See What?

by Lil_Nezumi [archived by HPFandom_archivist]

Summary

PERMANENTLY ON HOLD - HP/DM creature fic. Sixth year ends & summer begins, things are discovered, things have changed, just what is a Draekon, what is the Founders Law? Dudley is in this? Very Bad!Mione, but Bad!Wheezie?

Notes

Note from SeparatriX, the archivist: this story was originally archived at HP Fandom, which was closed for health and financial reasons. To preserve the archive, I began manually importing its works to the AO3 as an Open Doors-approved project in August 2016. I e-mailed all creators about the move and posted announcements, but may not have reached everyone. If you are (or know) this creator, please contact me using the e-mail address on HP Fandom collection profile.
One

Disclaimer: Harry Potter-verse and characters belong to J.K. Rowling & WB. Sigh, I’m just borrowing them for a short time. I make no money from this. Bloody plot bunnies, I can get no rest from them and now they have multiplied in a nasty amount.

Warning: HP/DM Slash, male/male love, wizard bonds (maybe), sap story (maybe not) and Happily Ever After (maybe). If you don’t like it, lump it and don’t even bother to read it.

Origins: Harry Potter novels, with a smidge of the “Daredevil” thrown in (only the sonar aspect without the pain).

Author’s Note: I have read so many HPDM stories that there may be a slight chance that this story will look like some of the others out there.

I have not yet read ToOP or HBP and I will not be using what parts of it I have gleaned from many of the other HP FanFiction stories that I have read. Yes, I know about Sirius and the prophecy. Sirius and the veil will be fuel for this story.

Author’s Note II: I went with the premise that boarding schools have more intensive studies and testing. Also, personally I have found that the timetables for boarding schools differ. Therefore this story is based on the Hogwarts Leaving Feast, being June 15, no matter what.

Legend:

‘Thoughts or emphasis’
“Normal speech”
(…Words spoken in another language…)  
---------------------------------

Chapter One
---------------------------------

June 26

‘I should have known not to trust them completely. They've betrayed me before, but I thought I could trust them this time. I thought that she would have been happy for me that I had finally buckled down and brought all of my grades up. I thought that he would've, at least understood why I needed to get these kinds of grades, especially with Voldemort after my tail every year. I needed these skills. I still do. I should have trusted my instincts to not drink it. That it was the wrong colour and that it did smell a bit off.

I just can’t go throughout my life without trusting anyone and yet here I am paying the price for that trust. Maybe she didn’t know, but how could the “Cleverest Witch in our year” not know that the potion had gone bad or was the wrong one... Early birthday present my arse!!

Bloody vindictive bitch! Jealous fucking bastard! I remember those looks now, those narrowed eyes...
when my marks shot up during the year to the one of the top of the class... Even his anger showed for a moment, but I disregarded it. What an idiot I am!

I can’t let anyone know about this, all those bloody sodding hopes resting on my shoulders. I should have died from drinking that garbage and not ended up wherever the hell I am now. I don’t even know if I’ve left the Dursley’s house, for all I know I could still be locked in that room, on the floor unconscious. ’

(...Sss, what have we here, ss?...) A sultry voice said with a hissing undertone.

(....A human, brother, ss!)... A second voice, replied with the same hissing slur.

(...And what shall we do with him?...) Questioned the first, the hissing was followed by distinctive sound, like that of a baby’s rattle somewhere near his feet.

(...We watch ss!)... The second voice said. (...He will either rise or fall again. It’s his choice, but we watch sss...) ‘Two, maybe more are watching me. Is this a test? Another bloody test of my character, a test of my worthiness to dig that blasted wizarding world out of the manure that they allowed themselves to fall into and wallow in until someone, obliviously and merrily, comes along to save their bloody arses!!! Well thanks, but no thanks!!! ’

He turned his head up to the sky. He didn’t care, if it was blindingly bright or not. It felt hot and dry out here. There was no breeze, no water seemed to be nearby and there was next to no sounds around him. From where he stood, he felt the sweat pouring down from him and he knew that he would soon be in danger of dehydration. Moving his bare feet on the ground a bit, he realized that he was standing in very hot sand, but sand none the less.

He still wasn’t allowed to wear shoes in the summer time. “Too good for the likes of you, Boy. It’s not like you’re going to be going anywhere til ‘they’ come for you, you Freak!” That was his relatives’ reasoning, although why he had to go back at the end of his sixth year was beyond him.

He was turning seventeen that summer and he was still stuck at the Dursleys.

“It’s for your protection young Harry.” That’s what Dumbledore said, again!!

‘How stupid do they think I am...? Well, I’m apparently stupid enough that after two weeks of boredom, I drink this potion without researching or analyzing it.’

He patted himself down to see what he had on him. He was only wearing knee length shorts from worn out sweats, tied to his waist by rope and the large oversized gray T-shirt with torn sleeves that he had put on that morning, in order to work his aunt’s garden. He came in for water and lunch, getting out from the heat of that day. He had gotten in the habit of doing his homework in the middle of the afternoon, while everyone was resting.

It was after receiving nada, nothing and zilch from his 'best friends' in response to the letters that he had sent to them this summer, that he pulled out that potion vial to examine it. As soon as he touched it he felt a compulsive need to drink the potion. Thinking and digging deeper in his mind, he wondered ‘why’ he would drink that potion. He came to the realization that he did feel a compulsion to drink it. It wasn’t like imperious, but... but... what was he missing?

He was frowning hard now. His eyebrows were drawn down and his mouth had thinned into a straight line. He took a deep meditative breath and spread his legs into a basic fighter’s stance, bent at the knees, one leg slightly forward to provide proper balance. He took another deep meditative
breath, in through the nose and out through the mouth. On the next breath he turned his thoughts inward and concentrated on his memory, with the aid of his inherent magic he was finally able to clear up a few odd issues that just felt wrong during this past year especially toward the end of the year.

He heard a buzzing, actually it sounded more like humming. Looking over a few of the memories that contained that particular noise, a couple of times seemed to have occurred on some of his “dates” with Cho. A few of the times it occurred when he was with Ron and Hermione, and at least once or twice when he was alone with Ginny. Going further back a few years, the rest of the time occurred when he was in the presence of Dumbledore. ‘What was he up to then? How did they learn that ability? Is he testing me? This will not last you meddling old fool!’

Putting all of his stubborn will and closing his eyes within those memories, he upped his concentration on the noise. Then he heard it, heard the words, “Subliminus” and “Finite Incantatem”. His eyes flew wide open. ‘Those bloody bastards!!!’

That spell was the spell of suggestion and it worked against him in such a way that it caused him act naturally and not to question any actions on his part or the part of his friends and Cho, including even the Headmaster. He never would have questioned those gray areas of his memory.

He closed his eyes again, concentrating and was finally able to see the events occur clearly in his memory for the first time in a long while. Last year was fine. It’s just that there were just a few personal private moments that were fuzzy and were not all that clear, but he first brushed them off as having partied too much with his friends.

That was his first mistake, the alcohol that they were serving him was laced with a tasteless, odorless potion and that combined with the charm, “Subliminus” they were able to make him do what he was most inclined to do at the time.

Following his memories and thoughts he knew that he had wanted to break it off with Cho, but she manipulated him into her bed with that trick. She tricked him into remaining with her, when that wasn’t what he wanted. ‘That bitch!!!’

Then he saw the same thing happening with Ginny. She was finally able to get the Boy-Who-Lived into her bed, too! They had intensified his active hormones with their actions combined with alcohol and once he was stimulated enough the suggestion charm was said in order for them to get what they wanted.

These memories shocked Harry to his very core, he never thought that Cho or Ginny would to do such a thing. He was panting in rage at the betrayal he felt by such actions, manipulating his memory to suit their misguided carnal needs. It could even be construed as rape since he was not an aware or willing partner. He never wanted either of them that way.

Hermione used the charm to try and make him fail, but due to his new study habits, which meant avoiding her and her study charts, he was able to overcome it. Ron wanted him to fail at Quidditch and schoolwork, so that he was not left behind or never left alone stuck studying with Hermione, but he wasn’t powerful enough to make the spell work that well.

The last time that this spell was used was one the train-ride home, which he had thought went by rather fast, but never questioned it at the time. He thought that they were having an excellent conversation together and that he just didn’t see the time go by, but now he saw... uh... heard the true ride home. He knew that he had fallen asleep at one point and then he heard the muttered spell.

‘They compelled me to drink that bloody potion!!!’ The words were clear now. The conversation
was flowing around his sleeping form, but his mind had absorbed the words.

---------------------------------

“What are you afraid of Ron?” Hermione asked. “Don’t you trust me? We just tell him that it’s a simple potion to correct his sight. You know that HE would never allow us to kill him!”

“I know, but what if something goes wrong?” Ron questioned. “I mean this is Harry Potter, he’s bound to get around it somehow. That ‘prat’ is uncommonly lucky, I just know something will happen and it will come back to bite us right in the arse.”

“Ronald Weasley,” she began. “Watch your language. This potion will kill Harry bloody Potter, HE made it and you know what that prophecy says it’s one or the other. So, because HE brewed the potion, Harry drinks it, he dies. Simple!”

Ron shifted in his seat, as he loved Hermione and followed her everywhere now that they were finally together he looked at her lovingly and agreed. “All right, I still have a bad feeling about this, but all right. Just do it, I want to be able to get rid of this prat once and for all too. What’s Dumbledore going to say when his Golden Boy dies? What if he finds out it was because he was the one who provided us with that charm?”

Hermione just grinned evilly, “Subliminus… (humming) We don’t even need to tell him. Our Master will be truly pleased. Don’t worry. Our Master will be very pleased. Do not worry. I love you.” She turned to Harry who was listening and said, “This is an early birthday gift Harry, early birthday gift. A potion and you must drink it, just drink it, drink your birthday gift. It will make you see, for your sight, correct your sight. Drink your gift, early birthday gift. For your sight, drink… the… potion…. (humming) Finite Incantatem…”

---------------------------------

‘So they thought I would be that easy to get rid of. You guys have another thing coming to you!!!!!! ‘

His rage was rolling off of him in waves now and the butterfly effect has just begun. ‘I will no longer allow myself to be manipulated any further by those betrayers!!!’

Harry took another deep breath, now to find out where he is and whether there is a chance to go back. He hissed in parseltongue, (...Pardon me, friends. My name is Harry Potter and I was wondering if you could tell me whether I am in a desert or a dream?...)

(...He speaks our language brother...) hissed the first voice surprised, the rattling sound coming closer to Harry’s left ankle.

(...Indeed, this was not foreseen...) hissed the second voice in shock, coming closer to his right ankle.

(...What do we do now brother? It has been so long...)

(...I know, to be understood is our dream...) replied the second.

(...Should we assist him?”...)

There seemed to be a long pause and then, (...Yes, I believe we shall...)

Harry didn’t know what they meant by assisting him, but he stood very still and waited for them to decide. He chose to not move away ready for them to either climb onto him or to bite him. They bit him, on his the top of his feet at the juncture of his ankles emptying almost all of their venom into each of foot.
He refused to cry out at the pain, seems it was part of their test and he knew that needed to refrain from making any sound. He was finally following his instincts on this issue. He knew that he had made the right choice.

(...We have gifted you human, Harry Potter...) hissed the first voice.

(...We hope that you do live, but now we must leave you...) hissed the second.

(...You are in a dream induced coma with only a slight fever...) hissed the first voice.

(...You are also physically in the desert Outback of Australia...) hissed the second.

(...I am known as the American Diamondback Rattler. I was brought here by ship to help the settlers, way back in the day, with a few rodent problems. Call me ADR. I was also a known totem for the Native American Indians of that land before the others like you came...) ADR explained.

 (...I am the Rainbow Snake of these lands, not many humans can have Rainbow Snake Dreams, but you are the only one who’s unique, in that I can actually talk with you. I am one of the gods of this land and it is still very old, but young too. I was lonely so I allowed ADR to remain here, as my brother. Call me Rain. We have gifted you to never fall prey to any poisons, natural, magical or any created by your non-magic people...)

ADR continued (...We have gifted you the languages of all the creatures. It is a communicative understanding only, the spoken languages include that of your people, that includes even sign language, but your main creature affinity will always be with us. I hope you are not disappointed with our gifts?...)

(...Merlin, no!...) Harry replied, truly shocked at the question. (...Why would I be disappointed? You two are very generous in your gifts. I guess that I am just going to have to assume that if I want to live I now have to fight to wake up and continue fighting to live...)

Rain spoke with agreement, (...Once you do, you will find that any blocks on your magic will have been removed. You will come into your magical heritage somewhat earlier than your comrades, but it will help you to adjust to your new situation. It helps that you are in this desert location. Your magical heritage also includes a future mate, the gifts that we have given to you can be shared with him from the moment that you two bond with one another...)

(...Yes, with your increased magic and at this current location you will be able to vent your feelings without harming anyone. We felt your anger and you have to every right to be angry. Unfortunately, we can not fix what they have broken, but then again I truly believe that you will be able to see more than you have ever seen before...) hissed ADR.

Rain hissed his agreement. (...We will be watching you, Harry Potter, even if you never hear from us again...)

(...We won’t leave you empty handed though...) hissed ADR. (...Turn left and continue in that direction until you reach Ayers Rock...)

(...Climb to the top of the rock, walk on it, meditate as you will and someone will be there to assist you...) Rain explained.

(...Do this in your dream and your actions will follow you in real life...) ADR continued. (...Fare you well Harry Potter...)

(...We will be watching you...) Rain said.
Harry felt them leave and no longer felt their presence. He felt their venom working up into his body. There were four pinpoints at the junctures where it the ankle connects to his feet, they were burning and itching now. He reached down to feel the wounds and he knew that he was bleeding a bit. He tore two strips from the bottom of his shirt and wrapped them around his feet and ankles tightly to help stop the flow, but not tight enough to prevent him from moving his feet properly.

He then immediately faced left and began to walk in that direction. Taking a deep breath he opened his senses and felt that there were scrub brushes nearby, he tried to “accio” a branch without his wand. He hoped, waited for a moment and then he actually felt a branch come to his hand. It was long and whippy, stripping away the excess twigs and branches he now had something that help him walk forward without stumbling too much.

He wasn’t walking very fast and he knew that he was going to have to rest very soon because of the venom and that bloody potion. They still had to work their way through his body first. He needed to find a place with some water nearby, but then he remembered that in the Australian Outback was not going to easy to navigate, especially now. Still he was going to survive this and he was going to show them all that he will not be putting up with their shit any more.

He felt the sun beating down on his face, so he ripped a couple of other strips from the oversize shirt and wrapped them around his head, hoping to conserve some of his body’s water and protect his head from heat stroke. His sense of direction flared and somehow he just knew that he was traveling west.

Suddenly he felt a smidge cooler, not sure what caused it he walked forward a bit until he was in the full heat again. He walked backwards and felt the cool area. Knowing that he was in the shade of something he sidestepped to the left, keeping his face in the direction he had to go. Stepping back into the heat he changed his direction and side stepped to the right going into the cooler area, it wasn’t long until the brushing swish of his branch hit something. Reaching out slowly his hand brushed against the bark of a tree.

