

Chapter 24

Harry smiled as he watched everyone at the kitchen table, eating breakfast. Taking in the sight of his beautiful girlfriends and their parents, all laughing and smiling happily, he couldn't help but feel like he was part of something. Maybe not a family - not quite yet - but it was close and filled him with a sense of belonging.

"Do we have any plans for today?" June asked as she handed Iffy a blueberry.

Taking the berry the size of her head with a grin, she lifted it to her face and opened her mouth.

"Use your silverware," Andy told her.

Closing her mouth, Iffy set the blueberry down on her plate and picked up her spoon.

"I don't think so," Tonks replied to her mother.

"We need to clean out zhe library," Apolline said.

"What? Why?" Hermione asked in alarm.

"Arry ran into a Lethifold last night," Apolline said. "Iffy found it and woke 'im up. By zhe time she got me, it was already wrapped out 'is face."

Tonks, Fleur, and Hermione all turned and looked at him expectantly.

"What?" Harry asked.

“Why didn’t you wake us up?” Tonks asked with a frown.

“It didn’t know it was going to be that dangerous,” Harry said. “And I woke Hermione up. We both thought it was probably just a Pixie.”

“I don’t remember that,” Hermione said, furrowing her brow.

“Excuse me,” June interrupted. “What exactly *is* a Lethifold?”

“It’s a sort of wraith-like creature,” Hermione replied. “It’s not entirely physical. They look like a black cloak and feed by wrapping themselves around their victims, suffocating them, and then slowly digesting them.”

“And we have those here!?” Robert asked incredulously.

“Not anymore,” Harry said. “It must’ve come from Hogwarts, like Iffy. It’s a good thing she warned me, though. That thing must’ve been starving to attack me when it knew I was awake.”

“Are they common here?” June asked.

“No,” Andy answered. “They tend to live near the equator. I have no idea how one got to Hogwarts.”

“It probably fed on rats,” Hermione said. “They spread from the Caribbean by hiding away on ships and eating ship rats.”

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Tonks asked, placing her hand on top of his.

"I'm fine. Really," Harry told her. "I'll admit, it gave me a good scare when it wrapped around my face. I thought someone had gotten into the house somehow. It took off as soon as I cast my Patronus, though."

"Why would you cast zhat if you didn't know it was a Lethifold?" Fleur asked.

"I was trying to warn you," Harry said.

Fleur didn't look happy with that answer.

"Zhe next time Iffy wakes you up in zhe middle of zhe night, you tell us," she told him firmly, her finger poking his chest before she whirled around to point at Iffy. "And you, do not let 'im leave wizout us, oui?"

Iffy, who had her spoon raised to her open mouth, closed it and nodded.

"Bon," Fleur smiled, running her finger lightly over Iffy's long, blonde hair. "And zhank you for warning us."

Beaming at the praise, Iffy turned back to her breakfast. She'd just raised her spoon back to her open mouth when Harry heard a familiar bark. Iffy gave a start and looked up warily. When Hedwig glided gracefully through the bay window, she squeaked in fright and flew swiftly over to Hermione, hiding in her bushy locks.

"It's alright," Hermione said soothingly.

"Hey, girl," Harry smiled as Hedwig landed lightly on the table in front of him.

With a welcoming hoot, she held out her leg. Untying the letter tied to it, he stroked her feathers and fed her a piece of bacon. After gobbling it down, Hedwig's amber eyes landed on Iffy. Squeaking fearfully, the Fairy ducked back into Hermione's hair.

"Ow. Iffy, be careful," Hermione said with a wince.

"It's alright, Iffy. She won't hurt you," Harry said. "Will you, Hedwig?"

The snowy white owl ruffled her feathers and gave a short bark. Turning to Iffy, who peeked out of Hermione's hair cautiously, Harry beckoned her forward. Watching Hedwig warily, she flew forward and hid behind his glass of orange juice.

"Hedwig, this is our new friend Iffy. Iffy, this is Hedwig," Harry said.

As Iffy peeked around the glass, Hedwig tilted her head to the side and hooted, causing Iffy to duck back behind the glass.

"Harry, are you sure this is safe?" June asked worriedly.

"It's fine, mum," Hermione told her. "Hedwig is Harry's familiar. She won't hurt her."

"It's fine, see?" Harry said, reaching out to pet Hedwig's feathers.

Tilting her head back, the owl crooned lightly. Creeping out from behind the glass, Iffy cautiously approached. Staying a distance away, she circled around her while Hedwig turned her head to follow her movements. When Harry distracted Hedwig with another piece of bacon and some praise, Iffy inched forward and ran her hand over her feathers. Pulling back sharply, she watched for a reaction, but none came.

Easing forward, she stroked the owl's wing lightly. Hedwig turned to look at her, and Iffy froze, her eyes going wide.

"Here, like this," Harry said.

Combing the back of his fingers down Hedwig's breast feathers, she closed her eyes and crooned.

"Just make sure to always stroke down," Harry told her.

Walking closer, Iffy tentatively ran her hand over Hedwig's breast. Smiling, Harry pulled his hand back and turned to the letter.

"It's from Madam Bones," he said.

"What's it say?" Tonks asked, leaning to look over his shoulder.

Opening the letter, Harry read.

"She wants to come over with Susan," he smiled.

"Oh, good," Tonks smiled. "I'll head over and give her the secret after breakfast. We can go through the library when I get back."

