

Miscalculation

Summary-

For years Harry has gathered Unspeakables, scholars, and professors, the best in the field of Arithmancy, to complete a ritual he found in the Potter Family Tome. The goal, a one-way trip into the past. They've done the math. Let's hope no one forgot to carry the one.

1.

Harry stared down at the three relics before him. The Cloak, the wand, and the ring supposedly created by Death itself. There was truth in old stories, but finding it was never easy. The relics overflowed with Death Magic. Owning all three allowed him to summon them at will, regardless of where they were. Shockingly enough, they came to him even if someone else had them. Regardless of the legend following him, Harry didn't have as much experience as some others out there.

Hunting down the worst of the remaining Death Eaters, and the converts, pitted him against some dangerously talented witches and wizards. No one wanted to admit that Harry shouldn't have been out with the Auror squads, but who could tell The Man Who Won to stay out of it?

The first time he had been disarmed while wielding the Elder Wand had sent a spike of panic through his entire being. Harry and the wizard stared in shock when the wand refused to work. Well, the fact that the wizard had cut off most of Harry's right arm in the process was where most of the shock on Harry's part came from. The wand had vanished from the other wizard and appeared in Harry's left hand.

Unfortunately, regrowing limbs wasn't something that the magical world could do just yet. Bones could be replaced, but the complex network of nerves, muscle, and skin was too complicated. Instead, Harry paid one of the few remaining Dwarven Smiths to create him a new arm. He would have gone to the goblins, but they were still

unhappy with him. Technically, he was on the same level as any other wizard after paying the fines, but Harry suddenly found that everything from them had tripled in cost and had gained as many fees as they could tack on.

Most of the Dwarves had entered the Stone Slumber and wouldn't be awake for another fifty years or so. Fortunately, there were still a few skilled Smiths around. They had made the bones from a special Mithril Alloy. He would have been left with a metal skeletal limb if not for a ritual that allowed people to replace parts of their bodies with those from magical creatures. It was originally created by a war-wizard to enhance soldiers. Only witches, wizards, and squibs could survive the process. A donation from Slytherin's Basilisk gave Harry an arm of iridescent black scales that functioned just as well as his original arm. The fact that it was highly spell resistant was a nice benefit too. Years of having Phoenix Tears and Basilisk Venom flowing through his body made the process even easier.

A simple glamour made it look like a normal arm, but he still switched to long sleeved shirts and took to wearing gloves after that. Hermione had gathered all of their friends to convince him to take a break from actively hunting Death Eaters to get some real training. It was hard to argue while his new arm was still tingling. The Dwarf had called it the Attunement Process. During the stretch of downtime, Harry worked on getting comfortable casting with his left hand until the new arm settled. It also gave him time to look at the world outside of hunting Death Eaters.

Magical Britain was barely limping along. Half-blood and first-generation witches and wizards had fled during Voldemort's rise. They were slow to return. Most had no plans to come back at all. Those that remained discovered that they still faced the same prejudices and obstacles. Magical Britain was going to vanish in the next fifty years if things didn't change.

It lit a fire in his soul. The Death Eater situation needed to be handled now. There were bigger issues to face. Once he was

attuned to his new arm Harry trained with Aurors, Hit Wizards, and duelists from around the world.

Harry was a force of nature by the time he returned to the hunt. He studied the Black Family Tome and Potter Family Tome when he wasn't training or in the field. There were spells, rituals, and tactics that were created for the sole use of the respective family. He found a half-formed ritual in one of those study sessions that caught his attention.

Time Travel.

The ritual looked sound. It was abandoned when the creator discovered the amount of power it would need, as well as the fact that it would send them back physically. They wouldn't take over their younger body and it was a one-way trip. He had taken the ritual to Hermione, who then brought in Professor Vector, who then reached out to another professor, and so on until they had gathered a team of experts including a couple of Unspeakables. The group was magically bound to secrecy, sworn directly to the Potter Family Magic. None but those Harry, or the future Head of the Potter Family, would even know of the ritual. Everyone else would forget it once they left the workshop.

After years and years, the ritual was finally ready. It was a one-way trip into the past. The goal was set the summer before his Fourth year. Voldemort wouldn't have a functional body yet, his followers were focused on their own goals, he knew the location of all the horcruxes, and the Ministry was primed for someone to take over.

Hermione had been the one to convince him about the Ministry. Since the end of the war, she had been working on getting the Magical Government in order. It dug its heels in and fought everything including the tiniest change. Laws were still in favor of Purebloods. The half-blood and first-generation population of witches and wizards faced harsher punishments, stricter laws, lower wages, and were treated only slightly better than magical creatures. It was a miracle that there hadn't been more Dark Lords. Things

would have ended much worse if Voldemort had taken a slightly different approach. The only way to fix the Ministry was to start over. Harry was the best option with his knowledge of the future and magical prowess.

He would need to be careful, there would be two Harry Potter's once he arrived. With any luck, he would only need to be at Hogwarts long enough to get the diadem. He didn't plan on interacting with his younger self or Dumbledore any more than was absolutely necessary. Harry had gone from idolizing the wizard, to hating him for all the manipulation the old goat had done in his life and had finally settled on irritation. He would definitely take the option to smack the man if it became available but did not plan on going out of his way to fight the old wizard.

"Are you ready?" Hermione asked.

Harry smiled at his friend and nodded.

He stood out surrounded by Unspeakables and other serious looking magical folk as he was the only one naked. They were playing it safe as they didn't want any other material to complicate matters. One of the Unspeakables had mentioned they might need to remove his arm just in case. It would have carried a lot more weight if that specific wizard hadn't tried to get Harry to remove the arm all the time. The Unspeakable desperately wanted to study it. Thankfully, the arm had fully integrated to his body, and his magic, so it wouldn't cause any issues. If anything, the Mithril Alloy made Harry's magic flow easier than before.

Harry scanned the ritual circle. The Cloak, Wand, and Stone were placed at specific locations in the array. The Hallows were the perfect artifacts to power the ritual. He wasn't sure if the trio were actually created by Death. What he did know was that each artifact was beyond powerful and grew stronger when used simultaneously. The Elder Wand packed a punch on its own, but it also seemed to syphon a small amount of magic with each spell that was used and added it to the ever-growing reservoir. The Resurrection Stone could

summon and speak to the dead. When used with the Cloak, the stone would temporarily turn him incorporeal. If just the Elder Wand was used, then it could banish, bind, or create all sorts of undead. A combination of the Cloak and Wand made any spells invisible, unstoppable, and completely untraceable. Using the three of them to power the ritual was their best shot at getting it to work.

The Chamber of Secrets had been the perfect location. Hogwarts was built on the nexus of Ley Lines which not only gave an extra boost of power but helped stabilize things as well. The Chamber was detached just enough from the castle to avoid mingling with the vast multitude of enchantments within. That was also one of the reasons that people could apparate to and from the Chamber without tripping the wards. Thankfully, it could only be done once a person had been there, otherwise Voldemort would have had an unobstructed path into the school. Voldie would have had to take each of his minions there at least once and he wasn't the type to share.

Hermione came to a stop beside him. Her arrival pulled him out of his thoughts.

"You'll take care of them?" Harry motioned to the relics carefully arranged around the ritual circle.

"Yes." Hermione nodded. "I'm going to toss them in the veil once the ritual is over."

"Thank you." Harry pulled her into a hug.

For once, it was Hermione who broke away first.

"I love you, Harry." Hermione said. "I always have, and I always will, but I do not need your other wand rubbing against my leg."

"You love me?" Harry teased.

"Like the annoying little brother, I never wanted." Hermione teased right back.

She shifted to the side and gave him a proper hug.

"Be careful." Hermione whispered.

"I'm always careful." Harry chuckled.

Hermione tapped the thin scar where his skin transitioned into scales.

"Perfect example." Harry nodded. "Imagine how bad it would have been if I hadn't been careful?"

"Get your naked bum in the circle." Hermione rolled her eyes. "I'll miss you."

"I'll keep an eye on little Hermy, Harry, and Ronnie-kins." Harry gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Their future will be better than ours."

"I know." Hermione didn't fall for the bait. "You made sure to say goodbye to everyone?"

Harry nodded. Neither wanted to acknowledge the fact that by going back, he was erasing the future. In truth, it was only Harry who knew about the project outside of the workshop and ritual space. Everyone else forgot what they were working on once they left. They knew that they were working on something, but it was hidden behind a magical vow so they couldn't discuss it with anyone.

Hermione watched as her best friend carefully navigated the various runes carved into the floor as he made his way to the center. She took in his naked form in a clinical manner. Hermione could admit that at one point she had a crush on Harry. Somewhere along the way the love she felt for him shifted away from romantic. Still, she could objectively say that Harry had grown into a handsome man. She tried not to linger on the various scars on his body or replacement arm. The iconic lightning bolt on his forehead was a hair-thin line these days. She had to purposely look for it to see it anymore. Instead, she watched him gracefully approach the center of the circle.

She looked down to the three relics arranged around the circle. A sigh escaped her lips as she slipped her hands into her pockets. The plan was to take them to the veil once Harry was gone. They didn't

know what issues it would cause if they were destroyed before then. Something crinkled in her pocket.

Hermione pulled out a pink Post-It note. A complex equation she didn't recognize was scribbled on it. She studied it for a moment. Realization rapidly turned to dread as her eyes ran over the numbers. It was part of the last bit of Arithmancy for the ritual. More importantly, it didn't match the final draft. The memory jumped to the front of her mind. She had ran the numbers once more, wrote it on the note to correct it, and then went to lunch. The memory charm had muddled things just enough for her to forget about it.

After years of working on the Arithmancy when they had finally got it down to the final cluster and she had forgotten to carry the one. She locked eyes with Harry. The last thing he saw was the unrestrained panic in her eyes.

~§~

Everything froze. Slowly, his vision began to tear. The room around him shifted, cracked, and shattered. He stood in a vast expanse of darkness. For an unfathomable amount of time, he simply existed in this void.

One moment he was in endless darkness, the next he stood in a comfortable sitting room. Two chairs were arranged to face one another with a small table in the space between them. A figure was already seated in the one that faced him.

The person was a woman that looked to be in her mid-forties. With a witch, that could mean anywhere from fifty years old to ninety. She looked familiar in a way like he had seen her around many times throughout the day but had never spoke. An accidental shared look in the lobby or a silent ride on an elevator. He wouldn't have given it a second thought on a normal day. This was anything but a normal day.

"Join me." The woman motioned to the empty chair.

Harry did as she asked. The rustle of fabric on leather alerted him that he was dressed. A quick examination revealed he wore a simple two-piece suit.

"I'm sure both of us are more comfortable this way." The woman stated.

"I know you, don't I?" Harry studied her face.

"You could say that." The woman gave him a gentle smile. "We have encountered each other quite a few times through the years."

She stopped speaking and let the silence stretch.

"Death." Harry stated.

She inclined her head.

"The ritual didn't work." Harry sighed.

"I didn't say that." Death replied. "You returned to me what I had once lost. This was the perfect time to finally sit down and chat."

"So, the ritual worked?" Harry asked.

"I didn't say that." Death flashed a sly grin.

Harry sighed. He rubbed a hand over his face.

"Does this have to do with the Master of Death thing?" He asked.

"Master of Death. Please." Death rolled her eyes. "You are marked by death, claimed by it the moment you united the Hallows. Did you find it odd that you survived so much that should have killed dozens of wizards?"

"I didn't unite the Hallows until my last year at Hogwarts." Harry cocked his head to the side. "How would that protect me?"

"You are the Master of the Hallows." Death explained. "Now and forever. Death stands outside of time, as do my gifts."

Harry tried to let that information sink in.

"What does that mean? The Master of the Hallows?" Harry asked after a moment.

"As it sounds." Death crossed her legs and settled back into the chair. "They will only work to their full potential in your hands. The wand will never hurt you; the ring will not tempt you, and the cloak will not blind you."

"I don't supposed I could take them with me." Harry said.

Death smiled at him.

"That would be too easy." Harry sighed.

Her smile grew.

"What now?" Harry asked.

"Now." Death motioned for him to stand.

He did.

"You carry on until we meet again." Death stated.

The walls and floor disappeared leaving only the two seats and the table. Harry now stood in empty space.

"One gift before you go." Death faded away as she spoke.

A ring appeared on the middle finger of his left hand. He recognized a Lordship Ring when he saw one. This one did not have the Potter or Black family crest. Instead, it displayed the crest for the Peverell House, the Hallows Crest.

Harry shifted his attention from the Lordship ring back to Death. She wasn't there. He once more stood in darkness.

~§~

Freezing wind buffeted his flesh seemingly coming from every angle at the same time. His previous experience with time travel via the Time Turner hadn't been as intense as this. Granted, he was going a lot farther than a couple of hours. There wasn't a return trip either.

Everything he had left was gone. The death, destruction, and deteriorating magical world as well as the laughter, love, and lives.

Harry knew that this plan was selfish. It wasn't beyond him that he had placed himself in the role of hero once more. His 'saving people' thing was in full force every step of the way. Not that anyone had ever tried to take the role in his place. Someone had to do something to save everyone. His resolve was bolstered every time he looked in George's haunted eyes, held Teddy, or walked down the half-empty streets of Diagon Alley.

He closed his eyes and focused on his plans while the fabric of reality morphed around him. The summer before Fourth Year. The World Cup. The Tournament. The Return of Voldemort. His knowledge of the future would quickly become useless once he started making changes. He needed to stay out of sight until he could make a big move.

The freezing sensation eased, then finally stopped. Harry found himself standing in the Chamber of Secrets alone. The place looked like it hadn't been touched in years. He glanced to the place where the basilisk corpse had laid only to find it missing. It should still be there. The body had been perfectly preserved due to the magic in the Chamber and the nature of the creature.

Something had gone wrong. He was still alive, which meant it had worked on some level. Harry turned his attention to his body. All the parts were there but he wasn't the same. His arm was still attached and hadn't mystically been replaced with the original hardware. He pressed his hands together then slowly pulled them apart, transfiguring the dust in the air around him into a mirror. The face that stared back at him was his. Only it was younger. He had been a few years short of fifty when they had finalized the ritual. Such complicated magic should never be rushed. Now, he looked like he couldn't have been much older than twenty. Twenty-five at the most. Thankfully, his scar still wasn't as blatant as it had been in his youth. The thin strip of lighter skin could easily be written off as a trick of the light.

He needed to figure out what had gone wrong. The missing basilisk corpse meant that he had arrived before his second year. Harry wasn't going to let a few years change his goals. First, he needed some clothes. Second, he needed to figure out what year it was. Third, he needed to adjust his plan accordingly.

Harry strolled over to the closed tunnel hidden inside the statue of a giant head. He had returned to the Chamber a few times after the War. Once to explore, another to grab enough material to replace his arm, and countless times during the ritual preparation. They had found a living chamber off the main tunnel. Unfortunately, the multiple bookshelves had been plundered sometime before they had arrived. The rooms were under the same strong stasis magic as the rest of the Chamber. It looked like someone had stepped out for lunch and would be back soon rather than gone for hundreds of years. Harry was heading there because there was a wardrobe in the bedroom. Any antiques or artifacts it once held were lost to time. Harry wondered if that was how Riddle afforded being able to travel around after Hogwarts, selling artifacts. Borgin and Burkes was the perfect place to sell, and Riddle had worked there.

§Open§ He hissed.

Stone ground against stone as the mouth opened. He waited until it was completed before he stepped inside. The basilisk hadn't made a sound yet.

§Master?§ A voice called out.

He had to jinx it.

§Not master.§ The voice whispered. ***§Clutch-mate?§***

Harry looked at his right arm. It must have recognized the scent. The sound of something large slithering toward him brought him back to the moment at hand. He looked up to come face to face with a basilisk. Its eyes were wide open, the beautiful swirl of gold stared back at him. The only thing that felt different was a little tingle along

his spine. Using the basilisk to replace his missing arm must have made him immune to its gaze. That was a nice surprise.

§You are not master.§ The Basilisk flicked its tongue out again.
§You are not clutch-mate.§

§No.§ Harry replied. ***§My name is Harry. Do you have a name? §***

§First master named me Euryale.§ The basilisk replied. ***§New master called me snake. New master hasn't come back.§***

Euryale. Harry gave an appreciative nod. Salazar must have been a fan of mythology.

§Are you going to attack me?§ Harry asked.

§No.§ Euryale sighed.

Over the years he had discovered that most snakes were much more expressive than people thought. They were basically cats in noodle form. Logically, he knew that she should probably kill the creature. Things were going to get bad once Riddle got control of the basilisk again.

§Are you hungry?§ Harry asked.

§Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.§ Euryale rushed forward.

She was too big to wrap around him in the tunnel. Instead, she knocked him back against the wall. She wasn't as large as when he had faced her the first time, but she still had no problem moving him. He wasn't sure if the difference in size was due to him being a full-grown adult or she grew rapidly once she was woken again. Not to say she was small by any means. She was still as thick as he was tall. The impact had also reminded him that he was nude.

§There might be some acromantula in the forest.§ He muttered.

§What are those?§ Euryale asked.

§Giant spiders.§ He explained.

§That sounds tasty.§ Her tongue flicked out a few times.

§I'll open a passage to the outside.§ Harry slid along to get free. ***§I just need to get some clothes.§***

Euryale followed behind as he made his way toward the living quarters. The door opened smoothly. He had taken a couple of steps into the room before he came to a halt. The bookshelves he had expected to be empty were not. An ornate desk rested in the center of the entry room. It had meticulously stripped the first time he had seen it. Just like the shelves, it wasn't empty.

§Euryale.§ Harry looked over his shoulder at the basilisk. ***§When was the last time you had a visitor?§***

§The master who called me Snake was here some time ago.§ Euryale replied. ***§He was young when he first found his way here. The last time he came he had aged. He smelled of corruption and rage.§***

Measuring time when dealing with Magical Creatures was always a challenge. They could keep track via the moon, but Euryale didn't have that option. At some point, most likely the same time he had stashed the Diadem, he had visited the Chamber. Yet he hadn't taken anything. Harry and Hermione had thought that Riddle had stripped the place. Either he had yet to do so, or it hadn't been him who took everything. Hoarding knowledge sounded like Dumbledore would do. He had lost a lot of the animosity, as well as reverence, he had for the old wizard. With age and distance, he could see some of the logic behind the choices, but there were still so many pitfalls to the plans.

It was similar to his acceptance of Ron's actions through their life. The jealousy and strife that popped up were due to them being young. In the middle of it, Ron leaving during the Horcrux hunt had forever altered their friendship. Now, he could see that they were all just scared kids. Ron even more so. Ginny was at Hogwarts, they had no idea if his family was safe, and they were on a fool's errand.

Hermione had sent her parents to Australia and Harry didn't have anyone to lose.

Either way, it was a boon for him.

Harry grabbed some functional robes from the living quarters. They were of amazing quality but a few hundred years out of date. Salazar liked black, which was expected. However, the high collar and prominent shoulder-pads were a surprise. They would work well enough for now.

Euryale led him to the passage that led outside. He opened it.

§Try to stick to the giant spiders.§ Harry stroked her snout.

§There are other creatures out there. Be careful.§

§Thank you, Harry.§ She slithered forward but stopped before she got all the way out. ***§Are you going to visit?§***

§I'm going to be very busy for the next couple of years.§

Harry explained. ***§But I will try to visit.§***

Euryale accepted the answer and slid out into the night. He watched her disappear into the Forbidden Forest. It was night, at least he knew that now. Hopefully he could move through the castle without being discovered. He missed his cloak and the Marauders Map already.

2.

For quite a while, *Tempus* was the most commonly used spell to tell the time. While it appeared simple it was a rather complex piece of magic. The spell tapped into the consciousness of the user to determine how time was measured. Following that logic, the group of researchers came up with a way to expand the function. Two problems were that Harry did not want to use magic until he was outside of Hogwarts to avoid detection and that he wasn't sure how it would work with time travel. He could not chance leaving behind a magical signature. The safest way to find out the date would be to get a newspaper.

He could use the spell once he was in Hogsmeade. His first stop was the Room of Requirement. There should be a few wands for him to choose from. It was likely that there would be some clothes and gold as well. He wasn't one to care all that much about fashion but walking around dressed like some MMO character drew too much attention.

Harry made his way out of the secret passage from the Chamber of Secrets to forest. It was either that or climb up a slime covered tunnel. With his luck there would be some poor first year when he finally made it. A humanoid figure covered in slime emerging from a tunnel in the middle of a bathroom would traumatize anyone regardless of age.

In the future, a thorough exploration of the Chamber uncovered a couple of access points. The bathroom was the easiest to access. Then there was the one in the forest. The third, and final, option was in the main courtyard under the Slytherin crest. There was some complicated concealment runic array hidden among preservation enchantments. It looks like it was part of the school coat of arms from the outside. The Unspeakables were giddy little kids when they got a look at runic array.

Harry stepped out of the tunnel and took a deep breath. It was big enough for a thousand-year-old basilisk, so it was fine for him. The

tunnel was still inside the wards so he had to wait a little longer until he could use magic. He may have been being overly cautious, but he didn't want to slip up.

He stole a quick look at the sky. The sun was setting but he could see flickering lights in the windows. Either they didn't bother to save candles, or school was in session. He rolled his shoulders as he started to make his way to the castle. A lone figure on the grounds didn't raise enough suspicion as it should. If it did, then Quirrell would have been discovered in a couple weeks of his first year.

Harry slipped through a side-door. He had memorized the secret passages from the first floor up to the Room of Requirement. This part of the plan was one that they could actually practice. Filch stuck to the third and fourth floors due to the access to broom closets for students. House Elves were amazing at many things, but they hated having to break the trust of their charges. The paintings worked better at surveillance though they had their own loyalties to consider.

The passages were dustier than he had expected. If it was Juniors first or second year, then Fred and George should have used a few of them. Moving through false paintings, hidden doors, and summoned staircases brought him to the seventh floor in a meandering path that was much faster than a direct route.

He paced along the passage three times to summon the room. The door opened onto a chaotic pile of junk.

"May I have a row of available wands and clothes in my size, please?" Harry asked the room. "Also, any expanded bags or trunks."

Two tables filled with items slid into place before him. Harry moved to the selection of wands first. There were a few broken ones which he set aside. It was a shame to see such works of art discarded like this. Once that was complete he ran his hand over the ones that were in good shape. He found a couple that tingled that he would save for disposable options. None of them were a perfect fit, thankfully, there were a couple of shops in Nocturn Alley that could

keep quiet. He hadn't used the phoenix feather wand in years and wasn't sure it would still work for him. Plus, it wasn't like he could steal it from Junior without raising unnecessary suspicion.

With that done, he moved to the clothing. He let out a relieved breath. There were quite a lot of options. Muggle clothing outnumbered robes, which made sense. Witches and wizards had the option to claim missing items over the breaks. As much as he wanted to stick to Muggle clothes, it would attract too much attention in magical areas. He grabbed an every-day robe along with a selection of Muggle clothing to wear underneath.

Only one trunk appeared, and it was rather distressed had appeared. There were a couple of satchels that were in better condition. He searched all of them, just in case. The trunk was filled with half-finished homework and old copies of class books. None of them were first editions worth keeping and the only notes in the margin were doodles. There were a couple of sickles and a handful of knuts worth grabbing. He moved to searching through the bags which only brought out more of the same. The names weren't ones he recognized either. Once his search was completed he came away with one galleon, nine sickles, and five knuts. It was better than nothing.

"Could you bring me the diadem, please?" Harry asked.

Nothing changed.

"Can you open a path to it?" Harry asked again.

The lost things in the room shifted into a single path. He recognized the taint of magic before he laid eyes on the diadem. Harry stalked over to the horcrux. He plucked the diadem from its perch with his basilisk-skin hand. The sickening energy rolled off of the artifact and tried to latch onto him.

"Pathetic." Harry snorted.

They had discovered that while he did have a remnant of basilisk venom in his blood. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to destroy a

horcrux though it was enough to kill a normal person.

"*Avada Kedavra*." Harry hit the diadem without hesitation.

The Room was one of the few places on Hogwarts that he could use magic without worry. He chuckled as he realized that he didn't have to wait any longer.

"*Mensis Dies Sidus Tempus*." He rotated his wrist clockwise as he spoke.

1980 April 6th

Harry glared at the numbers floating in the air before him. Well, he was right about being before his second year. Unfortunately, his math was a bit off. Instead of a few months before his fourth year, he was a few months before his own birth. The Room supplied a chair for him to use.

"Thank you." Harry muttered.

He ran a hand over his face. Voldemort was still alive and whole, for the most part. His parents were still alive. He didn't know how facing Voldemort before turning into a wraith would differ from his previous experience. Not only that, but the Death Eaters were also out in force. Having them all focused on the same goal was something he hadn't planned for. He took a long moment of thought. The ability to save his parents had never crossed his mind. There were too many variables that he didn't know.

"Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." Harry leaned back in the chair. "I don't suppose you have an opinion on this?"

A drinks cart appeared in front of him. He recognized a few half-empty bottles of Fire Whiskey, quite a few Butter Beers, and some Muggle alcohol.

"Funny." Harry chuckled.

First things first, he needed to get out of Hogwarts.