He laid his branch thin end in the direction that he was to travel and then sat with his back against the tree. He smelled the greenery on the tree and knew that there was water in the area, but he just didn’t know how to access it.

Closing his eyes, he concentrated on the throbbing in his feet and legs. There was some pain in his mind too. It was Voldemort and apparently he knew that something was up. He knew that Harry did drink that potion, but just couldn’t fathom that Harry was just too far away to reach or why. Harry would even lay down some money that Voldemort was being affected by some of his residual pain due to the potion that he had ingested.

Harry grinned manically and then began to laugh out loud, relieving some of his anxiety. Then he started to rant and rave for a few moments letting his angry emotions overwhelm him, when suddenly he felt an explosive blast of his magic surge outward from him.

Remembering the snakes mentioning that no one in the area would be harmed, Harry still couldn’t let his rage control the form his magic took. Besides he needed water to survive so he modified the wave to be cool like the moist breeze from a sea blowing through the desert.

He wandlessly conjured a “WaterPak” similar to the ones he had seen in the stores that specialized in hiking gear and outdoor sports. He opened the top and allowed the water to accumulate within the pack, knowing that he would need it soon. Taking several sips of the cool water, he relaxed against the tree.

His magic came back to him like sonar vibrating against his body, showing him the layout of the land.
and marking the areas that he should avoid, but luckily also marking the direction he needed to continue traveling in.

Smirking he thought that ADR was right. He could definitely see better now then he ever could. At least now he no longer needed to worry about breaking his butt ugly glasses, he no longer needed them at all, especially now that he had been blinded...

Harry soaked the strips of his shirt that he had around his head with the water and then re-wrapped his head with the wet cloth. Taking another sip of water and re-filling his “WaterPak”, he reigned in his magic and then collapsed against the tree. He kept the water tube in his mouth for some instinctive reason, but only knew that he needed to do it.

Unknown to him, these actions that he had taken in his fever induced dream were exactly what he needed in to be able to fight the true fever from the potion and to help maintain his body’s ability to survive the true Outback.

Harry had collapsed from exhaustion and the venom. He fell into a deep dreamless, yet pain filled sleep. Luckily it was dreamless because his magical inheritance caught up to him and induced more growing pains than he had ever thought possible. It was almost as bad as receiving Crucio.

His muscles were tightly clenched and cramping. His body grew longer, taller and more defined. His height was now 6’1 and a half, broad shouldered, with longer arms and legs. His skin darkened to a golden tan, all over. It will help him with his new training on Ayers Rock.

His hair finally broke past the stigma of “just like his father” and grew down past his shoulders in waves to his mid-back. There were now lots of very dark streaking-red highlights. It was a gift from his mother and one that suited him very, very well. His fingers grew a bit longer, with fingernails growing slightly longer, curving a bit like claws or talons.

His eyes which had been rendered blank, to a milky fog gray-green by the potion, were not anymore. Not that many would have noticed these differences, but now they were back to the deep verdant green, like the darkest emeralds, they were brilliant and somber. The pupils were slightly larger than normal, creating the darker appearance in the colour, but they were also slit like a cat’s eye or snake eyes would be better.

Harry did not know this, although he soon would, as soon as someone told him about it, of course. He also developed elongated canines upper and lower, they were not too noticeable since he wasn’t of vampire or werewolf decent, but that of Draekon.

The most astonishing addition to his growth was his bat like wings. Wingtip to wingtip they were twice his height and were the softest leather. They were strong and yet he was able to hide them however he didn’t know that they were there just yet. They retracted at will and seem to know that he wanted to remain looking normal for the time being. Their colour matched his hair. They were ebony black with highlights of a dark blood red within their folds, visible in the strong light of the day or from either a very colourful sunset or sunrise.

A force they could not fight drew the ghosts of the land, they found him and imparted to him during this period any magical gift or knowledge that they had wanted to pass on. It did not matter if the gifts or the knowledge was good or bad, it was still knowledge and power, Harry just swallowed it all. He soaked in the experiences that these shades gave him and sealed the exchange with a magical soul promise to them. Promising to write their stories should he ever be free to do so in this lifetime, if not his promise will be carried forward onto his next life.

Ghosts from the closest countries came to him also, there were a quite few from Japan, China,
Russia, the Irish prisoners shipped to this British Prison Colony, including their British guards, a couple were aristocrats and the rest were mostly runaways. The ghostly priests, monks and shamans from these lands, also visited him, imparting him with spiritual and magical knowledge.

He learned ancient martial arts, the ways of the samurai, the various spiritual rituals of Japan & China, the herbal lore from the shamans handed down for generations, so much of which was forgotten. The art of fighting war came from the British guards and the Russians, including the use of swords and the early muskets, not that those would work in the wizarding world. He learned about love, hate and every possible emotion that existed from the heart of every man, woman and child spirit that sought him out during this time.

So many lives and so many lost stories, his vow allowed many of them to move on in peace secure in the knowledge that he was honourable and will honour their wishes the best way that he can.

The very pride and the love of the earth herself flowed through him, acknowledging this small lone child and cradling him in peace for this one tiny moment in time required for him to come into his own power. He was at peace, even though he was in extreme pain.

He knew that he had to survive this, to fight, if only to take down that arsehole Tom Riddle the self proclaimed Dark Lord Voldemort, with the added bonus of taking on Peter Pettigrew, Lucius Malfoy, including one Hermione Granger and Ronald Weasley, his own personal traitors.

Peter had betrayed his parents, Sirius and Remus, so therefore he really needed to be taken down. Lucius he just wanted to go after him for spite because he was such a dick. Ah, as for Hermione and Ron he felt the need to have revenge on them for their lies and their final betrayal of him and their long friendship. He would, of course, take revenge on a few others, but for now knowing that he was really going to learn something knew and something that he needed to know, was almost a form of revenge too.

One of the ghostly aboriginal shamans stayed by his side and was waiting to guide him to the Rock. Snakes circled around him, slithering all over him, curled on and around his body, protecting his rest. One of the few remaining tribes of the Outback wanderers came to this area and saw this strange phenomenon. They were astounded at this sight, but there were a couple of wizards among them. These wizards explained that the pain that this youth was being subjected to was their own form of an adult right of passage and usually occurred when they came of age inheriting their full magics.

They too, watched and waited. They saw that the young man had a strange affinity for the snakes in the area. The shaman prevented his tribe and the wizards from hunting these snakes because they were there in such a vast number, many of them were coral ones, rattlers, red-bellied black snakes and some others, all totally poisonous. Strangely, the nicks and bites that the youth was receiving from them did not affect him in any way that they saw.

On their fourth day of watching, they heard a groan from the youth. They stopped all of their activities, talking and otherwise. They watched and waited to see what he would do, especially with all of those snakes around him.

Harry had moved his hand slightly, but the muscles were cramped from lack of use, causing him to moan softly. Slowly he pinched the tube with his lips and drank two swallows of water. He shifted his body, twitching and slowly twisting both his arms, legs and shifting his back to stretch and to loosen the new, unused muscles.

Listening for the sounds around him, he heard the hissing of the snakes and felt some of them resting on his body. Some of the snakes had not been able to get the water so they rested on him lapping up the sweat from his fevered change. Understanding them and their actions, he poured some of the
water he had into his hand, evaporating it into a small cloud that he manipulated to rain mistily on all of the bodies of the snakes as a thank you to them for their protection. Once each snake felt the water hit every part of their body they began to leave the area.

The last one to go hissed something to the youth, but the wizards that were watching gasped as they heard the youth hiss back to the snake. Turning his head in the direction of the gasp, he spoke to them.

"Who’s there?" He asked.

Receiving no answer he sighed and waited a bit, wondering if anyone realized that he was no longer at No. 4 Privet Drive in Surrey or even in the United Kingdom.

---------------------------------

TBC...
Chapter Two

June 28

Dudley had walked into his cousin’s room a few days ago to find that the waste of space, as his parents called him, was gone. Somehow that did not feel right. His parents had gone on holiday and left him in charge alone with the ‘freak’, but he was bored today. So bored, he went looking for Harry’s company, maybe his cousin could tell him more about the wizards without his parents knowing that their son knew more about the Wizarding World that he should.

Harry’s owl was on the desk shuffling the paper. “What are you doing?” he asked the bird. He knew that the bird was intelligent, but he didn’t think that he was bored enough to begin talking to it.

Hedwig hooted anxiously from the desk. He looked and saw a letter from those people. She watched him with narrow eyes and then made a decision. She held out her leg.

He took the letter and read it.

“Harry, there’s nothing to report on about our resident bad guy. How about you kid?” Signed by Phoenix.

“I guess he has to answer, huh,” he said to the snowy owl. She lifted a parchment and he saw Harry’s standard answer. She then lifted another parchment, pushed the inkwell and quill in his direction. He didn’t have to think hard on this one. “You want me to answer in his place?” He asked astonished.

Hedwig immediately hooted excitedly and nodded her head bopping up and down.

“I guess so. I owe him one after all, but I have to practice his writing, give me a few minutes.” He sat down in his second bedroom and practiced until the owl was satisfied. Writing the note in Harry’s place, he tied it to the owl and opened the window for her.

He watched her fly away into the night, hoping that Harry would be back soon. It was strange enough for the owl to do this and even stranger still that he actually decided to help ‘the Freak’. Dudley smiled to himself and thought, ‘If I do this often enough maybe he will owe me one. I wonder where he went.’
Shrugging his large shoulders not caring, he left the room pausing in the door way he looked back into it and then decided to shut the door. He locked the door with the six bolts and took the keys with him. Maybe his father will let him take care of ’the Freak’ for the rest of this summer. ‘I have to make it convincing, but I know that Daddy will let me do anything for now.’

Hedwig was winging away to the Order of Phoenix, delivering the false letter, but she knew that even if this family denies the ties of blood, those ties will still help her master with whatever was happening with him now. She knew the direction to fly to in order to get to him, but she also knew that if this deception worked, she would be required to stay here for now.

‘That fat boy might not be that dumb’, she thought after having successfully delivered the letter, without any fuss from the Order at Harry’s standard answer, she returned to find the door to the room shut and locked. Blinking her exhausted eyes, she tucked her head under her wing and fell asleep.

---------------------------------

June 30

Harry had waited long enough and still got no answer from the area where he heard the gasp, therefore he chose to ignore it. If they didn’t want to come forward and tell him what he wanted to know, he wasn’t going to waste his time on them. He had somewhere to go and he had to get there soon.

Bending down cautiously, he picked up his stick and began to walk in the direction of Ayers Rock. “Wait young man,” a voice said in English.

Harry titled his head in the direction of the speaker, waiting. “How do you know the snake language?”

Harry chuckled, “I’ve always known how to speak parseltongue. If that is all, there is a task that I must accomplish before I return to school this year. Enjoy your walkabout!” He said walking away from the people and the wizards.

One of the wizards tried to follow, but the shaman stopped him, pointing out the rather large rattler that settled on the boy’s path, preventing any of them from following the youth. The wizard’s eyes widened in shock and looking toward the rest of aboriginal people that they were there to study with, he knew that this was a very big deal. The youth had walked far enough away that he had all but blended with the light of the sun setting in the distance.

The tribe watched him walk farther than the wizards could see and then one of the wizards saw the mist white outline of a ghost. The ghost looked at him and then at the shaman of the tribe, turning around it began to follow the youth.

The wizard then knew what the ghost was saying even if it had spoken to him, he would never have understood him, but the ghost clearly said, in his manner, that he was a shaman and would be watching out for the boy.

The shaman of the tribe, chanted and the other members chanted with him, (…Earth, water, wind and fire watch over your travels young one, may the Rainbow Snake and his brother watch over you too…)

Harry heard their wishes and sent a cool misty breeze that smelled of the ocean, back to them. It misted them like he did the snakes. They heard his voice in their language whisper back. (…I go
where the sun sets, may the Brothers watch over you and your families…

They were all wide eyed at the reply, they were so much in awe that his reply was formal, proper and in their spoken tongue, many members of the tribe placed a small gift in the indentation where the youth had slept. The gifts were little things, like a pot, a spear, a flat stone and many more such items that one needs when traveling. Even the wizards knew that the tradition of gifting a traveler after he left was a blessing to his journey, but these desert tribes had not done so for many years. This youth was obviously different.

The two wizards agreed with the tribe and they each left something as their blessing too. One left one the feathers of a hippogriff that he had the rare opportunity of encountering, even if it was in the company of a known wizard felon who has now disappeared from the Wizarding World. The other left a small potion vial filled with pure ocean water, he could always obtain another on his way home, a bit of ocean was a sign of luck for travelers, especially if they were about to cross a desert.

---------------------------------

July 3

Three days later, Harry reached the base of Ayers Rock. Time and again he had the company of a snake or three, but he didn’t mind them with were great conversationalists. They told him about the different creatures in Australia and they mentioned that he had a constant companion in the form of a ghost shaman.

Harry already knew that though as the ghost had passed through him a few times to cool him down and help him figure out the time sense of this country. Also he assisted, like when he felt that Harry should take a sip of his water or where and how to locate the nutrient rich water root from the shrubs in the area.

He was still learning a few things, like the fact that he had wings, claws and sharp teeth. He could probably fly without a broom now, but he preferred to walk in the direction that he needed to go. His birthday was still a few weeks away, but he needed to get to the Rock and climb it before that happened. It was a feeling inside him the compelled him.

At least this time, he knew it was just his instinct and not some suggestion spell that was compelling him to go on. Now he finally reached the base and checking his meager belongings to make sure that the WaterPak was secure and that the improvised pouch with the remains of his shirt held, had at least three of the roots for food.

He walked to the Rock, touching it here and there, trying to determine the best place to start. His decision made, he began the long journey up. Hands moving over head feeling for the next crack or crevice. His feet following his hands and his wings out to provide balance in case he needed them, but they were not extended, as he might have had the temptation to fly, again his instinct forced him to go at it the muggle way. He reached a hand over, then a foot taking its place and reached overhead searching for the next hold. His body bent and crawling up the face of the Rock.

Hopefully he remembered this correctly from his world studies in the muggle public school and the Rock was not as jagged as some of the others around the world. A cold breeze was beside him, his ghostly companion was pacing him.

He hoped that this was some form of encouragement. Then he felt the shift in the temperature of the Rock. It was getting a little hotter the higher up he went. The edges were rounding and he heard the
warm breeze drifting across the top.

‘I’m getting closer, I’m sure of it.’ He thought.

Finally pulling himself up once more he reached overhead and found that he was at the end. It was just a matter of continuing over and soon he would be there.

‘Huff... huff... Finally I am up. Huff... Ah, some water and a small rest should do it. Damn I forgot the walking stick.’ ‘Accio walking stick’, he said out loud startling some of the birds that had been perched there. The birds only fluttered a bit and settled back down to their siesta. The stick came right up into his hand, startling the ghost of the shaman.

(...I forgot that you were a wizard...) he muttered softly.

(...That’s all right, I sometimes forget myself...) Harry replied.

(...You understood me???)

(...Of course, did you not know? I listened to you when you told me the hours of the day and when to take a sip of the water, how to find the roots...) Harry said, tilting his had in the direction of the ghost. (...I was listening to the stories and tales that you were telling me about your tribe...)

