked me as your equal 16 years ago Tom. Today it happened. I could've dueled you for days if I had to, but you couldn't. Your monstrous crimes that split your soul would never have allowed you to stand up to me forever, and for your crimes your reign ends today."

Harry raised his wand to the man's eyes, but the man spat, "What are you going to do? The leader of the light is going to hit me with the killing curse now?"

Shaking his head Harry however said, "That's your problem Tom. You were powerful, you were dark, but you were woefully uncreative. I should be thankful. It made finding and destroying all your horcruxes that much easier. Goodbye Tom."

With the final words being said Harry cast the severing charm and watched the man's head fall off his shoulders. It was a gruesome dark scene, but the battle was done.

Harry looked up to Susan to see her running towards him and the two embraced, but her body wasn't the last to hit his. It was followed by Neville, Ron, Hermione, and the entirety of the DA Leadership that had followed him tonight. Not even one of their own had an injury that would see them in the Hospital wing for more than a few hours. Harry tried to imagine what this battle, what this war could have been like without his friends at his side, but truth be told it seemed almost impossible. The body count would have been seemingly endless, and it would've been all his fault. Sometimes you just must rise to the occasion, and fight to the finish. Harry felt the love his friends surrounded himself,

and realized that he owed this victory to them, and the people that stood up to the dark monster. In the end it was Potter Alliance that won the day.

{A/N) Epilogue is to follow. Stay tuned.

34. Epilogue

E

A young couple were sitting at breakfast in their Chateau in Rome reading the local newspaper, and of course stealing glances at the Daily Prophet that had been delivered as well. The two had a ritual every morning to make love, eat breakfast, and read the local newspaper. The two didn't even receive the Daily Prophet since their relocation and knew whatever was in it was either good news or bad news. It had been sent by Daphne Greengrass who was in a close working relationship with the young married couple and they noticed it was dated from yesterday. After stealing the tenth glance at it Harry sighed, "Go ahead my love, open the paper."

They didn't have to look past the headline to know what had happened, "Neither said a word as they began to read the article:

The couple sat the newspaper down with faint smiles. It seems Collin had gotten the big article he was hoping to get to right, but the sadness of the news washed over the two who had been so affected by the life of Albus Dumbledore.

Harry stood up running his hand through his hair gently and took deep breaths. He did not want to make his official return to Britain, not yet, but he knew it was time.

"Come my love you can't hide from British Media forever." The beautiful redhead spoke to the annoyed looking green-eyed man.

"I don't owe it to them. I owe it to him. He gave me the chances, he gave

me the weapons, and when things looked bad, he stood beside me in the times that counted. Can't we stay off the radar for a little longer?"

"And what just not go to the funeral?"

This stumped Harry. He had of course never considered not going to the funeral that just would be improper, and completely unfair to the greatest light wizard of the last generation. Hell he was the one that gave the ceremony at his wedding five years ago he couldn't just not go, "No of course not. Dumbledore knew full well how I felt about him in the end though. I don't know why the media is in a firestorm about our return to Britain over this."

"Don't you think it's time to return my love? You read what Colin said, and you know he is right. He practically wrote the article to you." Susan asked carefully.

This made the man sigh. They had been traveling the world and living in Rome ever since the fall of Voldemort. They had completely avoided all the celebrating, and award ceremonies, and anything else that included the post war celebrations. They had lost too much, and most of the advanced DA had come out to stay with Harry for extended periods of time, and even vacationed with Susan and himself from time to time. The group had stayed very tight knit over the years.

"Here I thought you enjoyed the Italian lifestyle. We get up in the morning and we make love. We go to the town for a walk, we come back and make love." Harry grabbed his wife by the waist, "Then we eat lunch from working up such an appetite, and then we make love again. It's been a perfect life."

Susan rolled her eyes and giggled as the boy kissed her on the neck, "Yes it's amazing I wasn't a balloon the week after we beat Voldemort, I thought I would never get you to stop."