Summoning parchment and a quill, Tonks wrote a quick reply letting Madam Bones she would be by in an hour.

"Can you take this to Amelia Bones for me?" Tonks asked, holding the letter up to Hedwig.

With a hoot, she stuck out her leg.

“Thank you,” Tonks said, tying it to her leg.

Harry gave Hedwig one last piece of bacon, which she gobbled down before taking to the air. Iffy watched her closely as she looped around the kitchen before passing through the charmed window.

“See, I told you it was safe,” Harry told her.

With a bashful smile and a shrug, Iffy went back over to her plate.

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After Tonks returned from visiting Madam Bones, Ted spent some time explaining magical creatures to Hermione’s parents while Harry and the others combed through the library.

“Some of these things sound quite... dangerous,” Robert frowned.

“They can be,” Ted nodded. “The thing you have to try and understand is that magicals have ways of dealing with them. I know it’s frightening. My parents had the same concerns, but it’s really no more dangerous than the Muggle world.”

“Doesn’t sound like it,” Robert sighed.

Ted smiled sympathetically, “We also have better ways to heal. How often does someone in the Muggle world survive losing their head?”

“That can happen?” June gasped.

“Happened to a friend of mine, actually,” Ted chuckled. “Splinched himself while learning to Apparate. His body ended up at his destination, but his head stayed behind. We had quite the laugh watching him try to pick up his own head.”

“Not helping, dear,” Andy yelled before stunning a doxy.

“Do you sense anything else?” Apolline asked Iffy.

Zippering back and forth across the room a few times, Iffy then flew back to Apolline and shook her head.

“Merci,” Apolline smiled.

“Crookshanks, no!” Hermione yelled.

Crookshanks, who’d been eyeing the Doxy in Andy’s hand, sat down and sulked.

“Those are not toys,” Hermione scolded him.

Smiling, Iffy flew over to the ginger cat and circled his head. Crookshanks followed her movement for several turns before leaping into the air. Iffy laughed as she darted out of the way.

“Be gentle, Crookshanks,” Hermione reminded him.

“I wonder why she isn’t afraid of him like she is Hedwig,” Harry said.

“Crookshanks can’t fly,” Tonks said.

“Good point,” Harry smiled.

A moment later, the doorbell rang.

“That’ll be Bones,” Tonks said.

Taking her hand in his, Harry led the way to the front door. Pulling it open, he smiled.

“Hello, Susan. Madam Bones,” Harry said. “Come on in.”

“Amelia is fine,” she replied with a small smile. “Hello, everyone.”

After introductions were made, Harry gave Amelia and Susan a tour of the house. Near the end, Fleur grinned in anticipation as she took his hand.

“We actually have a bit of a surprise for everyone,” Harry said. “Fleur’s had a little project she’s been working on that she just finished last night.”

“What is it?” Apolline asked.

Grinning, Fleur pushed open the doors leading to the patio, and everyone gasped. Fleur had spent a lot of time and energy building a large, square pool with a small section blocked off for a bubbling hot tub. The whole screened-in patio had been charmed with Climate Charms, making it feel like a balmy Summer’s day. The screen itself had been enchanted with the moving illusion of her favorite beach in France. Looking closely, Harry could even make out Beauxbatons castle in the distance.

“Aw, love, you got me my hot tub,” Tonks beamed.

Rushing up to Fleur, she wrapped her arms around her and kissed her softly.

“Ermione ‘elped,” Fleur smiled.

“This is incredible,” June said, staring around in awe. “I can even smell the ocean.”

“Can we go swimming, maman?” Gabrielle asked excitedly.

“If it’s alright wiz ‘Arry,” Apolline said.

“Of course,” Harry told her. “It’d be a shame not to use it.”

“Cherie, zhis is wonderful,” Apolline said, hugging Fleur while Gabrielle rushed over to the pool. “I better go transfigure your sister a bathing suit before she jumps in wiz ‘er clothes on.”

“Everyone’s going to need bathing suits,” Tonks said. “I doubt anyone thought to bring one in December.”

“Are you coming, mum?” Hermione asked. “I can transfigure one for you.”

“Why not?” June smiled.

While the women went into the study to get changed, the men went to the study. The men finished sooner and went back out to the patio to wait for the women.

“This really is incredible,” Robert said. “It would take months to build something like this in the Muggle world.”

“Fleur’s brilliant with Charms,” Harry grinned. “And Hermione helped her with a lot of the Transfigurations.”

“You didn’t help?” Robert asked.

“No, I’m rubbish at this sort of thing,” Harry said.

“Dora tells me your quite the duelist,” Ted said.

“I’m alright,” Harry shrugged. “She still kicks my arse when we practice.”

“Well, she is an Auror,” Ted smiled.

Just then, the doors to the study opened, and the girls came out. Harry grinned as he looked over his girlfriends in their revealing two-piece bikinis. Of course, he couldn’t help glancing at the other women as well. Susan and Amelia were in more modest one-piece suits that did little to hide their prominent busts and wide hips. Apolline, like her daughter, looked stunning in her silver two-piece, her sinful curves on full display. While not as striking, Andy still had the figure the Black sisters were known for, and June’s full figure gave Harry an idea of what Hermione would look like in a couple of decades.

“Our eyes are up here, gentlemen,” Tonks smirked.

“And I’m sure they’re lovely,” Harry said, his eyes fixed on her chest.