Sheepishly the shaman replied honestly, (...I thought that was luck. It did not occur to me that you understood my words as you were often speaking with the snakes...)

It was now Harry’s turn to be sheepish, (...I thought that you did not want to speak to me. Of course now I know that you did not think that I would have understood. I am sorry...)

(...It’s all right. I will be able to guide you better now, even though we are nearing the end of road...) The ghost looked at Harry for a long time and just had to ask (...How come you are not better prepared for this journey?...)

Harry looked sad, but answered honestly, (...I drank a potion under a spell suggesting that I should. It was given to me with the understanding this gift would have corrected my eyesight. The true giver wanted to kill me, but now that I think about it, I don’t believe that’s what was supposed to happen either...)

He took a deep breath and explained, (...I have someone who has been trying to kill me for years. There’s something of a prophecy that basically says that I will kill this person or he will kill me. He gave the potion to two of his followers in order for me to drink it. He told them that it would kill me, but I think that he did not trust them or just did not tell them the truth. The potion was supposed to incapacitate me with pain and somehow bring me to him in order to be killed by him. Obviously something went wrong and that is how I ended up here...)

The ghost listened to Harry’s story fascinated by the truth that Harry could not hide. (...Now what do you have to do? Do you know?...)

(...No, I don’t, but first I must train here like the Brothers said and then I will see how things have turned out back home. Maybe I can go back, maybe I can’t...I’ll have to wait and see...) Harry said.

(...Thank you for the truth of your story. I will watch you as you rest for now, may the Brothers guide your dreams...)

(...Thank you...) Harry replied lying down, curling into a ball and falling into a deep sleep. A sleep where he dreamed of events that might have happened, may happen or will happen, there was no
Harry felt that he was watching from a ghostly-detached point of view. Strangely he could see this clearly. It was as though his sight had returned for a bit.

He saw Dudley sitting at his desk, writing on a piece of parchment, while Hedwig was waiting. She turned her head in his direction, hooted softly and winked one eye. He moved closer to see what his cousin was doing. Looking at the note he read, “I am treated well. No visions, yet. H”

His cousin rolled this up and attached it to Hedwig. She hoped to the window, looking at her master and Harry smiled, nodding. He was OK with this. He watched his cousin, walk out of the room and lock the door.

He then moved from there to Grimmauld place. He watched Dumbledore pacing up and down wandering what to do. The letters came and Harry had been replying like he normally would, but there was something off about the way the letters were written. There was, also, no mention of visions from Voldemort.

Harry moved from there to the room that Remus was in and watched the saddened eyes of his one time professor and now honorary Godfather. The man was reading some of the old school journals belonging to his friends. Harry moved closer to see what was written. It was a journal from the Marauder days. Harry smiled and passed on the amusement he was feeling to his Godfather.

Remus lifted his head and looked around sharply searching out for the youth. Harry was jerked away suddenly and now found himself in a room with Buckbeak, the hippogriff that helped Sirius escape. The creature looked up and when Harry bowed, the creature stood and bowed back.

(...There is a reason why I am here like this, Buckbeak. I just don’t know if it is to release you now or later, also I can no longer look you in the eye in real life, please take no offence, it’s just that I’ve been blinded...)

The hawk head bobbed back in the form of surprise. (...I understand, but if you release me, I could find you...)

Harry shook his head, (...No there is something that I must do, first. Could you please wait?...) Harry then said “Relashio” and “Alohamora”. The chains anchoring the hippogriff let go. There was still the collar with one link tinkling around the neck of the creature, but Harry knew that you had to be able to touch it in order for it to be removed. He muttered a few other spells into the collar for now, hoping that his instincts were not wrong. (...These spells are to help someone. I just do not yet know who...)

Buckbeak knew that the time for Harry’s visit would be ending soon so he said, (...I will wait here, until you send a message to me, by your white owl or like this once more before I leave. I still owe you one...)

(...Thank you...) Harry managed to say before he was whisked away again. This time he was sent to the Burrow, but there was not much to see, except Ron and Hermione who were naked on Ron’s bed, in the throws of passion. Knowing that they were finally together was something that would have made him happy, but their happiness now just turned his stomach because of their betrayal. He saw their exposed left arms, shocked. They both had been Marked by Voldemort.

He was then quickly sent to a few of the homes belonging to some of the Slytherin students and he
saw that what they go through was similar to him in the summer times. Their training was just a painful as an empty stomach, but he saw among some of them sparks of defiance. Knowing that their choices would soon be made he vowed to help as many as he could.

He was shocked however when he reached Malfoy’s Manor. He saw the elaborate dining areas, the grand rooms, studies, portraits and the library, ‘Whoa, what a library? Where’s Malfoy?’ This thought propelled him to a tower room that had bars on the windows, with one window missing. There was only a filthy mattress in the middle of the room with a thin crusty sheet and nothing else.

There he watched as Draco received his daily “crucio” from his father. Harry was pissed that something like this could happen. His anger blasted Lucius into the wall and then crumpled to the ground. Shocked Lucius picked himself up and left the room.

“Whoever you are don’t do that. He’ll think it’s me.” Draco said to the empty air.

Harry knelt near him, letting his breath fall onto the pale cheek of his school time rival. “I feel that you are here, just don’t do that, please. He’ll think that I’ve come into my powers early...”

Harry then saw a house-elf enter the room. He didn’t want that creature to see who he was, so he shielded himself with his wings. The house-elf squeaked in terror, only seeing the wings it stuttered the word, “D..Dra...Draekon! A Draekon!” and passed out.

“Thank you for that,” Draco said, moving as quickly as he could.

Harry watched as he went to a corner of the room and whispered a few release spells. Harry observed that Draco drank down a couple of potions, whispering the spells to return the empty vials into an invisible area, Harry knew that Draco was going to eventually need his help.

Harry’s time was almost up here, so he quickly ran to Draco, wrapping his arms and wings around him he whispered into the soft ear, not caring if Draco could understand him or not in this form, “I will find a way to help you. Don’t give up and don’t believe a word they say.”

Draco was startled to feel the comfort wrapping around him and to hear the words. He smiled a little and then remembering that he was supposed to be recovering from the curse, he dived for the mattress in the center of his room, crawling under the thin sheet.

---------------------------------

Harry was pulled back to his body, he heaved a sigh and then fell into a dreamless sleep, smiling.

---------------------------------

TBC...
Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:

‘Thoughts or emphasis’
“Normal speech”
(…Words spoken in another language…) 

Chapter Three

June 27

Draco Malfoy was locked in his rooms this summer for refusing the Dark Mark. His father was livid. His ‘father’ was supposed to have been locked up in Azkaban, but the bloody bastard escaped. His ‘father’ had hidden out for a bit and then came back to hide at the Manor.

His mother had been recovering from the loss of her husband, but now she was dead. She had wanted to send Draco away at the beginning of the summer, but something always prevented her. His father’s most loyal house-elves were using the Subliminus spell on her. She was always almost to the door with his luggage, ready to send him off, when one of them showed up with a supposed letter from his father who prevented it. It was always the same note, his mother never opened it, but it was the trigger that reinforced the message to keep Draco home.

Draco knew that his summer was going to go from bad to worse very soon, so he honestly tried to finish his all of schoolwork. He tried to have emergency rations and items ready for whenever the shit chose to hit the fan. He really tried, but those sodding house-elves, the ones belonging to his father, somehow always found his emergency stash.

He tormented them for it, actually harmed some of them, as they were not to have been in his rooms, ‘ever’. He had always taken care of his own rooms before and never allowed one of his father’s elves to ever assist cleaning up his room, but one of ‘them’ always came in anyway, managing to find and take away those things.

They were actually now emptying his rooms of everything, his furniture, his bed, everything mobile, except for his school trunk, which was hidden and concealed in a corner of the room. His father’s house-elves believed that they had taken his school trunk and stored it away at the beginning of the summer hols. That was not the case.
Draco had had Professor Snape assist him in placing a concealment and misdirection charm on it. He altered the spells to purposefully work against any revealing charms, spells and pesky house-elves. He was never happier than when he found out that Dobby had been given his freedom by Harry Potter. Dobby had willingly helped to place and test the spells for him.

He had a more then a few of his prized possessions in it and all of his school supplies. Once his homework was done all he had to do was whisper a spell and the homework would be filed away properly within his school trunk. He finally had to use that spell on some the emergency rations, his much less formal clothing and every galleon that his mother had been giving to him as an allowance, plus lots of emergency medical supplies.

Since they could not see the trunk they didn’t take that away. They left his mattress on the floor and emptied the bathroom of all it supplies. Many solid bars rose up on the outsides of his windows. There was not enough space between then for him to squeeze through. One of the windows had been removed to allow for air to circulate in the room, but would not be replaced if there were any summer storms. He would not be able to escape that way any way.

His mother had disconnected his personal fireplace from the floo network before she died. Even the emergency floo powder that allowed any fire travel to a secure and safety spelled location had been removed from the manor.

“My dear son, this is all to teach you a lesson in humility. The Dark Lord is preoccupied for the moment, but you will learn the error of your choice before you return to school this year or you will never carry the Malfoy name, ever again. Crucio...”

Pain hit him like a thousand needles ripping though his body, his muscles were twisting and it felt like every bone in his body was breaking, bit by bit. This was kept up, until he passed out from the pain. His father left him there with one ‘his’ house-elf assigned to watch him for the remainder of summer.

When he woke up from the pain of that curse, he saw the creature and knew that he would not be able to access his things anytime soon. Groaning he rolled over and turned his thoughts to Potter.

‘Why Potter? Heh, I don’t know. There was something different about him last year, his grades were matched to mine and I think that he actually set out to beat Granger.’

He had nothing else to think about and realized that his own so-called friends had been distancing themselves from him before the start of this summer. It was like they knew what was waiting for him this summer and they knew that the time would soon come for them to make their decisions. Follow their families, follow Dumbledore or risk certain death by following the Dark Lord.

‘Great choices I that have there, live or die!!! Hm, that’s just plain life, but am I stuck with this for now. I wonder how the Golden Boy is doing. If I had the choice to live in a world without Voldemort or live in a world without Harry Potter, gah!!! Why am I even thinking about this? ’

The truth was that Draco had not gone out of his way during the sixth year to get on Harry’s bad side. He seemed to have been the only one to notice that Harry had changed or was changing. Certainly there had been just a few altercations in the beginning, but they had left him reeling from the force used behind them.

‘I guess losing your Godfather will do that to you. I’m glad that mine explained it that to me near the beginning of the year, or else I might have seriously been injured. I would react just the same if I had lost Severus.

Now what am I going to do? I can’t write to anyone and I certainly don’t trust anyone to help me
out. If I were to leave now my father would probably look for me, hunt me down and kill me. Besides I don’t have anyplace to go. Maybe if I stick it out for a bit, then maybe I will be able to escape, just like the bloody bastard did.

Draco’s magical inheritance was due to occur near the end of August, but to what end. Will his father allow him to go through with it, without having to pledge his loyalty and life to the resident loony? Will he be able to live through it or will his ‘father’ interfere?

Luckily for Draco his ‘father’ had trained him to work his body and mind at various tasks. He vowed that he’ll live to spite his ‘father’. He’ll live to defy him. He knew that he would gladly give up the name Malfoy in a heart beat, if being given the choice to live meant living without it.

Taking a good look around his room, his noticed that there was definitely more room now. Sneering at the house-elf, he moved the mattress into the direct center of the room and then he began to pace around in at circle. He occupied his time by walking and then running around his room. He modified his pace to sprint from the door to the window and jogged backwards to strengthen his legs.

He did push ups, sit-ups on the floor and he did pull ups using the bars on his windows. When it rained he did them hanging from the door to his bathroom. The only accessory left to him was the mirror in the bathroom, but he suspected that he was being observed from it. That did not matter, if worse comes to worse he had a permanent way out. He would contemplate suicide, using the broken pieces of the mirror, but he had another plan, if someone could help him leave, there was another way.

=================================

July 3

A few weeks passed like that and he was slowly losing hope. His father had decided that a daily dose of “crucio” was just what the doctor ordered to assist his son decision-making skills.

It was during one of these sessions that he saw his father get slammed up against one of his bedroom walls. His father was shocked. He watched as the man picked himself up from the floor and limp out of the room. He knew that there was no chance for him to get some much needed potions from his trunk before that bloody house-elf came back to watch him.

He felt something watching and knew that someone or something was there, “Whoever you are don’t do that. He’ll think it’s me.” Draco whispered to the empty air.

He sensed that a being was there and felt the warm breath fall onto his cheek. Hope was returning, but he had to get it through this person...?

“I can feel that you here, just don’t do that anymore, please. I can take what he dishes out, besides he’ll think that I’ve come into my powers early...”

The door to his room had opened, shut and was locked by magic. Draco knew that the house-elf had returned, but then he heard it clearly squeaking in its terror, “D..Dra...Draekon! A Draekon!” and passed out.

Draco had been raised in the Wizarding World, but there were still many mysterious creatures in it, he didn’t know what a Draekon was, but he was sure that his father would soon hear about from the house-elf, once it woke up. Still the creature did save him, “Thank you for that,” he said.
Then he moved as quickly as he could to get the healing and nutrient potions from his trunk. Drinking them down, he felt the eyes of the creature watching him. He hoped that whatever this was, would not betray him by mentioning the trunk. He whispered the spell, returning the empty vials back into his trunk.

Suddenly, he was wrapped in comforting double warmth of arms and something else, he felt a breath near his sensitive ear, and shivering a bit he could hear the softly whispered words. “I will find a way to help you. Don’t give up and don’t believe a word they say.”

Smiling a little he felt the presence leave, quickly he returned to his mattress, pulling up the sheet over his head he knew that someone knows. They know that Lucius escaped and they know that he was going to need help.

---------------------------------

Harry awoke on the Rock refreshed. His ghostly shaman guide showed him the path to take to his teacher and then left him to move on to his final journey. He waved good-bye in the general direction of vanishing form.

Harry walked on a path, noticing many different smells. Some he recognized as potion ingredients and others he thought he remembered as the plants he learned from Herbology class. The path was winding, but he was not worried. There was something about it that seemed to know that he couldn’t see; still he hoped that he would reach his destination soon.

Pausing to meditate he heard an old wizened voice talking to him, “Well it’s about time you showed up. I can’t live forever, just waiting for you to get here.”

Harry cocked his head in the direction of the voice, hoping that it wasn’t his headmaster. “Professor Dumbledore?” He asked tentatively.

“Don’t insult me kid. Can’t you see that I look nothing like him?” The wizened voice said.

“See what?” Harry asked, but he wasn’t about to explain his loss of sight to this stranger. “Who are you then?”

“You’ve… you’ve been blinded?” The old man’s voice was astounded, he didn’t think that there was anything left that would startle or shock him. “How did you manage to get here from the drop off point? How did you ever manage the desert with your blindness?”

Harry only gave the stranger a funny little look, “I’m not sure that I should explain any of this to you. First of all I don’t know who you are and secondly I have no idea what you mean by ‘drop off point’? Do you honestly think that I ‘planned’ this trip?”