Harry grinned, "Well it looks like I finally got the job done."

As the 21-year-old man said this he grazed the woman's still very flat stomach, but they both knew that wouldn't be the case for long, "Are we going to tell everyone tonight?"

Susan laughed, "Sirius is going to faint."

Harry waved a hand, "Maybe it will light a fire under his ass and will convince him to go give Emmeline her first baby before she locks him in a closet and ties him up."

This caused both to laugh as they shared one last look knowing what to do next. They quickly scrambled upstairs and began to get dressed. When they were ready, they took each other's hands and apparated straight across international borders, and the channel. 1500 miles was nothing to these two power houses. They were able to travel incredible distances due to their training, and intensive studies in the Potter, Bones, and Black family grimoires. It was their family magic after all that had allowed them to gather such a name on the continent. They had traveled from dueling circuit to dueling circuit decimating competition everywhere they went. They were the power couple of Europe, and few could even hope to match their magical prowess, and much fewer their ferocity.

Susan and Harry had sat down through many interviews over the years to answer the questions of how two such young people were capable of such extraordinary magic, but the answer was simple. They trained their bodies to the brink of collapse for years to get ready for the war, and by the time it was over the results couldn't be undone. Of course, they also stayed on top of their training even with Advanced DA when they came down for visits. They would have the greatest assortment of light Wizards the world would ever see, and most were expecting a golden age that would begin the day Harry Potter entered the Political field with his

genius of a wife.

Of course, no one knew that Harry was still the master of Death as well.

He had retired the Elder Wand as soon as the battle was won against Voldemort and began to use his original Phoenix feather wand once again. The wand seemed to serve him even more efficiently since he became the Master of Death, but it was one thing he was never going to pry into much. Dangerous things can happen to people who tamper with death, and Harry had seen that go wrong the hard way.

When the couple arrived just outside the grounds of Hogwarts the gates were open, and thankfully they were a little late, so most of the press was already inside taking pictures. This was the first time their arrival in Britain would be public. They had of course returned for some weddings, birthday parties, and other events that their friends held but nothing major. This would be their supposed triumphant return, and Harry figured his wife was right, and perhaps it was time to return home, and make sure their hard work was not for nothing.

When they arrived at the site for the funeral by the edge of the Black Lake many whispers broke out as the current Minister of Magic Kingsley Shacklebolt was giving a speech. Most of the eyes had flitted back to Harry and Susan who were standing in the back quietly keeping their eyes forward. Daphne Greengrass quietly stood up and motioned for Harry and Susan to come take the two saved spots next to her.

Daphne had become the Potter Bones official spokesman. She handled a lot of their finances, and all their press releases. She worked very closely with Harry and Susan over the years, and always gave statements to the press when they would realize that Harry and Susan had returned once again without talking to the media. It was a well-paying job for sure, and she of course knew it was going to lead to bigger things once she got a

bit of a name for herself which was happening quickly.

The speeches went on and on, and all Harry could do was stare at the white tomb behind Kingsley and say prayers for the man who had cost Harry so much, but had also given him his best chance at success. The man he had fought beside until the very end of the war.

When the last of the speeches were over Kingsley looked out into the crowd and asked if anyone wanted to say any last words, and Harry knew he had to say something. To absolute silence Harry stood. Susan patted him on the leg as he walked out into the aisle, and to the front center of everyone. Kingsley greeted the boy with a hug, and a whisper, "I hoped you would say something. Thank you, Harry."

Harry nodded giving the man a slight smile and turned to address the crowd, "Good afternoon everyone. I am Harry Potter."

This led to some laughter throughout the crowd, and Ron who was sitting near the front shouted, "Unnecessary introduction if I have ever heard one!"

Leading to more chuckles throughout the crowd Harry grinned at his best mate and continued, "As Ron pointed out many of you know my story, but not many know for a while Dumbledore and I did not see eye to eye. This was while I was still in school, and I felt that the headmaster was keeping things from me that was going to affect that war against Voldemort. In a rare turn of events I was actually right, but it took awhile for Dumbledore to realize it."