"Could I have an exit, please?" Harry asked. "I would appreciate it if you could make it somewhere that no one will see."

The drinks cart vanished. A door appeared on the opposite side as the room from the entry.

"Thank you." Harry crossed the room. He paused at the door. "I let Euryale out into the forest. Could you keep an eye on her, please?"

~§~

Harry stepped through the door and found himself on the first floor in front of Gregory the Smarmy. He walked over to the statue. Thankfully, the Room hadn't put him out in front of the Whomping Willow. Hogwarts had a sense of humor. How else did they explain the moving staircases and false steps? He was pretty sure that Hogwarts was sentient on some level. It would take years of study that he didn't have at the moment.

The passage took him to the outskirts of Hogsmeade, beyond the Hogwarts Wards, and somewhere he could freely use magic again. Aurors would have already been at the gates if they had detected the Killing Curse being cast. If nothing else some of the staff would have investigated. All Unforgiveables set off an alarm in the Auror office. Though, considering the date, they might not have had the extra man-power to track down each time.

He strolled down the walkway on the main road into Hogsmeade. There were still some people around, which he took as a good sign. The threat of Voldemort had practically shut down Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade when he had reappeared. He didn't know if it ever got to that point during the first war. That was a stretch of time no one wanted to talk about.

Harry felt his blood run cold when he caught someone familiar among the small crowd of shoppers. A much younger, and healthier, looking Peter Pettigrew stood at the window of a small bookstore. His lips worked as he read the titles of the display.

"*Confundo*." Harry whispered.

Peter's eyes lost focus as the spell struck true. Harry rushed to close the gap between them.

"You said the Shrieking Shack is this way?" Harry took Peter's elbow and started to lead him away.

"Oh? Yes, yes. Right through here." Peter replied with a slight slur to his words.

They were off the main street and heading down the empty stretch leading to the shack when Peter truly regained his thoughts. The shorter wizard scanned the area. Finally, he turned his attention to the wizard beside him. He was a few inches taller than him with a lithe build and wild black hair. Peter would have mistaken him for his friend James if it wasn't for the lack of glasses and the color of his eyes.

"Who are you?" Peter's voice rose as he realized they were alone.

"We serve the same Master." Harry dropped his voice to a harsh whisper.

Peter blanched at the answer.

"You told him there was a passage from the shack to Hogwarts." Harry growled as he pulled Peter along.

"Right." Peter whimpered. "Right. It's inside."

Peter led him to a boarded-up window along the side of the house. He tapped one of the nails a few times. The board smoothly swung open to allow them inside. Peter stepped aside for him to go first.

"Nice try." Harry stared at him flatly. "You go first."

Peter glanced at the already drawn wand. His own was still in the holster on his wrist. Briefly, he considered drawing it, but didn't follow through. It was possible that he had told the Dark Lord about the secret tunnel. This meeting could have been why he was in Hogsmeade today. His thoughts got kind of fuzzy when he tried to think too much about it.

With a shrug, he led the intense wizard inside. Peter had to push aside some broken furniture to get into the sitting room. The entry closed in a silent motion once they both were inside. He turned around just in time to see a wand pointed directly at his face. His body tensed, desperate to do something.

"*Confundo*." Harry spoke before Peter could move. "I'm a Death Eater. You can trust me."

Peter nodded. The tension in his body eased.

"Have you told the Dark Lord where the Potters are hiding?" Harry asked.

"What?" Peter scrunched his brow in confusion. "Why would the Potters be in hiding?"

"The prophecy." Harry prompted. "You're their secret keeper. You told him yourself."

"What prophecy? Why would I be their secret keeper? Everyone knows they would pick that blood-traitor Black." Peter practically spit out the last word.

"*Legilimens*." Harry locked eyes with Pettigrew.

Harry was not gentle when he tore through the mental defenses Peter had in place. He focused on recent history with an interest on Voldemort and Snape. Any time he approached a memory dealing with the Dark Lord it lost all detail and faded away. Thankfully, Snape wasn't under such protection. Memories of the greasy bastard coming and going along the edges of muddled moments. There wasn't anything about a Prophecy. A rush of jealous rage flared when the thoughts were directed to Lily and James Potter. He hated James for a thousand things through the years they had spent together. Lily he hated for being muggle-born along with the association with the other Marauders.

Peter dropped to the floor as the spell ended. He whimpered and clutched his head as Harry looked down on him in disgust.

"*Stupefy*." Harry snapped.

Peter thumped on the floor. Harry stared down at the sad excuse of a person. There had been no coercion or pressure for Pettigrew to join the Death Eaters. He saw himself as a victim, that every downfall of his own could be blamed on muggles and those who supported them. Barely a handful of honeyed words was all it took for Pettigrew to kneel to Voldemort.

Harry ripped the sleeve of the unconscious wizard's robes to expose the Dark Mark. It looked like he was going to be changing history a lot more than he had planned.

"*Sectumsempra*." Harry whipped the wand across Pettigrew's throat.

An invisible blade decapitated Pettigrew. Harry levitated the head to rest staring directly at the Dark Mark to make sure it was obvious. Harry vanished any sign of his involvement. Then, he blasted a hole in the side of the shack and walked away. He wasn't sure how fast the Aurors would arrive, or if they even would, so he kept on the side of caution. His next few minutes were filled with the wonderful sensation of Multiple Apparition. For a brief moment he was in Surrey, the Forest of Dean, the alley behind the dress shop Aunt Petunia liked, and finally the Apparition Point for the Three Broomsticks.

A younger, and incredibly sexy, Madam Rosmerta waved at him from behind the bar. He flashed her a smile as he walked closer to her. It was a slow stretch after dinner but before closing there were only a few other patrons.

"You're a handsome devil. What's your name?" Madam Rosmerta purred.

"Harry." He took a seat as he spoke.

"Just Harry?" She asked.

"That's me." He flashed her a roguish grin.

"You aren't the first handsome stranger to try and charm me."
Rosmerta laughed.

"I won't be the last." Harry chuckled. "Do you have a room open for the night?"

"That I do." Rosmerta nodded. "Nightcap or something to eat first?"

"I'm on a budget." Harry shook his head. "Just got back in the country and my pockets are light."

"A traveler?" Rosmerta looked him over once more. "Why did you come back now?"

"Didn't have a choice." Harry sighed.

Rosmerta placed a warm mug of butter beer in front of him alongside a key.

"A welcome home, gift." Rosmerta winked at him. "Room three is open. Top of the stairs, second door on the right. Check out is at noon."

"Thank you." Harry put the money on the counter and took the drink.

"Hey, big spender." Rosmerta caught him by the sleeve before he could step away.

He looked back over at her. Hopefully, he had enough to cover the room.

"You forgot your change." She tapped the bar where a few sickles waited for him.

"It's not much, but it's your tip." Harry winked at her in hopes of covering his mistake.

The teasing smile she shot him was enough to let him know she bought it.

~§~

Harry moved on automatic as he took a shower and got ready for bed. Traveling through time took a lot more energy than he had expected. The plan had collapsed the moment he had arrived. All the preparations were for an entirely different time period. The Death Eaters weren't scattered and focused on selfish goals. Voldemort had a functioning body and hadn't spent years as a specter. His parents were still alive, and the prophecy hadn't been made yet.

The plan had basically been to wipe the board of the players and set himself as king. If his parents were already fighting against a rising tyrant, what would stop them from resisting him as well. There was still chaos to use, he just didn't know enough. From what he could gather, the first war wasn't much different than the second. The people looked to Dumbledore for guidance, but the old wizard had never been a warrior. Both times the Ministry hadn't inspired any sort of confidence. Voldemort and his minions got way too far. They had infiltrated the Ministry with enough power to prevent all but the most irredeemable. If he stopped the prophecy from happening, or at least it from reaching Voldemort, then he could save his parents. He couldn't let them die again. It should also save Alice and Frank Longbottom as well. They were only tortured after Voldemort had vanished.

He would have to alter his approach once he gathered more information. At least Rosmerta made sure the rooms were comfortable.

3.

Auror James Potter stared down at the corpse on the floor. More specifically, his gaze was on the tattoo on the left arm. One of his best friends, Peter Pettigrew, was a marked Death Eater. There were quite a few that served You-Know-Who that had not earned the mark. It took foul deeds to get one. Wormtail had the Dark Mark.

James and Lily had Peter over for dinner earlier this week. The sick bastard hadn't shown any signs that something was wrong. How long had he had the mark? It couldn't be added after death. The Unspeakables had studied it enough to know that it had to be taken when alive. Something in the process required active surrender to the magic.

How was he going to tell Lily? How was he going to tell Moony and Padfoot? A stone settled in his stomach. They were losing this war, everyone knew it, and suspicions were starting to rise. Someone among their number had to be working for the other side. As much as James hated to admit it, he had suspected Moony. You-Know-Who was promising a better place in society for all sorts of dark creatures such as werewolves, giants, and vampires.

"Alright there, Potter?" Auror Amelia Bones called from the other side of the corpse.

When they had heard the call for an explosion in Hogsmeade neither thought it would be the Shrieking Shack. It hadn't been in use since Moony had graduated. Seeing the hole blown in the wall had been a shock since they had been magically reinforced to contain a werewolf. It would take a bunch of power to break through. Seeing Peter dead had been a shock, it had only got worse when they saw the Dark Mark.

"Pettigrew was one of your crew back in school, right?" Amelia asked.

James nodded.

"And one of Dumbledore's secret soldiers." Amelia stated.

James nodded again. The Order of the Phoenix was not much of a secret among the Aurors. Dumbledore, or one of the others, had probably approached at some point.

"Any idea he was a Death Eater?" Amelia's voice was stone.

"I would have killed him myself if I knew." James snapped to look at her.

Amelia let out a single, dry laugh. She crouched down by the body and cast some diagnostic spells. It glowed red to reveal it was a dark curse. Dark was a word thrown around a lot that most people used incorrectly. For a spell, charm, or enchantment to be dark, it needed to be fueled with the sole intent to harm or kill. An overpowered stunner cast with killing intent technically was a dark, but as a stunner it would hit harder, not suddenly cause a person to explode.

"I don't recognize the spell that killed him." Amelia muttered. "Signs of multiple Confundus. Not sure if he was aware when he died."

"I hope he was." James growled as he headed across the room to the secret passage.

"What are you doing?" Amelia asked.

"There's a passage into Hogwarts over here." James answered. "I want to make sure it's secure."

"There is an unprotected passage into Hogwarts?" Amelia yelled.

"How else do you think we smuggled in butterbeer and fire whiskey?" James gave her a sad smile.

"We're in the middle of a war, Potter!" Amelia stomped over to him.

"How many are there? We need to seal them now."

"Agreed." James opened the secret door.

He hopped down into the passage and collapsed it in the distance. With that done he took a step back and collapsed it again. He climbed out of the tunnel then transfigured a few slats of wood to cover the entry before closing the trap door.

"I'll send a message to Dumbledore for Sirius and me to close the other passages." James said.

"The spell is dark. No idea where it came from. " Amelia turned her attention back to the body. "We'll bag the body and have the experts look over it. Maybe they can figure it out."

James transfigured some of the rubble into a tarp to cover the body. It tightened to collect both pieces into a bundle. Amelia raised the body into the air before she stepped outside.

"Are you going to fix the hole?" Amelia asked.

"No." James turned back to the shack.

He unleashed a strong blasting curse at the ceiling. It collapsed into a heap of rubble.

"That was dramatic." Amelia rolled her eyes.

James didn't reply. His specialty wasn't spell identification, but he did have a knack for tracking. It probably had something to do with being an animagus. Regardless, he was good at identifying Port Keys and Apparation residue. James slowly swept his wand around the area. A small spiral tunnel sparked into view. He took a step closer to the spot. There was a trick to reading them. It curved up into the sky, which meant it was the first of a string. A single Apparation appeared as a straight line.

"String Apparation." James stated. "Whoever did this knew how to hide their tracks."

They popped away without another word. It was time for James to bring the option of the Fidelius Charm up to Lily again. James would suggest Moony for the Keeper. Lily hadn't stopped trusting Remus. He couldn't imagine what could have happened if they had gone with his idea and chosen Pettigrew.

~§~

Harry jolted upright at the sound of an alarm. He scanned the room, desperate to find the source. Blocky, red numbers pulsed and grew

larger each passing moment.

06:03 AM

"*Finite*." Harry growled.

The alarm stopped the moment the numbers disappeared. He hadn't thought to check if the wand had a preset spell. No wonder it was in the magical equivalent of the lost and found. Someone had decided they had enough of it. It took a lot of willpower not to chuck the piece of wood across the room. The only thing stopping him was that he didn't have the money to replace it yet.

He was awake now. Nothing like panic and anger to get the day started. Hopefully Madam Rosmerta served breakfast early.

A metallic 'clink' caught his attention as he shifted the wand to his other hand. He opened his fingers to see the ring that Death had given him. The sigil for the Hallows was clearly displayed, yet no one had commented on it. At this point in time, people would most likely associate it with the last Dark Lord, yet no one had so much as glanced at it. He knew from experience that a Lordship ring could be hidden at will, but he hadn't given it any thought until just now.

Harry concentrated on the ring to make it invisible. A trio of visions flashed before his eyes. The first was of Dumbledore in his office, the outline of the Elder Wand shone brightly from inside the sleeve of his robes. The second was of a shimmering, folded cloak that he recognized immediately. His view shifted to show it was currently in an enchanted chest. Finally, the ring. He knew the Gaunt shack the moment he saw it.

The visions faded once he stopped concentrating. Harry glanced at the ring. It showed him the location of the Hallows, but he wasn't sure what else it could do. He closed his eyes and concentrated on summoning the Resurrection Stone. The vision of the Gaunt shack appeared once more, then the view shifted to a broader scene. He could make out the nearby town. After another moment it zoomed out even more to the point it looked like he was viewing a globe.

Buildings, roads, and the landscape were present but lacked detail. However, there were two bright points of light. A line began to form from one to the other. It didn't take much thought to figure out that it was a map to the location of the stone. The same process took place when he focused on the cloak and the wand.

He took another shower and used a couple of spells to clean his clothes. It was amazing the things that popped into his mind when under running water.

Harry didn't think he could claim the Peverell lordship. He wasn't sure when the last person with a valid claim died and would prefer to avoid any issues. That left him with a few options to gather funds. He couldn't walk around in the same borrowed clothes and a mismatched wand. Plus, he'd need somewhere to sleep.

He gathered everything that he could recall about this era. Voldemort had set a Taboo on his name, which was why people stopped saying his name. He could use that to summon Death Eaters. That could work in the short-term, but it would be easy to simply send more people. While he was curious how many Death Eaters he could take before he got overpowered, he wasn't going to waste everything for that.

It also wouldn't help his financial situation at all. He doubted the well-off Purebloods carried around loads of gold. Moleskin pouches weren't a new invention by any means. Hunting down bounties would bring too much attention. From what he could see his options for income came down to getting a job or stealing it. There were artifacts that he could recover and sell, but they would only complicate matters even more.

One of the many treaties with the Goblins meant they were the sole banking option in the magical world. Unofficially, Purebloods and the rich families had their own system. They weren't a bank, closer to loan sharks and money lenders, which meant that a lot of them had their own stash of gold. There were certain things he had always wanted to do but never had the chance to do due to time or

circumstance. Robbing Malfoy Manor was one of those. The family had lost a considerable chunk of their riches by the time he had the chance. He hadn't been able to take advantage of it, but Draco had taken him on a thorough tour of the grounds. Malfoy had been hoping to sell it to distance himself from the memory of everything his father had done. The cleaned-out vault was one of the first stops to assure any potential buyers that there was plenty of space for their own riches. It also showed people that he didn't have the fabled Malfoy Fortune anymore.

Riddle had decided to stay at Malfoy Manor in the future. Harry was pretty sure the reason was to torture Lucius. The place was constructed to look fancy, not to be comfortable. Personally, Harry would have chosen somewhere less ostentatious.

He only had a change of clothes to pack which meant leaving was a rapid event. Part of him wanted to go back to the Room of Requirement to look through everything. There had to be at least a few things that were worth a decent amount. For some reason it just didn't feel right. Breaking into a Manor and stealing everything he could, perfectly fine. Scavenging the Lost and Found, uncomfortable.

Harry stomped downstairs to find Madam Rosmerta and one other person. Most of the chairs were still put up on the tables. The blonde bombshell flashed him a smile as he got into the dining area.

"Good morning, Just Harry." Rosmerta teased. "Why are you up so early?"

"I forgot to turn off my alarm." Harry chuckled. "Is there breakfast?"

"Toast and eggs with your choice of tea, pumpkin juice, or spiced milk." She replied.

"Spiced milk?" Harry asked.

"Imports are moving slow these days." Rosmerta sighed.

"Spiced milk it is." Harry took a seat. "Any chance you have the Daily Prophet yet?"

"Just delivered." Rosmerta placed it on the table before she headed back into the kitchen.

Peter Pettigrew -Marked Death Eater- Found Dead in Hogsmeade

Harry scanned through the article. He wasn't sure how long it would take to be discovered. Blasting a hole in the wall was anything but subtle. Still, it was the Shrieking Shack, which was on the edge of town and considered haunted. The article focused on Pettigrew's life, his recent activities, and recommendations for anyone who encountered him in the last month to check for compulsions. They had no suspects and didn't seem to be all that interested in finding who did it.

He couldn't let the Death Eaters push back. A quick glance at the other articles in the paper showed him that the Ministry had practically given up. They were focused on survival and had all but accepted defeat. No wonder he had been hailed as the Chosen One when Voldemort died.

"Here you go, Just Harry." Rosmerta placed the meal in front of him.

"Would you like to join me?" Harry asked.

"Sure." Rosmerta shrugged and took a spot across from him. "It will be a few more hours before business picks up."

"I'm new to the area." Harry offered. "Mind if I ask you some questions?"

"New to the area?" Rosmerta arched a manicured eyebrow. "You do know we're at war?"

"I didn't have a choice." Harry shrugged.

Rosmerta studied him for a moment.

"Fine." She leaned back and subtly pushed her chest out to accentuate her already impressive bust. "Mysterious stranger works for you. Ask your questions."

"How often are there attacks?" Harry asked.

"It varies." Rosmerta sighed. "Sometimes it's every day of the week, then they don't appear for days. Muggle born, Half-Bloods, and 'blood traitors' are leaving if they can."

"Why don't you?" Harry asked.

"I put everything I have into this place." Madam Rosmerta smiled as she looked around the inn. "I'm not going to let them chase me off."

Harry smiled back at her. He let his mind wonder a little bit as he started to eat. It wasn't lost on him that the food was lacking. He had seen how the second war had impacted the economy. The international community were playing it safe, waiting to see how things ended. That brought something to mind.

"Any international help?" He asked.

"France sent some support early on." Rosmerta shook her head.

"Their corpses were put on display in Diagon Alley a few hours after they arrived. That sent a message."

"The Death Eaters have infiltrated the Ministry, and any help would be wasted." Harry muttered.

"That's one way to take it." Rosmerta gave him a sad smile. "You should keep your voice low. Never know who is listening and you might be the next to disappear. I'd hate to see that, Just Harry."

Their conversation stopped as another couple of people came down the stairs. Madam Rosmerta stood to take care of the others. Harry winked at her as he left. He strolled down the way over to the edge of town to get a look at the Shrieking Shack to find it was in a worse state than he had left it. There were a few other people milling around due to the newspaper. The only loss was the secret passage into Hogwarts.

He turned away from the scene and headed to an arranged Apparation area. It was a general 'landing zone' for people to use to prevent witches and wizards from popping in at random places.

Something in the magic prevented overlap with other travelers but it didn't protect against moving objects like carriages. Harry chuckled to himself. Enchanters and Artificers could create carriages that were basically palaces on the inside twice a day but couldn't figure out how to consistently alter a car to be even slightly more comfortable than normal.

Harry concentrated on a spot outside of the Malfoy Manor wards and disappeared.

4.

Harry appeared in the forest near the Malfoy Manor. He watched the place for a little bit to make sure it wasn't swarming with Death Eaters. Unlike the last time he had been here, the place was practically lively. The house and the grounds were well cared for, there were a couple of carriages out front, and the curtains were open to let light in.

He couldn't recall when Draco had been born. They were around the same age, but off the top of his head he didn't know. Regardless, Narcissa was pregnant right now and he didn't want to encounter her. She would be a valuable ally if he could convince her to join. The conversations they had in the future had shown him that she never believed in the Death Eater cause. She married Lucius out of duty for her family and gave him an heir for the same reason. Her dreams of romance hadn't survived their initial courting period.

Harry strolled through the forest. It didn't take long to find the cluster of ruins he was searching for. Draco had calmed down quite a lot once he was married. Astoria Malfoy, formerly Greengrass, healed him somehow. The first thing she recommended was distancing themselves from the past and sell the manor. Narcissa wasn't happy until they let her know she would get a split of the profit.

Draco had invited him over for a tour before he sold it. Neither was under the impression that Harry would buy the manor, it was more about closure. One of the things Draco had shown him was the escape tunnel. There were also quite a few secret passages to move around the Manor without having to be seen by visitors or other members of the house. Their existence was only shared from one Lord Malfoy to the next.

Harry activated the switch that opened the tunnel. He let out a little chuckle as he stepped inside. The tunnel was made of expertly carved stone unlike the secret passages leading out of Hogwarts. There were veins of glowing crystal along the ceiling to provide light.

Leave it to the Malfoy's to make their emergency escape passage fancy.

Oddly enough, he already knew where the treasury was. He had been part of the raid that searched the Malfoy Manor for dark artifacts and information Death Eater remnants. Being the Man-Who-Won gave him a lot of pull in the Auror department. He had been fast-tracked through training and they wanted him on the raids. Something about having him there made the squad feel better, plus it was great for publicity. Draco had made sure to show up with reporters to show he was involved. The gold had already been moved to another location, but the artifacts were still there. Draco had strategically position some 'emergency' funds for a quick escape to appear as though his father was ready to run at a moment's notice. Harry had been on the squad that supervised the transfer of gold to Gringotts. The Ministry wanted to make sure it was accounted for down to the last knut.

Harry came to a stop at the end of the tunnel. A few steps led up to the frame of a false painting of the original Malfoy Manor. The painting was real, but it wasn't magical, which meant it was a fake. He searched the edge of the frame until he found a cluster of runes. Once activated, he could look out through it without anyone being able to see inside.

The sound of a few voices echoed through the home. Loud laughter broke out every few moments. Thankfully, they were all male. It was unlikely that Narcissa would be home if Lucius had company over. She could smile and wave like a good Pureblood wife, but she didn't like to be around the other Death Eaters more often than she absolutely had to. Laughter was also a good sign that Voldemort hadn't taken over Malfoy Manor.

Harry opened the painting and stepped out into the hallway. He listened for a moment to get a hint at where they were. It didn't take him long to follow the sound to the study on the first floor. The public one for drinks and cigars, not the private one where deals and

schemes were made. He paused at the doorway to take in the scene.

Lucius Malfoy, Lord Nott, and Lord Avery sat around the room laughing about something. He had missed the joke, but apparently it had been quite funny. Honestly, he had expected to find them torturing some poor muggle rather than simply having drinks and smoking. The scene would have fit with any sort of gentlemen's club across the country if it weren't for the fact that the cigars let out blue smoke, a telltale sign that whatever it was had ground pixie wings mixed among it, and that the men were wearing robes instead of suits.

Harry strolled over to the liquor cart and looked through the selection. The trio of Death Eaters went silent as they noticed him.

"Who are you and why are you in my house?" Lucius Malfoy spoke in a frosty tone.

"Veela Honeyed Mead?" Harry sniffed one of the bottles. "Good on you, that's hard to come by."

"I asked you a question." Lucius growled.

Harry poured himself a drink. After taking a sip he turned around to face the three Death Eaters. They had all drawn their wands and were pointing them at him.

"Potter?" Lucius cocked his head to the side.

"No." Nott cut in. "That's not Potter."

"Potter, yes." Harry saluted Lucius with the tumbler. "James, no."

"How did you get into my house?" Lucius took a step closer.

"I walked." Harry smirked at him before he finished his drink and set it down. "So, are you going to take me to your vault, or should I rip that Lordship ring off finger to open it myself?"

"You do realize you are outnumbered?" Avery flashed a feral smile.

"Three in-bred Nazi impersonators against me?" Harry flicked his wrist to summon his wand.

The trio of Death Eaters stared at his black scaled hand. He twirled it along his fingers to make sure they got a good look at it. Eventually, he'd have to cover it up with gloves, or a glamour, but for now it would be an asset. He twirled the wand along his fingers before tossing it to his left hand. That seemed to break their focus on his arm.

A cutter, blood boiler, and bone breaker zipped toward him.

Harry raised his scaled arm to intercept the spells. It had been a nice little surprise to find that the basilisk portion of his arm was just as resistant as the creature it came from. He still felt the impact, but the spell itself was blocked. Even against an experienced duelist it caused them to stutter in their casting for a moment. He hit them each with a body-binding curse and watched them fall flat on their faces. Learning to cast with his off-hand had turned out to be rather difficult. He was proficient enough ,but in a real fight he still used his main hand.