Harry heard someone approaching; carefully he changed his stance and waited. (...He changed his stance elder...) A young sounding and amused voice said. Harry still waited patiently and did not acknowledge the other voice that he heard.

“You are cautious... that will serve you well. Tell me what or who advised you to come to the Rock and seek me out?”

Harry gave a small enigmatic smile and said, “A cunning pair of Brothers with very sharp teeth!”

He heard two gasps at the mention of the Brothers and the chuckling voice of the, ‘Elder’?

“Well it seems that you are the one that I’ve been waiting for. I have much to teach you. I will also
show you how to get around your disability with the magic that you possess. I will also teach you other forms of magic without a wand and you will be able to return home near the end of summer. It will probably be by the same method that you arrived, but truthfully I do not know myself. It will take about a month for everything, this time around. What do you say young one?”

“I say that you still have not told me your name,” Harry said to the elder. “Please forgive me, I am not trying to be impertinent and everything you say has merit, but if I am to learn from someone I believe that I would like to know their name or at least their preferred name. You can usually tell a lot by a person’s name, even if it’s one that they choose for themselves.”

The elder chuckled heartily, “Young one I like you. What you say has merit, you may call me Uluru or just Elder will do. It is just one of my many names and I am rather fond of it. I have two attendants with me and their names are Kei and Kina.”

“I’m Harry... just Harry.”

“Very well then Just Harry,” Uluru said. ‘Interesting, he chose to tell me one of his true given names’. The elder considered Harry’s method of arrival. His attendants were there to assist him and sometimes they could see further than he could. The attendants had been clearly describing to him all of Harry’s actions in the desert, while traveling and how he chose to climb the Rock, instead of trying to use his wings. Nothing would have happened if he did, but maybe young Harry was under the impression that the Brothers were testing him.

“You are free to leave and come back at any time to visit after this summer. It’s not like I’m going anywhere,” he said chuckling. “You have much to learn and this can only be done over time. What you do learn this summer should help you to cope and perhaps hide your affliction. You need to gather your forces and learn who you can and can not trust.”

“I think that it is time for you to get acquainted with your new surroundings. Now this time, you need to control how much magic you send out.”

“I don’t understand... magic that I send out?” He asked eager to learn, but confused at the elder’s words.

“You sent out a wave of magic a several days ago and then pulled it back into yourself. I felt it hit like misty rain, but it had no true purpose. It is important that you become able to send it out and pull it in without detection, but you also need to send it out with a purpose. For now try to send it out only a few feet in front of you and then pull it back to you. Try to get a sense of the area around us.”

Harry thought about how he had sent and called this wave the first time. He concentrated on just sending it out a few feet. He decided that maybe this time instead of sending it out in a circumference he would just send it out in a one quarter of the direction. He didn’t need to send out behind him, so he sent it out twelve feet to the front, barely managing to control it and pull it back in.

When it came back to him he was able to ‘see’ the elder sitting on a rocking chair of a small porch with two dog-like creatures. They were dingoes and they were crouched at his feet. He didn’t notice any others nearby and therefore he had the distinct feeling that the elder’s assistants were these two. He was surprised to ‘see and sense’ the shrubbery nearby and even more then that he was able to note the layout of the building.

“Whoa... that was so cool,” he said. He couldn’t help himself; he did it again and again, in various degrees and directions, number of feet, the shape of it around him and circling him.

Magic was something that had always fascinated him, even when his uncle was trying to beat it out
of him, he was too interested by the slight of hands that the street buskers did when the performed at small fairs.

“That is enough young Harry,” Uluru said. “Now that you have figured out the layout of the house, why don’t you come in and we’ll find you something to eat, perhaps someplace comfortable to sleep, what do you think?”

“Thank you for your kindness, I appreciate the fact that you want to teach me. I will try to answer your questions for you, but the truth is that I’m not really sure how I ended up in Australia.” He said, as he came forward the elder’s attendant spoke to him.

(...Don’t you dare do anything to hurt the elder...) Kei said.

(...You’d better pay attention to his teachings, pup...) Kina said.

(...Please don’t address me as “Pup”. I have many memories tied to it and for now the name fills me with sorrow...) Harry said to them, walking into the house following the elder.

The elder was astounded, as were his four legged companions, when they heard Harry speaking to them in their own language, but he never faltered a step. Harry knew that Uluru heard him and for now just chose not to say a word about it.

Smiling Harry knew that his summer would be far more interesting then it had ever been before.

---------------------------------

June 30

Since Dudley was helping with the letters, that needed to be sent to the Order, and he was helping him out with a few other things. Harry sent a special early birthday present to his cousin. Special not only because it was the only present that he had ever given his cousin, but special in that it was a unique spice for his food. It was a special kind of spice that Harry made just for Dudley, with very specific instructions for his cousin to follow.

If his cousin used it properly, he would find himself losing unwanted poundage at a very rapid rate. There were consequences to everything and Harry outlined all the possible side effects. He even went so far as to say that when he returned he would help his cousin ‘fix’ his appearance so that his rapid weight loss would not be noticeable by the extra loose skin.

When Harry’s birthday rolled around he hadn’t been expecting anything from Dudley, but surprisingly he did receive a couple of gifts, including his new school list with a prefect’s badge. He replied his acceptance to return to the school, but declined the badge.

His replies were forwarded to his house for Dudley to copy. Seems that Hedwig, being the very smart bird that she is knew that the strange looking bird holding various letters were the replies that Harry needed to forward, but that Dudley needed to copy them first so that the change in Harry’s writing would not show.

He sent a very thorough letter explaining to his Head of House why he didn’t want or need that added honour. He had too much to learn and was not about to be bogged down with responsibilities that others had actually wanted to have and were much better suited to do.

He sent thank you notes to Remus, Snape, Moody and a few others from the Order for their birthday
gifts. He even sent one to Ron and Hermione, as they had sent him something, but he never opened it. He felt uneasy about the odd magic that surrounded it. The note to them had a two-fold effect for them. One, it let them know that Harry had not yet drunk the potion and two allowed them to tell their Master about it.

The gifts he received were things that the Order members thought would be of use to him. There was a wand holster for his arm from Moody, a book on animagus transformations from McGonagall. He received a couple books on Occlumency from Snape with a note saying that the ‘Remedial Studies’ will continue and a bunch of other knick-knacks that served no other purpose except for fun and something to pass the time.

He received another note from Dumbledore stating that Harry should continue to remain at his relative’s house in order to be safe. He replied that he understood and would be patiently waiting for the end of summer. He asked for a few more books to study from, which in the course of a few days, owls dropped off several packages to Harry’s room.

He surprisingly received a present from his cousin with a note thanking him for the spice. The present was several catalogues of clothes. Dudley said that if Harry’s spice worked then he would need new clothes to fit him. His cousin’s note explained that he understood that Harry might be going through a similar kind of change as well and that if Harry wanted it, Dudley was willing to get him a few things for him for when he came back. His cousin also said that the catalogues contained the different styles that youths were wearing and that he would be glad to take his cousin along shopping in London for those things before school started.

Harry was stunned, but sent a reply back saying that he agreed to it and would even buy something for his cousin, within reason, as a thank you for all his continuing help this summer. It was a clear indication that Harry was going to ask him to do something. Dudley already knew that it would be something big.

-----------------

July 16

Harry was now able to read Braille and convert books to it with a whispered spell, write letters and do some of his schoolwork with the assistance of a spell on his little finger that guided it in a straight line, enabling his writing hand to follow.

He even found an obscure little spell that allowed him to learn how to cut potion ingredients with ease and without affecting the properties of the ingredients. Strangely it was a spell for blind chefs in order for them to be able to cut and make astounding presentations for their amassed cooking skills, without altering the flavour or properties of the food.

Harry was glad that it did the same thing on potion ingredients and that those ingredients did not lose any of their magical properties because the spell didn’t cut the ingredient, it only enabled the person to have the ability to cut, slice, dice, chop etc...

This whispered spell was cast at his hands and then his hands would take directions literally, if he told them to cut at a 32 degree angle facing the direction of the sun at the zenith of 1400 hrs, they would do it. This same little spell helped with the stirring of the ingredients in the cauldron. He could tell his hands what speed he needed to stir, the angles, direction and timing of it.

It was interesting the things that he learned about blind wizards and how the inherent magic adjusted
to compensate for most normal everyday activities.

He was constantly reading and training himself more than the elder could possibly know. Uluru and his two assistants constantly pushed him to learn new things and pushed him even more to use the gifts that the shades had given him. They were all delighted that he could speak to the assistants in their language and Uluru loved to listen to the hissing of the parseltongue. Harry would often translate the tidbits from the snakes that came to visit him.

Harry still felt the connection with Voldemort, but it was beginning to strain. He had fewer and fewer visions ever since he had been here, but most importantly he no longer felt any of the effects from Tom’s anger or from the crucio being thrown at his followers.

The elder explained to him exactly what a Draekon was and what it meant. He made Harry study the laws, customs and traditions of that race, including all of the Ministry of Magic’s laws in relation to the Draekon species. It was important that Harry understand who takes precedence for decisions based on specifics from allowed actions of defense and offence to the claiming his mate and having the ‘marriage’ status recognized by the wizarding world, should his mate turn out to be a witch or wizard.

He had been able to return in his ghost or astral form several times in order to ‘see’ his friends, family, various members of the Order and curiously his schoolboy rival, Draco. He didn’t quite understand that one. It usually happened when he meditated after a long hard day’s work.

It seemed that when Harry traveled in the ghostly form he was able to influence a few situations and the few discussions he had with Uluru and his attendants confirmed his growing suspicion that Draco was his mate. The fact that he was able to influence more people like speaking with his cousin via notes and letters, and when he speaking with Buckbeak and Hedwig, he had premonitory feeling that everything he was doing had to do with the Slytherin Prince.

Draco wasn’t doing too well. The daily dose of crucio had increased with time and his... ‘Forget it, that man will no longer be referred to as my father’... Lucius added physical abuse to the lot. Draco was often lost in strange dreams from time to time, slightly worried that the crucios were beginning to affect his mental health.

Lucius had decided to increase the number of crucios that Draco was to have in a day. Because in his own research he learned that the only way for any outside influence to have affected him, with specific reference to a Draekon, was for his son to be the mate of one.

He was constantly asking his son for the name of the creature, when it came and how to contact it. Seems that the Draekon could be a powerful ally or an enemy and his father wanted the creature for his master.

The Dark Lord was getting frustrated. The task his Death Eaters had been given had worked, but not in the way he thought it would. His newer Death Eaters bore the brunt of that failure. They had the audacity to claim that Harry Potter never drank the potion. Voldemort knew when the potion was ingested and therefore he knew that the Death Eaters had
preformed their end of the bargain, but Potter still had not shown up. It was a fact that pissed him off so much that all of his Death Eaters had been subjected to a multitude of curses and hexes. The raids that he planned against the various Muggles did cheer him up some, but still Potter was not there and there was no sign of him showing up anytime soon.

Lucius, in trying to save his own skin one day, had changed his master’s focus to his own son by mentioning in passing that one of his house-elves had seen a Draekon in the presence of his son. Voldemort could barely contain his glee and allowed Lucius access to his personal libraries for research purposes.

Until there was proof positive that Draco was the mate of such a creature, the curse and additional physical torture would be kept up. Draco had been taken to the dungeons of Lucius’ Manor and subjected to a very meticulous torture schedule, several times before Harry’s birthday.

Lucius kept a journal of the things that he did to his son, but it soon became clear that his son was useless. Therefore he decided to quit everything for the time being. ‘I think that I’ll give him a week to recover’... he thought and said as much to the house-elf that was used to being assigned to watch his son.

“That creature needs to be able to get to him, so I don’t want any of you to enter Draco’s rooms for nine days or the price will be your deaths.” He knew that the Draekon would eventually have to come and claim his mate therefore Draco needed to be somewhat cured or healed and he needed Draco to have a false sense of security or a small measure of freedom for that to happen.

Therefore after his last torture session in the evening of July 30th, Draco was placed back in his room without a house-elf to watch over him and one book was left with him as well. “Might as well know what your in for son,” Lucius said, leaving behind a book that explained Draekons somewhat in general, with a very few real facts or true facts.

His was cut and bruised in many places and there may have been a few broken bones, but nothing that he couldn’t set for himself the muggle way. That is if he knew about those methods.

Harry was there that day and just after midnight on July 31st, Draco came into his magical inheritance. Strange that it occurred on Harry’s seventeenth birthday.

Since it came while the youth was asleep, Harry was able to ‘see’ the transformation occur. He even felt the rise in magical power, but was now able to gauge his former rival’s power levels, for lack of a better term. It seemed that Draco’s levels were close enough to match his own after his inheritance however his own personal power was still beyond what the norm was for natural wizards. Still Draco’s inherent magic healed over all the physical wounds that his father had inflicted upon him and he would be able to resume his personal training to build up some of his strength.

Unfortunately for Draco, his magical inheritance came too early and proof was being written all over his features that he was clearly a Draekon’s mate. His eyes were still sparkling silver, but his pupils matched that of his mate’s, large and slit like a cat’s... uh...snake’s… uh...whatever. The same with his teeth and fingernails, they matched the same elongation that his mate had.

He grew a bit taller, but still remained slightly smaller then his mate and his muscles were cleverly masked by a single extra layer fat under the soft pale skin, to give the impression that he was the softer one. His did not gain wings, but his hair grew longer reaching to his mid-back, the most astonishing part of it was the hair at his temples had changed into two solid bands of ebony black with streaks of deep red within the darkness.

Harry had been around that day and find out that Lucius would not be closely monitoring his son for
a while. This was the chance he needed in order to rescue Draco. Harry had a plan, but Draco needed to be told and needed to understand what he had to say in order to escape.

He went up to the sleeping form and lay down next to him, holding him gently in his arms. Draco’s body curled into his as he whispered what he had learned and hoping that his mate heard him. “I heard your father talking to the elves. They will be feeding you once a day and your father has decided to stop questioning you for now. He will be waiting for me to show up. I have a plan for you to follow. Remember your lessons from third year Care of Magical Creatures. Five days, I promise to try and get you away from here within five days.”

Harry was pulled away just after that, as long as there was that margin of time for Draco to recover his strength a bit, he knew that his plan just might work.

--------

TBC...
July 31

Draco woke up the following morning and remembered the words. He woke up slowly remembering the tortures of the day before. Looking around the room he noticed that there was no house-elf and he knew that the creature was telling him the truth. His eyes fell onto a book left on the floor beside him.

Picking it up, he read the title, “Magical Creatures: Effects and Consequences of Wizard Relations and their Offspring.”

Draco was not surprised at the book and he wondered if Lucius left it behind. He knew that this book would not contain all of the information that he needed, but Draco decided to play along for now.

He turned to the index to look up Draekons and then turned to the pages that contained the information.

Draekon Species: An Incomplete History of Known Facts

Very little is known about the true history of this species, other than they are certainly the descendents of dragons. They are in fact now known as a sub-species of dragon, much like the Wyverns, but this particular genus contains natural intelligence, enough to match humans.