As everyone chuckled, Harry grinned before helping to set up some lounge chairs. Iffy was enthralled with the warm, humid air and zipped around happily while Gabrielle headed straight for the pool and jumped in.

“Too bad we can’t get a tan,” June said, lying on her back.

“We might be able to do that,” Hermione said thoughtfully.

“An enhanced Lumos Solem enchantment, per’aps?” Fleur offered.

“That might work,” Hermione said. “We’ll have to research it.”

“Still, you two did a wonderful job,” Robert said.

“Thanks, dad,” Hermione smiled. “Fleur did most of the work, though,”

“You ‘elped a lot, ma cherie,” Fleur smiled.

“‘Arry,” Apolline called. “Would you mind if we put a tree in ‘ere for Iffy?”

“Not at all,” Harry said.

Zippering over to Apolline, Iffy hugged her chin with a smile before doing the same to Harry.

“Fleur, come swim wiz me!” Gabrielle yelled.

Smiling, Fleur got up and walked over to the pool.

“Mmh, that arse,” Tonks murmured.

“Nymphadora, is that really necessary?” Andy sighed.

“What?” Tonks asked. “Everyone was thinking it.”

Grinning at her exasperated mother, Tonks stood. Pulling Harry to his feet, she led him over to the pool.

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While Harry and the girls played in the pool for a while, Dobby managed to find a grill and started barbequing out on the patio. The atmosphere felt completely at odds with the spirit of the season, but it was a welcome break from the stresses of reality.

As Dobby finished cooking, Andy and Apolline levitated the table and chairs out from the dining room. Iffy wasn't a fan of all the meat, her nose wrinkling cutely, so June fetched a cherry tomato from her salad. The little Fairy looked at it oddly but squeaked in delight after her first bite.

“Fleur, Hermione, thank you so much for this,” Amelia smiled. “I haven't felt this relaxed in years.”

“You're welcome,” Fleur replied, smiling.

“Will you and Susan be staying the night?” Harry asked. “We have plenty of extra bedrooms.”

“Can we, auntie?” Susan asked, looking at Amelia pleadingly.

“Alright,” she said after a moment. “I'll have to send a letter to the Ministry so they know to contact me by Patronus if anything happens.”

“You can send a letter with Hedwig,” Harry offered.

“Wait,” Hermione gasped. “If a Patronus can find us under the Fidelius, couldn’t someone use that to find us?”

“Very astute, but that’s not how a messenger Patronus work,” Amelia said, causing a wave of relief to pass over the table. “When you send a messenger Patronus, it goes directly to the intended recipient – far too fast for anyone to follow.”

“Oh, good,” Hermione sighed.

“It was a good thought, cherie,” Fleur smiled, patting her arm.

The conversation turned back to more pleasant topics after that. After she finished eating, Apolline off her skills in Herbology and Charms by growing a small, hollowed-out tree in a ceramic pot.

“That’s amazing,” June said as Iffy happily inspected her new den.

“My family owns a vineyard,” Apolline explained with a smile.

“You should see zhe tree ‘ouse she made for Gabrielle and me when we were younger,” Fleur grinned. “It was magnifique.”

“Miss doesn’t need to clean up,” Dobby said, startling June as she started picking up the dirty plates.

Letting out a breath, she smiled down at Dobby.

“If I’m going to be a guest here, than I can at least clean up after myself,” June said, then turned to Harry just as he opened his mouth. “I insist.”

Recognizing that arguing would be a lost cause, Harry raised his hands in surrender and nodded at Dobby.

“Hermione, will you help me with the dishes?” June asked.

“Dora, you can help me put the table and chairs back in the dining room,” Andy said.

“But mum,” Tonks whine.

At a stern look from her mother, Tonks huffed and grumbled as she got up.

“Can Dobby help, miss?” Dobby asked, following after June as she headed back into the house.

Smiling, Harry kissed Fleur’s temple and got up to help move the chairs. When everything was put back in its proper place, Harry wrapped his arm around Tonks’ bare waist and walked with her back towards the patio.

“I love this swimsuit,” he told her, as his hand caressed her smooth skin.

“Too bad we didn’t go with Fleur’s idea,” Tonks smirked. “She and Apolline wanted to go topless, but mum and Amelia didn’t like the idea.”

“Pity,” Harry said.

As they passed through the kitchen, Harry paused when he spotted Hermione. She was standing at the sink, humming and shaking her round little bum back and forth as she washed the dishes by hand. Harry and Tonks shared a mischievous glance before Harry let go of her.

Sneaking up behind Hermione, he slipped his arms around her. Hermione gasped, then moaned as he pressed himself against her bum and trailed his hands up her stomach to cup her breasts.

“Skaing your pretty little arse like that, it’s like you’re begging to get buggered again,” Harry whispered as he squeezed her breasts.

“Harry!?”

“June!?”

Harry jumped away from her, his face burning with embarrassment, while Tonks clutched her stomach and laughed so hard she wheezed. June spun around, her arms covering her chest as her face went bright red.

“I’m so sorry,” Harry said. “I thought you were Hermione.”

“I should hope so,” June said.

“Er, I should just – sorry,” Harry stammered before he turned and fled the kitchen.

Afraid of going back out to the patio and running into Robert, Harry headed down the hall to the dining room. There he spotted Fleur, bent over as she straightened the tablecloth.

Moving slightly to the side, Harry leaned around to look at her face, just to make sure. Tonks snorted loudly and burst out laughing as she leaned against the doorway for support. Fleur looked around at the sound and eyed Harry curiously.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“Just making sure,” Harry mumbled.