A small smile graced the young man's lips as he recalled the memory, "It was in this time that my idolization of the man began to wane, but my respect grew. I understood at some point during the best Summer of my life that the Headmaster was always looking out for me, and he did everything he thought was necessary to keep me alive, and safe. We may

not have agreed on the methods, but at no point did I ever have to fear that he wasn't working in the best interest of the greater good, which is an interest he and I shared. Dumbledore was the leader the world needed during the war against Grindelwald, and he became a Titan of magical power as he stood up to his once friend for the betterment of the world. He sacrificed a lot back then, and he never stopped sacrificing for those he cared about."

Harry looked back to the grave of the man and sighed, "I will the man that showed me the way when the world turned to me in its darkest hours against Voldemort. The teacher I respected, the friend I always had, and the man I cared about. The world may never know a greater light wizard."

It was at this point that Harry turned and placed a hand on the white tomb, and whispered, "Until the next great adventure headmaster."

There was applause, a demand for pictures, and a lot of shaking hands.

There were then lots of small words exchanged between Harry and Susans' closest friends as they invited them to the restored Potter Manor for an evening of privacy.

The husband and wife put their team of house elves to prepare for guests, but Harry was making a constant fuss of making sure his lovely pregnant wife stayed down for the remainder of the evening, and to let him take care of the rest until the guests arrived, and one by one they did.

There were of course the seven original defense leaders. Neville and Hannah had fallen further and further for each other as the years from school faded away. They had already been blessed with one child, and Neville was taking his first huge job in the world as the Hogwarts Defense Against the Dark Arts Teacher, while Hannah was going to be his assistant for the next few years until Professor Sprout retires, and the

husband and wife would have to flip for who would get which position.

Ron had Katie Bell attached to his hip. It was a couple Harry would have never seen coming, but after three years of being on the Canons reserve team together Ron was promoted to starting keeper, and Katie was traded to the Holyhead Harpies. It all started with a bet with Katie who was sweeping the nation with her offensive abilities as a chaser, and prowess as an overall player that Ron had made a friendly bet with her that if she couldn't put up five goals against him then she would buy him dinner. She put up 6, but still allowed Ron to take her out to dinner, the rest was history.

Hermione and Collin gave dating a start during Hermione's last year of schooling, the two hit off great, and with all their common ground being from the muggle world it was a promising relationship. No one in the group outside of those two new what happened to their relationship, but when Hermione graduated the two broke things off mutually and Hermione joined the Unspeakables right out of school. Collin had become quite the casanova standing at over 6'3, and being a war hero made him the desired eye candy to many witches, and he showed no signs of slowing down, and even had the impossible Gabrielle Delacour on his arm that evening. Hermione came in with Daphne with one arm looped through hers as the two rattled on about some impossible theory of the protean charm. Daphne and Hermione were the best of friends, and Hermione's close friendship with the Pureblood Princess was one of the big reasons Harry had trusted the girl enough to allow her to be their financial advisor, and public PR spokesperson. Daphne had big dreams, and she had all the right connections in this home to make it if she so desired.

Luna and Ginny came out of the floo holding hands, and no one even

raised an eyelash at the site. Luna had gone on to intern under Rolf Scamander a Magizoologist, and Ginny was playing with Katie on the Hollyhead Harpies, both were as happy as could be, and to Harry that was all that mattered.

Sirius and Remus came through next. Sirius with his arm around Emmeline Black Nee Vance. The two had married shortly after the war, and apparently fired up an old romance that had been cooking before his stay in Azakban. Remus however was walking towards him with a boy that was just five years old, but as soon as Harry made eye contact with the boy he surged towards him and lifted his Godson off the ground, "Hey Teddy, long time no see!"

"Uncle Harry!" Teddy bellowed in excitement planting a wet kiss on Harry's cheek.