Every bit of information contained here, regarding these creatures was passed down generationally by word of mouth or by oral stories and tales, before any written languages emerged. By then the tales had changed to suit the cultures of those times. However one emerging fact that is common in all of the tales, was the fact that the oldest living dragons were tired of being apart from the world… Watching it, guarding it and they somehow knew that they would eventually die out, as the age of these particular watchers was vanishing…

The stories vary, but still some commonality occurs. Some of the older species morphed themselves
to blend with groups of animals in their regions. Many groups were primitive humans that had a few mystics among them. These mystics had magical power and this power drew the dragons to them.

The most popular reason that these humans drew the dragons was because the magic contained within these humans would help to genetically ensure the propagation of these dragons.

These dragons once drawn to a particular individual would alter the human and themselves to form a pair, a pair which could mate and produce offspring. The alteration usually occurred at the human’s time for a magical growth spurt, commonly around the time human puberty.

Prior to the human magical growth spurt the dragon would seek their partner through dreams or projections of their spirit. This was in order to ensure that their human partner was aware that physical changes may be taking place during their magical growth period. The humans had a choice to seek out their draconic mate or remain away, but the physical changes would remain visible for the remainder of the human’s natural life.

In true essence these changes allowed to dragon to add genetic material to the human and whether they were mated or not allowed the human to carry the Draekon genes that allowed the species to survive.

Many of the humans did seek out their mate because the changes were extreme enough to engender ostracism within their own culture. Once the pairs came together and were joined by others, Draekon communities soon emerged.

These communities remained hidden from what is now known as the Wizarding World and there is no tangible proof that they still exist, but the offspring of these creatures are often recorded at the various Ministries of Magic. There are spells to follow the Draekon genetic code throughout certain family trees, but again it is at the family’s discretion and not the Ministry.

There are still some Ministerial Laws with regards to the offspring of such creatures, many of which are similar to the laws that affect Veelas and other volatile creatures, where their mates can be overprotective and/or violent. A Draekon, once it has fully claimed his or her mate, will not fall prey to possessive or jealous rage that marks many other species.

They do, however, have the “Right of Disposition” with regards to their mates, should their mates exhibit any form betrayal to their Draekon life-mate. If this mate has been put down, so to speak, the Draekon may eventually seek another, thus beginning the cycle again.

In the simplest of terms, if the mate of a Draekon betrays the creature, then the Draekon are permitted to kill them. It is considered an act of mercy as any mate who knowingly betrays, in the sense of disregarding their instructions or boundaries or conditions set by their mate they will become self-destructive. Their Draekon life-mate will fall prey to a severe mental instability and go on a destructive rampage, which will not only endanger many, but could also be the cause of a massacre.

There has been only one documented case where a Draekon, itself, was affected by this kind of mental instability and it had created an environment that insidiously provoked his human mated to knowingly betray him. Eventually the creature was found out and put down by the elder members of his community and this story is now rumored to only live in a muggle fairytale, commonly known as “Bluebeard’s Wife.”

However, once a Draekon has identified their mate, that mate can be fully claimed or remain partially claimed for life.
In the past a partially claimed mate, having had their features changed during their magical growth spurt, were allowed to consummate with another, without the fear of the betrayal process. It was thought to be part of their form of a propagation theory, as there were only few old dragons and therefore multiple changes with many mates per dragon were common occurrence.

In this day and age, the genetic magic altered the descendent so that, now, a partially claimed mate will incorporate the features that his or her partner passes on, but they will never be allowed to marry or consummate with any other being other than the one that has magically chosen them. The only exception will be if the Draekon dies prior to claiming them.

Features that passed on can be as simple as one or several of the following: eye colour or form, elongated canines, fingernails in the form of smaller claws, height, hair length or colouration, or very small vestigial bat like wings.

Once a human has these features, that human is known as a potential Draekon mate and by that time the Draekon will have made their presence known throughout the old method of dreams, spiritual projections or both...

Not much is truly known about what's passed between the two, nor is it known when a Draekon will emerge. Speculations among historians, state that Draekons are born from two who carry the genes and that a true Draekon can emerge at the time of a pubescent magical growth spurt among wizards....

The rest of the words were faded and damaged. Draco wondered what his father was planning by giving him this particular book, because it was mainly crap at information.

However, he did remember a few of his dreams and realized that the Draekon in question was sending him the truth and a bit of information about himself. Remembering that he had to build up his strength, he made his way to his hidden trunk and began to drink the potions he needed to recover.

He also continued his physical training and a bit of his schoolwork. Just the reading part of it, because of the book he was able to hide it and read another without detection, that is should someone decide to look in on his actions.

It was also good thing that he was Slytherin or else he might have gone into his bathroom without the tatty sheet, which he needed to hide his new appearance. He used the sheet as a cover for the mirror in his bathroom, knowing that someone could always scry his actions by looking for this mirror connection.

He hoped that the Draekon that wanted to help him was his mate, but he also hoped that it was someone that could actually help him.

Four days later, August 4

Lucius had decided that nine days was too far away and therefore four days later he decided to look in on his son.

Draco sensing that something was up, quickly stuffed his school book back into his trunk and pulled
out the tattered one that his father had left behind for him to read about Draekons. He was somewhat
clean and had ripped a small edge off of the ratty sheet in order to have something to tie up his hair.
He wove a couple lengths of sheet in his hair in such a way that he hoped the change of colour at his
temples was not detected. His hair looked like they were multi-braided and dредded because he had
no access to soap or shampoo.

Lucius walk in and watched his son reading the book that he had left behind. “So, my son. How are
you feeling? Tsk, tsk, tsk, this won’t do!” He said looking his son up and down.

“What do you mean?” Draco rasped, due to the fact that he hasn’t talked to anyone for a long while
now.

“You’re looking a little ragged around the edges, my son. I don’t know whether to present you the
Dark Lord as you are or clean you up first,” Lucius explained.

“I’d rather not be presented to that lunatic at all,” Draco said.

“Oh really, perhaps you need to be reminded your place...” Lucius said, fingering his wand.
“Doesn’t matter you will be presented to the Dark Lord and you will pay attention or lose your life.”
He was about to leave the room, but decided that Draco should really remember his place... “Crucio”

Draco was once more subjected to that awful curse. His father sent a few other curses at him, cutting
him and breaking his legs, on top of another crucio, that wrenched and twisted his muscles.

When Lucius finally finished, he left the room with a parting shot, “You’d better change your
attitude, son. The Dark Lord doesn’t take too kindly to traitors.”

Luckily for Draco his sire didn’t send another house-elf to look in on him or to watch him. He heard
his father’s voice outside the door. “Do not feed him today or tomorrow. He will need cleaning
supplies only on the day after and you guard the door, but leave him be. We want that Draekon!”

Draco crawled to his school trunk and pulled out his remaining potions. There was only a bone mend
left and a salve to disinfect the cuts, closing them, however there was only enough left to take care of
some of the major ones and a few of the smaller ones. He hoped that he would have the chance to
get out of here before the next time Lucius took it into his head to ‘persuade’ him.

----------------------------

Harry was distracted on this day. His mate had been attacked and he knew now was the time to
extract him from that place.

His letters were prepared, one to Dudley and several to Draco. He hoped that he could convince
Buckbeak to assist Draco, despite what Draco said about him in their third year.

Harry finished his learning and training this time around. He had completed his summer studies and
thankfully, Uluru understood that need. The elder’s purpose when Harry arrived was to aid him in
adjusting to his various new abilities and help him to figure out which of the skills that the ghosts
 imparted were the more important to practice, as he would surely need to be able to defend himself
from his unseen assailants.

Uluru had finally been able to help Harry control his magic pulses or waves. Now, all Harry needed
to do was maintain a few them as little orbital waves around his body and he would be able to
navigate with nearly no flaw in his step or falter any in his immediate surroundings.

He needed them to rotate with consistency around his body, flexing back and forth like yo-yos,
without ever leaving his vicinity. Harry decided on using that atomic pattern that he remembered seeing during his time in muggle-school. Two orbits in an X pattern from left shoulder to right foot and right shoulder to left foot, one circling him in an up and down motion, perpendicular to the earth and one in a sort of wobbly horizontal moving up and down his frame. Maintaining these basic four, Harry was able to send out others to do other things like testing distances and obstacles.

However, there was always the chance for a couple of them to fail in a completely magical area, but with Uluru’s help he was able to detect magical auras and intent from those around him. Uluru’s assistants, Kei and Kina were helpful in that respect. They suggested that Harry find or obtain a familiar or two, the kind that represents him and that would be useful by staying with him at all time.

Sometimes witches and wizards were guided towards certain creatures that would be excellent familiars. Other times they used spells, potions or rituals that would assist them to find a familiar or to locate one based on compatible characteristics.

Harry didn’t find himself drawn to any such creature, yet, and told them logically it would be better for him to wait until he returned to his own climate. Any creature from this region may not be too comfortable where he was going.

He did inform them that he felt that he might have to return under his own devices, rather than rely on the method he arrived. He planned to perform the “Ritual of Familiar Seeking” localized in the direction that he intended to travel home, in order to get back in time for his last school year.

In the mean time, his concern towards his mate had increased exponentially and he now felt that he must take whatever action he could in order to free him quickly. To assist Draco he brought forth several ideas with Uluru and his companions. They finally agreed that it would be best for Harry to physically work hard exhausting himself on the day he needed to visit his mate.

The rescue was going to take some planning and a bit of luck. Luckily Harry had already verbally explained everything to Buckbeak and Hedwig. Now all that was left was for Dudley to do his part and maybe finally without all of that worrying Harry could concentrate on his much needed lessons and schoolwork. He was running out time and he wasn’t sure how he would be returning back to Privet Drive.

The others did not know how that potion had affected him, even after a careful study of the ingredients from the couple of drops left in at the bottom of the vial that Dudley had sent to him. Harry knew that he would have to enlist the aid a certificate Potions Master in order to dissect it farther, unfortunately the only one he knew was his potions Professor, Severus Snape.

(...I really don’t like that man...) he said to Kina and Kei, the two dingo attendants of the elder. (...That man has hated everything about me from the beginning and now this... He going to be royally pissed off because my mate is his godson...)

(...Don’t worry about it...) Kina replied kindly. (...From what you have said about the man, I am sure that he will be pleased to know that his godson is in safe hands, rather then where he is at the moment...)

(...True and don’t forget that you, yourself have mentioned that the man is a spy...) Kei butted in. (...If I was a spy then I believe that it would be harder to put up many different masks to please everyone. Perhaps he needed to keep one that would allow him to take his anger out some way...)

Harry thought about it and then said, (...I understand that...).

Everyone just looked at him in a questioning way, which he felt and responded to, (...It’s true. I just
wish that he could have kept it on an even keel. Not just focusing on me and my bloody fame or who
my father was. At least he cares about his godson and has been able to help him...

Uluru knew that Harry would not be able to concentrate on ritual requirements the moment and since
Harry needed to exhaust himself physically in order obtain a kick start to travel astrally/spiritually, he
recommended that Harry run with the wild dogs. (...Kei, Kina take our young guest out and have a
run, while I prepare the room for Harry. I believe that tonight will be a long night for you Harry.
Please be sure that you want to do this...)

(...Thank you elder...) Harry said getting up from his seated position on the ground. (...You are very
kind. Once that I know Draco will be safe I will be better prepared to dive into the studies. Do you
have idea on how I will be returning home? I hope that I will be able to return in time to claim my
mate. I have feeling that that aspect of our lives will need to be somewhat settled before we head
back to school...)

(...Don’t worry about too much now Harry. For now, just concentrate on saving your mate...) The
elder told him, as the dingos and Harry were standing up to go train.

Harry smiled worriedly, but thanked the elder for his understanding. They took off running around a
pre-ordained track around the house and gardens.

Later that night Harry fell into another of his exhausted traveling dreams.

---------------------------------

August 5

Dudley found the object that he was looking in his cousin’s trunk. Watching the time, he carefully
stepped out of the house on the pretense that he was going to his friends' house for a party.

His parents didn’t question him knowing full well that young men were apt to get rowdy during the
summers before their final year of secondary school. In fact Dudley’s parents decided the now would
be a good time to visit Marge for a few days, thus leaving their ‘Dudders’ home alone, like a big
man.

The reason for his caution was not his absent parents, but for watching wizards. Tucking the
invisibility cloak into his backpack, Dudley left the house and headed to the party.

His plans were to leave the party, as soon as everyone would no longer notice absence.

---------------------------------

Buckbeak looked up from his perch and watched as a snow white owl flew up to the tower window.
Harry had asked for his assistance to retrieve his mate and bring him to a designated area in the
muggle suburbs of London.

Explaining his request clearly to the hippogriff, Buckbeak understood why his help would be
required. If Harry’s mate was polite then he was sure to help. Hopefully that blond brat had learned
his lesson and would be polite to him. Otherwise Buckbeak would be hard pressed to allow the rude
one to fly with him.

---------------------------------
Later that night, in Draco’s sparten room, he was lying on the flat mattress shuddering and shaking
from the muscle pain and remaining cuts inflicted by his former father. He felt the familiar presence
of the one who came to him from time to time. The one he now acknowledged to be his mate and
luckily Lucius chose not to assign a house-elf this evening. Seems he still thought that Draco would
be considering his proposition and was convinced that his heir would comply with his and the Dark
Lord’s demands.

“We’ll meet soon, love,” the disembodied voice said. “Now get ready to leave and please remember
to be polite,” with this last statement Draco heard the trilling hoot of an owl at his window. Glancing
towards his only open window, he saw, sitting on the narrow ledge, a snow white owl that was
somewhat familiar. He recalled having seen this owl before a few times in the Great Hall. There
were not too many who chose to have such a visible white owl for their post, but there were enough
that seeing one now did not help to identify the bird’s owner.

Gingerly, he got up and walked to the owl to retrieve her burdens with a polite thank you. She had a
letter and a small parcel. The letter was short and only explained how to use the contents of the
parcel.

Draco readied his trunk by pressing the button that will shrink it for easy carry and secured to his
body using the part of the ragged sheet. He used the rest of the sheet to wrap around his body to
protect it from a possible chill, like the disembodied voice suggested.

The shrink button was something that Dobby had actually suggested. Draco was still bound by the
underage law he refused to use his wand in case he was able to escape and had not wanted to
develop a habit of using it during the summer, but in modifying his trunk he would be able to
manipulate it for easy carry and concealment, definitely very useful, considering his needs at the
moment.

Re-reading the note, Draco asked that Hedwig move away from the window. Hedwig, knowing
what was about to happen, flew to another shaded location on the grounds and waited.

Opening the parcel, Draco noticed that it was a potion inside something that looked like a round
rubber balloon. Still, following the instructions, he opened remaining window, exposing all the bars
and threw the object straight at them.

The balloon or ball like thing smashed into the bars and upon impact exploded into a colourful liquid
that coated just the bars, but certainly coated all of them, dissolving them without sound and without
alerting anyone or sounding an alarm. Once the bars were completely gone, Draco heard the chirp of
bird and the sound of very large beating wings.

A moment later, his window was shadowed by a large creature that filled it and was stepping into his
room. His eyes widened and he felt a little terrified by the hippogriff, yet the comforting warmth of
his mate’s arms around him made him look the creature in the eye and bow.