He strolled over to them, plucking their wands from the clenched grip. They stared up at him with obvious rage. He held the wands up and made the motion to snap them. Rage was instantly replaced with fear.

"Purebloods have some interesting laws." Harry levitated the trio to hover over, so they floated upright in a row. "For instance, if I were to enter your manor with ill-intent and you were to attack me, it would be counted as defending against conquest?"

Lucius and Nott glared at him. It was only Avery that understood where this was going.

"This invokes the Right of Conquest." Harry pointed his wand at Lucius' hand. "I claim the Malfoy Lordship by Right of Conquest."

Lucius screamed in a mixture of pain and anger as a slow-acting cutting curse removed his hand from his arm at the wrist. The curse

had originally been created with precision in mind and was used by enchanters as it easily cut through most materials.

Harry removed the ring from the dismembered hand and placed it on his scaled index finger. He paused for a moment to feel the wards shift their loyalty to him. Four House Elves appeared in the room beside him a moment later. There was an older male elf and two female elves, one of which held a baby to her chest. He could recognize Dobby regardless of his age. The elves froze as they took in the scene.

"Lords Malfoys calls?" The male elf took a knee before him.

The two female elves followed his lead. Avery and Nott stared at the ring as it adjusted to fit on his finger. A Lordship ring was charmed to only recognize the rightful wizard who held the title. The elves kneeling to him only served to enforce their fears. Lucius' screams had changed to pained whimpers.

"Rise." Harry motioned to the elves. "I'll call for you later. Return to your duties, tell no one of this."

The elves vanished.

"Calm down, you two." Harry chuckled at the other two. "This isn't your Manor. I can't claim your Lordships."

Rage mixed with pure hatred returned to their glares. They let out a string of threats and curses that were muffled through their stiff mouths.

"Let me show you." Harry turned his wand to Avery.

To his credit, Avery didn't scream nearly as much as Lucius. Harry plucked the removed hand up by the stump and held it up for the three to see. The Avery Lordship ring disappeared and reappeared on the still attached hand.

"I would have to challenge you to a duel with your Lordship against mine." Harry explained.

Nott started to yell and try to speak. His words were unintelligible through his clenched mouth, but the intent was clear.

"You're threatening me, trying to curse me, or offering to pay me to let you go." Harry squinted at the Death Eater. "I can never tell with Purebloods."

Harry pointed his wand at Nott's forehead. The man didn't stop trying to threaten, bribe, or curse him. A quick and clean piercing curse silenced the Death Eater. The dead body flopped to the floor. He turned his wand to Avery and repeated the process.

Lucius had gone silent watching the two other Death Eaters die. Harry shifted over to stand in front of the one-handed wizard.

"Now, Lucius." Harry floated Lucius over to the chair he had been sitting in before. "Let's have a little talk. Shall we?"

He flicked his wand, releasing the body-bind only to summon chains to hold Lucius in place.

"What do you want?" Lucius begged. "You said the treasury. I can take you there. Right now. I'll give you anything you want."

"What about your wife?" Harry asked.

"You can have her too." The Pureblood yelled.

"Selfless of you." Harry sighed. "You three are important to Tommy Boy. Do you know he's a half-blood?"

"He is the descendent of Salazar Slytherin." Lucius yelled back.

"His mother was a squib, and his father was a muggle." Harry replied. "But that's not the point. Just a little bit of trivia." Harry pointed his wand at Lucius. "The important question is this, why is there a piano above your head?"

Lucius flinched and darted his eyes upward. He stilled once he realized there wasn't anything above him. His confused eyes settled back to Harry.

"*Legilimens*." Harry said.

Most Purebloods were trained in Occlumency. It was a skill that was important to safeguard their many secrets. There were tricks that made things easier. Misdirection, confusion, and simple distraction could make slipping through the carefully constructed shields a little easier. It took precious moments to get their defense into place.

Harry tore through Lucius' mind without even attempting to be gentle. He searched for all the recent information on the Death Eater plans, locations, and the identity of the other members. Narcissa had been sent away to a healers retreat because he found her to be too annoying in her later months of pregnancy. It was impossible to avoid the various crimes and atrocities that Lucius had gleefully done, which made the next part much easier. Harry cut the connection.

The Death Eater was covered in sweat and shaking in effort. Harry stood and crossed the space between them.

"You don't deserve this, but I will do you a kindness." Harry placed his wand on the bridge of Lucius' nose. "Narcissa and your son will be safe."

Lucius died much easier than he deserved.

"Elves." Harry called.

The male elf appeared a moment later.

"I need you to remove the bodies." Harry motioned to the three. "First, take cuttings of their hair to use in Polyjuice."

The elf popped away for a moment and returned just as quickly.

"Do you have a way to reach Lady Malfoy?" He asked.

The elf tensed.

"I'm not going to hurt her." Harry soothed.

The elf studied him for a long moment.

"What's your name?" Harry asked.

"Dibby, Lords Malfoys." The elf bowed. "My mate is Pelly. Her sister is Tenny."

"And the child?" He asked.

"Dobby, Lords Malfoys." The elf shook in fear.

"Contact Lady Malfoy, tell her Lord Malfoy requests her return." Harry ordered. "Make sure the grounds are secure, remove all portraits to the Malfoy vault in Gringotts, freeze any that cannot be moved, and then continue with your daily duties. I'll need you to guide me to the Ward Tome."

Dibby looked relieved as he popped away once more. Harry scanned the room now that he was alone. He turned his attention to the three new wands and ran a little magic through each. Lucius' wand responded with a small tingle, Nott's wand jumped out of his grip, and Avery's wand refused to work at all.

A moment later, Tenny appeared. She kept her eyes low and didn't look at him.

"This way Lords Malfoys." Tenny bowed and motioned for him to follow.

Harry stayed a respectful distance away from the elf as they moved through the Manor. They didn't look underfed or mistreated. He could only guess that things for them did not get bad until after Voldemort vanished. Tenny took him to the main entry to the edge of the Malfoy coat of arms that had been carved into the marble floor. The same glowing crystal had been used to fill the indentation to keep the surface smooth. It also added a sense of power, as though the Coat of Arms was the source of the glowing, not the crystal.

The Malfoy family crest split down the center. Half of it began to lower and form a set of stairs. Harry chuckled as he noticed that there were handrails. He had to wonder who thought to install them. Most magical buildings treated them like they were an aesthetic choice rather than a safety feature.

Tenny continued to lead him to the room where the Ward Tome was kept. The passage underneath the Manor was a little bigger than the escape tunnel. It also had multiple doors instead of the single entry and exit of the other.

"Where do these lead?" Harry asked as they passed.

"Malfoys Manor has a potions lab, armory, library, and a vault down here." Tenny replied.

"A vault?" Harry asked. "I thought the vault was in the private study."

"That be one of the vaults." Tenny nodded. "Lords Malfoys has three vaults, plus the goblins."

Harry wondered if Draco knew about that. When they had come down here in the future there hadn't been any other doors. It was just a straight shot to the circular chamber where the Ward Stone and Tome were. Draco, or Narcissa, had cleared them out and bricked them up.

"I'll take a look at them once we're finished here." Harry said.

Tenny bobbed her head in understanding. They entered a circular room that hummed with power. The main ward stone and the corresponding tome rested on raised platforms. Harry quickly crossed over to the book. He flipped through until he found the list of accepted visitors. It was practically a VIP list of Death Eaters.

"Tenny." Harry called. "I want a copy of this list on plain parchment. No enchantments, just write them down for later."

"Yes, Lords Malfoys." Tenny snapped her fingers and a piece of parchment appeared in her hands.

Harry removed all of the names aside from himself and Narcissa Malfoy nee Black. He then flipped back to the active list of wards. Apparation, Floo, and Port Key travel had been blocked, which was why Nott and Avery had visited via their carriages. He disabled the anti-travel portion of the wards now that the list was down to two.

"Tenny." Harry looked toward the elf.

"Yes, Lords Malfoys?" The elf was trembling like crazy.

"I am not going to hurt you, any of you." Harry gave her a gentle smile. "I would like you and the others to stay in service to the Malfoy family under my guidance. Unless you would rather be free. Hogwarts is always in need of elves."

"NO!" Tenny slapped her hands over her mouth. "No, please Lords Malfoys, don't free us. We are good elves. We serve the Malfoy family."

"Thank you, Tenny." Harry knelt down to look her in the eye. "It wasn't a threat, it was an option, and only if you request it. I'll have to meet with you and the other elves once I'm finished here. You can return to your other duties now. As I said, tell no one of this. No paintings, ghosts, or people."

Tenny nodded enthusiastically before she popped away.

"The carriages." Harry muttered. He had just sent Tenny away.

"Tenny, a moment please."

The elf appeared once more. Her face was a mask of terror.

"Please don't punish Tenny." She flinched away from his gaze.

"Why would I punish you?" Harry asked.

Tenny shrugged.

"I don't plan on punishing you, or the others." Harry spoke softly. "I forgot something. The carriages, are there elves, or anyone else in them?"

"No, Lords Malfoys." Tenny shook her head.

"Can you get inside of them?" Harry continued.

"Yes, Lords Malfoys." Tenny nodded.

"Carefully remove anything dangerous. As well as any identifying marks." Harry ordered. "Leave it alone if it will hurt you. Set any

coins you find inside of them out in plain sight. Then take them to the sketchier part of Nocturn Alley and leave the doors open. Let the scavengers have them."

"And the horsies?" Tenny asked.

"Horsies?" Harry asked in return.

"Big, shiny horsies with wings." Tenny clarified.

"Hm." Harry thought for a moment. "They're probably trained so I can't just set them free. I'll ask Lady Malfoy what she suggests once she's here."

"Lady Malfoys be in the sitting area." Tenny announced.

"That was fast." Harry muttered.

"Lady Malfoys be wanting home." Tenny nodded.

"Did she see the carriages?" He asked.

"No." Tenny replied. "Pelly gave her tea and took her to Lady Malfoys favorite chair."

"Good job, thank you." Harry smiled at the elf. "Let her know that Lord Malfoy will be with her soon."

Tenny nodded, then disappeared with a pop. Harry strolled back down the hall. He stopped at the first door. The Lordship ring glowed as he touched the handle, likely deactivating any traps or curses for unwelcome visitors. He poked his head inside to find a small library. The next was a professional grade potions lab. After that was the Armory, which he would have explored immediately if Narcissa wasn't waiting. Finally, there was the vault. Inside were two plain looking chests. He felt a wave of magic flow over him as he entered the room. Once again, the Lordship ring glowed at the sensation.

On closer inspection neither chest had a latch. Instead, there was an impression where the Malfoy Ring could be inserted. Harry slotted the ring in. The lid gently rose until it was completely open. Inside there were a dozen shelves full of neatly stacked gold coins.

"That will do." He smiled as he closed the lid.

Once it was shut he shrunk it down to the size of a matchbox and placed it in his pocket. He didn't want to get greedy, but this was Malfoy gold. It would be used to bribe politicians and buy the freedom of many guilty people. Plus, it was Malfoy gold, technically, it was his now.

"Dibby." Harry called.

The elf appeared and waited for orders.

"Are you finished with the tasks I gave you?" Harry asked.

"Yes, Lords Malfoys. Dibby, Tenny, and Pelly are good elves." Dibby bobbed his head

"Thank you." Harry flashed a small smile. "Please take me to Lady Malfoy."

Dibby held out a hand. Harry took it. Elf Apparation was much smoother than the wizard version. He had no idea why; it was just something about their magic. Apparently, he wasn't the only one to be curious about the wonders of elves. There were multiple Unspeakables that had spent years studying the creatures. A lot of interesting theories had come from the research, but there was too much of a disconnect between wizards and elves to get the magic to work together.

Harry appeared before Narcissa Malfoy. He couldn't help but smile. The usually prim and proper lady currently rested on a comfortable looking chair with her bare feet resting on an ottoman. A couple of stone orbs rolled around the bottom of her feet in as a magical foot massage. Pelly stood beside her waiting for orders.

"Lady Malfoy." Harry inclined his head. "Please, stay seated and don't touch your wand. I don't want to hurt you."

"Lord Malfoy." She replied with a stiff nod. "I take it that Lucius is dead?"

"By Right of Conquest." Harry showed her the ring.

"I don't mean to speak ill of the dead, but he always was an idiot." Narcissa groaned. "The most Gryffindor Slytherin I've ever met."

Harry chuckled.

"May I take a seat?" He asked.

"It is your house." Narcissa raised a manicured eyebrow.

"My intention wasn't to become Lord Malfoy when I came here."

Harry took a seat across from her. They were even more comfortable than they looked.

"And what was your intention?" Narcissa watched him with her sharp eyes.

He didn't doubt she already had a few plans on how to kill him, manipulate him and then kill him, or turn him into her lapdog and kill him when she got bored. Probably all three.

"To clear out the vault in Lord Malfoy's study." Harry admitted.

"Lucius just happened to be here entertaining a couple of his... colleagues."

"You do realize they were Death Eaters?" Narcissa asked.

"I know." Harry gave her a feral smile. "They are not the first Death Eaters I've killed, and they certainly won't be the last."

"You killed them?" Narcissa asked. "The three of them? I've seen Avery fight; he is more dangerous than Lucius and Nott. The three of them together had decimated Auror squads."

"And yet I killed all three with a wand that's not even mine." Harry replied. "Let's get to the reason I called you here."

"Please." Narcissa inclined her head.

"You may have been safe at the retreat, but the news of Lucius' death would have spread eventually." Harry explained. "I've cleared the wards to only accept you and myself. Currently, half the vault by the Ward Stone is in my possession. I plan on looking through the

other two mostly out of curiosity. Not even I can rationalize robbing a pregnant widow blind."

"How chivalrous of you." Narcissa said flatly.

"I'm a Lord, not a saint." Harry teased as he played with the Malfoy ring.

"A muggle born Lord Malfoy?" Narcissa laughed. "Lucius must be spinning in his grave."

"Half-blood." Harry corrected. "My mother was muggle born." He paused. "I'm a Lord, not Merlin. Better?"

"Passable." Narcissa nodded. "You widow me, but don't intend to rob me more than you already have. What exactly do you plan to do?"

"Kill a half-blood named Tom Riddle, neuter Dumbledore, and set myself as king." Harry replied easily.

"Who is Tom Riddle." Narcissa asked.

"You know him by a name that's taboo." Harry answered.

He smiled as the realization played across her face.

"A half-blood?" Narcissa gasped. "How can you be sure?"

"Tom Riddle." Harry stated. "He was a Slytherin prefect, the Head Boy in his seventh year, and is the son of a squib and a muggle under love potion." He paused. "That reminds me, I need to destroy that diary while I'm here."

"Diary?" Narcissa asked.

"It was something Lucius was entrusted to protect." Harry looked over to where Dobby waited. "Dobby."

"Yes, Lords Malfoys." Dobby bowed.

"There should be a dark artifact, a diary, one that Lucius was given by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named." Harry explained. "Can you bring it to me please?"

"Yes, Lords Malfoys." Dibby winced.

The elf disappeared.

"You won't say his name?" Narcissa asked.

"There is a taboo on it." Harry shrugged. "I'd rather not have them pop in yet."

Dibby appeared a moment later holding the diary. It was in much better condition than it had been the last time Harry had seen it. The book practically pulsed with power stronger than it had ever in the future. Probably due to the fact that Voldemort was still alive. For the moment.

"Drop it and step back." Harry ordered.

Dibby was happy to follow the order. Harry waited for the elf to move out of the way before he hit the diary with the Killing Curse. A thick cloud of black smoke erupted from the horcrux. It let out a bone-chilling scream as it vanished.

"What was that?" Narcissa's face had gone white.

"Do you know what a horcrux is?" He asked.

She shook her head.

"That was one." Harry shot a blast of flame at the now-mundane diary. "An absolute moron uses an object to store a piece of their soul. They do this to try to become immortal. In a way, it works, but splitting a soul is not something that should ever be done. It breaks the mind and twists the body. Each split sacrifices something, on top of the murder required to complete the process."

"You know a lot about them." Narcissa spoke quietly.

"This isn't my first time encountering them." Harry shrugged.

He let out a content sigh as he sat back down. A tense silence filled the room. Tense for the elves and Narcissa at least.

"How did you get into the Manor?" Narcissa asked.

"The escape tunnel in the ruins." Harry replied.

"How?" Narcissa gasped.

"Trade secret." Harry winked at her. "Are you able to search the vaults with me? You should grab enough to leave the country for a few years. Somewhere no one will think to look for you. Take the elves as well."

"Why should I leave here?" Narcissa asked. "This is my Manor."

"*Our* manor." Harry teased. "This place won't be safe once word gets out that Lucius is dead. Either his fellow Death Eaters will come calling, or Tommy will decide to break the wards for a personal chat. You don't want to be here when he does that."

Narcissa nodded.

"Help me to my feet and I'll show you where the vaults are." She held out a hand for him to take.

"Tenny." Harry stood. "Help Lady Malfoy to her feet. Keep close in case she needs any further assistance."

Narcissa stood on her own power with a brief pause to make sure her wand didn't fall. She didn't seem to mind that he had just called her bluff. Instead, she held out her hand for Tenny to take, using the elf to keep steady, and led him out of the sitting room. Harry smiled at her as she walked into the hall. He didn't comment on her slight waddle, he wasn't suicidal.

5.

It had been a couple of days since Narcissa left. He had wanted to wait to make sure she was safe before he made any moves. She hadn't told him where she was going, just that she wouldn't be back until after Draco was born. He had agreed to surrender the title of Lord Malfoy to her soon.

Harry strode down Diagon Alley wearing Avery's face. The Polyjuice potion would hold up if he went to Gringotts, but that wasn't his target today. Choosing Avery had taken some thought. Using Lucius could have worked as well, but he didn't want to bring attention to his current hide-out. Nott, on the other hand, had a family. They would be targeted if there were any witnesses and Harry wanted witnesses. He turned and made his way down Nocturne Alley. There was a little place that less important Death Eaters liked to gather. It turned out that while using the potion that Avery's wand would work for him. The 'gentlemen's club' was more akin to a run-down pub than somewhere that a Lord would ever deign to frequent.

A group of disposable Death Eaters were scattered around the room. He scanned those assembled to find his target. There were a couple of people he recognized as Aurors or other Ministry employees. None of them by name. Most importantly, there weren't any people who would be missed. There was only one person he actually knew. The sight of Severus Snape chumming it with other Death Eaters made it even better. The man was such a tragic hero.

"Avery!" One of the scuzz called out. "What's a prim little lord want here?"

Harry pulled a stone cube with small, intricate runes carved into it. He ignored further jeers as he strode over to the table in the middle of the room. A steady pulse of blue energy played along the surface of the cube.

"You are all worthless pieces of shit." He said loudly.

Those deeper in their cups jumped to their feet and started casting. Harry didn't bother to block or dodge. The bright multi-colored magic barely left their wands before they were absorbed by the cube. To his credit, Snape was one of the first to notice the issue.

Another barrage followed once they saw the previous volley didn't reach him. The more observant among them tried to tell the others to stop. Unfortunately for them, yelling at drunks who are also yelling at someone else wasn't the best way to communicate.

Harry stepped back outside a moment before a bright flash of blue lit up the area. The cube was one of the nastier pieces in the Malfoy Armory. It was also one of the items that Draco had turned over to the DMLE. The cube was basically a magical bomb fueled by the spells it absorbed and would explode once it reached its limit. It released a wave of arcane energy that basically tore the soul from the body. Judging by the screams, it was a painful process. Unlike the Killing Curse, it could be blocked to a point. It was fueled by the magic absorbed by those around it so a shield wouldn't block the pieces of magic that came from them. It also had the extra benefit of preventing apparating as well by absorbing that magic as well. Supposedly, the effect wouldn't harm any of the Malfoy family, but he didn't want to discover if being Lord Malfoy counted. It was a one-of-a-kind artifact that had become more of a trophy than a weapon.

The residual magic faded after a few moments. Harry stepped back inside to finish off anyone who had the mind to send up a shield. Only two had managed, but they didn't fair very well. A couple of quick piercing hexes ended their suffering. He took a moment to arrange all of their arms, so the Dark Mark was exposed. After a moment of thought, he gathered some blood from the closest dead wizard then used it to write on the wall.

'Unworthy'

"That will cause some chaos." Harry chuckled as he stepped outside and raised his wand to the sky. "*Morsmordre*."

The familiar skull and snake appeared in the air before he popped away. Lucius' memories did not provide Voldemort's current location. It was blocked by some powerful mental magic that couldn't be breached. The only way to get Voldemort to come out and play was to get him to leave his hide-out. Killing a bunch of his minions while dressed as one of them would definitely raise some questions.

Thankfully, the Malfoy wards still recognized him even while he was under the effects of Polyjuice. The wand didn't react negatively when he used it, but the security let him through. It was an odd bit of magic that he filed away for later use. If he remembered when he had the time.

He took a seat in the main study with a copy of the Malfoy Family Grimoire while he waited for the potion to run its course. They had stripped the Manor of everything of worth. Neither knew when the Death Eaters would come looking for Lucius and didn't want to be caught unaware. He had let Narcissa take pretty much everything with only grabbing a few choice items from the armory, potions lab, and library for himself.

Technically, it was impossible to copy a Family Grimoire, but that was only when accounting for those outside of the family. There were times that the book needed to be shared due to marriage, births, or a transfer of title. The original was currently with Narcissa while he held the copy. He wasn't about to lose access to all the knowledge he could now access. Narcissa was the true owner, which was why she had the original.

The Malfoy Grimoire had some interesting magic with a focus on potions and enchantment. Most of the spells had originally been focused on improved control and ways to apply intricate details. The further he read the more notes showed how the family magic had shifted the purpose to more nefarious means. He was pretty sure he'd lose access to this copy of the book once he surrendered the title to Narcissa since it was created using the Malfoy Family ring. As such, he had an automatic quill transcribing the pages into a mundane journal.

Harry put the book down to allow the quill to resume its work. He could feel the potion start to wear off. All of the work transcribing would be ruined if his muscles spasmed at an inopportune time. The wand practically jumped from his hand once the transformation began. He could almost imagine it looking back at him in horror at the realization he wasn't its master.

The clothes he had worn were too long in the arms and legs but too tight just about everywhere. Unlike Harry, Lord Avery had been a tall, scrawny man. The shirt would have torn at the seams if not for the enchantments on the clothes. He stripped out of the stolen clothing once the transformation was complete.

He got changed into some of the borrowed clothes that the Room of Requirement had provided. It was time to take care of some things now that he had gold. A wicked smile crossed his face as a thought crossed his mind. He strode out of the Manor and beyond the wards instead of simply apparating away. His earlier thought about Malfoy Manor was correct. The place was not made for comfort. Even the beds were overly ornate and hard as rock. He had slept on better beds when he had been on the run in his seventh year.

Harry took a moment to clear an area around him of trees, stone, and underbrush. Once that was finished he used his magic to dig a few deep trenches that could easily fit a few people shoulder-to-shoulder and lined the bottom with branches transfigured into spears. Even if they missed the spears, the fall would be enough to break a bone. He stretched out some nearby grass to cover the various holes. The pits were placed in a spiral around a small island of untouched ground. Once that was complete, he squatted down in the center of the safe area.

"Voldemort is a bitch." Harry yelled.

A moment later a trio of pops announced the arrival of a group of five masked Death Eaters. There was a moment of confusion when they recognized where they were. It took another precious seconds

to find whoever had spoken the taboo. The hunched wizard in the center of the newly made clearing didn't look like anything special.

"Who are you?" One of the Death Eaters growled.

"I have to admit." Harry stood. "The masks are a nice touch. Your voice sounds like a monster." He side-stepped a nasty looking curse.

"Rude. Does no one appreciate banter these days?"

Another few curses answered his question.

"*Arfwisg*." Harry whispered.

A slight blue sheen appeared around his body about an inch away from his skin. Unlike a shield spell which usually only blocked one direction, or a more advanced version that created a dome, this was magical armor. It was on par, strength-wise, as a standard *Protego*, he could still move while being protected.

He took a couple of steps to the side, inspiring them to do the same to keep him in their line of sight. Harry had to hold back a laugh as the first Death Eater stepped into a pit-trap. The scream and its sudden stop caught their attention.

"*Accio*." Harry pointed at another one of them.

They let out a short scream as they disappeared into the trap. One of the others decided that running in the other direction in hopes to avoid the pit. It would have been a good plan if there was only one trap. The Death Eater pitched head-first into another pit.

The two remaining Death Eaters stopped their assault. They scanned the ground to spot further traps. It was rather easy not in the middle of a fight.

"Who are you?" One of them yelled.

"Your doom." Harry said dramatically before breaking into a laugh.

"Couldn't help myself."

"Stop talking, just kill him." The other yelled. "We'll identify the body."

"Before we start." Harry held up his hand. "How do you like those masks?"

He couldn't see their eyes, but he could feel their glares.

"Fine." Harry sighed.

A swipe of his wand sent a broad arc of sparks. The two Death Eaters intercepted the spell. Instead of fading away the sparks collected on their shields. He kept sending more their way until their vision was completely blocked. Harry dropped the deluge and waited. Their shields dropped, sending the sparks to the ground at their feet. Each one let out a little pop along with a tiny flash as they connected with the grass.