Susan embraced Remus as he laughed at Harry and his only son's antics, "Nymphadora sends her regards, but they are keeping her for the cleanup crew at Hogwarts to make sure none of the guests stay on the grounds for longer than they should."

Harry grinned hugging his honorary uncle, and fellow Marauder, "As long as my Godson gets to keep making appearances we can always harass momma nymmy later."

Remus groaned, "Oh please don't let her hear you call her that."

This caused some laughter to ring out throughout the group, and Harry just beamed as he saw everyone gather and chat with high spirits. Losing Dumbledore wasn't the hit it certainly could have been. The man helped the light win two wars, and was over a hundred years old, he lived a great life, and Harry was certain he was happy in the next great adventure. Everyone that knew him at all in fact were certain of it. Dinner was served with the last of the guests arriving, and pleasant

conversations continued through the night before Neville put his hands on the table, "Harry we all need to talk."

This brought silence around the table, and Harry looked at the boy with an even face, "Okay Neville what's on your mind?"

Taking a deep breath the man stared into his mentors eyes, "Harry...you and Susan have been traveling the world and living your lives together for five years. I am sure it has been a great five years, and my God if anyone deserved a break it was you two, but mate...we need you back in the country. We have to make sure all the hardwork and effort we went into winning the war stays in place. We have to make sure something like Voldemort never happens again, but the public needs a face to rally behind. A young Dumbledore. A new leader of the light, and one that someone can trust."

Harry clapped his hands, "So you want us all to rally behind you?"

Splendid! I was really dreading taking up that mantle. You have my support 100% mate." Harry raised his glass, "To the Longbottom of Longbottom's, our new leader of the light."

Dead silence went around the table as everyone stared at Harry with a bewildered expression, but before anyone could say anything Susan broke down laughing first, "You oversold that one my love. Just tell them."

Ron looked at the couple strangely, "Tell us what?"

Harry took Susan's hand gently, "What we want to tell all of you is that Neville is right. It is time for Susan and I step into the limelight and take up the mantles we are responsible for. If we want our child to be brought up in a great world, then first we have to make it a good one ourselves."

Colin spit out his drink hard, "Wait did you say child?"

Susan beamed at everyone, "He certainly did. We are as of only two

weeks ago expecting our first. I have been dying to tell everyone!"

It happened immediately, but Harry was pretty certain Sirius was first out of his seat and starting the whooping. What happened next was many hugs, tears, and congratulations. Harry and Susan at the end were holding hands, and Hannah asked, "So do you think its a boy or a girl?" Susan answered, "It's a boy. Call it mother's intuition. James Albus Potter."

This silenced everyone, but smiles were evident everywhere. Colin shook his head, "Your kid is going to be a legend. Born to two titans of magical power, and dueling beast. Is it possible to start his training while he is still in there?"

This caused a series of laughter, and Harry clapped Neville's arm, "Ready to be a Godfather mate?"

Neville looked amazed, "Me?"

Susan put her arm around Hannah, "Well you and Hannah. That is if you accept of course."

Hannah squealed and more laughter erupted from the group, "I'll take that as a yes."

The next round of hugs started, and when it was all over and seats had been taken Ron stood up, "I would like to propose a toast. To Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, to Harry James Potter, and James Albus Potter, the greatest light wizards to ever live!"

The cheers was answered, and Harry took a look into Susan's eyes and the two shared a smile. What a great life to live together, and it all started with a scheme, and an alliance.

{A/N} Wow 3.5 years of writing this story, and it is time to close the final chapter to this book. Please give me your final thoughts. It is personally my favorite story I have written, so much so that I have

written this epilogue probably ten times, which is why it took so long to get the ending down. I really appreciate all of the support this story has received, and I am hoping to start closing the final chapters to a Badgers Champion this year, and perhaps get started on some new projects coming later in the year. A big shoutout to anyone who has reviewed this story. I finished this one for you guys. Cheers, and Mischief Managed.

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