Buckbeak was impressed and bowed back, allowing Draco to approach and climb aboard. He made
sure that he had a secure hold on the creature and soon the hippogriff leaned out of the window for a
diving take off.

Hedwig took off guiding the way into the dark of the night.

---------------------------------

It was about two in the morning before Dudley saw, from his hidden position by one of the trees in
the local park, that something had cast a large shadow against the moon. Soon he heard the fluttering
of huge wings rustling down near him.

The creature that landed was something straight out of fantasy books. Following his cousin’s instructions, he bowed while looking the creature in eye. Once it had bowed back, he approached it cautiously, removing the collar just like Harry had asked him to and that Buckbeak was expecting to have removed.

Draco slipped off the creatures back, nearly crumpling to the ground, but Dudley him caught in time. Helping the blond to stand upright, he fastened the collar around Draco’s neck. Draco was a little out of it and therefore never really noticed the action. He was struggling to stay upright and conscious, but he knew that he was fighting losing battle.

“Buckbeak,” he asked the hippogriff. When heard an answering chirrup from the fantastical creature, he said, “Harry says that you are free to return to your canyon nesting grounds or to the Forbidden Forest near the school. If you’re looking for Hagrid then Harry suggests that you head towards France. It’s not a good idea to be seen around this area. We don’t want my cousin to get into trouble, do we?”

Buckbeak chirped again and shook his head, beat his wings a few times and took off into the night.

Dudley was still holding onto the other person, when the other person suddenly passed out. Shifting the weight, Dudley managed to cover him up with the invisibility cloak and lifted him over his shoulders. Staggering his way into his house he sincerely hoped that it looked like he was staggering in a drunken fashion rather than under the weight of another person.

He made it into the house and walked up to his cousin’s room. Taking the invisibility cloak off his new guest, he put it away. He paused for another good look at the youth that Harry claimed needed help, noting all the bruises and cuts, he searched his cousin’s trunk for the appropriate potions and salves. He placed everything on the desk with the letter that Harry had wanted to deliver to this person.

Thankfully, his parents were going to be away for another day, so he could explain everything to the pale blond youth that was now sleeping on the narrow bed.

---------------------------------

Harry watched his mate sleeping, until he could no longer maintain his astral presence. Hugging him and whispering softly in his ear, “I will see you soon, love. I have to finish a few things first. Dudley will explain as best he can and there is a letter explaining everything that I can to you.” His wrapped his mate in his arms and placed a very heated kiss onto a surprisingly responsive mouth. It was all he could do to convey warmth, security and protective possessiveness before he faded back to his body.

(...Hedwig, please watch over him and if he needs your services will you allow it?...)

(...Of course...) She responded, (...He is your mate and therefore I will obey him too...)

(...Thank you my friend...) As he was beginning to fade from sight, (...Don’t let him eat anything from Ron or Hermione...)

She knew that, but it might be difficult considering the other owls are only trying to do their duty, however this was her domain and she would protect his mate, just like her friend wished.

Draco rolled over moaning in his sleep, but she never heard a sound. It looked like the collar was working.
The following morning, Draco felt the warmth of the room that he was in for the first time in long time. He rolled over and not wanting to cause anymore damage or pain he stretched cautiously, extending as best as he could.

Sitting up slowly, he was able to take the information about the room he was now in. There were broken toys and tattered books in some of the corners of the room. By the door there was a wardrobe with a loose door and a battered school trunk just to the side of it. Near the bed there was an owl perch, with a cage underneath. There was a Quidditch poster, where the figures looked to have been charmed immovable, and a very small Gryffindor pennant on the wall next to him. A rickety desk with a spindly chair was near the small window and on the desk were a couple of potion bottles and a letter with his name on it.

He took in the room as a whole and noticed that it was way smaller than his first closet, but he instinctively knew that there was no way that his father could find him now. Taking a deep breath he heaved a deep sigh of hope.

Slowly he got up from the bed and took the envelope, feeling that it would contain an explanation. Opening it he found several sheets of folded and numbered parchment filled in green ink, with the neatest writing he had ever seen. He unfolded the one marked No. 1.

-----

Dearest mate,

There is no doubt now that you are my mate. I have had a difficult time this summer trying to come to terms with the various events that have occurred to me since I left the train platform this year, yet I must be clear to you regarding this.

I have not had any prior knowledge that I was anything other than human. I apologize now and will again in person, when we meet, because I was equally baffled as to everything that a Draekon was. I have learned many details, of which there are a few better detailed books in my trunk, and will willingly share them all with you, but for the time being please know that I will now leave you in peace, if this is not what you seek.

You are free to use any and all of my belongings within this room, but please, please do not remove the collar. It was modified to protect your presence in this house. No one will know where you are, unless you take that collar off.

My cousin’s name is Dudley Dursley and a muggle, he will be better able to explain some of my true past to you, however you will most probably be confined here until the last week of August. I hope that that will not be too much of a hardship for you.

I have made plans to meet you and Dudley in London around August 20th, but if I do not show up in time, then you can expect me to see you the evening of August 31st.

The other letters explain the events that have occurred to me this summer and some of the events that have occurred in the past.

I hope that you will not be too disappointed in me.

Please talk to Dudley.

Your Draekon mate,
Draco snorted. ‘Harry Potter’, he thought. ‘Why, am I not surprised?’

TBC...
Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:
‘Thoughts or emphasis’
“Normal speech”
(…Words spoken in another language…)

Chapter Five

Harry left his mate with the hopes that Draco would eventually get to know or understand him from the letters that he left behind. It’s not like they cannot communicate via post, now that Draco was no longer under the watchful eye of his father.

The following day Harry completely immersed himself in the ritual required to find his and his mate’s familiar during travels.

Harry finally re-learned how to be a student and had re-developed his study habits the point where he rewrote his school notes to perfection. This was important now because he had to rely on his memory for other more mundane things like the location of his belongings or the placement of the furniture in his rooms.

He developed special magical ink that appeared in different colours to the average human eye, but actually had a slight odour, texture or mixture of both. It was better than normal charmed ink, as it incorporated a language spell that would alter the writing from written cursive to Braille and back again. The different odours and textures or mix of the two allowed him to identify the subject that he was studying and helped him to maintain accurate subject notes.

Uluru had helped him send correspondence to the Gringotts Branch in Melbourne before his seventeenth birthday and with their assistance Harry learned how to deal with the basics of his finances. Griphook from the London branch was invited over to the branch in Melbourne, which turned out to be very lucky. Harry’s inheritances were now allowed to be dispersed to him without consultation from any guardian, due to the fact that he acquired his magical heritage. The heritage of a Draekon is nothing to laugh about and quite frankly the goblin nation was quite pleased with this outcome.

Harry gained his financial independence earlier then predicted and therefore no one from England would be aware of that fact until August 15. That was the date that all Wills were to have been carried out and if Harry was not in attendance then he would have forfeited everything in accordance to those wills, plus whoever was his guardian would have had the right to distribute the financial assets however they pleased.
Griphook explained everything that Harry needed to know about claiming his inheritance and how to go about doing it in a very legal manner that prevented interference. Once all of his land, properties and monies had been accounted for, Harry very smartly updated his locking options with a severe upgrade to the securities on all of his belongings.

He had an account opened for his mate in the interim, until their future was somewhat settled and had the goblins send his mate the key. He hoped that Draco wouldn’t take receiving a spousal allowance the wrong way and hopefully will not complain about the limit to the amount he would be allowed to withdraw or use in a given week.

Draco was now his to protect and that included providing him with financial stability. ‘Merlin, I hope that 400 Galleons a week is enough. I wonder how much his parents gave him,’ he thought. ‘They probably just got him whatever he wanted, either way I’m sure I gave him enough to replace a few of the items and clothes that I noticed he no longer had. Better get Dudley to help him shop in the Muggle world. Perhaps there is something that will allow Draco to shop in the Magical world without being found.’ That was something else that Harry pondered upon, during his time with the second old coot in his life.

Uluru had fully assisted him with the rehabilitation and most of his new Draekon abilities, but Harry was still behind in his training due to the lack of sight. The old man pushed him until he was confident that the young Draekon could cope with his up and coming travels and trials that he would experience returning to his seventh year of school. The best yet was that Harry no longer needed his “Remedial Studies” with Professor Snape and Harry hoped that that time could be used for other studies in training and focus with the sour Potions Master.

---------------------------------

Draco had spent the better part of the day recovering from his afflictions and another part reading all of the letters that Harry had written at different intervals. It seems that the letters were written after each time that his mate had visited him.

Harry explained everything from the traitorous behaviour of his best friends to the absolute horror of losing his virginity to some Ravenclaw tramp and another traitorous Weasley, female this time. Harry also told him many things about the Draekon heritage and how it was lost, but not extinct, obviously.

His mate then charged him with only one task for the time being, until they could meet before heading to school. “Wear that collar. It will protect you from being seen by the Order members that patrol the neighbourhood and it will especially protect you from Mad Eye Moody’s disgusting rolling eyeball...”

So, Draco followed his mate’s advice. He snooped to his hearts content through Harry’s meager belongings and found several interesting things. He also spoke with Dudley regarding the Boy-Who-Lived’s real life situation. He was horrified to see the infamous “Cupboard under the stairs” that was Harry’s first bedroom.

Still one thing to know about Draco was that he thirsted for knowledge and decided that he would learn about muggles from Harry’s cousin. He had taken quite a liking to the handheld game systems that Dudley had in abundance and Dudley even taught him how to use a cell phone, computer (from the older models lying around the room) and a few other gadgets. Draco loved this stuff, he even liked to surf the web for interesting facts and was surprised at the vast amount of knowledge available online.

Dudley for his part visited often to explain the Muggle side, while Draco explained the Wizard side from his perspective. He clearly stated that his perspective was not the regular one, but one of
breeding. He explained that his early education forced him to learn and be aware of the Wizarding political climate due to his father’s connections.

He even explained to Dudley about the Hogwarts house system and how the students were sorted according to character traits. When Dudley heard about that he was shocked and spoke his mind on the subject. “That has to be the dumbest thing that I have ever heard. Every single trait that you’ve mentioned exists in everyone. It’s stupid to separate those with bravery, brains, loyalty and cunning as the main markers of a person’s character. People change as they get older and they need to in order to grow. How is sticking everyone with those same characteristics going to allow anyone to mature well?”

“You do have a point, but I believe that it was to engender some competitiveness within the school. You know, to allow the students of one house to feel like they can have a solid point in common with which to begin interacting with one another.” Draco stated, defending his school, but somehow understanding that the House system could be improved upon, greatly.

“There should be a change to that,” Dudley said. “Don’t you guys have a change up later, get re-sorted or something, so that you can get to know others of the school. Do you happen to know whether anyone has ever been placed in the wrong House to begin with?”

“Not that I know of, but I’ll tell you that there are times that I’m sure your cousin was placed in the wrong House.” Draco then explained some of the actions that he’s seen Harry take that really went against the Gryffindor law of “How to act bravely with no brain!” Not surprisingly the recent events assisted his case in point.

“You know that you have some of those qualities too,” Draco stated. “You, a muggle, meet up with a creature that you have never seen before in your entire life and seemingly accept it as is. You take me into your house, not knowing what kind of person I am, showing that you have Gryffindor bravery. Yet you are a sneaky Slytherin around your parents and are cunningly forging Harry’s writing in order to prevent that Flock of Buzzards from being suspicious of Harry’s whereabouts. You are beginning to show a disturbing bout of Hufflepuff loyalty by protecting Harry’s mate and for some reason I don’t believe that you are as stupid as you pretend to be around your friends, which leads me to believe that you have a bit of the Ravenclaw brains.”

Dudley just laughed because Draco had just proved his point that someone can be made up of all the House traits from his school and then gleefully told him so. “You’ve just proved my point. You have just told me that I would fit in every House at that school of yours and that, perhaps, your funny little Sorting Hat would not be able to place me so easily within any House. Think about it. You’re eleven years old and your personality has not had time to develop, but now that we are older it is harder to separate everything into black and white categories.”

Draco fell into a thoughtful mode, as Dudley took up his letter writing for Harry. There were the usual letters to the Order, but there was an additional one for Professor Snape and one for Remus Lupin that Harry didn’t want forged. In it Harry explained to his professor some of the situations that had occurred to him and then proceeded to ask if there were any potions ingredients from his travels that he could bribe the Professor with in order to gain his assistance for some future disruptions that he was planning for the big bad Lord Dark Dufus.

Remus’ letter was more direct, in that Harry expressed some of the feelings that he has been having and some of his concerns regarding Dumbledore’s true motives. He explained everything that he thought he could and expressed his hope that Remus would be able to patch things up with Professor Snape, as Harry explained that he would be trying to get the Potions Master’s assistance.

Throughout all of that another exotic bird, a golden eagle this time, showed up at the window
looking for someone. The eagle spoke to Hedwig and when the snowy owl hooted her response the eagle flew to the side of the bed and waited patiently for the letter that he carried to be removed by an invisible hand.

Draco was watching the birds communicate and knew that only Hedwig was able to see him, but to allow another bird... He nibbled on his bottom lip and raised a hand to take the letter. The eagle waited until it was completely removed before flying over to sit next to Harry’s owl. Obviously it was waiting for a reply or for something to happen.

Draco opened the letter from the eagle and found that it came from Gringotts. Looking in the envelope he found a vault key that was brand new. Reading the letter, his eyes widened that the amount that he now owned and at the amount that his mate allowed for withdrawal. He only needed to let a drop of his blood fall onto the key to activate it. He didn’t waste anytime searching for a knife. He just brushed the pad of his thumb against one of his lengthened canines and cut himself.

He allowed only one drop to fall onto the key, there was a small flash of light and the eagle could now see him. He chirped once to indicate that he could now see the youth sitting on the bed. It then hopped to the window and flew away.

Draco was a bit concerned about the bird being able to see him, but the letter clearly stated that once the vault was activated, any correspondence to him could only be delivered to him by that one bird. Harry apparently set it up that way.

Dudley was done for the day and there was only one letter from Harry left to Draco. “Hey. Drake, this one’s for you,” he said. Then he teased the blond by asking, “Do you want me to forge this one for you in order that you actually receive the right letter from your mate?”

Draco chuckled and just snatched the letter to read. Dudley had one of his own, so they both sat down to read some of Harry’s adventures or his instructions.

---------------------------------

Hey Duds,

I hope that you and Draco are getting on all right. It seems that I will have to be making my way back to London through some of my own power and some of my own magic. I believe that I will be back earlier then I thought, but don’t tell Draco. I would like to surprise him by arriving a day or two earlier then expected.

I gave him some money and since you know that the currency we use is actual real gold, I was wondering if you could shop with him in Muggle London to pick up whatever he wants. Perhaps to set him up at a hotel so he can explore some of the city, but I insist that you be with him when he does.

I don’t want anything happening to him and you will still be the only one to truly see him as he is. Muggles will only be able to see that someone is with you, but would never be able to tell who that person is or even what they look like. His presence will be wiped from their memories once he leaves their vicinity.

Take one or two of the gold coins and pawn them. Just say that you are a metallurgy student and that you’ve inherited the pieces from an eccentric relative who loved to forge their own coins. The coins should fetch several hundred, if not thousands of pounds for your guys to spend.