Walking up to her, he wrapped his arms around her and buried his face in the crook of her neck.

“What ‘appened?” Fleur asked, stroking his back soothingly.

“Something happened?” Hermione asked as she walked into the room.

Groaning as Tonks giggled uncontrollably, Harry sighed and pulled back from Fleur.

“Harry - he - he groped your mum,” Tonks gasped, clutching her stomach.

“I thought she was you,” Harry said when Hermione gaped at him.

“Harry!” Hermione cried incredulously

Covering her mouth, Fleur giggled.

“That’s not funny,” Hermione hissed. “How would you feel if he did that to your mum?”

“I wouldn’t mind,” Fleur smirked with a shrug. “I don’t zhink maman would mind eizzer.”

“Ooh, you’re impossible,” Hermione huffed.

Giggling again, Fleur hugged her. When she pulled back, she looked over at Tonks, and they shared a glance. Smiling, they suddenly walked over to Harry, each of them taking an arm and pulling him towards the patio.

“Oh no,” Harry said, digging in his heels.

“No point in hiding in here and letting things get more awkward,” Tonks said. “You just need to get out there and get it over with.”

When Hermione started pushing him from behind, Harry groaned and let them lead him outside. Everyone looked up when Harry stepped out onto the patio, and he could feel his face heating up.

“So,” Robert said. “My daughter isn’t enough for you? You have to try and steal my wife, too?”

“Robert,” June said, slapping his arm lightly.

Harry groaned and rubbed his face.

“I’m really sorry,” he said. “I honestly thought she was Hermione.”

“Then I’ll take that as a compliment,” June smiled. “Now, let’s just forget it happened and get back to enjoying our holiday.”

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Harry still felt a bit awkward for a while, but eventually, things started to return to normal. After spending a couple more hours out by the pool, everyone put their clothes back on and headed into the house as the sun started to set.

“Do you think we could get a telly?” Tonks asked as she cuddled up against Harry’s side.

“Sure,” Harry said.

“Hermione, didn’t you say electronics don’t work around magic?” June asked.

“They tend to go haywire around a lot of magic,” Hermione replied.

“They should work alright here,” Ted said. “They work fine at our house. Although, you may find that they don’t last as long.”

Suddenly, Harry yelped when he felt something burning hot against his thigh. Digging into his pocket, he pulled out a gold Galleon and looked at the edge of the coin. A single word sent his heart racing.

Help

“It’s Daphne,” Harry said. “She needs help.”

“What’s happening?” Amelia asked sharply.

“I don’t know,” Harry said. “Something must be seriously wrong, though. Daphne knows these are only for emergencies. Dobby!”

With a pop, Dobby appeared in front of Harry, bouncing excitedly.

“Dobby, do you know where the Greengrasses live?” Harry asked.

“Wait, I’ll send some Aurors,” Amelia said.

“I can’t wait,” Harry said, getting to his feet. “I promised Daphne I’d protect her and her sister. Accio cloak.”

Amelia stared at him for a long moment as Tonks, Fleur, and Hermione got to their feet. Just as his cloak flew into his hand, she sighed.

"Fine, but you're taking me with you," Amelia said.

"Uh, boss, are you sure that's a good idea?" Tonks asked.

Amelia glared at her, "Legally, I can't stop you, but like hell am I going to let you lot run off and leave me behind, especially Potter."

"Hermione--"

"I'm going, dad," Hermione said with finality.

Robert looked like he wanted to argue but gave up with a sigh when June rested her hand on his arm.

"Be careful, auntie," Susan said.

"Would you like me to come as well?" Andromeda asked.

"And me," Apolline added.

"Dobby, can you Apparate with that many people?" Harry asked. "Chances are Daphe, Astoria, and their mother will be coming back with us. And this isn't an order. I'm asking for your help, just like when we rescued Tonks and Amelia."

"Harry Potter, sir, is going to save another friend?" Dobby asked.

“Yes,” Harry nodded.

“Then Dobby will help,” the eld said, puffing out his chest.

“Thank you,” Harry said. “And you’re sure you can handle taking everyone.”

“Yes, sir,” Dobby nodded. “House Elves is being very good at moving many things at once.”

“It’s settled then,” Amelia said before taking out her badge and tapping it with her wand.
“Chambers, come in.”

“I’m here, Minister. Is everything alright?” a male voice asked from the badge.

“I’m fine, but something’s come up,” Amelia said. “Tell Shacklebolt to get teams one and two ready. I want them ready to assault a manor in twenty minutes. I’ll contact you again when I know more.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Chambers replied.

“Do you have a plan for this?” Amelia asked, looking at Harry.

“We Apparate in just inside the wards. Is there a treeline nearby?” Harry asked as he turned to Dobby, who nodded. “Okay. Once we’re there, I’ll sneak up to the house under my cloak and see what’s happening. If I can sneak Daphne and her family out safely, I will. If not, we’ll see what we’re dealing with and go from there.”

“You’re not going up there alone,” Tonks said firmly.

"No, he's not," Amelia agreed. "I'm going with him."

Reaching into the pocket of her cloak, she pulled out an invisibility cloak of her own. Harry sighed worriedly.

"Even with cloaks, more of us means a bigger chance of being spotted," he said.

"If Death Eaters have taken over the house, my Aurors need to know how many and where they are," Amelia said in a tone that brooked no argument.