Harry targeted their masks. They glowed red as they were suddenly superheated. If that wasn't bad enough, he shrunk them as well, effectively welding the masks to their faces. They dropped their wands as their sole focus shifted to removing the molten things. He would have left them to slowly suffer until they died if he didn't have things to do. An overpowered cutting curse ended their plight. No head meant no pain. At least once the brain realized it wasn't connected to the body anymore.

He carefully checked the pit traps that had been triggered. The simple spikes had taken care of the Death Eaters. With that done, he rolled the two headless corpses into the nearest pit. He made sure to gather their wands first. A sheet of transfigured stone covered each pit once the bodies were all hidden. He had already wasted enough time on these. At least he knew that the Taboo worked and could be used in the future.

Harry paused. It wouldn't take long for the Death Eaters investigate the missing kill squad. They would probably check in a lot faster than usual since it had happened so close to Malfoy Manor. Once they were here they would discover that the place was all empty and the wards had been sealed. He could fill the open stretches with numerous traps, plus even more in the Manor itself. Harry looked

back at the house. He had spent more than enough time here already. It was time to move on.

He popped away and appeared in the specified arrival area in Diagon Alley. There was an edge of anxiety in the air. A few Aurors patrolled the area asking questions. Harry stepped out of the landing area to clear it for any further people.

"What happened?" Harry asked as one of the Aurors got close.

The guy searched for whoever had spoken.

"Potter?" The Auror paused.

"Yes?" Harry answered.

"You're not James Potter." The Auror shook their head.

"Correct again." Harry smiled. "Who are you?"

"Auror Longbottom." The man replied. "You're a Potter? I've never met you."

"I've never met you either." Harry shrugged. "Can I get to Gringotts?"

"Sure." Frank nodded. "Avoid Nocturne until we've cleared it."

Harry gave a lazy salute as he walked away. He stole a couple of looks as he walked by the entry to Nocturn Alley. It looked like there were a few Auror squads around the pub, or whatever it was. Only a couple of them were instigating, the others were there to provide security for their colleagues. Nocturn was not kind to Aurors, not even in the future. In the future, it was policy for squads like this if they had to go in at night. Now, in the midst of the war with Voldemort, it wasn't safe for them in the daylight either.

The goblin guards didn't take any extra interest in the happening in the alley. They still looked like they were ready to attack at any moment. He strode through the doors up to the desk.

"Business?" The goblin asked.

"I need to speak to the Malfoy account holder." Harry stated.

The goblin looked up from his ledger. Harry flashed him the Malfoy ring.

"Follow." The goblin shrugged.

Another goblin appeared beside the desk. They didn't even look at him. The goblin simply led him to a side room. There was a rather distinguished looking goblin behind a much nicer desk.

"Lord Malfoy?" The goblin asked.

"For now." Harry smiled as he slid the ring off his finger. "I've come here to surrender my Lordship to Narcissa Malfoy, nee Black."

The goblin stared at him for a long moment before they took the ring. Harry felt a slight tingle as the Malfoy Lordship left him.

"Is that all, wizard?" The goblin asked.

"I need to open an account of my own." Harry offered.

"The front desk will do that." The goblin dismissed him.

6.

Harry stepped out of the bank humming a song that wouldn't come out for another twenty years or so. It was one from the Muggle side of the world, the Weird Sisters had inspired a generation of musicians, but that didn't equal quality.

"Potter!" A voice called out to him that wasn't Auror Longbottom.

He turned to see James Potter striding toward him. Harry felt a little hitch in his throat. Logically, he knew there was a chance that he would encounter his parents. In truth, with his current plan it was practically inevitable. He locked his mental shields down tight on instinct.

"Potter?" Harry asked in reply.

"Who are you?" James came to a stop not too far from him.

"Harry Potter." Harry inclined his head just a bit. "You?"

"Lord James Potter." His father replied.

That made him pause for a moment. No one had ever told him that his father had claimed his Lordship. In fact, he was pretty sure that it had made a point that James Potter did not. That was something he was going to have to figure out. Either it was mis-information or a straight out lie. It was never clear when it came to dealing with Dumbledore. The record keeping toward the end of the war was a big mess and the old man didn't help matters at all.

"Good for you." Harry smiled at him. "Is this an official conversation?"

James studied him for a long stretch of silence. The two Potters looked like they were around the same age. His body might have been younger, but he had a good twenty years on the man.

"Not yet." James narrowed his eyes. "I don't know you."

"I don't know you, either." Harry shrugged.

James continued to study him.

"You're not making this easy." James said after a moment.

"I'm not sure what you're trying to do." Harry flashed him a smirk.

"I'm trying to figure out who you are." James casually shifted his feet.

Harry recognized the motion for what it was. James was following standard escalation protocol for Aurors when the subject was uncooperative. Present a smaller target, keep your outward appearance neutral while clearing a path for wand-work. His wand-hand was placed toward the side facing away to keep it out of a direct line of sight.

"I'm Harry Potter." He held out his hand to shake. "I just got back from a long trip a few days ago. You're the first other Potter I've ever met. It's a common enough name on the Muggle side. I'd say it's a good chance we're related considering the resemblance."

James nodded. He let out a sigh.

"Sorry." James set a practiced smile. "Things have been crazy lately. Not sure it was the best time for you to come back."

"Truer words, my friend." Harry gave a dry chuckle. "This wasn't part of the plan. Well, I can't change it now that I'm here."

"Do you live around here?" James kept his voice casual.

"I've been staying with a friend the last couple of days." Harry shook his head. "They left the country, as they should, so now I'm looking for a place of my own. I was thinking of renting a place in Hogsmeade for a while."

"The market is in the buyers favor." James offered. "You might be able to get a place for less than it would cost to rent."

"I don't know." Harry grimaced. "Buying a place now feels wrong. The people who left will need a place to live once the war is over." He paused. "And the properties that are open due to less-pleasant reasons do not sound appealing."

James nodded.

"It was nice to meet you." Harry gave another friendly nod. "If you'll excuse me, I have some errands I need to run. Is Nocturn open?"

"If you're brave enough." James shook his head. "We're done with the investigation. Just be careful. There aren't enough Potters to lose another."

"Same goes for you." Harry patted the man on the shoulder as he walked on by.

Harry held it together until a few stores over. He stepped into the closest doorway and tucked out of the way. His mental shields dropped, nearly sending him into an emotional breakdown. The only thing that kept him from bursting into tears was the fact that he was in public. He took a few deep, calming breaths. It took a few moments to get his emotions under control. The dangerous thing about Occlumency was that it could mute things too deep of a degree.

With the mild panic handled, he stepped back out into the street. He had no idea what the shop had been that he had taken as a brief refuge, but no one seemed to pay attention to him. Everyone kept to themselves and that was the wonderful thing about Nocturn Alley. He found the wand-maker easily enough. The location hadn't changed in the future. Nocturn hadn't been spared from the impact of the war, but it hadn't been hit as hard. If anything, it felt the brunt of the unrestrained ire in the aftermath.

Technically, he could have gone to Olivander. He would need to get the Elder Wand back. Until then, he'd need something to use until then. The phoenix feather wand would be there. Unfortunately, the connection with it had faded once he owned the Elder Wand. Harry wasn't sure if it was the fact that his magic had changed once the horcrux was gone, the fact that he had all three Deathly Hallows, or if it was as simple effect of reaching his full power. There was also the small fact his wand-arm had been rebuilt using the biological

matter from a basilisk and with special Dwarven Mithril alloy as the bones.

"How may I help... Auror Potter, what brings you here?" The clerk swapped from their customer service for to a guarded one with hardly a pause.

"Wrong Potter." Harry replied. "And I'm here for a wand."

The clerk, an older woman by the name of Muriel Krauss, studied him for a long, tense moment. She had been attractive in her youth but that had been years ago. Remnants of her beauty hung on her like the light from a failing lamp. She appeared to be in her mid-seventies, which meant she was closer to ninety. Magic was a wonderful thing. Muriel survived the war and still ran the shop in the future. She wore black robes that were of good quality without being ostentatious.

Her wands were perfectly legal, those on display at least. Each one was registered with the Ministry and required paperwork to attach the wand to the buyer. She would even make a custom order, the quality of which even Olivander could appreciate. Those also had to be registered through the Ministry so that the magical signature was added to a data-base in case of illegal activities.

Harry wasn't here for the display wands.

"Welcome, then." Muriel waved a practiced hand at the display cases around the room. "Please tell me if any catch your attention."

Harry strode over to the counter without bothering to give the various cases a glance.

"There's a hole in the restless summer air." Harry stated the code phrase.

Muriel kept her expression neutral. She strode out from behind the counter and continued over to the door. It closed as she approached. She tapped the knob with her wand which made a solid snap echo through the shop as a myriad of locks slam into place and the windows went dark.

Harry waited as she did a slow circuit of the store. He ignored the magic that washed over him. It was a harmless spell used for thorough observation. Any glamours, Polyjuice, or hidden items would be highlighted for anyone to see. The Auror badge had an enchantment that worked as an emergency port key as well as a call for help. Those two additions made them shine like a beacon when touched by the spell.

His glamoured arm glowed but didn't make the illusion fade. Masking a scar or false limb was common enough in Pureblood circles to not raise an issue. Moody was one of the few people who didn't hide his scarring and replacement limbs. Partially due to his own code of conduct and partially because there was just too much to cover for any glamours to be effective. Young Harry would have loved the option to hide his scar, but no one thought to tell him it was an option. Cosmetic glamours were used for a variety of reasons. It wasn't unheard of for Pureblood families employed them to mask the true appearance of their daughters as to not draw unwanted attention.

"Come along." Muriel walked back to the counter.

She tapped a quick pattern on the ornate cash register with her wand. Harry didn't bother trying to learn the pattern. In the future she had confided in him that it was all for show. The real trigger was actually a trip wire that activated with the enchantment on the door. Muriel had a knack for not just wand creation but the application of magical resources in complex rituals. Her knowledge and notes had played a vital role in designing the one that had sent him here. Harry didn't think she had anything to do with the ritual going awry. He had seen the unrestrained joy Muriel had as she worked with the other researchers and other professionals. She made wands because that was a good use of her skill-set, but her passion was in creation. A couple of high-quality bottles of Horntail Vodka broke through her stoic exterior.

The floor behind the counter slid aside to reveal a stairwell. Muriel continued down without a look back. Harry followed a couple of steps behind. He wasn't being paranoid. Muriel was a consummate professional.

He just hated crowding people on stairs. The floor slid back into place once his head had cleared the space.

Muriel waited for him on the lower level. She was surrounded by terraced shelves full of various materials. Unlike Olivander, she didn't just use wood to create her wands. Stone, crystal, and bone were just as common in her masterpieces.

"Select the material and a core." Muriel motioned to the materials. "The minimum price is twenty galleons. It will increase depending on your selection."

Harry nodded and started to search through the options. He held out his wand hand to feel if any of the materials called to his magic. It had been a necessary for him to learn how to use his off-hand as well when his new arm attuned to his body. However, he needed a wand that would accept his main-hand. It was still his magic that the wand would resonate with, but the basilisk and mithril complicated matters.

Muriel watched impassively as Harry slowly circulated around the room. He wasn't all that shocked when the Holly wood didn't even elicit a tingle. Thankfully, none of the bones reached out to his magic either. That would have been a hard to explain if people noticed. Glamours on wands didn't hold for long.

He felt himself drawn to a selection of metal. A chunk of cold iron practically leapt into his hand as he approached. With that settled as the main material, he turned his attention to a core. He twirled the iron ingot along his fingers as he strolled around the room some more. Harry closed his eyes and reached out with his magic. He kept it as a casual scan to avoid accidentally activating anything too volatile.

A soft tune teased the edge of his hearing. It was distantly familiar. The source eluded him. He opened his eyes to zero in on the item that called out to him. A jar of thin strips of muscle fiber rested on the display in front of him.

"These two." Harry offered. "What is this?"

"Heart string from a Hungarian Horntail." Muriel replied. "When do you want it?"

"As soon as possible." He placed the two items in front of her. "I'll need a bundle of disposable wands as well. Yew with a Wampus Cat Hair core, if you have them."

The duo was one used by Hit-Wizards, assassins, and wastrels around the world. Muriel summoned an unmarked box and tucked it under her arm. She led him back up the stairs into the shop proper.

"Fifty Galleons all together." She set the box on the counter once he had joined her.

Harry counted out the gold coins without arguing. He popped open the box of wands and slid one into his wrist holster. Harry tucked the box under his arm once it was resealed.

"How long?" Harry asked.

"Come back tomorrow." Muriel replied.

"Sounds good." Harry nodded. "Have a good day."

Muriel unlocked the door and unblocked the windows. Harry stepped back out onto Nocturn Alley. With the wand settled, he needed to turn his attention to something that was becoming more apparent. He needed some new clothes. The borrowed ones from the Room of Requirement lacked the enchantments he wanted and just didn't fit right. Harry headed to another store in Nocturn Alley. The clothing was more expensive, but it was well worth the extra cost.

7.

Harry stepped out of the tailor wrapped in acromantula silk. It was a muggle style suit that he had ordered a dozen in shades of black and gray. He had a cape added to help it blend into wizard fashion. It wrapped around his shoulders and flowed like cloak. He could easily shuck it off to use as a distraction, break line of sight, and to blend in with the muggle world. Acromantula silk had the added benefit of being waterproof, nearly indestructible by normal wear and tear, and accepted enchantments easily. A cutting curse, piercing, and other destructive spells could damage it, but resisted mundane means. He had to be sure to be aware the material had limits. It didn't stop the force. Getting stabbed or shot would still hurt, it just wouldn't pierce the silk. Each suit had three layers as well to hide the layer with runes and enchantments. The cost was the only thing that prevented the entire magical population from using the same materials. Acromantula silk couldn't not be duplicated through magical means. It had to be harvested naturally. Even 'hand raised' acromantula were dangerous to professionals.

No one gave him a second look as he strolled into a Pureblood Gentlemen's Club. It was a place for Lords to gather to complain about their wives, make under-the-table deals, and reminisce about old times. Expensive liquor, cigars, and over-priced food was the standard service. He took an open seat off to the side of the main room where he could see the door and have a wall at his back. A few curious looks drifted his way, but no one approached. It was obvious he was a Potter. Anything more than a passing glance made it clear he wasn't James.

He had to come up with an updated plan. The previous had been simple enough to adapt to unexpected events. Going back too far in time had not been on the bingo card. He needed to see how much his parents, Sirius, and the population in general followed Dumbledore's lead. On top of that, he had to find out how to best infiltrate the Ministry now that the staff was completely different than the tactics they had prepared. Years of gathered secrets for people either still in school, or not yet born, were useless.

Harry wasn't the impulsive teenager he had been. He needed to think and plan before he acted. Hermione was an amazing resource. She pushed him

to think in ways he didn't usually. However, he didn't think finding the Granger household to converse with a baby was a good idea. He needed someone with a similar mix of intelligence and madness. Luckily for him, and the rest of the magical world, she didn't have the urge to take rule. Dark Lady Hermione would have made Voldemort look like an amateur. Harry had always thought that the situation was the same with Bellatrix.

Three names came to mind when he thought about this era to fill the requirements. The first was Bellatrix, but that would only work if she hadn't pledged herself to Riddle. Pandora Lovegood was another option if she was anything like Luna. He had to admit he was incredibly curious to meet her. Finally, and most risky, was Lily Potter. The only wizard that came to mind was Sirius as he was just mad enough to come up with something crazy enough to work.

Pandora was the best bet out of the three. Bellatrix was likely already a Death Eater and he didn't know if he could face Lily yet. Seeing his father had been hit harder than he had expected. The other option would be to see if Emma Granger had an open appointment at her dentist's office. That was tempting simply because he thought it would be funny.

Harry strode out of the place without a word. He hadn't ordered anything, or spoken to anyone, but the silent detachment of the lounge filled its purpose. The place had its own point to apparate that he passed by. It tracked the outgoing magical signature which was something he did not want. He disappeared with a pop the moment he stepped into the public landing area. There was too much traffic for the point to be able to track anyone. It wasn't a needle in a haystack, more like a needle in a stack of needles.

He appeared at the outskirts of The Rookery. Blasting through their wards was not a good way to start a conversation. He placed his hand over the property line and waited. A small ripple of magic raced across the surface of the ward. The door to the giant chess piece opened a moment later. It was a decent distance away. Any spell sent from the ward line would drain off most of its energy before it reached anyone. The distance would give them a couple of moments to act if they were brought down as well.

Harry paused as the figure approached. He had expected Pandora to look like Luna. She did to the point where the similarity was uncanny. Pandora had a bit more curves as her hips were wider and her breasts were larger. Even then, she was still petite. Her breasts were, at most, a handful and the extra weight on her hips made her ass smackable. The biggest difference, one that he hadn't expected at all, was her hair. It was black with an iridescent quality that made it look like starlight in the low light.

She cocked her head in a familiar motion as she came to a stop in front of him.

"Harry Potter," she said.

"Pandora Lovegood," Harry replied with a smile.

Her eyes narrowed as she stared at him. It was just as unnerving as when Luna did it. Like she was looking straight them him to his soul.

"You have an interesting energy about you," Pandora said after a moment.

"Nargles?" Harry smiled.

Pandora shook her head. A gentle smile crossed her face.

"Bedtime stories rarely step into reality," she looked over him again.

Her eyes stopped at the ring on his hand. The expression on her face hardened.

"Rarely is not never," she pointed to the ring.

"You can see it?" Harry raised his hand. "Silly question. Of course, you can see it."

"Why are you here Peverell?" Pandora kept her voice even and flat.

The sound sent a chill down his spine.

"It was a gift," Harry lowered his hand. "I've come to speak to you."

"Oh?" Pandora waited for him to continue.

"Over the years I've come to put a large amount of trust in your family," Harry offered.

"You have an aura of death around you," Pandora stated. "It mingles with swirls of destiny that both has and has not been fulfilled." She paused. "An avatar? No, the wards wouldn't notice you."

Harry could see the intelligence in her eyes as she studied him.

"Time travel," she said after a moment of silence.

He smiled and nodded.

"You should know that your very presence has erased your timeline," Pandora said with an edge of concern in her voice.

"I'm aware," Harry replied. "We planned for it."

"We?" Pandora raised her eyebrows.

"My team," Harry clarified. "I never had the pleasure of meeting you."

"And yet here you are," Pandora stepped back to give him room to enter.

"Thank you," Harry inclined his head and moved inside the wards.

There was a slight tingle on his skin that told him his intent was being scanned. Those with the goal to harm, maim, or pressure would experience a spike of pain until they left the area.

"Would you like something to drink?" Pandora began to walk to the house without looking back.

"Yes, please," Harry stayed a polite distance behind her.

Harry took a seat at their kitchen table as she began to make tea by hand rather than magic. She noticed him watching and nodded.

"I don't use magic when preparing potions or food," she explained. "There is an element of intent that is lost in the distance."

Harry nodded.

"Why did you come here?" Pandora asked as she put the water on to boil.

"The cluster of wands in your cloak does not inspire confidence."

"I'm having one commissioned," Harry explained. "Those are for just in case I need a wand before then."

"Or if you need to do some dastardly deeds," she added.

"That too," Harry chuckled. "That isn't why I'm here."

"The wards told me that," Pandora continued to prepare the tea.

Harry pretended not to notice the addition of *Foeniculum* powder. The herb, commonly known as fennel, was good for drawing out the truth without being as harsh as other methods.

"Honey?" She asked as she set the cups on the table.

"Thank you," Harry nodded.

Pandora added the honey and stirred it up. She watched him over the rim of her cup as she took a sip. Harry followed suit without pause. One benefit of the basilisk venom was being immune to lesser poisons, which covered everything except for more venom. Possibly. He was curious, but not enough to put the theory into practice.

"Why have you come here?" Pandora asked once more.

Harry could feel the *Foeniculum* loosen his tongue.

"I wanted to speak with you," Harry didn't fight the pull. "Something went wrong in my travel. Most of my preparations and plans won't work. Your daughter is one of the few people I would speak with in these types of situations."

"Daughter," Pandora smiled softly. "But we never met."

Her expression dropped after a moment. He could see the woman work the information over, solving it like a puzzle.

"Survived the war to die after," Pandora whispered.

"In a timeline that doesn't exist," Harry countered.

Pandora nodded. The two sat in silence as she gathered herself once more. Harry gave her space and focused on the tea. He had fallen out of the habit of drinking it, swapping over to imported French coffee once the project started. Fleur had spoiled him for any other sort.

Damn. He would have to approach a Veela Enclave to get a decent cup of coffee. How hard would it be to travel internationally? The closest one he knew of was in France, which was the same one that Apolline was from. It had been almost a hundred years since there had been a Veela Enclave in Britain. It would be a hard sell even if he could make the trip. A lone wizard showing up uninvited to an Enclave asking for coffee sounded like the start of a bad joke.

"Where is your husband?" Harry asked trying to get himself back in the moment.

"Sweden," Pandora answered. "He's searching for a proto-gnome."

"Proto-gnome?" Harry asked.

"The ancestor of the common gnome," Pandora explained. "He is trying to determine if they were an intelligent species rather than a pest."

Harry nodded. It didn't sound as outlandish as the excursions Luna told him about, but it was still a bit of a stretch. Gnomes were basically bipedal gophers.

"I ask once more," Pandora put her cup down. "Why are you here?"

"As I said, I need your help to come up with a new plan," Harry replied.

"You'll need to tell me more than that," Pandora held his gaze.

He didn't feel her testing his mental defenses, but that didn't mean much if she was anything like Luna.

"The original plan was to arrive around fifteen years later than this," Harry motioned to the world around them. "The details don't really matter with the changes I've already made. Basically, I was going to end the war and replace the Ministry. Starting out, I would be a king until I could gather a competent group to lead the country into the future."

"You don't strike me as a Dark Lord," Pandora smiled at him.

"Thank you," Harry toasted her with the teacup. "The country was a few years away from completely vanishing. Issues started in this war, were never handled, and magical Britain was a backwater island compared to

the rest of the world." He took another sip. "The Ministry was corrupt, bogged down by prejudice, and the Minister was only concerned with maintaining their position. I saved the country at least once a year since I started Hogwarts. The people swapped between painting me as their savior to proclaiming me a madman or the next Dark Lord."

"What of Dumbledore?" Pandora asked.

"Dead," Harry replied. "Before that, he had plans that he didn't share with others. They didn't include taking direct action in most of the conflicts until it was too late."

Pandora nodded. Her eyes went distant as she took in his words.

"Why won't your plans work now?" She asked.

"Taking over the country isn't a bloodless process. It won't just be Death Eaters that oppose me. I don't want my parents to think I'm just another Dark Lord," Harry admitted.

"Are you certain that you aren't?" Pandora asked.

"I hope not," Harry shrugged. "I could say it's the best option, but every warlord thinks that way."

"Hm," she tapped the edge of the teacup with her fingers. "That is quite a predicament."

"Thoughts?" Harry asked.

"Deal with the Dark Lord publicly," Pandora answered. "Once he is gone you can use the fame to start your conquest. You will have to deal with Dumbledore and his followers in some way. The victory will win some of them over to your side."

Harry nodded.

"I'm worried that my parents won't be among them," Harry said softly.

"There are two ways that will solve that puzzle," Pandora offered. "Join Dumbledore's Order or tell your parents the truth."

"Simple as that?" Harry asked with a dry chuckle.

"Simple as that," Pandora nodded.

Harry contemplated her words as he finished his tea. Pandora let him have his silence to think.

"Thank you for the tea," Harry said. "And the conversation."

"You are welcome," Pandora gave him a kind smile. "Tell me about my daughter."

"Gladly," Harry smiled at her.

8.

Harry adjusted the cuff of his right sleeve again for at least the tenth time in the last minute. He had opted for a charcoal gray long-sleeved dress shirt and black gloves rather than rely on a glamour. His cufflinks and lapel pin were emerald, green to match his eyes. He tried for a more casual look but wasn't sure how successful he had been. In an effort to appear less stuffy he had ditched his cloak. On the muggle side of the world, he could blend in easily with a high-class crowd. It didn't feel right to wear jeans or another more casual option for pants and he refused to swap over to sneakers once his custom fit shoes were complete.

He took a deep breath, let it out, and strode into the Ministry. The conversation with Pandora had been rather enlightening. Both parts of it. Talking about Luna made him realize how much he had loved the girl. Maybe not romantically, but she was someone incredibly special to him. It sparked a deep ache for the all of the people he would never see again. He had to keep telling himself that they would grow up in a better world than the previous version. The best he could hope for was to see these versions of them happy and safe.

The conversation also made him face the truth. He had no inclination to join the Order. Dumbledore had lost his faith. The wizard was powerful, intelligent, and had a way with people. Unfortunately, that did not mean he was the best fit for leading a 'secret' resistance. Dumbledore wasn't going to relinquish control easily. The man liked to be the one in control.

His plan to replace the Ministry with a functioning system would put him at odds with the old goat. Potentially his parents as well. He absolutely refused to fight them, which meant his only option was talking to them.

Harry strode to the elevators. He got a couple of inquisitive looks as he selected the floor for the Auror Office. It was the best place he could think of to find James Potter. He made it to the door of the bullpen before his mental shields cracked.