Get him out of there and have fun. Maybe he can take you into a magical alley in order for you to
see part of the Wizarding World. Don’t worry, I sent him a magical charm to attach to his collar that will allow him to shop for his school things and anything else that he may want.

I would like you to forward Remus’ letter as is and that goes for Professor Snape’s letter with the small box that I have just sent you. It contains the potion vial and the stabilized remains of the potion that I stupidly drank at the beginning of summer.

That’s all for now.

Hope to see you guys very soon,

Harry

Draco eagerly opened the letter from his mate, having gotten used to the change in Harry’s handwriting. It was now very elegant and could rival that of any noble born wizard. However his eagerness had more to do with the fact that it was ‘his’ mate writing to him.

He had suspected that he would be the mate of a magical creature. It was just something that he had always known. However he never expected that it would be to a creature as rare as a Draekon. He eagerly opened it and began to read…

My Dearest Mate,

I don’t think that I will ever be able to address any letter to you so plainly anymore. You will always be “My Dearest Mate”, until you come to your decision. If your decision is a positive one, then one day I may change my greeting to become My Dearest Love.

Sappy, I know, but on some days I feel that I must express it otherwise it I feel that stifling it would lead to something very unpleasant. That is just how I feel. I know, it’s Hufflepuff of me, but I can’t help it.

Now on to better things, in this envelope is a charm that I created for you to attach to the remaining link on your collar. It will allow you to leave the protection of this house. In fact it will allow you to remain hidden in plain sight no matter who is standing in front of you. So don’t worry about Mad Eye Moody, he’ll think that he saw someone else.

I gave my cousin some ideas on what to do now that you are technically free. I must insist that you keep wearing that collar until I come and remove it from you. It is the only way that I know for you to be safe. Muggles will see you, but will never be able to identify you because once you leave their vicinity you will be erased from their memories.

The advice I gave Dudley was to take you shopping for whatever it is you wanted to buy. He’s to take a few Galleons to a muggle pawn shop and exchange it for muggle currency. I know that you will get enough to cover all of your expenses. I ask that you wait for him to be around before traveling in Muggle London. I would also like for you to test the charm by shopping in a Wizarding alley. Take Duds with you, he might like to see some of our world before the beginning of the school year.

Please get your school books and supplies for the upcoming year. Could you pick up mine as well? See Duds for a list of my courses. I had to reply to McGonagall about my NEWT courses and you should have no trouble figuring out the books that I need.
By the way, do you like silk? I believe that I will be traveling through Japan and China, up through Russia, perhaps a small stop near Romania, India, Italy and then on to London. If there’s anything that you can think of that you want from those countries, don’t hesitate to write back very soon.

I have asked Dudley to forward a letter to Professor Snape and in it I am requesting assistance with my training. Could you provide me with a list of potions ingredients that are rare in Europe, but that I could easily acquire during my travels. I am going to try and bribe him for his help. In fact I mentioned a bribe in his letter. Hopefully he won’t destroy it before reading it.

Well that’s all that I can think of for now. Oh… Your key, I hope that you are not too angry with me for setting you up with a spousal account. I felt that you needed it and it will be permanently yours no matter what. Think of it as a dowry. If that is too sappy or girly for you, then perhaps you could think of it as a bribe.

I dream of you every night and await the day that I can feel you next to me.

Harry

Draco snickered at the bribing parts of the letter. 'Yes, you prat,' he thought. 'I will take it as a bribe.'

He smiled softly to himself at the way Harry was expressing himself. He didn’t think that they would have that many issues to overcome, as they had been corresponding on a regular basis, but he did notice that sometimes Harry turned sappy on occasion in his writing. He didn’t mind that at all, in fact he secretly loved it. Then he looked thoughtfully at the letter pondering the possibilities and then looked towards Dudley.

Dudley just finished his letter and was looking at it when he noticed that Draco had glanced his way. Turning his gaze to the blond in Harry’s bed, he waited.

“Duds,” Draco began. “I think that he has given us some good ideas. What do you think? Do you think that we could plan to go a magical alley sometime tomorrow or the day after?”

“Sure”, Dudley replied. “We could even go today if you want. It’s just the start of the afternoon, besides I don’t think that you’re planning to shop for anything fun right now. I think that you want to get some of the necessary shopping out of the way and I would love to visit a magical alley.”

“Alright, just let me plan some of the things that I want to buy,” Draco said. “Oh, by the way do you still have a copy of that letter Harry had you copy for Professor McGonagall regarding his course selection for the year?”

Dudley pulled it out and let Draco look it over before releasing the desk space for Draco to plan his shopping list. Dudley decided to take care of the letters and package for Harry’s Professor and honourary godfather.

Taking the letters he tied the letter to the package and then the package to Hedwig’s leg. “This one is to Professor Snape, please deliver that one first.” Tying the second letter to Hedwig’s other leg his stated that that one was for Remus Lupin, to be delivered last. “Take your time and don’t tire yourself out. Harry wouldn’t like that and neither would I. There’s a good owl, now off you go. The other letters here can wait until you’ve rested a bit. They’re only for the Order and they can certainly wait.” Hedwig hooted once, nibbling a finger before taking off.

Draco was finished with his list and together they set out to get some of the essentials for next school year.
August 9

The renowned Potions Master Professor Snape was slowly going out of his mind with worry for his godson, Draco. He found out earlier in the summer that Lucius Malfoy had escaped Azkaban. His godson had disappeared a few weeks after that and Lucius was not talking about how it happened.

Also, his fears were growing every time he met up with the Dark Lord because he had the distinct impression that Lord Voldemort knew that he was a traitor to his Dark and Glorious cause.

He just couldn’t figure out how or who was betraying him at the meetings, but he certainly knew that he wasn’t the only one to brew potions. Some potions were already prepared by the time he arrived at the Dark Lord’s Lair and he knew that they were not part of any batches that were requested of him.

He was currently sitting in a high backed chair that looked really uncomfortable, but was actually one of the most comfortable pieces of furniture in his sitting room. He had a snifter of brandy on the table next to him and he was, at this moment, contemplating what his next step should be, when in from the window above his door flew a snowy white owl.

He looked at the owl gently circling the room, moving his arm the owl settled next to him on the vacated armrest. The owl had a letter-package combination on one leg and a simple letter on the other leg. He lifted one dark brow when the owl lifted the leg with the package in his direction.

“If you’ll permit me?” He asked her, taking out his wand. Hedwig just resettled her leg, hooted softly and waited calmly. Snape raised his other brow at this behaviour, but performed the necessary spell checks for stray pranks, hexes or jinxes. Gently removing the parcel, he conjured a bowl of water for the owl with a couple of treats for her before allowing her to fly away too soon.

“Relax before the next leg of your journey,” he said, slowly opening up the letter first. A quick scan of the letter had him curious as to who could be writing to him. Further inspection of the signature had his wondering why the Potter brat would be writing to him and yet, he was beginning to doubt that it was from Harry Potter due to the neatness of the writing. Still he started re-reading the letter from the top to find out what was going.

Potions Master Severus Snape

Dear Professor,

Firstly, I must apologize to you for invading your privacy during the fifth year, but perhaps asking for your forgiveness may be a bit too much. I had thought, at the time, that you were keeping the same secret that Professor Dumbledore was and I was just trying to figure out what that could be. You see it had something to do with me, a Dark Lord and a prophecy. If you haven’t been told what that whole year was about, now you know part of it, but I digress.

Once I was in your pensieve and saw what it really contained, I didn’t want to leave. I had never seen any side of my father before and now I sincerely wished that I hadn’t stayed in the memory. It is not something to be proud of and I did confront Sirius and Remus about it.

I have not told anyone else about the contents of your pensieve or what I had witnessed; it is just not
right to do such a thing. I am sorry for invading your privacy. I have so little of it myself, but in that moment I forgot how it felt to have my own invaded. I am truly sorry.

Moving on, I must say that I am glad to have received your letter informing me that “Remedial Studies” will be resuming once more and I thank you for your concerns in that matter. However, I believe that following the Headmaster’s orders may be difficult now, as I am quite capable of Occluding my mind. Feel free to test me once the new school year begins.

I know that you may have more than a few questions, perhaps about how come I am not sending any information to the Headmaster and the Order regarding the visions that I have been plaguing me in the past. Well, to tell you the truth, I am too far away for them to affect me at the moment.

Yes, Potter has gotten himself into another strange situation, but in my defense I was set up. You know about the “Subliminus” spell and about an interactive potion that can be used accompany it. Well that was part of the set up.

It is very important for you to believe me because I fear that your life is in far greater danger than you may realize.

In the package is the remains of a potion that I was “compelled” to ingest near the beginning of the summer. I was told that it would correct my eyesight, but once I held the potion vial I couldn’t stop myself from following the ‘suggestion’ to drink it. I am sincerely hoping that you were not the brewer of that concoction.

I have, also, discovered several Pettigrews within my small circle of friends, a couple of whom frequent the same meetings that you do. I do mean the same meetings both light and dark. Please be careful, not for my sake, but for the sake of your godson, Draco.

That brings me to another topic. Sorry for the multitude of topics in my letter, but I have only this one time to write to you requesting your assistance.

As you may be aware, Lucius Malfoy in no longer imprisoned and I have seen some of the Dark Lord’s actions against his followers, but did you notice a time when his attentions were diverted to Draco? Something that Lucius may have slipped to the Dark Dufus about a Draekon and your godson.

It is true. Your godson is the mate to a creature only known as a Draekon. Lucius was torturing his son in order to capture this creature for the Dark Lord, but do not worry too much about him.

Draco has given his father the slip. He is now in a safe and secure location. He will be at the King’s Cross station in time for September 1st, happy, healthy and whole.

My request for your assistance is therefore three-fold.

One: I need your Potions expertise to try to figure what that blasted potion was and if I can expect any further complications from it. I have included my research and conclusions, but I do not have an insight to all the interactive possibilities of these ingredients. In fact I am not sure that I have discovered the correct ingredients.

Two: I would like your continued assistance in training for my up and coming battle with the Dark Lord. I know that you have a greater store of knowledge then many of other Defense Professors that have attended this school. I will be asking Remus to help me as well. This school needs to be taught defense more than ever. Even if some of the students are Marked, it is the unmarked ones that I fear will be caught in the middle. I want to unite this school for the final battle and in order to do that I
need your help along with Remus.

Lastly: I fear for Draco’s life in the dorms, plus once he has mated with his Draekon, his mate will not permit them to sleep apart. In these times it is too harsh to separate those that are meant to be together. Please help him get a room of his own, near yours in case of emergencies. I think that it will be for the best. I know that his father and the Dark Lord have placed a high price on his head. It’s almost as high as my own.

If you decide to assist me out of the goodness of your heart, then I heartily welcome it. But since I know that many Slytherins and especially as their Head of House you might prefer a “quid pro quo” arrangement, I am perfectly willing to offer you substantial compensation for your services. In case you’re wondering, the answer is yes. Harry Potter is willing to bribe you for your assistance.

As stated above my location is a lot further then anyone in the Order may realize, and I sincerely hope that you will keep this to yourself. I have access to the flora and fauna from the Far East countries, including Australia and China.

Do you have a preference for specific potions ingredients that you would like for me to cultivate for you? Should I just bring back a grab bag of the most exotic? I also have a fully rendered Basilisk carcass and you may have access to some of its parts, if you’d prefer that to anything else. We can bargain later if you wish.

Please advise me of your decision prior to August 11. It might be easier and quicker for you to reply through the Gringotts interpostal service. Send your reply to the Melbourne branch in Australia. I plan to be back around the 20th.

Should you decide that everything in this letter is false, then don’t worry. I will still be collecting various ingredients during my travel home, as I have suddenly developed a great fascination for potions on my own.

I will be speaking with you when I return to school, even if it is only to keep up the appearance of needing your assistance with Occlumency.

Yours sincerely,

Harold Jamison Potter

---------------------------------

Snape was gobsmacked at the contents of the letter and had to re-read it several times before coming to any conclusion. The brat stated that he wrote to Lupin regarding more training and there was a meeting with the Order in a couple of days. Perhaps that would be a good time to confer with the Wolf and confirm the brat’s sincerity.

He took another sip of brandy and then began to dream of the possible ingredients he could demand for his help. Smirking, he thought of a few that would prove difficult for Potter to find if he really was not where he indicated he was. ’Yes, that is another perfect way to test his sincerity,’ he thought. ’However I am relieved that Draco has escaped. Now all I have to worry about are the Pettigrews.’

Curiosity about the package had him opening it to find the notes that Potter was talking about. ’Hopefully they are in order,’ he thought, shuddering at the mess that passed for Potter’s school work in the previous years. His writing alone was atrocious and his organizational skills were lacking, but the boy had some unique insights from time to time. Potter tended to add marginal notes to his essays that had this Potions Master wondering if treating Potter the way he did stifled some of the accurate
insight that he found to those comments.

Opening the box he found a small black journal and under it he found another box that had stasis
charms. He took the journal out and placed the box on the table next to his brandy. Flipping the
cover to the first page, his eyes widened in shock, as the title was clear and in the same handwriting
as the letter that he had just received.

Turning the page he was again surprised at the neatness of the writing and the structure that Harry
had used. Harry had started with an introduction of the potion with an explanation of what really
happened vs. the vision he had received, which detailed what was supposed to have happen. He had
even included the conversation that had been carried out during his train ride, which allowed him to
add another possible outcome for the potion.

He had listed all of the herbal ingredients in green ink and the animal parts in red. Further to that the
magical vs. the non-magical were separated by a different degree of colour and the colour key was
on the opposite page from the list.

Professor Snape was soon immersed in the deductions, the systematic testing carried out and the
methodical note taking that filled the small journal.

---------------------------------

Remus Lupin was sitting in front of the fire recovering from a full moon night, when he heard the
soft wings of a bird flutter nearby. Looking up he saw that Hedwig had come to deliver a letter to
him from his honourary godson.

Smiling, he spoke to the beautiful bird, “Hello Hedwig. I see that Harry has a letter for me.” Hedwig
hooted at him, holding out her leg in order that he may take the letter from her. “Thank you girl,” he
said conjuring a stand with a water dish and some treats.

Remus looked at the letter and smelled it for a moment. He smiled knowing that Hedwig had
delivered something to the Potions Master Professor Snape before coming to deliver his letter. He
loved the varied scents that accompanied the dark man, but there was no way that he would tell him
that. Severus was more likely to hex him for insult, rather than take it for the compliment it is.

He was still smelling the letter when another odour was discovered attached to the letter. Sniffing
again he felt a growl begin at the back of his throat. He smelled a Dursley and that was not a good
thing to smell, due to the fact that they have never treated Harry well.

‘Now what could my Cub be writing about? He seems to have made this letter larger then any other
sent to the Order.’ Remus then became a wary and proceeded to lock his room with high security
spells that prevented snoops from eavesdropping.

---------------------------------

My Dearest Godfather,

Yes, Remus, I now consider you my godfather because there are not that many people in the world
that I would trust to fill Sirius’ shoes. Not that I expect you to do that, it’s just that I miss him and I
know that you were close to my parents and him. I find myself trusting you more then any other
adult I have encountered, because you have a calm aura about you, despite your wolffish nature.