Recognizing she had a point and anxious to get going, Harry nodded.

"You come back safe. All of you," June said while Robert wrapped an arm comfortingly around her shoulders.

Iffy flew over and landed on the table in front of June, eyeing them nervously.

"We will," Harry said.

Gathering around Dobby, everyone that was going held hands. With a nod from Harry, they swirled into nothing with a crack.

A moment later, the group appeared inside a copse of apple trees near a large manor.

"Potter, give me your glasses," Amelia whispered, her hand held out expectantly.

Looking at her curiously, he handed them to her anyways. Amelia muttered under her breath as she cast a complex charm before handing them back.

“So we can see each other,” she explained, handing them back.

As Harry slipped them on his face, he found he could see through Amelia’s cloak and the clothes underneath. Taking in a glimpse of her impressively large breasts, he looked away quickly.

“Er, I can-”

“I know,” Amelia interrupted before casting the same charm on her monocle. “I’m more concerned with getting out alive than you seeing me naked.”

“Right,” Harry nodded.

“Tonks, you have your badge?” Amelia asked.

“Yes, ma’am,” Tonks replied quietly.

“Good. If you don’t hear from us in five minutes, call for backup and tell them what happened,” Amelia told her.

Turning to Harry, Amelia nodded. The two of them swung their cloaks over their bodies. To everyone else, they disappeared from sight, but to each other, nothing had changed. Belatedly, Harry realized that Madam Bones could see him just as much as he could see her.

Fighting down his embarrassment and the desire to check out her bum, Harry followed her as they crept towards the house. Yellow light poured out from the curtain covered windows on the first floor. When they noticed several silhouetted figures moving around, they shared a glance before silently moving in that direction.

As they reached the house, they crouched and pressed themselves against the stone wall on either side of the window. Peeking through the curtains, thanks to his charm glasses, Harry

spotted at least two dozen witches and wizards roaming around a large room. Nearly all of them had the faint outline skull shaped masks somewhere in their robes.

Harry strained his ear to hear what they were saying, but he could only make out an indistinct murmur. Checking his pockets, he grinned when his fingers thin, fleshy cord. Waving Amelia over, he led her to the double french doors not too far away. Hoping one end of the extendable ears for them to listen through, he set the other on the ground. Amelia eyed it curiously as it slithered through the snow and slipped under the door.

“- getting them back soon enough,” a deep, male voice said.

“I hope we take care of that bitch Bones when the Dark Lord gets back,” another said with glee.

“Do you know when he will return?” asked a more cultured voice.

Looking at Harry, Amelia mouthed a word.

‘Greengrass’

“Not for a couple of weeks,” a witch replied.

“You chose the right time to join us, Gerard,” a wizard laughed. “Soon, the Dark Lord’s forces will be in place, and we can finally make our move.”

“And why did it take so long for you to join our cause?” another wizard asked aggressively.

“I was merely biding my time,” Gerard Greengrass said. “As soon as it became clear how ineffective the Ministry is against the Dark Lord, my decision was easy.”

“Coward,” A witch spat. “You think you can walk in at the final hour and take all the spoils?”

“Speaking of spoils,” A wizard with a silky, arrogant tone interrupted. “Where is my future wife. I’d like to get to know her.”

“I believe she’s with my wife,” Gerard replied. “I’ll go check on them. Excuse me for a moment.”

On a gut feeling, Harry decided to follow him. Looking through various windows, Harry circled around to the back corner of the house while Gerard walked up to the second floor. There was a balcony above him, so Harry had to back up to look through the window. It wasn’t until then that he realized Amelia had followed him.

Looking through the curtains covering the door leading to the balcony, he watched as Daphne stood from her vanity and walked towards the door. Looking around, Harry noticed that there weren’t any windows on the first floor of this side of the house. Eyeing the balcony for a moment, he suddenly took off his cloak.

“Harry!” Amelia hissed softly.

Giving her a firm, pointed look, Harry took off running towards the house. Propelling himself off the wall with his foot, he turned in mid-air and caught the bottom of the balcony with his hands. Heaving himself up, he climbed over the railing and onto the balcony.

When he saw his breath fogging, he pulled the neck of his jumper over his mouth to hide it while slipping the extendable ear under the door.

“- at the party,” Gerard was saying.

“I don’t see anything worth celebrating,” Daphne said, her voice icy cold.

“Regardless, you will make an appearance and speak with your future husband,” Gerard said demanding.

“More like my future executioner,” Daphne bit back. “You know what he’s like.”

“Which is why I contract you to him and not Astoria,” Gerard said. “You’re more equipt to deal with the situation.”

“You mean I’m more expendable,” Daphne spat.

Smack!

Harry clenched his hand around his wand, fighting the urge to rush in.

“You will not speak to me that way,” Gerard growled. “It’s only a death sentence if you allow it to be. Use what I’ve taught you. Eliminate him, and all the power of the Notts will belong to us.”

“You want me to kill one of the Dark Lord’s closest supporters?” Daphne asked, her voice entirely devoid of emotion.

“The Dark Lord won’t care so long as your power and fortune are at his disposal,” Gerard said dismissively.

“And his friends?” Daphne asked.

“Then ensure there’s nothing to trace it back to you,” Gerard said impatiently. “I know you’re not happy with this decision, but you will abide by it. The Greengrass name must survive.”

“Even if it costs you a daughter,” Daphne said coldly.