James Potter stood beside Frank Longbottom and Amelia Bones going over case files. A couple of desks over stood Sirius who was blatantly flirting with a witch Harry had only seen in photos. Marlene McKinnon was a woman that Sirius had dated. She also died in one of the Familicide assaults that Voldemort loved in the first war.

"Oi, Potter," someone yelled.

"Yes?" Harry and James answered at the same time.

James followed the other voice to find Harry.

"Looks like you've got a visitor," Frank motioned for James.

"Sweet Merlin, Prongs," Sirius joined James as they approached. "You weren't kidding about the family resemblance."

"Lord Potter," Harry inclined his head.

"Mister Potter," James replied. "What brings you here?"

"I was hoping to speak with you," Harry answered.

He really wished his voice didn't tremor when he spoke.

"You and Lady Potter, if possible," Harry added after a moment. "As you said, there aren't many Potters running around anymore."

James and Sirius shared a silent conversation. It pulled at his heart to see the two together. His time with Sirius had been limited and he only caught glimpses of the man in front of him.

"I'll need to speak with my wife to arrange a time," James finally answered.

"Thank you," Harry inclined his head once more. "Feel free to send an owl or stop by. I'm staying at the Three Broomsticks until I've settled on a place of my own."

"Being around Rosie helps too, eh?" Sirius teased.

Harry chuckled as he shrugged.

"I should have an answer for you by the end of the day," James said. "Is that all?"

"Yes," Harry replied. "Thank you."

Harry stepped away and returned to the elevator. It didn't arrive nearly as fast as he had hoped it would. He ignored the subtle glances sent his way on the ride down. His steps were sure and steady as he strolled out of the Ministry. He stepped out and raised his wand.

Somehow the Knight Bus arrived without running anyone over. Harry paid for a ride to Hogsmeade and rented a room for the rest of the month. Finding a place of his own could wait until after he had an idea of his further path.

It was too early to retire. He was too wired even if it was. Harry decided to take a walk around the village to work off some energy. He noticed the large black dog in the nearby alley once he stepped outside. Padfoot followed him through his tour of the village stores. Harry made sure to spend plenty of time in the bookstore. It wasn't just for show, there were gaps in his knowledge of the time period. He couldn't allow his plans to fail simply because he overlooked some tiny detail. Unfortunately, the store did not carry back issues of the Daily Prophet, Quibbler, or any of the International Newspapers for sale. The clerk looked at him like he had grown a second head when he had asked. Even then, he left the bookstore with quite the haul.

Padfoot was waiting for him when he stepped out into the street. Harry ducked into a small deli that didn't exist in the future. He purchased a big turkey leg that was cooked to perfection. The spices were subtle as to not aggravate sensitive taste-buds like those belonging to a dog, or canine animagus.

Harry walked over to where Padfoot waited. The animagus watched him approach with a cold stare. Harry clicked his tongue to call the dog closer. Padfoot didn't move. Then Harry unwrapped the turkey leg from the paper wrap. He held it out to Padfoot and waited.

The dog took a couple of careful steps closer. He lunged the final distance, snatched the leg, and dashed back out of reach. Padfoot wagged his tail so fast it blurred.

"There you go, boy," Harry spoke in a soft voice reserved for animals. "No tags."

Padfoot didn't look up from the turkey leg. The animagus let out a little woof in reply.

"You're too handsome to be a stray," Harry said moving closer. "Are you lost?"

Padfoot puffed up a bit at the compliment.

"Well behaved, healthy, and smart enough to recognize a compliment," Harry stood straight as he spoke. "Are you someone's familiar?"

Padfoot kept an eye on him as he continued to chew on the leg.

"No," Harry muttered, putting on a show of working it out. "You wouldn't wander so far from your partner." He paused. "You've been following me since I got to Hogsmeade."

Padfoot stiffened.

"Animagus," Harry stated. "Please don't run, I'd rather not force a transformation in public. Plus, you'd cause a scene once the sleeping potion I doused that turkey leg with kicks in."

Padfoot dropped the leg. He leaped back, staring from the discarded food to Harry. The dog let out a little growl in warning. Harry broke and he started to laugh. Padfoot glared at him, huffed, and snatched the remaining turkey leg from where it dropped.

"Why would you be following me?" Harry wondered out loud.

Padfoot huffed but didn't give any further information.

"Fine," Harry said waving a dismissive hand at the dog. "Go report to your master. Just know, I'll kill you the next time we meet if you work for that half-blood with delusions of grandeur."

That caused Padfoot to drop the turkey leg and stare at him.

"That's right," Harry said looking down at the dog. "Your master isn't some ancient Lord. He's the son of a squib and a muggle doused with love potions. Tell him I know, and I'm coming for him."

Harry strode away with purpose. Did he need to put on such a show? Not really, but it was fun. It would give them something to talk about and make it clear he wasn't a Death Eater.

~§~

Harry woke up the next day to the tapping at his window. He stumbled over to the sound to let in the owl. It dropped the letter then stared at him expectantly. Harry plucked a treat from his pocket and tossed one to the owl. The owl snatched it out of the air then flew away without another look back.

Mister Potter,

Your request for a meeting with Lord and Lady Potter has been accepted. This letter will act as a Port Key at precisely Eleven AM for a period of five minutes. Please be aware that in the current climate it is best to keep your wand, or any other personal items, in their place.

With Kind Regards,

Remus Lupin

Steward of House Potter

Harry smiled at the letter. They had made Remus steward. Good for him. Apparently, the reveal of Pettigrew as a Death Eater eased a lot of rough edges. Personally, he would have had a nice little chat with some laced tea just to be safe. Veritaserum was a controlled substance, but there were other concoctions out there that served the same function without raising alarm. The alternatives weren't as powerful and could easily be fought off

by someone with rudimentary mental defense. On the plus side, his favorite mixture of magic herbs was nearly tasteless and didn't cause the sort of fugue state that Veritaserum did. It simply helped loosen the tongue.

That gave him a couple of hours to get ready. He took a shower, got dressed, and had breakfast while on autopilot. His instincts made it hard to truly relax. These disconnected moments were the closest he got when he wasn't somewhere he considered safe. A life of conflict didn't leave him untouched.

He had enough awareness about him to keep an eye out for trouble, but not enough to hold a conversation. Madam Rosemerta was busy that morning, so he didn't have to worry about accidentally ignoring her. She was always good for a bit of company if the place wasn't busy. He wasn't sure if he was just that lucky or if it was something she did with all of her customers. She deserved some time off her feet regardless of the reasoning.

Hogsmeade was just waking up and he made it to the Apparation Point easily. Diagon Alley, however, was already on the go. There wasn't much for him to do until meeting Lord and Lady Potter, he had to think of them like that rather than his parents to stay sane. It also reminded him to stay on his toes. Either his passage back in time had caused some unexpected ripples, or he didn't know nearly as much as he had thought he did about the past. No one ever mentioned that his father had taken the Potter Lordship. In fact, he was pretty sure people had told him that it didn't happen. Harry didn't think this was an alternate dimension. He got the impression that Death would have mentioned something about it if that had happened.

Muriel Krauss had already opened her shop. There were a couple of customers milling about when he arrived. Harry chuckled to himself. He had the sneaking suspicion that they were all here for the variety of less-than-legal services Muriel provided.

The shop had a wonderful detection charm targeted for Auror badges specifically. There was a small music box on the counter that played a

looping selection of songs. It would swap from sounding like a woodwind instrument to a string version when a badge was detected. Muriel had shown it to him and Hermione one evening after some drinks. That was also the night he learned that she had a beautiful singing voice. Dancing, unfortunately for his feet, was not a skill she could claim.

"Good morning, Muriel," Harry called as he approached her.

"Mister Potter," she replied.

The look she gave to him was not a pleased one. She glared as he came to a stop in front of her, seemingly without a care in the world.

"Is my order complete?" He asked cheerfully. "Wonderful music box by the way. Is that a flute or clarinet?"

"I never asked," she replied narrowing her eyes. "Your order is ready."

She withdrew a simple wooden box from under the counter and placed it in front of him. He removed the lid without bothering to see if the other customers were watching. The iron rod had a silver filigree that ran the length. A charge popped

"The price includes the silver," Muriel spoke before he could. "The material needs a binding medium to ensure the core is stable. While ornate, the pattern allows the core to flow through the entire wand rather than simply along the center."

"I would love to talk about wand crafting with you," Harry said twirling the wand along his fingers. "You do amazing work. It's lighter than I expected."

"I take pride in my work," Muriel said through gritted teeth.

"As well you should," Harry smiled. "Until next time."

Harry flourished the wand, finishing the motion by sliding it into his wrist holster, then he turned and walked out of the store without another word. The other two could decide if the wand he had just picked up was legal or not. Either way, they would probably spend at least another ten to twenty minutes milling around the store until they made their move. He would need to send Muriel a nice bottle of alcohol as an apology.

He whistled a little tune as he strolled back down the street to Diagon. Malfoy had plenty of top-shelf booze that he had grabbed before locking down the manor. It would take a few minutes to identify the poison ones. His progress stalled when he caught sight of a familiar witch.

Andromeda and Bellatrix Black weren't twins, but they might as well have been. The main difference, aside from the penchant for torture and bloodlust, was their hair. Andromeda took care of hers, giving it a nice shine and bounce that would make Muggle women seethe. On the other hand, Bellatrix treated her hair as an annoyance. Harry had thought that the time in Azkaban had played a part in her style, hair and clothing, but that clearly wasn't the case.

Bellatrix, flanked by the Lestrangle brothers, strutted down the center of Diagon Alley. People scuttled out of the way. It gave him pause. For some reason he didn't expect to see known Death Eaters out in public. He guessed it made sense. What was the point in cowing the country if you couldn't walk down the street?

Well, he did have a couple of hours to kill before his meeting with his parents. Not to mention he had a lot of nervous energy to work off. Now he just had to figure out how to get to them without causing absolute chaos and needless collateral damage. They hadn't noticed him yet and there was enough crowd cover to avoid them.

Logically, Harry knew he should walk away, or just keep them in sight without engaging. There was the possibility that he could recruit her. She was one of Voldemort's heavy hitters, turning her to his side would be a boon. It had been years since Sirius had died, technically, he was still alive. She could be his weapon to wield against Voldemort and his minions.

His train of thought ground to a halt as the trio laid eyes on him. The two brothers didn't give him a second look, but Bellatrix gained a feral edge to her gaze. The very same look that was in her eyes when she had killed Sirius. All of the calculation and strategy vanished. Years of grief, anger, and loss bubbled up inside of him.

Bellatrix recognized the fire in his eyes. She let out a loud cackle as she drew her wand. A blast of fire launched through the air at him.

Unfortunate people in the path found themselves covered in flame. The Lestrage brothers had their wands out and unleashed a barrage of spells a moment after her. They weren't aiming at him, just anyone nearby. The only small positive in the situation was that the trio weren't using the Killing Curse. Instead, they stuck to ones that caused swathes of damage and chaos. A fleeting thought along the back of his mind wondered if this had been their aim all along.

Harry from years ago would have tried to protect the people, raising shields to block spells, and transfiguring the environment as physical barriers. Time spent hunting down Death Eaters, having his arm explode, and the multiple horrors that he came across had changed him. The people could take care of themselves. They had the tools and should have had a couple of simple spells to make a shield. Instead, they ran around panicking and causing the situation to get worse.

He froze the fire as it got close. It halted in place, still burning, just hanging in the air. Harry turned it back to Bellatrix. He kept the fire frozen, turning it into something akin to molten glass shards only with the mass that came with the material.

Bellatrix dodged the incoming fire, giggling as she moved. One of the Lestrage brothers caught the spell. The shards of fire tore through his exposed flesh and ignited his clothes. Harry hadn't cared to learn either of their names. They were supposedly accomplished duelists and had killed a few Aurors. The Lestrage not on fire stopped aiming at the people and began to try to save his brother.

Harry created an Air Whip and snapped it at the trio. It was a modified version of the Flame Whip that Voldemort liked to use. The spell was rather versatile and could seamlessly swap to the other elements. Air, while not as flashy, had the added bonus of being nearly invisible. Unfortunately, the wand motion was still the same regardless of the element.

Being one of Voldemort's Inner Circle meant that Bellatrix was familiar with the spell. She leaped out of the path, coming to a stop behind a lamp post. The Lestrage not on fire was not as lucky. His head was separated from his

shoulders before he knew he was dead. The other rolled along the ground to try to put out the flame himself.

It was just the two of them now. The people in the street had cleared out. It also looked like a couple of the stores had put up some sort of protective shields. That didn't remove the corpses in the street, but it would reduce the total number.

Bellatrix hit one of the bodies with a spell that sent a web of electricity along its limbs. The corpse lurched. It moved in jerky motions as it rose to its feet. Harry flicked his wand at it, grounding the magical electricity, draining the body of the force mobilizing it. It was amazing how many aspects of science carried over.

Harry snapped his wand back, transfiguring a clump of splinters into a cloud of sewing needles and sent them rocketing at Bellatrix. Her eyes widened. She yanked the still-burning Lestrage in front of her, saving herself and ending the wizard.

The momentary interruption in line of sight allowed her to use his own trick against him, with her own flair. She tore a strip of the charred cloak from the now-dead Lestrage, transfigured it into a ragged shard of stone, and launched it at him. It changed to a snake as it got close to him.

Harry smirked as he caught the snake without a care.

§Kill her.§ He ordered sending it back to her.

Bellatrix froze as he spoke the language of snakes. She recovered in time to dodge the flying snake.

"Who are you?" She screamed as she put up a shield.

"The True Heir of Slytherin," Harry growled as he strode toward her.

Her forehead scrunched in confusion at his words. The wand in her hand was still pointed directly at him, but she couldn't concentrate. This wizard she had mistaken for that damned Potter had swiftly killed Rabastan and Rodolphus without a second thought. Rabastan was dead before the needles silenced his pitiful cries. Potter was too much of a good-boy to do

such a thing. To further complicate matters, he was a Parseltongue. A blessing only the descendants of Slytherin could claim.

Any further words were interrupted by the sound of multiple pops signaling the arrival of the Aurors. She winced at a sting in her calf but paid no heed to it. Bellatrix glared at him, then popped away, leaving him alone in the street.

Harry smiled as the summoned snake slithered back over to him. He leaned over, allowing the Black Mamba to slide up his arm and rest across his shoulders. The snake preened.

§Good girl.§ Harry gently stroked its head.

It lowered its head, closed its eyes, and reverted to a strip of charred cloth. Harry sighed and shook his head.

Aurors took in the scene, their wands instantly snapped to point at him. Harry held up his hands. His wand pointed away from the Aurors while held almost daintily between his thumb and index finger.

"Drop the wand!" One Auror yelled.

"Of course," Harry did as instructed.

Muriel was no fool. She knew that if one of her wands were confiscated it would lead back to her. There were only so many wand makers in the country. Even less that could produce such quality work. The wand vanished before it dropped lower than his waist. Instead, one of the disposable wands he had purchased clattered to the ground. The iron and silver slipped into a self-contained pocket of storage that was popular with wizards in the 1800s that had fallen out of style. Mostly because it took considerably longer to draw than a standard wrist holster or inner-robe pocket. Putting a wand away, however, was much faster.

"You?" Amelia Bones asked as she strode over to him.

"Me," Harry smiled.

"Anything you can tell me about this before we take you in for questioning?" She asked.

A couple of Aurors I didn't know flanked her. One held magic suppressing cuffs. He put his hands out in front of him to make it easier.

"I claim the Lestrangle Lordship by right of conquest," He announced.

The charred body shifted. Its arm flopped out from underneath it. A slightly less gaudy ring disappeared from the burned finger and appeared on Harry's. Amelia stared at him for a moment. She shook her head and motioned for the Auror holding the cuffs to move forward.

Cleaning out another Death Eater vault was always a good thing. He could always use more money. The fact that it meant Voldemort wouldn't have it anymore was a bonus.

The Auror cuffed him while another picked up the wand.

"Yew with a Wampus Cat Hair core," the Auror that held it said.

Amelia gave him a flat look. Harry shrugged.

~§~

Harry sat in the interrogation room alone. He had been there for a good twenty minutes without anyone coming in yet. His time running raids with the Aurors had given him plenty of experience with their methods. They hadn't removed the cuffs, which meant they considered him dangerous.

As per standard operating procedure, two Aurors entered the room. He recognized both of them. Harry nodded at them in greeting.

"Auror Moody, Auror Bones," Harry said calmly.

"Quite the scene you made," Moody clanked as he stalked around the room. "Ten dead and fourteen injured. Two of which needed to be sent to St. Mungo's."

Harry nodded.

"Anything you want to tell us, Lord Lestrangle?" Amelia spoke up.

Harry let out a soft chuckle.

"I was in Diagon Alley and saw a woman that seemed to recognize me," He said. "People have been doing that a lot lately. A moment later, her and

two companions started to cast spells. They didn't seem all that bothered about all the people around. One of them tried to roast me with some fire. I, like any sane person, didn't want that to happen, so I fought back."

"Fought back?" Moody snapped. "We have witnesses that say you killed two of them and sent the other running."

"She ran because your people arrived," He countered. "I don't blame you lot for being late. Time is hard to gauge in the thick of things. You know how it is."

"And you do?" Moody glared at him.

"I've had an interesting life," Harry shrugged.

"Such as?" Amelia spoke.

"Nothing to do with this event," Harry replied evenly.

"You knew the two wizards enough to claim their Lordship," Amelia continued. "Strange that."

"I recognized the head," Harry flashed her a sly smile. "It was focused on other things until then."

The two Aurors stared at him for a moment. Silence stretched on as they waited for him to say something more. It was amazing how effective the technique could be. Most people felt a need to talk simply to fill the silence. Harry looked from one to the other in expectation.

"Am I under arrest?" Harry asked.

"You killed two marked Death Eaters," Moody said.

"Not to mention the lives you saved," Amelia added with a short glare at Moody.

Harry held up his hands for them to unlock the cuffs. Amelia tapped the metal. They dropped to the table with a loud clank.

"Do you know what time it is?" Harry asked.

"Ten 'til Eleven," Moody answered.

"Thanks," Harry replied. "I've got an appointment that I don't want to miss."

The two led me out of the back into the public area. Aside from Moody and Amelia, he didn't recognize any of the other Aurors in the office.

"You did good," Amelia said as Harry started toward the elevator. "There aren't many people who will stand and fight. No one wants to admit it, but we're at war."

"Losing, more like," Moody growled.

"Your little club isn't doing any better than the Ministry," Amelia countered.

Harry stole a quick look at Amelia. She seemed a little annoyed at Moody but didn't say anything. Apparently, the Order wasn't a 'secret' as people made it out to be. Amelia pinched the bridge of her nose.

"We're fighting," Moody narrowed his eyes at her. "That's more than some."

"Well," Harry clapped his hands. "It was nice to see you again. I need to get somewhere that I can safely use a Port Key. Is there an area for that in the building?"

He knew full well that there was a spot on each level just for such a thing. Letting them know he had that information, and the fact that he could walk through the Auror department blindfolded -fire whiskey, overstaffing, and a slow shift led to some very stupid choices- would not do him any favors.

"This way," Amelia said motioning him to follow.

Harry followed after. They didn't speak. It felt like she wanted to say something, but didn't Harry wasn't going to press. He had other things to worry about. The meeting with his parents was now in the forefront in his mind.

~§~

Bellatrix stumbled through the mansion. Her thoughts were hard to gather. She knew she needed to tell the Dark Lord about what had happened. He

had been elsewhere when she had arrived. She took her frustration out on some low blood recruit that looked at her.

It had been over an hour now. All she could do was walk around the manor, waiting for the Dark Lord to return. The day had started out fine. Her master had given her something special to keep safe. Rodolphus had said their family vault was the best place for it. The fact that those disgusting creatures would be unknowingly further the noble cause.

They hadn't planned on terrorizing the people in Diagon Alley, but the opportunity was too good to pass up when she had seen Potter. He wasn't wearing his Auror robes and appeared alone. A perfect little gift for the Dark Lord that had fallen into her lap. She would deliver the blood traitors' head to earn his praise.

Then she met those emerald eyes. They were beautiful, the color of her masters' favorite spell. She recognized the rage and hatred in them as well. This wasn't James Potter, she didn't know who he was, but she knew a killer when she saw one. She shivered at the memory of those eyes burning into her own with the all-consuming need to kill.

Bellatrix knew people thought she was mad. She probably was a little, but that didn't mean she was a fool. This wizard that claimed to be the True Heir of Slytherin was dangerous. Rodolphus and Rabastan had killed as many Aurors and traitors as she had. Combined, at least.

He fought like a nightmare made flesh. Not once did he bother with the worthless chattel in the street. His sole focus was on killing her. It sparked a fire within her. She wanted to track him down, not only for the chance to fight him once more, but to punish him for slandering her Dark Lord.

Bellatrix stumbled a couple of steps. She reached out to brace herself. Her eyes blinked rapidly as she tried to clear the blurriness from her vision. She focused on putting one foot in front of the other. Her legs went out from under her. She clawed back to her feet.

There was something she needed to tell her master. First, she just needed a little sleep. No one bothered her as she trudged through the halls. She

moved in circles, making the same turns repeatedly. The few Death Eaters that would approach her were elsewhere.

Finally, she found a chair to rest, completely unaware that she had walked by the room at least four times already. Bellatrix dropped into the seat. She leaned her head back and closed her eyes.

Voldemort arrived an hour later. By then the Black Mamba venom had done its work. Bellatrix Lestrange nee Black was no more.

– NOTE – The wand storage is from Hogwarts Legacy.

– NOTE #2 – Apologies for the lateness. Illness knocked me flat for a few days. I had a completely different version of this chapter as well. It didn't feel right, so I rewrote it a couple of times.

9.

Harry closed his eyes as the Port Key activated. He felt the familiar pull begin to ease and braced himself for a landing. Even after all these years he hated most Magical versions of transportation. Port Keys were the least objectionable, but they still were uncomfortable. He did eventually become accustomed to Apparation. That didn't make it a pleasant experience.

He opened his eyes to see that he was standing in the entryway to a stately building. It didn't have any homey touches which made him think this was a location set aside for official meetings. He was a little disappointed they hadn't decided to speak with him at their home, but it made sense. Still, this wasn't a place he recognized. That meant they weren't in the Ministry or a private room at Gringotts. The décor was tasteful, if a little cold, which made him think it was a place of business rather than part of a manor. There were dozens of places like this for backroom deals, and there were probably more now since they hadn't been destroyed in the war just yet.

The sound of shoes clicking on the polished tile floor snapped him out of his train of thought. A younger, and much healthier, version of Remus Lupin approached. The scars on the side of his face were missing, his clothes were in good condition, and he didn't look half-starved. Honestly, even after all these years Harry had mixed thoughts about Remus. The werewolf had been a friend to his parents, supposedly one of his fathers' best friends, but hadn't contacted Harry until the Sirius' escape. Even then he had waited months before saying anything. They hadn't spent enough time together to have a real connection. Harry could understand not contacting him while he was a child. Not only was Remus a werewolf, but he had just lost the most important people in his life. Saying he went on a downward spiral was an understatement.

Harry hid a small smirk when he noticed Sirius quietly lurking a few steps behind Remus. A layer of shimmer told him that the animagus had on the invisibility cloak. As Death had said, the Hallows would not work against him. It would be too much to let them know he could see through it.

"Mister Potter," Remus drew the words out as he studied the green-eyed wizard.

"Mister Lupin, I presume?" Harry asked.

Remus nodded.

"Please turn over your wand as well as any sort of weapon you have," Remus said snapping back into his professional voice.

Harry drew his iron wand. He considered it for a moment, seeing the swirl of silver along the length. Slowly, as to not cause undue stress, he took off the glove on his natural hand and wrapped it around grip before handing it over.

"Careful of the silver," Harry said as he held it out to Remus.

The werewolf narrowed his eyes, but didn't say anything. Harry held up a hand to stop the other man from stepping away. He then removed the collection of Yew with a Wampus Cat Hair core wands. Remus stared at him for a long moment. Harry shrugged with an unapologetic smile on his face.

"Anything else?" Remus asked in a tired voice.

Harry thought for a moment. He did a quick pat-down of his pockets to make sure he hadn't forgotten anything. The artifacts he had looted from the Malfoy horde had been placed in his new vault. He hadn't had time to track down the current incarnation of his weapons' dealer yet. Most likely it was under the purvey of the same group, but he still needed to make contact.

He unlatched his cloak, folded it over his arm, and offered it to Remus.

"It's not a weapon," Harry said. "Just feel like a prick wearing it when I don't need to."

Remus coughed to cover the snort of laughter from Sirius. Now, Harry could have easily fit in with a Muggle crowd. His black two-piece suit was expertly tailored and made from exotic materials, but it wouldn't draw any extra attention other than admiring the craftsmanship. He unbuttoned the jacket to allow for a wider range of motion as he waited.

"Is that all?" Remus asked once more.

"Yes," Harry nodded.

Remus sent a quick glance at the hand that still had a glove on it. Harry was not going to start that line of questioning yet.