"If you can't get the better of him, it's a necessary sacrifice," Gerard said. "Now, not another word. I want you down in the parlor in five minutes. Do not make me come back up here."

A moment later, the door closed sharply.

"Bastard," Daphne spat tearfully.

Carefully looking through the door, Harry watched as Daphne sat on the end of the bed and dropped her head into her hands. He felt incredibly guilty for seeing her in such a private moment – made worse by the fact he could easily see through her clothes – but it couldn't be helped.

Taking a deep breath, Harry slowly reached over and tapped softly on the window pane. After several taps, Daphne stood abruptly and stormed towards the door. Wand in hand, Harry prepared to silence her as she yanked open the door.

"Harry!" she gasped surprisingly softly. "What – how –"

"No time," Harry whispered. "I'm here to get you out of here. Can you get your mother and sister?"

"I - yes," Daphne said, blinking rapidly as her eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly, she threw herself forward and hugged him as tightly as she could.

"Thank you," she sobbed.

Holding her gently, Harry rubbed her back.

"Daphne, I know you're going through a lot right now," Harry whispered, "but we need to move quickly."

"Right," Daphne murmured thickly.

Sniffing, she pulled back and wiped her eyes.

"Come to the balcony as soon as you're ready," Harry said.

He reached out and squeezed her hand supportively before letting go and climbing back over the railing. Lowering himself down as far as he could, Harry dropped back down to the ground next to Amelia.

"They're coming," he whispered while putting on his cloak.

"Good," Amelia nodded before lifting her badge to her face. "Shacklebolt."

"Yes, Minister," came Kingsley's rumbling baritone.

"We've discovered a meeting of twenty to thirty Death Eaters at Greengrass manor," Amelia said. "We're attempting to evacuate non-combatants now. As soon as they're clear, I'll give you the word, and you can start your assault. Expect heavy resistance. Call for backup if you need it, but don't tell them where you're going until they need to know."

"I've already called in teams three and four," Kingsley said. "We're ready when you need us."

"Good. Bones, out," Amelia said, then tapped her badge again. "Tonks."

“Everything alright?” Tonks asked worriedly.

“We’re fine,” she replied. “The Greengrasses are on their way out, and the Aurors are standing by. Be ready to leave.”

“Ready when you are,” Tonks said.

Tucking her badge back into her robes, Amelia turned to Harry.

“Did you learn anything important?” she asked.

“No,” Harry said. “Just that Gerard has joined the Death Eaters and promised Daphne to Nott.”

A stormy look came over Amelia’s face. As curious as Harry was to know why, now wasn’t the time for idle chatter. They fell into silence as they waited. Gradually, the adrenaline started to fade, and Harry began to feel the cold. Given the state of Amelia’s thick, crinkled nipples, so was she.

Honestly, he wasn’t trying to be a pervert, but with breasts that big, it was hard not to look at them.

“Harry!” Daphne hissed.

Stepping back from the wall, Harry and Amelia looked up and lowered the hoods of their cloaks.

“Quick, jump down,” Harry said as quietly as he could. “I’ll catch you.”

Nodding, Daphne stepped away from the railing and appeared with Astoria a moment later. She helped her sister step over the railing as Harry waited with his wand at the ready. Nervously, Astoria bit her lip and jumped.

Harry easily caught her with a Levitation Charm and lowered her safely to the ground. Amelia pulled the younger girl over and whispered to her as Harry got ready for the next one. Daphne guided a thin, curvy witch to the railing. Seeing the similarities between her and the girls, he figured that she had to be their mother.

When the older witch stepped off the edge, Harry caught her and lowered her to the ground.

"Hello, Evangeline," Amelia smiled.

"Amelia," Evangeline said in surprise. "When Daphne said her friend was taking us someplace safe, I didn't expect you to be here."

"I was at Harry's when Daphne called for help," Amelia explained. "Of course, I wasn't going to sit by when one of my oldest friends needed me."

"Thank you," Evangeline said tearfully while Harry lowered Daphne to the ground. "Gerard has lost it, Amelia. He's--"

"I know," Amelia interrupted softly. "But right now, we need to get you and the girls to safety."

"Of course," Evangeline nodded, visibly gathering herself.

Rubbing her back gently, Amelia turned to Harry and nodded.

"Let's get out of here," she said. "Head towards the apple orchard."

They started walking away from the house, the Greengrasses folding their arms over their chests to protect against the cold. They only made it a few yards when a door on the side of the house suddenly opened. The entire group froze as a Death Eater stepped outside and spotted them. There was a beat of silence before the wizard's eyes widened.

"They're escaping!" he yelled, drawing his wand. "It's-"

Amelia's spell slammed into his chest, knocking him out before he could say another word. But it was already too late.

"Run!" Harry yelled as witches and wizards in black cloaks rushed out of the house.

The Greengrasses took off at a sprint towards the orchard while Harry and Amelia threw everything they had at the Death Eaters in the doorway. Harry felt sickened as he watched wizards and witches thrown around in broken, bloodied heaps from the destructive magic he wielded, but he never stopped. If he did, they would all be dead.

Soon, a wall of blue, shimmering shields sprang to life as the Death Eaters defended themselves. Throwing hexes and curses over their shoulders, Harry and Amelia started running. More Death Eaters poured out of the house from other doors, forcing them to duck and weave between brightly colored bolts of hissing, spitting magic.

"Get behind us!" Tonks yelled when the Greengrasses reached them.

She, along with Fleur, Hermione, Andy, and Apolline, stepped out from the trees. Tonks' wand spat a steady stream of violent magic, sending explosions ripping through the line of approaching Death Eaters. Hermione created and animated an army of beasts made out of snow that snarled and growled as they charged ahead. Fleur summoned fiery birds that lit up the field with an orange, flickering glow as they dive bombed the mass of black cloaked figures, setting several ablaze. Andy and Apolline focused on protecting everyone, transfiguring wooden shields out of branches and ripping boulders from the ground to intercept curses.

It was an incredible sight to behold.

Now that they had a momentary break, Amelia pulled out her badge.

“Now, Kingsley!” she shouted over the noise.

Dozens of bright red spells lit up the night sky as they impacted the wards surrounding the manor. The dome above them cracked like glass as more and more spells slammed into them.

“It’s the Aurors! Run!” one of the Death Eaters yelled.

Harry looked back as he tried to Apparate away, only to spin in a circle. Before he could do anything else, one of Hermione’s wolves was on him. Its snowy teeth didn’t actually break the skin, but it still trapped the man in place and took him out of the fight.

“Disapparate!” Amelia shouted as soon as they reached the orchard.

Harry wondered why she shouted that, only to feel himself pass through the Auror’s Anti-Disapparation wards a moment later. He watched the Greengrasses vanish with Apolline and Andy before he grabbed hold of Hermione. Looking back at Tonks, Fleur, and Amelia, they all nodded and Disapparated as the Aurors charged in.

Appearing outside Fort Potter, the sudden silence was startling. Everyone took a moment to catch their breath and calm their racing hearts. Looking around, Harry made sure everyone was there and breathed a sigh of relief when they were.

“Where are we?” Evangeline asked.

“Hermione,” Harry panted, “Could you?”

“Fort Potter is located at Number 16 East Hill Lane,” Hermione said.

“Wow,” Daphne said as she looked at the house. “You don’t do small, do you, Potter.”

“Definitely not,” Tonks smirked suggestively.

“Let’s get inside,” Fleur said with a shiver. “I’m freezing, and everyone is probably worried.”

“I need to get to the Ministry,” Amelia said. “Tell Susan I’m safe, and I’ll be back as soon as I can.”

“Do you want me to come in, boss?” Tonks asked.

“You’ve done enough for tonight, Auror Tonks,” Amelia said. “Besides, you still have a job to do. I didn’t make you Harry’s bodyguard just so you could spend time with your boyfriend.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Tonks smiled with a jaunty salute.

“Amelia,” Harry said as she started to turn. “Thank you.”

“Just try not to make this a habit,” Amelia said.

Harry nodded before she walked outside of the wards and Disapparated. Turning back to the group, he wrapped his arm around Fleur to warm her up and led them to the house. The moment they entered, June, Richard, Ted, Gabrielle, and Susan came rushing in to greet them. Harry blushed as he glanced at June and Susan. He’d gotten so used to the charm on his glasses that he’d forgotten it was there. Seeing Susan’s large breasts – even larger than her aunt’s – and June’s shapely figure reminded him sharply.

Taking them off, he quickly removed the charm and put them back on just as June hugged him tightly.

“Where’s aunt Amelia?” Susan asked worriedly.

“She had to go back to the Ministry,” Tonks said. “She’s fine, though.”

“Is anyone hurt?” Andy asked.

Everyone shook their heads, but Hermione still checked Harry over before being satisfied.

“Everyone, this is Daphne, Astoria, Evangeline Greengrass,” Harry said. “They’re going to be staying with us.”

“Eva is fine,” Evangeline said as she greeted everyone.

Leading everyone into the living room, Dobby popped in with tea while Iffy flew over to Hermione and curled up in her hair.

“Can you tell us what happened?” she asked.

Daphne set down her teacup and sighed.

“My father told Astoria and me that he’d made marriage arrangements for us,” she said. “Astoria would marry Draco Malfoy while I was being sold off to Thadeus Nott.”

“He was going to hand you over to that vile beast?” Andy gasped.

“Yes,” Daphne replied in a clipped tone.

“Who’s Thadeus Nott?” Hermione asked.

“A disgusting old man,” Daphne said. “He’s Theodore Nott’s grandfather, and he’s been married sixteen times. Not one of his wives lived to the age of thirty. It’s well known that he enjoys young women and disposes of his wives when they get too old.”

“Why hasn’t he been arrested?” June asked incredulously.

“There’s never any proof,” Daphne said. “Not that the Aurors ever looked very hard. He’s got a lot of money and influence. Besides, from what I’ve heard, he doesn’t usually kill them himself. He... breaks them to the point that they commit suicide.”

“That’s awful,” June gasped.

“My father isn’t a good man,” Daphne told her. “He’s far more concerned with preserving the family name and improving his station than anything else. I never expected he’d go this far, though. I thought he would discretely aid You-Know-Who, not openly join him and sell his daughter to the families of two of his most ardent supporters.”

“He surprised us all,” Eva said quietly. “Thank you, Harry. If you hadn’t agreed to take us in...”

“Don’t mention it,” Harry said. “You’re welcome to stay here as long as you need to.”

“I’d offer to pay you for letting us stay here, but I don’t know how I can,” Eva sighed sadly. “Gerard is sure to revoke our access to the family vault – he’ll probably dissolve our marriage contract, as well. I just hope he doesn’t disown Daphne and Astoria.”