"Follow me," Remus turned and motioned for Harry. "How did you know about the silver?"

"Oh, the werewolf thing?" Harry asked.

Remus did a good job of not reacting. Sirius moved to position himself behind Harry and off to the side.

"Yes, the werewolf thing," Remus replied with a sigh.

"The scars on your hands," Harry said. "Teeth marks, not quite fangs, but close. You've kept good control of your wolf, most have more scarring."

"Thank you," Remus said stiffly. "Lord and Lady Potter are meeting you in a secure location. I'm sure you understand the current situation."

"Death Eater attacks that wipe out entire family lines," Harry said. "Yes, I understand."

"You're rather cavalier about it," Remus didn't bother turning around as he spoke.

"I just had an interesting conversation with a few of them," Harry stated like he was commenting on the weather.

That made Remus finally come to a stop. His entire body was tense as he turned to face Harry.

"Relax," Harry rolled his eyes. "They're dead."

Remus raised his eyebrows in a silent question.

"They started causing chaos in Diagon," Harry explained. "I stopped them. End of story."

"You killed three Death Eaters on your own?" Remus asked.

"That's what I said," Harry nodded. "Can we continue? Talk to Auror Moody if you want more."

"I will," Remus stated.

"Goody," Harry motioned for Remus to move. "Let's go."

Remus grumbled but did as instructed. Sirius' steps had a stiff sound to them now. The wizard walked heel-toe and pushed off at the end of each step to be ready to move if it came to that. Harry had to stifle a sigh. He was nervous enough without having to worry about all this mess too.

They stopped in front of a set of double-doors. He could feel the magic rolling off from it. Privacy wards, anti-animagus, anti-glamour, and at least six other recognizable ones as well as a couple that he didn't know mixed in. Whoever did this was a true master. Remus opened the doors and stepped aside. The room beyond the door was obscured with a veil of mist that deadened the sound and completely blocked.

The werewolf waited for Harry to go first. He shrugged and stepped through the veil into the room beyond. His feet refused to move once he saw the two people waiting for him, but not due to any sort of enchantment

Lily Potter stood in the middle of the room staring right back at him. He had seen his father before. Most of the stories that he had heard were about James Potter. The few things he knew about his mother was that she was an amazing witch. She was smart, caring, and didn't back down in what she believed. Still, pictures and stories had not prepared him to actually meet her.

Her wand snapped up and she sent a barrage of spells at him. Harry couldn't dodge them if he wanted. His subconscious recognized that they weren't meant to cause harm. Unfortunately, he didn't have enough focus to actually identify what they were.

"Who are you?" Lily spoke with steel in her voice.

"Harry Potter," he replied on instinct.

"Cute," Lily replied. "Sit down and tell me the truth."

Harry nodded. He took a seat and waited for his parents to do the same. Some of his senses came back under his control. He had not expected such a reaction from seeing his mother. The sound of soft footsteps caught his attention. A quick glance out of the corner of his eye told him that Sirius had joined them. The animagus was positioned at an angle behind him. If Harry had hostile intentions he would have to practically turn his back to his parents to attack Sirius.

"Please," Harry said after a moment to gather himself. "The story I have is a long one. I will do my best to answer your questions, but I ask that you save them until I am finished. This is harder than I expected."

"Fine," Lily said simply.

"Tea?" James offered as a serving tray appeared on the table between them. "I find it helps get the words out."

"Thank you," Harry said.

Harry served himself a cup, added a bit of sugar, and then took a sip. He hid a smile as he tasted the slight tang of Veritaserum. It wasn't enough to make him a glassy-eyed zombie, but it would definitely help get the words out. Contrary to popular belief Occlumency was not a perfect defense against the truth serum. A witch or wizard had to prepare their mental shields to fight it. A situation such as this, where it was done stealthily, would make it obvious that a person was using Occlumency. In the future, Harry had become something of a legend. They said he could resist Veritaserum with hardly a thought and had mental shields without equal. In truth, he had a good sense of taste and absolutely hated the idea of someone rooting around inside his head. Years of sharing a connection with Voldemort made him have his Occlumency always at the ready to keep his thoughts to himself. He could have resisted the potion but decided against it.

James made a motion for him to start.

"The larger story begins with a boy named Tom Riddle," Harry began.

He went on to tell them about Tom discovering the Chamber of Secrets, the death of Myrtle Warren, Hagrid getting the blame, and then Riddle's

life after Hogwarts which covered travels across the world as well as the creation of the horcruxes, becoming a Dark Lord, and gathering minions to his cause. He paused once he finished the first part of his tale.

"Tom Riddle is the Dark Lord," James muttered. "There's a taboo on his name."

"Dark Lord is a title earned through horrible deeds acknowledged by magic," Lily explained the use of the term. "That was interesting, but what does this have to do with you?"

"My part of the story begins on the night my parents were murdered," Harry said, he took a breath to steady his nerves. "October thirty-first in the year nineteen-eighty-one, James and Lily Potter were betrayed and murdered."

His parents stared at him in confusion. Harry used that moment to begin telling them the story of his life. He told them about Pettigrew being the secret keeper and his betrayal, how Sirius was blamed and wrongfully imprisoned, and then Dumbledore placing him with the Dursleys. The years before Hogwarts were summarized to save time, but each school year was explained in detail. Once that portion of the story was complete he moved to life after the war. He mentioned hunting down the remaining Death Eaters, showed them his replaced arm, and explained the time studying as he recovered. James and Lily shared a knowing look when he mentioned the Potter Family Tome as well as the spell he had found. The following years of focus on developing the ritual, the original target date, and subsequent plan were all summarized to speed things along.

Harry paused to brace himself before he continued.

"We used the Hallows to power the ritual," Harry explained. "Obviously, it was successful, kind of, but there was an unexpected development. I met Death and he gave me this." Harry held up the Perevel ring. "As the Master of Death, the Hallows have no effect on me. Which is why I know Sirius is standing slack jawed in the corner over there."

Harry finished his cup of tea. He waited for them to gather their thoughts. As emotionally draining as telling the story had been he still found their

shocked expressions amusing.

"I'm not usually one for tea, but this is nice," Harry said tapping the cup.

Lily studied him for a long, silent stretch of time. Her hand had come to protectively rest on her pregnant belly when his portion of the story began. She had began to rub the bump in soft circles at some point. Harry smiled at the scene; it struck a cord in his heart that he didn't know existed.

"You killed Peter," James said after a moment.

"Lucius Malfoy, Avery, Nott, the Lestrangle brothers, and that explosion in Nocturn Alley was me," Harry paused. "Most likely Bellatrix Lestrangle as well. Unless she managed to get to someone who knew how to negate snake venom."

"You want to set yourself as King?" Lily asked.

"It sounded like the best option at the time," Harry nodded. "The magical community was dying. Hundreds had died in the first war. Entire families were gone, ancient bloodlines and muggle-born alike. The denial of the second war allowed the Death Eaters to kill even more. Muggle-born and Half-blood families fled and had no wish to return. We were going to disappear in twenty years at most. The Death Eaters need to be stopped before they can do more damage. The Ministry is corrupt and ineffective. It needs to be replaced with a system that works."

"That sounds dangerously close to becoming a Dark Lord," Lily said.

"That's why I wanted to talk to you two. I don't want to fight you. Any of your," Harry said motioning to Sirius as well. "I'm going to continue as I planned. I'll end the Death Eater problem, remove the Ministry, and rebuild the country. The Dark Lord won over non-humans by promising them they would be treated like people. Even the 'Light' Purebloods do little to guide or support muggle-born, half-blood, and non-human magical folk."

They sat in silence for a long few moments.

"You're going to need time to think about this," Harry said with a sigh.

He stood. Lily and James drew their wands at the motion. The disembodied arm holding a wand marked Sirius' location to anyone observing. Harry

smiled softly. He held up his hands in the universal gesture of surrender.

"You know how to contact me," Harry said. "I'll wait for a few days to let you discuss this." He waited for a beat. "It was nice to meet you both."

Harry popped away.

The protective wards were wonderful work, but there was a weakness. They were set to protect Lily, James, and the yet unborn Potter baby. The wards considered Harry to be part of that list and didn't stop his travel. Remus was startled as he appeared in front of him. Harry gathered his things with a wave of his hand. He nodded to the werewolf and disappeared again only to appear in the rented room a moment later.

Harry collapsed into the provided chair. It wasn't the most comfortable, but it did the job. He laid his head back and focused on calming his breathing. His heart was thundering in his chest, adrenaline rushed through his system, and he felt like he had spent the last hour fighting for his life.

The meeting went better than he had feared. He closed his eyes tight. It was foolish to think they would welcome him with open arms and believe every word. He really hoped they would contact him again. They weren't going to die this time. This Harry would grow up with both parents. Even if he had to lock them away until his plan was complete.

10.

Harry strode through the doors of Gringotts. He waited patiently until he was able to speak with the goblin at the front desk. There were three types of people that he learned to never disrespect: the people who took care of your money, the people who prepared your food, and healers. Any of them could easily ruin his life in a matter of moments.

"Business?" The goblin asked without looking up from the ledger it was working in.

"New Lord Lestrangle to inspect his vault," Harry stated.

The goblin paused, then fixed him with a glare. Harry held up his hand and showed the new lordship ring. The goblin narrowed his eyes.

"You were previously Lord Malfoy," the goblin said.

"Yes," Harry nodded. "I disowned that title and placed it under full control of Narcissa Malfoy. This is a separate matter."

"Will you be making this a habit?" The goblin continued to glare at him.

"Maybe," Harry replied with a shrug. "It depends on how many Pureblood Lords decide to attack me without provocation. They have the tendency to die when that happens. Who am I to turn down a Right of Conquest?"

A small twitch of the eyebrows was the only hint of a reaction the goblin gave. It was a few moments later when another goblin arrived. This one was visibly confused.

"The summons was for the Lestrangle account," the new goblin stated.

I flashed him the ring. The goblins shared a tired look.

"This way," the account manager grumbled. "What is your business?"

"I want to take a look at my new vault," Harry replied with an amused tint to his voice.

"The former Lord Lestrangle was here earlier today," the goblin snapped.

"And then he attacked me, I killed him, and claimed his title," Harry said as he gave a quirk of his eyebrows. "My next stop will be to the Ministry to

dissolve House Lestrangle, at least this branch of it. I think there might be a few in France."

The goblin said something in their native language. Harry understood just enough to know that it was an impressive string of profanity. Mingled among the tirade was something about paperwork. That was a fate he wouldn't wish on anyone.

"Would it be easier if I was to surrender the title to the next eligible Lestrangle?" Harry asked.

The goblin shot him a look over his shoulder. It glared at him then gave a short nod.

"Let's do that then," Harry stated. "After I get a look at this vault. I would like to see my spoils."

The goblins' mutters eased off the profanity. Unfortunately, his handle on the goblin language wasn't nearly as good with normal conversation. His instruction came from nights of prolonged drinking with Flitwick. The Charms Professor had excellent taste in liquor and could drink enough to kill put three wizards under the table. He learned the hard way to never drink with Filius unless he was prepared to find his exploits on the front page the next morning. More importantly, do not accuse anyone with goblin blood of cheating. Harry had faced death many times but there had only been a few instances where he truly feared for his life. Finding himself at the end of the wand of a disrespected Charms Master and former Dueling Champion was one of those times.

"Wizard," the goblin barked.

Harry snapped out of his memories to find they were at the carts. He slipped into the seat. Apologizing to a goblin was never a good idea. Prove your intent through actions, words were useless. Another lesson learned from Flitwick. His mind began to wonder once more as the cart launched down the tracks. The Lestrangle family was one of the older ones which meant their vault took a minute or two to reach.

He hoped that he wouldn't have to face off against Flitwick. The man was not just an amazing duelist, but Harry counted him as a friend. It would be

a hard fight and one that he honestly didn't want. He wondered if he could become friends with him again. A younger Filius would be an interesting experience. He knew that Filius never joined the Order, but he wasn't going to count on the man staying on the sidelines.

The cart came to a lurching stop. It helped break him out of his thoughts. He waited for the goblin to open the vault. A disappointed sigh escaped his mouth as the interior was revealed. It contained a single item, The Hufflepuff Cup. He couldn't remember if this had been the case last time around. Harry shrugged. He stepped into the vault, hit the cup with the Killing Curse, and then returned to the cart.

"Is this the only Lestrangle Vault?" Harry asked.

"Yes," the goblin stared at him with a complex look on its face. "The previous Lord Lestrangle recently removed the valuables and transferred them to an unknown location."

"Shame," he said with a sigh. "Close the vault or swap it over to the next in line, whichever is easier. I need to disown the Lestrangle Lordship too. Do I do that with you or the Ministry since I'm passing it down the line?"

"I can handle it," the goblin snapped. "I am the account manager."

"Then let's go to your office," Harry said ignoring the tone.

~§~

Lily, James, Sirius, and Remus had relocated to another location. They hadn't settled on where they would stay in the long term. Until then they decided to switch between the many properties the Potters owned. Most magical means of transportation were unavailable to them with this late in Lily's pregnancy. Instead, they used magically enhanced cars. They blended in perfectly with the muggle versions and most Pureblood wizards didn't even think of them as an option.

"He claims to be your son from the future, the tale of the Peverell brothers is true, and that Death herself gave him a boon of protection," Remus stated.

"Don't forget his life story that sounded like that blowhard Lockhart wrote it," Sirius chuckled. "Defeating troll and a possessed Defense professor in his first year." He paused before adding. "Being immune to Veela allure, able to throw off the Imperious, and outflew a dragon too."

"Yes," Lily said as she pinched the bridge of her nose. "That about sums it up."

"The bit about your sister seemed spot on, Lils," James said.

"And you believe him?" Remus asked.

"He had the Peverell ring," James replied. "He knew about the ritual in the Potter Tome and was able to point out where Sirius was positioned."

"The ring could easily be faked," Remus countered. "Sirius forgot to silence his steps or mask his scent."

"And the ritual?" Lily asked.

"He could be a distant Potter relation," Remus answered after a moment. "I won't deny he could pass as James' brother."

"Or son," Sirius cut in.

Remus rolled his eyes.

"Regardless," Remus said with a slight edge in his voice. "He confessed to killing a number of people. The Lestrangle's might have been self-defense, but the others weren't. In case it slipped your minds, you two are Aurors."

"He claimed to be responsible," James countered. "We can't arrest him without proof."

"He wouldn't be the first to try to take credit for the clout," Sirius added.

"The deaths of Malfoy, Nott, and Avery haven't been reported. Don't forget that Pettigrew was splashed on the front page."

"Let's start with what we do know," Lily said. "There hasn't been any word on Malfoy, Nott, or Avery missing or dead. Multiple witnesses and their memories place Avery at the scene in Nocturn Alley earlier today where an explosion killed a large group of suspected Death Eaters. Moody and Bones confirmed his claims of killing the Lestrangle brothers and claiming their

Lordship via Right of Conquest. Eyewitness accounts show Bellatrix fleeing shortly before the Aurors arrived."

"I thought I was the Auror," James teased.

"There's a reason the Unspeakables approached her and not you, Prongs," Sirius said with a broad smile.

"As Sirius stated," Lily continued without commenting on their interruption. "Pettigrew's death was announced in the paper. No one has publicly claimed responsibility for it, so anyone could. The magical signature didn't match anything on file, including the fight in Diagon."

She paused for a moment.

"He claims to be our son," she rested a protective hand on her belly.

"Finally, and most concerning, he stated his intentions were to overthrow the government, place himself as king, and remove the Death Eater threat."

"We should tell Dumbledore," Remus said.

"That's what you always say," Sirius grumbled.

"He leads the Order," Remus replied with a slight edge to his voice. "The same one we all joined, unless your somehow forgot."

"His arm was neat," James spoke up to break the tension.

Remus and Sirius failed to fight off smiles.

"Do we believe him?" Lily asked.

"Does it matter?" Remus countered. "He admitted that his plan was to overthrow the Ministry and become king. There's no such thing as a bloodless coup. It doesn't matter if we believe him or not. In the end we're trading one tyrant for another."

The group sat in silence for a long moment.

"We all know the Ministry is corrupt," Sirius finally said. "I can count the number of honest members of the Wizengamot on my fingers and not need my other hand."

"It's not that bad," Remus rolled his eyes.

"I tell you the Mot is corrupt, and your argument is that it's not that bad?" Sirius snorted. "I thought you were the smart one."

Remus glared at him.

"We aren't getting anywhere," Lily snapped. "James, what do you think?"

"He's dangerous," James said after a moment of thought. "The Ministry does need reformation, he's not wrong about that. The Dark Lord and his minions need to be stopped. As much as I hate to admit it, Dumbledore and the Order aren't enough."

"You're fine with him tearing everything down and starting again with him in charge because the world isn't perfect?" Remus asked. "I still say that we should tell Dumbledore."

Lily glared at Remus. Her wand snapped up at an impressive speed. Remus was hit with a stunner followed by a sleeping spell then lastly obliviate.

"Lils!" Sirius squawked.

"He would have run to Dumbledore the moment he left the room," Lily said silently daring them to argue. "We'll decide on our own."

James gave a single nod in reply.

"Fine," Sirius shook his head. "Just don't scramble my brain too."

Lily woke Remus up. The werewolf rubbed his eyes and tried to subtly wipe some drool from the corner of his mouth.

"Sorry about that," Remus cleared his throat. "What were we talking about?"

~§~

Harry Potter, formerly Lord Malfoy, formerly Lord Lestrangle left Gringotts an hour later with a skip in his step. Finding whoever was the next in line for the Lestrangle Lordship had taken longer than expected. He couldn't just abandon the title unless he wanted to take a trip to the Ministry. Naming an heir or steward was an option that he unfortunately didn't fit his

situation. The reason for his improved mood was the fact that the closest blood relative was a Squib that had been discarded from the family. It didn't erase the stress from the meeting with his parents, but it did help a little.

It was annoying that the Lestrangle fortune had been moved elsewhere. He didn't know how much it had been, but it was more important that it stayed out of Voldemort's hands.

Harry couldn't be too disappointed. That was another Horcrux destroyed. During his days hunting Death Eater remnants, he had done some research on the cursed things. There wasn't a lot of information, even true dark wizards didn't mess with them, but he found some interesting little bits. Seven was the maximum amount that a person could make. Any more than that and the soul would shatter completely. Technically, they would still be alive, but they would be less than a ghost and the body would wither away.

He guessed that there were probably five in total, including the ones he had destroyed, in the current time period. The Gaunt Ring, the Ravenclaw Diadem, the Hufflepuff Cup, the diary, and the Slytherin Locket. He would need to check the cave to see if the locket had been placed yet. Unfortunately, he didn't know exactly when Regulus stole it. He also would need someone to drink the damned potion to get to it too. A wicked smile played across his face as an idea sparked in his mind. There was a pink toad that could do the task splendidly.

Harry strolled through the street until he arrived at the Apparation Point. A quick spin and a pop brought him to the exterior of the cave. The place was dark and dreary even at mid-day. There was a miasma of twisted magic emanating from the cave. He recognized the familiar stain that Voldemort left behind.

He stepped off the stones, forgoing the boat. Rather, his feet hovered a couple of inches above the water. He had worked out how Voldemort flew but could never get the hang of it. The sensation just felt wrong after years on a broom. Instead, he used it to walk on air when the need arose. Or if he wanted to show off a little. He didn't trust walking on the water with the Inferi lurking beneath it.

Walking over the water was significantly faster than the last time he had been here. He made his way to the raised pedestal where the basin rested. There weren't nearly as many Inferi in the waters, but that still didn't mean he was going to take the chance to wake them. He hated the damned things.

Harry stared into the basin at the Locket. He held his hand over the fluid and concentrated. The twisted energy that identified Voldemort's soul was pungent enough for it to be instantly identified. Perfect, he wasn't sure how old Regulus was at the moment, but hopefully this would spare him. Though, a trip to Grimmauld could be interesting. There had to be some interesting items that had been lost during Kreacher's lonely watch. It was also likely that Mundungus snagged a few things before he was caught with the locket. That could wait for another day. He had a trip to the Ministry to find his volunteer.

11.

The twitching form of Dolores Umbridge was curled up in the center of the platform. Harry opened the locket, hit it with the Killing Curse, and then tossed it in the water. It was a shame that he couldn't keep the artifacts intact, but it had to be done. He considered kicking Umbridge into the water for a long moment. Instead, he settled on leaving her there on her own. He could always kill her if she managed to escape alive.

Harry walked out of the cave and continued down the coast. There was only one Horcrux left in this time period. He didn't want to wait until later. Harry vanished once he was a distance away from the cave then appeared outside the Gaunt shack. Even in the daylight it looked dreary. He couldn't imagine this place was ever cheery.

For a brief moment he wondered what would have happened if Tom had had a decent childhood. Would he still have become Voldemort? However, if he followed that train of thought, shouldn't he become a Dark Lord himself? Well, he was planning on taking over the country and had killed quite a few people, planned on killing more, and his meeting with his parents could be counted as a monologue. No one thought they were the villain in their own story. His hands weren't clean, but they hadn't been since he was eleven. Sure, Quirrell had been self-defense. It was still murder.

Did it really matter? Thoughts for another time.

Harry entered the shack, summoned the ring, and hit it with the Killing Curse before it reached his hand. Oddly enough, it wasn't the curse that ruined the items. Rather, it was the soul shard vacating the vessel. The only thing left to do was kill Voldemort and his followers. Then he would need to take control of the Ministry. That brought the next problem. Albus Dumbledore. Dumbledore was that people believed in him and Harry was an unknown.

There was an easy solution to the problem. He could make a public defeat of Voldemort. Of course, that would require drawing the Dark Lord and his followers out where people could see. He may not go out of his way to save people anymore, but he wasn't going to be the one who had caused

dangerous individuals to appear. Once more he was reminded about how little he knew about this timeline. He was certain there had to be a time when Voldemort led an attack. That would have been the perfect fit, but he wasn't going to sit around and wait for that to happen.

He could always bring in the corpse as proof. Hopefully, that would be enough.

~§~

Harry walked into the clearing where the ruins of the Shrieking Shack rested. Using the taboo to summon Death Eaters had worked last time and this was a nice open spot that would work nicely for another round. Now it was time for the fun part. He went about setting the scene in his favor. He placed a few spike-pits with a thin layer of grass as cover around the clearing. Then he transfigured pieces of the ruined shack into flat stones, inscribed a simple rune array on each, and then placed them randomly around the area. They were rather effective even though they were basically stationary tasers. Anyone who stepped on one would activate a packet of compressed electricity that would race through their body and lock up their muscles. Just one wasn't fatal, it would stun whoever stepped on it. It took two or three to kill depending on the size of the person. A simple charm prevented the rune array from activating them in their current version. Overcharging them would turn the stones into lethal electrically imbued shrapnel, but it made them unstable and could just as easily hit him.

He had tried making rudimentary landmines as they would only need one to be deadly. The gunpowder aspect of it was too unstable when transfigured. Many hours, and numerous explosions, told him that it was a project that they required a good amount of time and patience to prepare. It took at least an hour to make one that was stable enough to be effective without exploding during setup.

Finally, he created wards that made sure that all forms of magical travel were blocked. All he needed to do was activate them once the Death Eaters arrived. They had developed something akin to a magic circuit that could flip the wards on and off as needed.

He disillusioned himself, created a few scarecrows, and then settled in by the ruins.

"Voldemort," Harry called in a sing-song tone. "Oh, Voldemort."

A series of quick pops announced the arrival of five Death Eaters. One let out a strangled cry as the ground underneath them gave out. Another went stiff and collapsed when they activated a stone. The three remaining Death Eaters spun around, trying to find their attacker.

Harry activated the wards and cut the trio down before they saw him. He hit the stunned Death Eater with a Body Bind then took a look at the one in the pit. The loud string of foul language told him they were still alive. A wicked smile crossed his face as he took the mask from the stunned and bound Death Eater. He rolled them over, so they were facedown. It wasn't anyone he recognized.

"You're alive?" Harry shouted leaning over the hole.

The Death Eater had a sharpened stick poking out of the top of one foot as well as another in their calf. It wasn't fatal, but it looked painful.

"Yes, I'm alive, you moron," the Death Eater screamed. "Get me out of here and patch me up. I can't apparate."

Harry waved his wand making the spikes disappear. He reached a hand down to the injured man. The Death Eater continued to curse as he was pulled from the pit.

"What happened?" The Death Eater asked. "Did we get them? Who was it?"

The Death Eater saw the bound figure on the ground.

"They're alive?" The Death Eater asked turning to look at Harry.

"How else are they going to deliver a message?" Harry asked right back.

"What?" The Death Eater cocked their head to the side in confusion.

The man never saw the spell that killed him. Harry let the freshly dead Death Eater drop to the ground before he turned his attention to the one

that was still bound. He woke them up, levitated them so they were standing, and waited for their tirade of threats and cursing to end.

"Finished?" Harry asked.

He silenced the man before he could start again.

"I'm going to send you back to your master," Harry spoke slowly. "Tell him, I'll be waiting right here." He paused. "Do you think he'll just rip the memory from your mind?"

The Death Eater blanched at the question.