As a tear fell from her eye, Andy scooted closer and wrapped a comforting arm around Eva's shoulders.

"Honestly, don't worry about it," Harry said. "You don't owe me anything."

"Let him," Astoria said, hugging her mother. "I'd rather live on the streets than marry Malfoy."

"Your father can't enter you into a contract against your will, can he?" Hermione asked worriedly.

"For Astoria, yes, but not a magical one," Daphne said. "We'd have to sign for it to be magically binding. Right now, all he can essentially do is enter into a written agreement. Not that anyone would take his word now that we've run away."

"Harry, perhaps you should show the girls their rooms?" Andy suggested.

Realizing she wanted a moment to talk to Eva alone, Harry nodded.

"Sure," Harry said.

As he stood, Dobby appeared next to him with a *pop*.

"Dobby has set up the rooms next to Ms. Gabby's, Harry Potter, sir," Dobby said.

"Thank you, Dobby," Harry smiled. "And thank you for helping us rescue the Greengrasses."

With a beaming smile, Dobby popped away.

“How did a House Elf help you rescue us?” Daphne asked, her brow furrowed cutely.

“Dobby got us through the wards,” Harry told her.

Daphne’s eyes widened, and her face paled.

“That’s... but how? House Elves aren’t allowed to enter another person’s home without permission. It’s part of the magic that binds them,” Daphne said.

“Dobby’s a free Elf,” Hermione huffed. “As all house Elves should be.”

“He’s free, and he still follows your orders?” Daphne asked.

“Dobby works here because he wasn’t to,” Harry said before Hermione could go off on a tirade. “I asked him, as a friend, to help me rescue you.”

“Potter...” Daphne said, trailing off and shaking her head in awe. “Do you have any idea what this means? You could go anywhere, anytime you want, and no wards can stop you. It’s part of the reason House Elves were enslaved in the first place. Merlin, if the Aurors could use this, they could raid the homes of Death Eaters while they sleep. They’d never know what hit them. Of course, the House Elf would need to know how to get there.”

“Well, Dobby did belong to the Malfoys,” Harry said thoughtfully.

Sharing a look with Tonks, he could see a glint of excitement in her eyes. It made him wonder how none of them had thought of that before. If they could convince more House Elves to help...

“How did you end up being friends with a House Elf that belong to the Malfoys?” Daphne asked incredulously.

Harry told her the story of his second year as he led her and Astoria to their rooms. Gabrielle was quick to sidle up to the younger sister and tell her all about the house. He figured she was happy to have someone her age in the house.

"I know the rooms don't look like much right now, but we can get you anything you need," Harry said.

"We can go shopping for clothes tomorrow," Fleur offered.

"Thank you," Daphne said gratefully. "We only managed to grab a couple changes of clothes and some sentimental items before we left."

"Daphne, this place is amazing!" Astoria grinned as she bounded into the room with Gabby right behind her. "There's even a pool and a hot tub."

Daphne snorted and smirked at Harry, "Figures you'd have those."

Harry grinned unrepentantly.

"Hey, what's with the fairy anyways?" Astoria asked as Iffy looked around curiously.

"We found her in the library," Hermione smiled. "My mum kind of adopted her. Her name's Iphigenia, but we all call her Iffy."

"That's odd," Daphne said.

"They're Muggles," Hermione shrugged. "They never get to see things like Fairies and Pixies."

"No, I didn't mean that," Daphne said. "I mean, they shouldn't be able to see her."

"Oh!" Hermione gasped. "Why didn't I think of that, of course. Muggles can't see most magical creatures. But why...?"

"Maybe zhe 'ave some magic, just not enough to use it?" Fleur suggested. "Or, perhaps knowing zhe secret for zhe Fidelus gave zhem just enough to see zhem?"

"Maybe," Hermione said thoughtfully. "I'll look into it. I wonder if that means they could see Hogwarts now."

Once the girls had put away their meager belonging, they all headed back to the living room.

"Gabrielle, come 'ere, ma petite," Apolline said. "'Ow would you feel about going to 'Ogwarts?"

"Really?" Gabby asked excitedly.

"Maman?" Fleur asked curiously.

"I get lonely at 'ome now that Gabrielle is in school," Apolline said. "Besides, I want to 'elp. Even if only by keeping you and Eva company when everyone goes back to school. If it's alright wiz 'Arry, of course."

"You and Gabby are always welcome," Harry smiled.

Squealing excitedly, Gabby rushed over to the couch and hugged her mother.

"Are you sure, maman?" Fleur asked. "You know 'ow dangerous it is in England."

"We are in just as much danger in France," Apolline told her. "Wiz how close you are to 'Arry, I would not put it past zhat batard to send someone after us. At least 'ere, I can be of some use."

Sighing, Fleur nodded and went over to the couch to hug her mother and sister.

"As you sure you won't miss your friends?" she asked Gabby.

"I don't have any," Gabby said quietly. "Zhey all left when I grew up."

Looking at her sympathetically, Fleur hugged Gabby tightly.

"Mum, dad, it would probably be a good idea for you to stay here too," Tonks said.

Andy and Ted shared a long look.

"You're more than welcome to stay," Harry told her. "In fact, I'd feel a lot better if you did."

"We'll think about it," Andy said eventually.

Soon, the conversation turned to lighter topics. Sitting on the loveseat next to Hermione, Harry pulled Tonks down into his lap as he watched the room with a smile on his face.