"Attend carefully," Harry took a step back. "Hello Tom Marvolo Riddle. Are you going to be the coward that I know you are and send more minions after me or are you going to come face me yourself?" Harry dropped the wards. "Go on."

The Death Eater disappeared with a pop. Harry didn't have to wait long. A resounding crack announced the arrival of the Dark Lord. It was followed by at least another dozen small pops as his minions appeared. Voldemort opened his mouth to speak only to be cut off as a few Death Eaters fell into pits around the clearing while others activated the stones. He turned, glaring at his minions. No one bothered to revive the fallen or retrieve the ones in the pits.

Slowly, he turned his glare toward Harry. Harry smiled at him as he subtly activated the wards around the clearing.

"Tom, is that you?" Harry asked.

Unlike the Voldemort that had emerged in the graveyard, this one was more human. He was tall and pale, with long brown hair that hung down below his shoulders. Tom Riddle was actually a rather handsome man.

"My name is Lord Voldemort," Riddle snarled.

"I'm sure it is," Harry said like he was talking to a child.

Riddle snapped his wand up, tossing out a string of Killing Curses. Harry had to admit it was rather impressive. The Killing Curse took a lot of power

and control to cast properly. An underpowered one would cause minor injuries that usually weren't painful.

Harry dodged out of the way of the spells. He carefully made his way around the clearing until he managed to get in front of the gathered Death Eaters. The Killing Curses that he dodged hit the masked minions that weren't prepared. Death Eaters scattered as their companions dropped. A couple more activated a stone, knocking them out, and one or two discovered a spike pit. The traps weren't nearly as lethal as their master.

"Do you know any other spells?" Harry taunted.

Riddle snarled, swapping over to a flame-whip. Harry ducked under the fire. Someone behind him screamed out in pain as they ignited.

"Two spells," Harry said. "Good job, Tom."

Riddle sent a spell-chain at him. Each one would have killed him painfully had they hit. Instead, Harry continued to dance out of the way. Tom either didn't care about his minions or was too far gone to notice that they were dying. The ones that had fallen to the scattered booby-traps were safer than those still standing.

"I have to say," Harry said raising a dead body to block a spell. "I'm a little disappointed at the lack of banter."

The body melted as the spell hit. A goopy clump of clothing dropped to the ground.

"You're usually so talkative," Harry teased.

Riddle finally stopped his barrage.

"We have never met," Riddle snapped. "You look like Potter, but you clearly aren't him."

"It's the hair, right?" Harry sighed. "I just can't bring myself to cut it and it's annoying if I let it grow."

"Who are you?" Riddle narrowed his eyes at him.

"That's a long story," Harry replied.

"You aren't going to leave here alive," Riddle started to calm down.

"One of us won't," Harry chuckled. "I'm curious. Did you feel it when I destroyed your horcruxes?"

"Lies!" Riddle cried.

"The locket, the diadem, the ring, and the cup," Harry counted them off.

Riddle's eyes widened.

"You know, I have to ask," Harry uncovered Riddle completely and propped him up so they could see each other. "Are you an idiot?"

"You will not speak to me in such a way. I am Lord Voldemort!" Riddle roared.

"You are Tom Riddle. I would say junior, or the second, but we both know that's not true," Harry wiggled his finger at the other wizard. "You're what, sixty or seventy years old? You've been chasing immortality since you were a kid and a horcrux was the best you could come up with? A squib could live until they're over a hundred with hardly any effort. A wizard of your supposed caliber should have been able to hit at least one-fifty. You could probably make it to two-hundred with potions, charms, and magical artifacts. That's not even counting Muggle methods."

Riddle launched into another attack. Harry couldn't deny that the man was talented. He was fast, had an impressive spell catalogue, and had an expansive knowledge base. Unfortunately for Riddle, Harry had spent a few years taking care of Dark Lords and Ladies during his quest to gather more esoteric schools of magic. In the grand scheme of things, Lord Voldemort, while in the top five, wasn't the worst.

Harry spun away as another spell-chain raced toward him, snagged the tail end of the streak of magic with the tip of his wand, and sent it back at Riddle. He followed the hijacked attack with one of his own. Riddle swatted away the first three spells of his own chain only to miss the last. He was screaming in pain as the new attack hit.

Tom Riddle dropped to the ground. A discordant chorus of screams rose from the surviving Death Eaters in the area. Harry wrinkled his nose at the

smell of burning flesh. Threads of thick smoke rose from the Death Eaters that were still alive. It all coalesced into an orb before lowering onto the body of the Dark Lord. A ragged, pain-wracked breath sounded as Riddle slowly pushed himself to his hands and knees.

"I wasn't expecting that," Harry chuckled.

"I ... am ... Lord V-Voldemort," Riddle shakily got back to his feet. "Death has no hold on me."

Harry watched as Tom's injuries started to heal. They stopped before he was completely restored.

"Doesn't look like you have enough minions around," Harry shook his head as he spoke.

"They pledged their lives to me," Riddle steadied himself. "They are mine to use."

"I wonder what the range on that is," Harry mused.

"My power is absolute," Riddle snarled.

"Does it grow back limbs?" Harry asked.

Riddle dodged out of the way of a cutter. He ducked to the side and switched his stance to an angle to present less of a target as he returned to his full height. Whatever words he was about to say were halted as his jaw snapped shut. His foot came down directly in the center of a stone, sending a shock of electricity through him, and tightening every muscle of his body.

Harry didn't waste the opportunity. He disarmed Riddle, then removed the hand that had held it. Harry waited for a moment to see if anything happened. Riddle screamed, but no more smoke arrived to heal his injuries.

"That's a bit disappointing," Harry sighed. "Bye Tom."

Tom's body went limp as the Killing Curse connected. Harry took time to check on the various Death Eaters in the clearing. Those that hadn't been killed by the pit traps or stray spells had become twisted husks. The only

part of them that hadn't been destroyed was the forearm with the Dark Mark.

Harry transfigured Riddle's body into a brick. He summoned it, dropped the wards, and popped away.

12.

Harry returned to Diagon Alley with the brick in his pocket. He wasn't quite sure how to announce that he had killed Lord Voldemort, but he needed to make sure the bastard stayed dead. There was a chance that he could drain the life from more of his followers. That would make it hard for people to trust him if he said Voldemort was dead only for the supposed corpse to pop back up.

He could come up with a couple of ways off the top of his head on how to deal with the issue. Option one, he could return Voldemort to his natural form in the vicinity of marked Death Eaters. That would have the added benefit of taking out some minions as well. The second option would be to simply keep Voldemort as a brick. Downside of that being that it would make it quite difficult to validate his claim. They would have to remove the transfiguration to check and that would just start back all over again.

Harry sighed. It really came down to the first option. Maybe he could have come up with another few ideas, but he wanted to get this over with. He signed in at the Ministry, presented one of the disposable wands at the desk, and decided to check in with the DMLE.

He didn't make it two steps off the elevator before Moody was there to greet him. The gruff old Auror stared him down. Moody didn't have his magic eye yet, but he could clearly sense the miasma that the Volde-brick emitted.

"What are you doing here?" Moody said, his wand pointed directly at Harry's throat.

"I have a couple of things I need some help with," Harry replied as though being held at wand-point was completely natural. "I've got a Dark Lord transfigured into a brick in my pocket and need to check if he's really, truly, completely dead."

Moody narrowed his eyes.

"You aren't lying," Moody said after a moment.

"Nope," Harry smiled.

"Why do you think he's not dead?" Moody questioned; his wand still pointed at Harry.

"They tried to ambush me out by the Shrieking Shack near Hogsmeade," Harry said. "Death Eaters, that is. I killed a few and sent one back with a message to their boss. He showed up with even more of his lackies, we fought, he died, and then drained the life out of his nearby minions. I killed him again, but I don't know if he'll pop back up if he's around more of his followers."

Moody studied him as he spoke.

"I was wondering if you had any marked Death Eaters around," Harry said. "That way I can change him back to human form and see if he comes back."

"We might have a couple Death Eaters in holding," Moody grumbled. "No marks though. Just suspected affiliations."

"Any suspected Death Eaters?" Harry asked with a sly smile.

"Moody," Amelia called as she strode over. "Mister Potter, what are you doing here?"

Harry repeated what he had told Moody, including the final question. He took the brick from his pocket and held it up for them to examine. They flinched back at the force of darkness that was unleashed.

"That certainly isn't just a brick," Amelia whispered.

Harry smiled at her and nodded.

"He drained the life from his followers," Amelia said flatly. "And you want to try again in a public place?"

"They weren't enough to put him back at full strength," Harry explained. "His wounds closed, but it didn't grow back his hand. Plus, I hit him with the Killing Curse. His body might be restored, but his soul is gone. We'd have a vacant shell. Worst case, I'll kill him again."

"You just confessed to using an Unforgivable in front of two Aurors," Amelia snapped at him.

"Pretty sure the law is on my side against a Dark Lord," Harry teased.

"You're sure it's him?" Amelia asked.

Harry nodded.

"Moody, grab anyone who has seen Voldemort," Amelia didn't flinch when she said the name. "I want to see if they can verify."

Moody scanned the hall as he waited for someone to appear. Amelia led him back to a holding cell set aside for dangerous suspects and confiscated dark items. He set the brick in the middle of the room. The two settled into a tense silence as they waited for the others to arrive.

Harry tried not to react when his father, Frank Longbottom, Sirius, and a witch he didn't recognize entered the room. They stared at him but kept it professional. The gathered Aurors drew their wands. Moody grunted as Harry did as well.

Moody hit the brick with a spell to revert it. The Aurors gathered tensed as the battered form of Lord Voldemort appeared in the center of the room. A chorus of blood-curdling screams echoed through the building.

"Brace yourselves," Harry warned.

Multiple strands of black smoke drifted through the walls. Slowly, it all formed into a large orb. This one was easily double the size of the previous. They watched as the body twitched and jolted absorbing the smoke. The bruises, cuts, and scratches healed before their eyes.

Voldemort took a deep, shuddering breath. The remaining smoke coalesced around his missing hand. Its color shifted from black to silver.

"I am Lord Voldemort," the body had a voice like dry gravel. "I told you once, you fool, Death has no hold on me."

The gathered Aurors stood in shock at the scene before them. Harry hit the resurrected Dark Lord in the neck with a cutter. The body flopped back onto the floor as the detached head rolled to a stop against the far wall.

"Give it a minute," Harry said.

There was more screaming from somewhere in the building. The thin strands of smoke that flowed through the walls faded before they could reach the headless body.

"You should probably get out there," Harry slid his wand back into the dimensional pocket where it usually rested. "There's going to be a lot of dead Purebloods out there, judging by the screams."

The Aurors stared at him in various degrees of incredulity.

"The smoke," Harry explained before they could ask. "It was the life force taken from marked Death Eaters. The cause of death will be obvious."

"You're going into a holding cell," his father said.

Sirius nodded, the four Aurors formed a line with their wands pointed at him. Harry looked to Moody and Amelia. They nodded. He sighed and held up his hands.

"Your wand," James Potter ordered. "The one you just had, not one of your fakes."

"They aren't fake," Harry said in mock-outrage. "They're disposable."

No one reacted.

"Not even a smile?" Harry asked. "Tough crowd."

He summoned his wand and held it out with the grip toward the Aurors. Sirius grabbed it. His brow furrowed as he held it.

"Is this silver and iron?" Sirius asked. "I thought Moony was just being dramatic."

"Enough, Sirius," James said in his Auror voice. "Escort the suspect to Holding Cell 23."

Frank's eyebrows raised at that.

Harry had trained with Aurors, but had never officially become one. That saved him from hours of paperwork. Everything else, be it stakeouts, questioning suspects, or guarding the prisoners. Azkaban had to be restructured once the thin trust in the Dementors shattered. They were

locked to the island with strong containment wards and left to live off the residual emotional energy. A new prison had been built and was staffed by people rather than soul-sucking monsters.

Holding Cell 23 was another set aside for dangerous suspects. It was layered with wards that suppressed magic. They had taken the runic array from magic suppressing cuffs and applied it to the entire room. It was given the name 23 because that was how many days it had taken to assemble. Simply putting an anti-magic ward strong enough to fill the room didn't work. In fact, it killed the first person who entered. Instead, they had to layer multiple wards that blocked specific schools of magic and then figure out how to get them all to work together. The Auror badges had an enchantment that would allow them to be able to use magic inside the room which made things even more complicated.

The room itself didn't look like anything special. A simple wooden table with a few chairs, a one-way mirror along the far wall, and a single door. The room was lit by a couple of mundane hanging lanterns to avoid further complications to the wards.

Harry could understand the caution, but it still stung a little. He waited for Frank to lead him to Holding Cell 23 and took a seat without a worry. The ambient magic in the air was thinner than he remembered. Funnily enough, it wasn't the worst place he'd experienced. Still, it wasn't going to be easy to brute force his way out of the room, but it was an option. He was confident that he could walk out the front doors once he was in the hallway.

Frank, the woman from before, and James Potter entered the room. They settled into a classic three-point position that put one of them off to the side behind him, another by the door, and the final in front of him. The other two Aurors were clearly confused as to why James Potter was so tense.

"Mister Potter," Auror Potter said as he took a seat across from Harry.

"Auror Potter," Harry replied with a slight tease in his voice.

James stared at him flatly. For some reason, it sparked a warm feeling in his chest. Who knew being glib with parents was so fun?

"Care to explain what you expected to happen by bringing a Dark Lord into the Ministry?" Auror Potter asked without a hint of humor in his voice.

"I didn't know if he could still come back and wanted someone on my side in case he did," Harry explained. "I also was hoping there would be a bounty or some sort of reward for dealing with him." He paused. "Any chance there is a reward?"

No one answered.

"You confessed to killing multiple witches and wizards in the last twenty-four hours," Auror Potter ignored the question.

"No," Harry shook his head. "I defended myself against people with murderous intent."

James stared coldly back at his son. Harry sighed, he leaned forward on the table, and locked eyes with his father. He would be able to detect if someone was reading his thoughts. Right now, he didn't care.

"Everything I have told you is true," Harry stated. "My patience is running out. I just solved the Dark Lord problem and I'm being treated like a criminal. There are three of you in this room with me, two behind that glass, and another in the hall."

The other Aurors in the room shifted a little at his words.

"I appreciate the time and skill that went into creating this room," Harry continued. "Please don't force me to turn it into scrap."

"You're rather full of yourself," Auror Potter practically growled at him.

"I've been told I get it from my father," Harry said with a humorless smile. "You have been warned. That headless Dark Lord is proof of what I can do. While I've always been curious about how I'd stack up against Moody, I'd rather do it under friendlier circumstances."

"You do realize where you are, right?" Frank spoke up.

James shot the other man a glare. Frank shrugged.

"Do you?" Harry asked in reply.

"What are you talking about?" The female Auror finally said something.

He shifted in his seat to look at the witch. There was something vaguely familiar about her, but he couldn't place it.

"Apologies, I don't know your name," Harry replied.

"Auror Perks," she replied.

Harry narrowed his eyes. A slow smile crossed his face as he realized the connection. Sally-Anne Perks was a Ravenclaw student in his year. He could see the resemblance now.

"Auror Perks," Harry said. "Pleasure to meet you, I'm Harry Potter."

The witch looked from Harry to James.

"Any relation," she asked motioning to her colleague.

"Yes," Harry replied with an easy smile.

"Then this is a conflict of interest," Auror Perks glared at James.

Anything more was interrupted by the noisy arrival of a group of Ministry employees. They lurched to a stop once they entered the room and found their magic suddenly locked down.

"Minister?" Auror Perks asked.

The Minister and her retinue hurriedly backed out of the room. Harry leaned over to see a group of rather annoyed Aurors gathered in the hall as well. If his memory served, the woman was Millicent Bagnold, current Minister of Magic. She was also the one who had no problem tossing Sirius into a cell without a trial and perfectly happy to take 'donations' from Death Eaters that claimed to be under Imperious. To put it plainly, Harry was not impressed.

"What is the meaning of this?" The Minister yelled.

Her voice reminded him of the painting of Walburga Black.

"We're questioning a suspect," Auror Potter replied.

"You're treating the man who slayed the Dark Lord as a criminal?!" The Minister practically screeched. "This is preposterous. This man should be lauded as a hero! The people need to know his deeds!"

James Potter wanted to tell them about Harry's plan. He wanted to let them all know that this was a dangerous wizard with the goal of becoming king. This wizard who claimed to be his son from the future was not a savior, he was another Dark Lord in the making.

Harry winked at his father as the Minister's minions removed their new hero from Holding Cell 23. The rest of the afternoon and into the evening was a blur of photo-ops, interviews, and a hastily arranged award ceremony. By the next morning everyone knew Harry Potter had slain Lord Voldemort. The following afternoon revealed the rise of the Dark Lord, including his true origins. No one mentioned the sudden deaths of multiple 'Traditionalist' faction members. Their remaining relatives were desperate to distance themselves from the exposed Death Eaters.

With the first part of the plan complete, it was time to move on. Harry was already making headway winning the approval of the people. It would make his ascendance to ruler easier if the majority of the populace cheered him on. Though he did have plans in case he had to resort to crude means.

Now to deal with Dumbledore.

13.

Harry spent the next week going to high society parties. He met the majority of the parents of the Pureblood classmates in his previous timeline. Those marked Death Eaters that were still alive were lucky enough to be too far away for the Dark Mark to activate. It also helped that the decapitated head of Voldemort was sealed in a box made out of cold iron with intricately carved anti-magic runes. The body was stored elsewhere in a similar box, just in case. Harry was pretty sure that Voldemort couldn't come back to life again, especially since all of the Horcruxes were now destroyed, but it didn't hurt to be careful. He may have also stole the box and replaced it with a fake then hid the original thirteen feet underneath the main lobby of the nuclear facility in Chernobyl. It wouldn't go critical for another seven or so years, but it was the thought that counted. No one would think to look there even if the reactor didn't melt down this time for whatever reason. He also replaced a few of the limbs of the body from different bodies of random muggles and a chimp. Mostly for the fun of it. It would be an interesting time if some moron in the future decided to try to use the body to restore Voldemort.

Yesterday had been yet another ceremony. This time it was for the public presentation of an Order of Merlin, assigning the attached Wizengamot seat, and awarding the bounty for killing Voldemort. It was then that he finally met Dumbledore.

"Hello, Mister Potter," a much younger Dumbledore said as he approached. "My name is Albus Dumbledore, it's a pleasure to meet you."

In that moment Harry knew that he could kill the old man right here and few people would question him. From there, it would be a couple of short steps to set himself as king. Harry had to resist the urge to slap the man just to get it out of his system. Instead, he offered the wizard a hand in greeting. Dumbledore had the decency to avoid attempting to read his mind. Worry lines were etched into his forehead and there were dark circles under his eyes.

"It is nice to meet you too, Professor," Harry replied. "Are you feeling well? Everyone else is celebrating but you look like someone just kicked your

dog."

"Ha, quite," Dumbledore sighed. "I am worried that people are celebrating too soon."

"Why is that?" Harry asked.

"I believe that Voldemort is now truly gone yet," Dumbledore dropped his voice to a whisper.

"Oh?" Harry raised his eyebrows. "Due to the horcruxes?"

Dumbledore flinched at the word.

"How do you know that?" Dumbledore hissed at him.

"I destroyed them," Harry replied. "After that, he was able to drain the life from the Death Eaters that were close enough. I'd say that was more impressive than splitting his soul into pieces."

"Indeed," Dumbledore whispered. "There was more than one?"

Harry wordlessly counted them off, then nodded.

"Five of them," he answered. "A Gaunt family ring, Ravenclaw's diadem, Slytherin's locket, a diary, and Hufflepuff's cup."

"My word," Dumbledore took in a deep breath. "The Founders Relics."

"They didn't survive destroying the horcrux," Harry sighed. "It's lucky he didn't use a person. I probably would have had to kill them."

Dumbledore nodded solemnly. That moment gave Harry pause. It was meant to be an unspoken jab at the previous timeline. Instead, it made Harry realize he was approaching this all wrong. He could raise himself up with a collection of minions with political and financial power, lock down the borders until he had scoured the country until his vision was actualized, and carve the bones of those who fell before him into a throne.

Just like Voldemort had tried and failed to do.

Harry closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose. He was being an idiot. Tom Riddle had fallen into the trap of avarice and lost the truth of

things. The former Dark Lord could have easily taken control of the country with perfectly legitimate means.

Some part of Harry really wanted to see how he stacked up against Dumbledore. Similar to the situation with Moody, there was a curiosity of how it would go. In comparison between the two, he hadn't spent nearly as much time with Dumbledore. Harry had worked with Moody for a few years, not to mention the training sessions. The Headmaster though, he had only seen a brief duel in the Ministry and heard stories of past exploits. Harry could always ask for a duel, but there was a difference between that and a real fight.

Harry forced himself back to the present. Killing Dumbledore, gathering followers, and conquering the country was a stupid idea. The people loved him. If they followed the same pattern as they did with Dumbledore, the Ministry would practically throw positions of power at him.

The Headmaster took a moment to gather himself and straightened his posture. Once again, he projected the wise grandfather persona instead of a tired old man.

"I have to ask," Dumbledore spoke after a moment. "Where did you study magic? I don't recall you ever attending Hogwarts, but you don't sound like you were born elsewhere."

"Private tutors," Harry replied easily. "I had Mana Burn when I was younger and had to be isolated."

Mana Burn was a rare condition where a witch or wizard could not control their magic to a dangerous extent. Instead of random bouts of accidental magic, their body temperature would rise to dangerous levels around magical people and items. Left untreated the person would burst into a flame that could not be extinguish until their body was gone. It was a very rare condition and most people who suffered from it had to be banished from the magical world for their own protection. Those that were able to overcome the illness were said to be extremely powerful.

"Oh, dear," Dumbledore whispered. "I'm glad you are here with us."

"Thank you," Harry chuckled. "So am I."

A flash of red caught his eye.

"Excuse me," Harry stepped away before Dumbledore could answer.

Lily Potter spotted him as he neared.

"Lady Potter," Harry bowed once he was close enough.

"Mister Potter," she spoke evenly. "You have done well for yourself."

"Thank you," Harry replied with a smile. "Please, call me Harry."

"Certainly," Lily said. "What are your plans now that you've slain the Dark Lord?"

"If you ask Lord Potter I'm practicing my monologuing and evil laugh," he answered with a sly grin.

Lily sighed.

"Harry," she said with a bit of irritation in her voice. "In case you forgot, I am very pregnant, and my energy levels aren't what they usually are. I have to balance the constant need to waddle to the ladies' room and the desire to throttle whoever designed maternity clothing. It doesn't leave me with much patience for banter."

"Sorry," Harry winced. "I'm going to continue on the plan I told you before."

"You'll become another Dark Lord?" Lily asked, her voice was a mixture of annoyance and exhaustion.

"I was thinking politics, but becoming a Dark Lord would probably be easier on my conscience," Harry replied.

That earned him a quick smile that Lily quickly hid.

"Would we be able to chat sometime?" Harry asked.

He hadn't meant to sound so eager, and he hated the edge of desperation in his tone. Lily motioned to the room around them.

"Somewhere less crowded," Harry clarified. "I was hoping for a place with proper food, less standing, and comfortable clothing."

"Are you still staying in Hogsmeade?" Lily asked.

"For now," Harry nodded. "I've been too busy to go house hunting."

"I bet," Lily replied. "I'll reserve a meeting room sometime this week." She paused. "If this little hellion doesn't pop out to come early."

Harry laughed.

"Mister Potter, Lily," Lord James Potter joined them.

James casually placed himself between the time-traveler who claimed to be his son and his wife. Lily would have to lean a little to the side to use her wand, if the need arose. It was a nice little trick Aurors used to cover their colleagues in an encounter that could get messy.

"Lord Potter," Harry bowed again. "Lady Potter and I were discussing the proper technique for monologues. My position was that rhyming was outdated and uninspired, but she had some rather thought-provoking counter-points."

Lily narrowed her eyes at him. The gentle grin on her face made traveling through time worth it. James stared coldly at Harry. His entire body was tense.

"Relax," Harry shook his head. "Even if my plan was to turn full Dark Lord, which it isn't, I wouldn't start a fight here. We're surrounded by my potential minions, the international press, and no less than four pregnant witches."

His parents didn't find his joke funny.

"To be clear," Harry said casually. "It's mostly the pregnant witches. I'm not crazy enough to poke that dragon."

Lily rolled her eyes at the comment.

"It was nice speaking with you two again," Harry said with genuine truth in his words. "If you'll excuse me. I have a few dozen more photos to take and even more hands to shake." He paused. "See, rhyming just feels wrong."

14.

~§~

NOTE: In all of my stories, Alastor Moody survived the war.

~§~

Physically, he was somewhere in the mid to late twenties. Mentally, he would turn fifty this year. Just not on his birthday. Time travel was complicated. Would his birthday technically change if little Harry was born on another date? These thoughts helped distract him from the nerves that were making him bounce his leg hard enough to rattle the table.

It had been a day after their initial conversation that he received an invitation to meet with Lily in a private room of The Three Broomsticks. He wasn't sure if it was just her. It would make sense for her to bring someone to be safe. Who would she bring? Sirius and Remus were more James' friends. Who was hers? Was she close to Alice Longbottom? The woman was just as pregnant as she was, so that wouldn't be a good option. He realized how little he actually knew about her. Everything he had heard was about his father. The only thing he knew about Lily was that he had her eyes and that she was smart. Oddly enough, it was Moody that had the most stories about her. Harry had memorized the few bits of information.

Harry jumped when someone knocked on the door. He leaped to his feet and waited for it to open. An attractive blonde woman with rather fluffy hair stepped in first. She gave him a critical look as she moved further into the room. Lily entered a moment later. A bright, but shaky smile crossed his face as she closed the door behind her. He had said that James was invited as well. They both knew it was a polite addition that neither of them really wanted.

"Harry," Lily greeted him.

Harry hurried over and pulled out a chair for her. She gave him a small smile as she took a seat. The blonde woman took a step back out into the hall.

"She's not joining us?" Harry asked.

"No," Lily replied. "James hired her as a bodyguard for me."

"From me," Harry stated. "I can't get mad at that."

Lily shook her head. She motioned for him to take a seat nearby. He did so a bit quickly. Lily gave him a little smile at his eagerness.

"I've always wanted to talk to you," Harry said softly.

Lily reached out and squeezed his hand. Harry felt an entire life-time of emotion hit him. The years of bedtime that he wished for her to hold him. Every day he wanted to hear her voice. He wasn't the least bit surprised when he felt tears streaking down his face. Lily stood and motioned for him to do the same. When he did, she motioned for him to hug her. Harry would have broken down into full-body sobs if not for the awkward shuffle they had to do around her belly. He was glad that he didn't want to ruin his first hug with his mother by crying all over her.

What little composure he had shattered when he felt one of her hands start to gently rub his back. Lily hummed a soft melody as he cried. The song clicked with a memory he had lost years ago. It was one he heard in his dreams. Harry would have sworn that he wasn't an emotional wreck, but the evidence proved otherwise.

He wasn't sure how long it took for him to regain his composure. At some point Lily had transfigured the table into a wide, comfy couch. He was laying on it with his head on her lap and her running her fingers through his hair as she hummed. Baby Harry was kicking the back of his head like a fiend.

"Looks like you're jealous," Lily laughed.

Harry chuckled as he sat up.

"Sorry about that," he wiped his eyes as he spoke. "I don't know where that came from."

Lily stared at him flatly for a moment. Harry nodded at the unspoken statement.

"Thank you," he whispered.

"Are you still planning on taking over the world?" Lily asked.

"Back to business, eh?" Harry gave a dry chuckle. "I never planned on taking over the world, just fixing our little part of it."

"Killing Voldemort and his followers hasn't done that?" Lily asked.

"Not enough," Harry sighed. "Voldemort was powerful, but he would have never made it to power without support. The entire system is broken. I have no idea what killing him will do to the timeline. It might slow down the death of the country, or it could set it to self-destruct in some other way."

"You're just a ray of sunshine," Lily sighed.

"Thanks," Harry flashed her a sly smile. "Really think about it. How did he get so much support so quickly? He promised non-humans a better life, told the Purebloods he'd handle the muggle-born problem, and the Ministry was fine to just let it build. The 'light' side of things don't really want things to change, they just want to be able to sleep better at night. They'll make a little noise but don't put up too much effort unless it impacts them. Think about it, how much did your husband care about the treatment of Muggle-born witches until he met you?"

"Your husband?" Lily countered. "That's a bit cold."

"Calling him dad sounds like I'm mocking him and using his name is just weird," Harry replied shrugging. "That and he doesn't seem to like me all that much."

"He's just worried," Lily said. "Our time is almost up."

Harry nodded. He wiped his tears away.

"Sorry I spent most of it crying on you," Harry gave a forced smile.

"I needed the practice," she gave him a real smile as she rubbed her belly.

"Promise me you won't make any moves until we speak again."

Harry sighed.

"I won't make any overt moves," Harry said.

Her gaze hardened a touch.

"I have parties to attend, hands to shake, and babies to kiss," He added with a laugh.

"Fine," Lily rolled her eyes. "You might look like James but it's like talking to myself."

"I will take that as a compliment," Harry preened.

Lily started to stand. Harry hopped to his feet and helped her to her feet.

"Thank you," Lily kissed him on the cheek. "Be careful, Harry."

"Please go before I start crying again," Harry let out a shaky breath. "I swear I'm not this emotional."

"Clearly," Lily laughed. "I'll owl you to schedule our next meeting."

"I look forward to it," Harry opened his arms for a hug.

Lily stepped in, turned her belly to the side, and wrapped her arms around him. They parted all too soon. Harry waited for her to leave before he collapsed on the couch. He would need to change it back before he left, but that was a problem for then.

Harry let his mind drift as he rested on the couch. It was tempting to transfigure one of the chairs into a golem to act as an impromptu therapist. He definitely needed one after that meeting. The thought had been a passing muse, but it would probably do him some good to get some therapy. He'd have to adjust the details and skip the gruesome parts.

There were still some things he wanted to do for selfish reasons. Seeing a younger Dumbledore really made him want to fight the professor. It was a morbid curiosity to see who was better. People always compared him to Dumbledore, that or they claimed that he was Dumbledore's apprentice. The problem being that he couldn't just stroll up to the professor and start casting. A friendly duel wasn't what he wanted either. Harry wanted a real fight.

That was the good thing about Moody. Mad Eye treated every fight as a real threat. Harry was tempted to see how he stacked up against a younger Moody. The desire wasn't as strong considering he had fought him many times through the years. Moody didn't believe in coddling his trainees. The

only spells that were off-limits for him were the Unforgiveables and that was only because the old bastard didn't like using them. Fighting a younger Moody would be interesting, but Harry already knew the tricks, tells, and tactics. Hell, the Older Moody had more years and experience which made him even more dangerous. Never underestimate an old person in a profession where most die young.

It wouldn't be a fight even if he could get Dumbledore into a real duel. The Death Stick wouldn't work against him. A wicked smile crossed his face. The Hallows. He could challenge Dumbledore for possession of the wand. It would not recognize him as the owner unless he won it in a real fight, or if he stole it, which wasn't nearly as fun. Did he want to do it in public? No, that was a little too Dark Lord. Plus, he didn't want people to know that the Hallows were actually real.

Harry stood, changed the couch back into a table, and left the private room. He smiled at buxom barmaid as he went up to his room. Once this was all done he would like to settle down and have that family he had always wanted.

"Once this is finished," Harry whispered to himself.

~§~

15.

Harry watched as Dumbledore moved around the Ministry lobby. The old man hadn't been avoiding him exactly, but their paths hadn't crossed since the party the other day. He had come up with a dozen different approaches to deal with Dumbledore. Honestly, he could simply wait for his popularity to overpower the Headmaster. He could work through the years he could improve his political standing while subtly undermining other seats of power that support the old man.

That sounded boring.

He saw Dumbledore step to the side. The old man seemed to be checking something in his robe. Harry quickly approached him.

"Professor," Harry said as he approached.

"Mister Potter," Dumbledore greeted him. "What can I do for you?"

"I'd like my wand," Harry replied easily.

"Pardon?" Dumbledore glanced at the wrist holster that Harry wore.

"Correct me if I'm wrong, your wand is currently on your wrist."

"Technically, you are correct," Harry said with a nod. "I'm talking about the one you have tucked in your robes."

Dumbledore went pale.

"It's mine," Harry stated dropping the good humor in his voice.

"I don't know what you mean," Dumbledore said evenly.

"The Elder Wand," Harry pressed. "You won it from Grindelwald and have had it ever since."

"I am remiss to tell you this," Dumbledore put on his best Grandfather voice. "The Hallows are a myth. I spent years of my life searching for them."

Harry willed the Peverell ring to appear on his finger. Most people couldn't see it. He had discovered that those close to the Hallows could. It helped

that he had taken the Resurrection Stone from the Guant Ring after destroying the Horcrux.

"That is strange," Harry held his hand up to show the Headmaster. "I seem to already have one."

Dumbledore froze for a moment. Harry could almost see lost years of obsession spark to life once more.

"What do you say?" Harry smirked. "Wager your Hallow against mine."

Dumbledore gave a small nod.

"Since I challenged you, it is your right to choose the terms," Harry said.

"We will duel until one of us is disarmed or unable to continue,"
Dumbledore stood straighter as he spoke; his grandfatherly persona slipped away to show the powerful wizard he truly was.

Harry couldn't hold back the smile that crossed his face. The magic rolling off of the Headmaster was impressive. This was sure to be a good duel.

"Time and place?" Harry asked.

A loud gasp sounded from nearby. Harry turned toward the noise to see the familiar, though definitely younger, face of Rita Skeeter. The news of their duel would be on the front page as early as tomorrow morning.

"A duel between two of the strongest wizards in our day?" Rita practically yelled.

Her words caused a noticeable ripple through the crowd.

"There is an Official Ministry Dueling Arena," Minister Bagnold added as she rushed over. "We would be honored to host a duel between two titans."

Harry looked at Dumbledore. He raised an eyebrow in question.
Dumbledore gave a nod in reply. His usual composure overruled by his obsession with the Hallows. The Minister led the two wizards deeper into the Ministry. A crowd began to form and quickly grew in size as they neared the Dueling Room. Thankfully, Rita did not hear what exactly the duel entailed.

The dueling arena was larger than he had expected. There was plenty of seating for the entire crowd and the platform appeared to float in the center of an open void. Harry continued on, taking his place on one end of the platform. A sheen of protective magic encased the void.

<The Elder Wand can only be won in a true contest,> a familiar female voice whispered into Harry's ear. *<Your protection from the wand will not work for this duel.>*

Harry nodded at the whisper. Death hadn't spoken to him since the initial arrive in this world, but he recognized the voice.

Dumbledore stood on the opposite side of the platform. They both patiently waited for the crowd to file in. The group now had a few reporters. People that looked to have come straight off Diagon Alley, including a few clerks and shop owners, arrived just in time before the doors closed. The stands were absolutely packed to capacity to see the two wizards to have defeated a powerful Dark Lord.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," Minister Bagnold stepped into the open space between the stands and the void. "Thank you for coming. Today we have the honor of seeing two titans of our time, Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter, duel. The terms of victory are disarm or surrender and have been agreed upon by both parties." She paused for the crowd to applaud. "To Judge we have decorated duelist and Auror, Amelia Bones."

Another pause for a round of polite applause.

"Duelists, are you ready?" Amelia asked.

Harry and Dumbledore nodded.

"Begin," Amelia yelled.

The two stared each other down, letting the moment hang. A tense silence settled in the arena. The air began to grow thick with ambient magical energy of the two duelists.

Both read the minute changes in stance, grip, and eye movement. Dumbledore was a known Master of Transfiguration but that wasn't his only branch of study. The man had years of knowledge and skills that

hadn't been truly put to the test in a long time. Even Voldemort didn't fight the old man unless there was no other choice. On the other side, Harry was an unknown. His legend grew every day as people whispered about him. Truth had little meaning as the stories spread. Seeing him in action was too good to pass up.

Harry felt Dumbledore's magic bump against his. The heat made sense with Fawkes as his familiar. An intense, deathly chill cut through the power marking the effect of the Elder Wand. His roots in Transfiguration gave his magic a constant shift to it.

Just as he did, Dumbledore felt his own magic. Instead of the common sensation of continuous shifting from a Transfiguration specialty, or the sharp edges of Charms, Harry's magic was completely still. The only thing Dumbledore found was the chill of death. Harry had spent years with all three Hallows. He had attuned to them in a way that none had ever before. As a result, his magic was tightly interwoven with death. The subtle tones were hidden under the chill.

Dumbledore raised his eyebrows in question. Harry smiled.

The Headmaster launched an attack. A cloud of stone, shards of ice, and a swirling bolt of fire rocketed toward Harry. Another chain of spells zipped at him. They were a mixture of common dueling spells charged to an insane degree and the occasional esoteric twist thrown in.

It displayed the vast knowledge the Headmaster held. Each spell was completed expertly with the perfect amount of motion and completely silent. Even the common dueling selection were altered as Dumbledore dipped into schools of magic from around the world. A stunner from Libya, disarming charm from New Zealand, and a cutter that originated in Brazil. Each variation made the usual defenses lose their potency. The crowd cheered at the display.

Dumbledore slowed his casting. He ended his show of power with a fine flick of his wand cleaning the debris, smoke, and bits of detritus vanished leaving the dueling area. The air cleared to reveal a completely unscathed Harry still standing in his original spot.

Harry was extremely disappointed. His travels after the war had allowed him to delve into magic from all over the world. The search for obscure knowledge to fuel the ritual made it easy to identify, nullify, and counter whatever Dumbledore threw at him. Training with Moody was more challenging than this. He guessed it made sense. Dumbledore was not a fighter. The old man could fight when pushed, but he was a scholar at the core of things.

He sighed and started to walk toward the Headmaster. Dumbledore didn't waste time. The platform shifted to quicksand, which solidified as Harry stepped onto it. Dumbledore clenched his jaw and continued to fight. Fierce gusts of wind broke against an unseen barrier around Harry. Ice spread out along the platform, shifting and changing shape in a continuous flow. Patches cleared to allow Harry to continue forward. The ice melted into mist and floated up to chest height. Lightning cracked through the air, striking the mist and essentially turning it into a ball of electricity.

Harry came to a stop in front of Dumbledore. His hair floated around his head in a halo. Electricity arced along the strands. He held out his wand and silently adjusted Dumbledore's glasses from where they had slipped down during the spellcasting.

"Do you yield?" Harry asked calmly.

Dumbledore met his gaze for a moment. Harry could feel a sneaky thread of magic attempt invade his mind. His own magic gripped the thread and ripped it away. Dumbledore screamed, gripping his head as he dropped to his knees. The sound of wood clattering against stone sounded like an explosion in the silent arena. Harry leaned over and plucked the Elder Wand from the platform.

"Stay out of my mind," Harry growled.

He closed his eyes as the Elder Wand settled into the grip of his hand. Its power harmonized with his magic. Harry spun the wand along his fingers and stored it in his self-contained storage pocket. He left Dumbledore clutching his head, kneeling on the platform.

The crowd erupted in cheers. Harry gave a humble smile and waved at the people. A familiar hint of red hair caught his attention. Aurors, led by James and Sirius, cleared the way as Lily Potter walked over to him. The woman sighed.

"You don't call this overt?" Lily asked rolling her eyes.

"What can I say?" Harry shrugged. "I saw a chance and took it."

"And what chance was that?" James glared at his son. "You humiliated Dumbledore."

Harry gave a sigh that sounded just like Lily.

"I thought it would be more of a challenge," Harry replied.

James would have lit Harry on fire if he glared any harder. The moment was broken when Sirius snorted in barely contained laughter. Lily smacked the wizard on the shoulder, but the damage was already done.

"I don't want to fight you," Harry said.

Harry stepped closer to James and dropped his voice low.

"Dad, please," Harry whispered. "I'm doing everything I can to prevent it."

Harry stepped around the two Aurors and his mother. He didn't get far before he was flooded by reporters with a young Rita Skeeter at the lead.

16.

Things moved fast after the public defeat of Dumbledore. The Wizengamot practically threw titles at him. Within a week he was the new Chief Warlock. Two weeks after that he was elected Minister of Magic by a landslide. In a world where an eleven-year-old has the ability to reshape reality it is those with power that make the rules. Harry was the most powerful Wizard in the country, possibly even farther. His focus was on avoiding the mistakes of the future.

He struck while the people still worshiped him. First came the education reforms, Dumbledore was powerless to resist. The budget was tripled, more staff were hired, and the curriculum was expanded. Introduction to Magical Traditions became mandatory for all muggle-born and half-blood students. That made a lot of Mot members very happy. So much so that they completely missed the fact that Pureblood students now how to take an updated Muggle Studies class. All subjects were split into three levels (introduction, intermediate, and advance) each with a new professor. Art, Music, and foreign languages were added as electives. Defense Against the Dark Arts was changed to Study of the Dark Arts. This allowed the students to learn the reason why the Dark Arts were restricted as well as methods fortify their resistances. The castle was also updated with elevators for every tower. Hogwarts was revitalized by the time all the changes had been completed. Thanks to magic, and plenty of money, everything was finished over the summer break. There was a burst of excited energy to the place when it reopened in the fall.

Then came the changes to the law. Harry removed the term limit for the Minister of Magic and ended elections until further notice. The Wizengamot had their power severely reduced before they even knew what was happening. It wasn't until Harry cracked down on nepotism and Pureblood privilege that they realized things had changed. The Wizengamot had been relegated solely to advisory duties. They could provide their opinions and evidence, but the final ruling was Harry's word.

The staff and practices for International Relations were restructured. Laws were altered to include all magical folk regardless of origin. Non-human magical folk such as Veela, Vampires, and Werewolves were given full

rights. Wolfsbane was available for all Werewolves and brewing was taught to those who wanted to learn. Regulations only allowed for the potion to be sold at cost, but Potion Shops were given special benefits to keep them interested. Vampires were connected to a donated blood supply. New negotiations with the goblins opened. They were given the option to open more branches of Gringotts around the country and settle wherever they wished. The Veela were the hardest to negotiate. Not only because of their Allure, but their requests were more complicated than they appeared. Protected enclaves, permission to create their own schools, and a specialized law enforcement agency for Veela concerns. Each species now had their own voice in the Mot. Where needed, they had their own laws to handle specific needs.

A group of Lords and Ladies gathered to stand against him. Not surprisingly, his father was among them. Their approach started out peaceful in hopes to avoid another conflict. It helped that most of the families that had been loyal to Voldemort hadn't survived. Much to their shock, Harry listened to their concerns. He didn't rage against them, kill them, toss them in Azkaban, or anything that a Dark Lord would have done. Instead, he addressed their issues as he could. They weren't completely satisfied, but it was better than they had expected.

Oddly enough, the most pushback came when trying to implement technological advancements. The current level of Muggle Technology had a noticeable discordance with Magic. There weren't any cellphones yet, so he didn't have to worry about disrupting the signals. As of right now, it was the television and radio that had the most issues. Changing from quills to fountain pens should not have been anything major, but the pushback was harder than dismantling the Wizengamot. It took multiple public exhibitions, and a sneaky discount for students, to get the people to accept them.

Eventually, even his father had to admit things were getting better. The population was growing, international trade and relations were improving, and people the families that had fled were returning. Harry was effectively king in a little over a year.

It was worrying to think that Riddle could have easily done the same if he hadn't gone insane. Young Tom Riddle was charismatic and powerful. All he needed to do was scale back on the genocide a little. Harry didn't want to think too much about how lucky he had been that he had faced an unstable Voldemort than a competent Tom Riddle.

June 1st, 1980

Potter Manor

Harry approached the doors to Potter Manor with a nervous energy running down his spine. His younger self was born yesterday. Today was the day he was going to meet him. Lord and Lady Potter had sent him an invitation, which was a nice surprise. James still wasn't a fan of his, but he had settled on a cautious approach rather than outright hostile. It helped that the budget for the DMLE had been increased as well as some additions to training.

The door opened smoothly as he approached. A rather dapper looking House Elf stepped out and bowed. They were dressed like a butler instead of a sheet or pillowcase.

"Greetings and Salutations, Not Mister Potter," the elf said.

"Hello," Harry said with a smile. "Not Mister Potter?"

"You be Mister Potter but Not Mister Potter," the elf replied as though that explained everything.

"Right," Harry said. "May I ask about your uniform? Does that mean you are free?"

"No, Not Mister Potter," the elf answered. "Bargo is not a Free Elf."

The last two words were said with such disdain it made Harry raise his eyebrows.

"Bargo is long Potter Family Elf," the elf stood up straight, proud in the statement. "Potters be treating their elves as part of family. This be a uniform to show that Potter Elves be important."

Harry smiled at that.

"Thank you," Harry said. "Are you here to escort me?"

"Yes," Bargo nodded. "Please follow."

Harry did. He took in the area as he followed. The place had been abandoned for nearly twenty years before Harry had been able to visit. There was a lot of red tape he had to deal with to simply get there. Someone had gone through a lot of trouble to make sure Potter Manor was almost erased from the records. When Harry finally did visit, the place was in ruins after years of decay. The wards had been destroyed, as well as a portion of the grounds, and the house had been thoroughly looted. He wasn't sure if it had happened when it had all happened.

Seeing the various pieces of Potter history plucked at his heartstrings. The portraits were mostly empty as the subjects were currently trying to get a look at the new member of their family. There was a noticeable change as they got closer to where Lily and the baby were. Most paintings were packed with Potter ancestors, house elves buzzed around waiting to help, and Sirius stood outside the door acting as an impromptu bouncer. He would send a little jolt at the paintings if they got too rowdy.

"Your Majesty," Sirius said with an elaborate bow. "How gracious of you to visit."

"Fuck off," Harry snorted. "How are things, Padfoot?"

Unlike James, Sirius was more than happy to accept Harry. He was all for unending the status quo of the Magical World. It helped that Harry beat the Pureblood Traditionalists at their own game without them getting wise to it until too late.

Remus was a different story. The werewolf held Dumbledore in the highest regard. Seeing the Headmaster defeated in such a way made him despise Harry. It got even worse when Dumbledore pretty much sequestered himself in his office. The improved status for werewolves kept Remus from being outright hostile, but he made sure that he wasn't anywhere to Harry.

"Wonderful," Sirius smiled brightly. "You're coming to the wedding, right?"

"Yes," Harry replied. "Just like I told you last time you asked."

"I want to make sure your plans didn't get change with Kingly duties," Sirius motioned forward. "Keep quiet. Lily is doing great. James is a mess. Junior is sleeping."

"Junior?" Harry asked. "Please tell me they didn't name him James Potter the second."

Sirius gave him a wicked grin but didn't say anything. The two wizards entered the room quietly. There was a muffling charm on the door to prevent anything from outside disturbing the interior. Harry smiled brightly as he took in the scene. Lily was awake holding her newborn son against her chest. She was radiant and graced him with a smile. James was asleep in a chair nearby; he had bags under his eyes, and it looked like he hadn't changed his clothes in a couple of days.

"Hello, Harry," Lily greeted him.

"Hello," Harry carefully made his way over to the pair. "Is he awake?"

"No," Lily let out a little laugh. "He's out just like his dad."

"Are you doing alright?" Harry asked as he transfigured one of James' discarded shoes into a chair.

"I'm fine," Lily rolled her eyes. "Honestly, childbirth isn't a big deal with magic. I don't know why James was so worried about it. Can't imagine how worked up he would be if we did it the Muggle way."

Harry shuddered.

"Enough of that," Lily said. "Harry, I would like to introduce you to your... little brother?"

"I like that," Harry said with a broad smile.

"Harry, meet Charles James Potter," Lily said running a hand through the small tuft of black hair on the baby's head.

"Charles?" Harry asked.

"After James' grandfather, Charlus," Lily answered. "I wasn't going to name him Charlus. It's not a big difference, but it would drive me mad."

"And James was against Harry?" He teased.

Lily nodded.

"It's nice to meet you, Charles," Harry whispered to the baby. "Your big brother will be here."

He was pretty sure it would be fine if he held the baby. This wasn't a time loop, so they were different people. On top of that, Harry had changed drastically since he had been born. The replacement arm, basilisk venom, and phoenix tears were more than enough to separate the two. Mostly, he just didn't trust himself to hold the baby. Maybe he would eventually, right now Charles seemed so small.

July 31st 1986

Potter Manor

"Harry!" Charles yelled as he saw his big brother. "Save me!"

Harry laughed, scooping up his little brother into a hug.

"What did you do?" Harry asked.

"I didn't do anything," Charles replied with a practiced puppy-dog look.

Harry stared at him for a moment.

"Ok," Charles sighed. "I may have used dad's broom without asking."

"And?" Harry prompted.

"And raced the owls," Charles added.

"And?" Harry said once more.

"And accidentally crashed into the statue of great, great, great grandpa Geoffrey," Charles finally admitted.

"The one that you think is creepy?" Harry asked.

"It was an accident," Charles replied with a roll of his eyes. "Mostly."

"Did you feed the owls extra granola to make them poop on it again?" Harry asked.

Charles gave him a wicked grin in reply.

"Happy Birthday, Charles," Harry squeezed the boy. "Is anyone else here?"

"Neville, Draco, Susan, and Ron are here," Charles counted off his friends.

"Daphne and Hannah are supposed to be here later. They won't miss the cake. Ron brought his brothers and little sister too. Her name is Ginny. She's really good on a broom. For a kid."

"Because you're not a kid," Harry said.

"Exactly," Charles nodded.

July 31st 1991

Potter Manor

Harry watched as Charles played with his friends. This was the year that they would be starting Hogwarts. Charles was easily three inches taller than Harry at been at the same age. He had made sure that the world was a better place. Not only for Charles, but for the entire country. There had been a couple of hiccups along the way. Nothing close to the old timeline.

Seeing all of the kids together really sold the situation to him. It had been a little painful at the start to see Charles growing up. There was some unexpected jealousy that popped up seeing the difference in their lives. Thankfully, it was a fleeting feeling that was extinguished by years of smiles and laughter.

It may have been a mistake, but this was far better than he had ever hoped. He was going to make sure that it stayed that way.

The End