Don’t worry, that’s one of the things that I love about you. It’s that wolffish nature because wolves
are highly intelligent, pack oriented and work together to accomplish many great things that many
times are all for the good of the pack.
I have a confession to make to you and then I am going to tell you something in trust. This summer I have not been living with my aunt and uncle. All of the letters that the Order has been receiving from me are forged copies that Dudley has been writing for me in order to protect my absence from the Dursley home.

Don’t worry I did not coerce him in any way shape or form... I sorta bribed him. The next time that you see him you will note that he has lost quite a bit of weight. It’s what he needed, but also what he wanted. Please don’t tell anyone about this.

You see I have discovered a couple of Pettigrews among my friends and I don’t want you to get hurt because of this knowledge. When I get back to school I will tell you who they are, but for the time being I was hoping that you could help Professor Snape.

I fear that something will happen to him soon and I don’t want anything bad to happen to him. It’s just a gut feeling that I have.

OH! By the way, don’t worry about Buckbeak, I set him free. I will tell you how, only after I get to back to school September 1st.

Now onto some bit of news, the Order may or may not know. Lucius Malfoy has escaped from Azkaban. He was last seen at Malfoy Manor, but I don’t think that he remained there. His wife has passed away with his help and Draco Malfoy is currently in hiding with mine.

I need your support this year Remus and I hope that we can have a solid heart to heart. So much has changed for me and I am no longer the rival of Draco Malfoy. In fact, Draco has run away from home because there is a price on his head for being the supposed mate of a Draekon. The Dark Lord wants the creature, but I don’t know why.

Chalk it up to me being a Gryffindor. I had to help him. He is in a completely safe and secure location, you’ll never guess where. Also, if you were to walk up to him in the street, you would never know that you are in his presence. So even if you do guess you’ll never notice him.

I have written to Professor Snape asking for help in the coming year and I am hoping to get your help too. He may consult with you to find out the truth or maybe to confirm that this letter you have received is really from me.

You see I fully intend to unite the school this year and maybe a lack of visible rivalry between past year-mates would help me unite the others. It’s not necessary, but then again every little bit counts.

I hope that you will be teaching us this year. I think it would be awesome. I am planning something worthy of the Marauders for September 1st. It’s not a prank, but it will cause havoc in the school. Better yet it is worthy of the Founders. Things will be changing and I will be pushing for those changes.

Now onto something that may be unpleasant for anyone to hear, so this is a heads up for you and what I place in trust to you.

I have recently found out that there was an inheritance deadline for the execution of my parents’ and Sirius’ Wills. The deadline was August 15 for the year that I turned seventeen. It seems that I had to be in attendance to the reading of those Wills prior to that day in order to inherit all of my properties, financial assets and other assets. If I was not present then I would have forfeited it all to my currently known magical guardian.

Do you realize who claims to have my best interests at heart? The one who the Wizarding World
believes to be my guardian? Do you know why I have not been allowed to leave the Dursley’s house at all this summer? Do you recall the day they were planning to pick me up? I’ll give you a hint; he isn’t a muggle nor related to the Dursleys.

I would have lost everything, but thank all the gods for my kind of luck because I spoke with a Gringotts representative. I found out that I have long since been emancipated, ever since I have received my magical heritage. Just to let you know, it’s big.

Since you know that I am no longer at the Dursleys, you might be worried that my visions are more than I can handle on my own, don’t. There is a reason that I haven’t written to the Order about them.

You see, I’m just too far away for them to have any effect at the moment. Wondering how far? Try the near the Orient. I’ll bring you back some good tea.

Do you want anything else in particular? I have to travel a bit to make my way back to London. Just forward me something before the eleventh through the Gringotts intra-office service, to the Melbourne branch in Australia. I will do my best to find whatever you want.

I promise to explain everything once I get back.

Please destroy this letter after you’ve shown it to Professor Snape. He made need physical proof of my sincerity.

Love from your Cub,

Harry

-------------------------------

Remus was stunned. Harry was not at the Dursley’s and yet the Order was still receiving the letters from him as if he was writing them himself. The fat lump Dudley was helping. He shook his head and began to read the letter once more.

‘A couple of Pettigrews!’ He thought, horrified that there were others like that ‘rat’ out there. ‘How does he know? We never found him out until too late, but Harry knows about a couple of them.’

That line alone had Remus’ hackles up. He stood up and began to pace his room thinking about everything that he just read in the letter. Finally he decided that there was nothing he could do until he had a conversation with Snape.

-------------------------------

August 14

The Order of the Phoenix has called a meeting for the evening of August 14, to discuss Harry Potter and his future.

This was just a small gathering of the core group. The Weasleys, Hermione Granger, Severus Snape, Remus Lupin, Mad Eye Moody, Kingsley Shacklebolt and of course, the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

They were seated around the meeting table and Remus was sitting next to Severus Snape by choice.
It seems that some of the other members were trying to keep a wide berth around and away from the Potions Master.

Remus felt it was the best way to ease some of the uncertainty in regards to Harry’s letter. When he walked into the room there was a small argument between the elders of the Weasley clan and the Headmaster. The Weasleys wanted to take Harry out of his relatives’ home and bring him to theirs, but the interfering old coot wouldn’t let them.

“No, now my dear Molly,” the old man placated. “Harry is not having any problems that you know of. In fact his letters are quite plain. He has not indicated having any trouble with his relatives this year.”

“Don’t try to placate me, Albus,” the red headed woman ranted. “Harry has every right to leave that place now that he is of age. He should be allowed the choice. We would gladly take him in, you know that.”

“The boy is placed where he is the safest. I will send someone to look in on him tomorrow. That will surely ease your minds,” he said with finality. He turned his twinkling gaze to Severus, who just glowered back at him.

“No,” Severus said. He knew that he had to play up to the group and protest any involvement to fetch or see to Harry’s well-being.

“I’ll go,” Remus said. “Harry is part of my pack after all and I feel that it is my duty to check up on him.”

“I don’t believe that would be a good idea Remus,” Dumbledore said. “You are still recovering from the other night.”

“I’ve recovered just fine Albus,” Remus continued. “Harry would want me to visit him. Besides I really feel that it is time to keep my promise to the Dursleys and see how they are treating him.”

“I’m sorry Remus, but I just don’t think that it is a good idea for you to visit them alone.”

“Oh… for Morgana’s sake Albus, let the wolf go,” Severus said. He was getting tired of the back and forthing of those two. “I’ll go with him to make sure that the brat is fine. Do you really think that it is wise to prevent a wolf from visiting a member of what he considers his pack?”

Everyone was stunned by that statement, but since the headmaster’s plan was to get Severus to go and check up on Harry, he was willing to allow Remus to go along providing that nothing happened to the muggles.

The rest of the meeting wound down to niggling details that did not involve either of the two gentlemen, but when the Headmaster was asked if he would be back the next day, he stated that he had some important business to take care of at Gringotts.

When Remus heard that statement, his eyes flashed with amber light and he seemed to start to growl. To cover up his actions he coughed and said that he would be returning to his room. Since the discussions taking place no longer involved him everyone waved him off.

Severus got up to follow when Dumbledore questioned him, “Where are you going?”

“Lupin seems a bit off and since I am the one providing him with the Wolvesbane potion I am going to see whether the modifications that I made are affecting him,” he replied. “Do you need me for anything else Albus? I really don’t care to sit here and listen to you argue about that Potter brat any
longer."

Albus Dumbledore just chuckled at his response, eyes twinkling he waved off his Potions Master. Watching as the dark man flounced out of the room with his robes billowing out. He turned his attentions back to the other members of the Order and began once more to defend his reasons for keeping Harry at his relatives’ home. He was just waiting for tomorrow to come before he would magnanimously allow Harry to leave.

---------------------------------

Snape followed the wolf from a distance and waited til Lupin had been in his room for a bit before approaching. He sighed before stealing himself to knock on the door, when the door opened to allow him entry.

“About time,” Remus said. “Come in. Can I get you something to drink?”

Severus stepped into the room and jumped when the door was shut behind him. He was never easily startled, but he was nervous due to Remus’ actions downstairs. “Sure, something strong,” he said.

“Have a seat and I’ll be right there.” Remus went to his little hidden bar and pulled something that he had been saving for a while. It was a fine aged Apple Brandy that had been part of his family’s secret stash. He even knew how to make it and modify the Brandy to have different flavours, although he needed money in order to produce more than a few bottles at a time. Still he knew the secret to aging them with a few time spells specifically designed to produce interesting wines and liquors of quality.

He paused for a few moments, to secure the room and lock it from snoopy type spells. Thankfully Sirius showed him which ones were the most effective in this house and which ones could not be overridden by anyone, due to the fact that they tapped the magic of the house itself.

Severus settled himself in a chair across from a warm fire. He sighed as he gazed at the dancing flames. He felt Remus’ presence next to him for a moment and then he turned his focus to the drink that was held out to him.

Taking a sip, he let it burn its way down his throat. It seemed that neither knew how to begin this conversation.

“Severus,” Remus began, startling the Potions Master again. Snape frowned marginally and then blanked his gaze, turning it towards the werewolf.

“Yes.”

“Here,” he said, handing over the letter that Harry had written him. He didn’t expect the Potions Master to hand over his letter for him to see, but he needed to show that he trusted Snape with the contents of his own, besides any double-agent knows how to keep secrets.

Snape perused the letter once, quickly scanning the contents and then proceeded to re-read it in order to obtain the most details from it that he could. He was surprised that Harry knew he would want to confirm his sincerity with the wolf. It showed more insight than he thought the boy was capable of.

He frowned at the mention of the Pettigrews, but then he positively scowled at the paragraph stating that his godson was in hiding and could not even be seen. Still it was better then the situation his godson was in before, at the hands of his own father.

Once his finished reading he took another sip of the brandy, this time he noted the flavour and hummed in pleasure at it.
Remus’ head perked up and his ears twitched when he heard the little hum of pleasure. Looking at the Potions Master, he saw that his eyes were closed and that he had a quirky little smile trying to peek out from one corner his mouth. Remus was almost ready to beam, when those dark eyes opened, out of focus for a moment and then sharpened to into his.

He sent a smile to the dark man and said, “I’m glad you like the Brandy.” Taking a sip from his own glass.

Severus paused for a moment, considering, and then handed Remus the letter that he had received from Harry for Remus to read.

Remus was surprised at that, but still took the letter and smelled it first, seeking out the scent of his cub. Once his found it he smiled wistfully and opened the letter to read all of it. Pleased to find that the contents almost echoed his own letter. He finished reading it and with a final sniff he handed it back to the Potions Master.

“Well. Now what should we do?” Remus said. “I’m all for going to the Dursley’s to see Harry, but knowing that he is not there, should we still go to keep up appearances?”

“Of course we still go,” Snape groused. “We will be watched and be certain that once we do not find the brat, we will have to report it.”

“True,” Remus said. “But we can delay the reporting by attempting to find out where Harry could possibly be, by following a likely path... Say to Gringotts or by questioning the Dursley’s.”

“So,” Severus began, hating small talk, but he was wondering about one of the issues that Harry had brought up. “Has the headmaster offered you the D.A.D.A. teaching position?”

Remus smiled and nodded. “At least this year I will have assistance, because I know that Harry had a training club for a couple of years in order to bring most of the students up to speed. I was thinking of asking for Harry to assist in some of the classes or else for him to continue his defense club.”

They made their plans for the next day, knowing that Dumbledore will be extremely disappointed from his meeting at Gringotts and the Order was going to meet the next night anyway.

They also spent a good portion of the evening in a lively discussion about the upcoming school year and both were secretly hoping that everything would be all right with their respective godsons. Still neither could wait to see Dumbledore’s face and expressions when he found out that Harry was a) not at the Dursleys, b) not on within easy reach, c) fully emancipated and d) fully in charge of all his finances.

Oh, yes the last Marauder and the Snarky Git were really waiting to see those fireworks. It promised to be a good show.

---------------------------

TBC...
Six

Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:

‘Thoughts or emphasis’
“Normal speech”
(…Words spoken in another language…)  
---------------------------------
Chapter Six  
---------------------------------

August 9

Draco had clipped his new charm to the link on his collar, the day he had received it. It was a small teardrop shaped emerald stone, which would allow Harry to locate his mate and sense whether he was in danger. Draco tested it thoroughly on the same day that he received his spousal key. It worked when he and Dudley went to Diagon Alley in order to pick up school supplies.

During their shopping spree and a whim Draco bought matching trunks for himself and Harry. They were magical trunks that were of the multi-compartment line, but that only had three compartments. He didn’t approve of the ones that could replace a home, because it seemed like those ones encouraged vagabonds. Still it was a personal choice and the three-fers were understated, yet elegant, which suited Draco’s noble tastes.

The ones that he bought were part of a matched set for couples. The set included a bonus shoulder carryall with multiple pockets on the outside with a huge space in the main compartment that allowed room for up to a 200 pound weight with a diameter of 100 inches round and 4 feet of height.

These were of course set up with any spells that the customer requested and therefore the carryall and trunks were now featherweight, shrinkable, protected from theft and they were also charmed to look normal on the outside, meaning that they didn’t look full. They were all brushed black leather with hints of red and they had bronze and copper fastenings with the highest security protection spells available.

The very last compartment of Draco’s trunk was where he planned to have a muggle type study or gaming room. He was planning to pick up lots of electronic gadgetry and was planning to get them up and running as soon as he could figure out how to power them with magic.

The spacing inside the trunks used complex magics that generated an extra dimension within the trunk. That dimension did not affect the muggle electronics because Dudley was exploring it when he received a call on his cell phone. They discovered that the call was unaffected in any way, shape
The second compartment was reserved for Draco’s clothing and the first compartment was for his school supplies, plus his own shrunken trunk.

Draco set up Harry’s trunk in a similar fashion, but left the last compartment for Harry to fill as he pleased. In the mean time, Draco had taken to buying up books that he thought Harry would like to read or to have to study from. He did include shelving, however on the off chance that Harry could not think of anything to fill his third compartment.

Besides they needed someplace to store the books that they were finding in the Muggle world. Draco knew that Harry needed to learn different things and therefore was shopping up a storm in some of the more obscure Magical Alleys found in London. The boys even took a three-day train ride to Paris and back, hunting among some of those Magical Alleys for lost treasures. For Draco it was almost like a mini-adventure and for Dudley it was just plain magical.

Luck would have it that Draco and Dudley found muggle pawn and antique shops to be fascinating places to find the strangest pawned knick-knacks from the wizarding world. They were able to collect quite a few and they had even found some old journals that were too fantastical for muggles historians to place much value on them. They even bought some from other languages, as wizards tend to age at a slower rate; there was always time to learn new languages.

The boys had spent a fun time buying clothing from the wizarding world as well as the muggle world for Draco. Even Dudley had purchased some for himself, as he was steadfastly following Harry’s instructions for losing weight and keeping it off.

When they had acquired, most of the necessary items like clothing and school supplies, the boys decided to take Harry’s advice and tried to leave the house before August 15, but just missed and had to leave on the day itself.

They had a very close call when they saw Remus Lupin and Severus Snape walking up Privet Drive, as they were getting into the taxi to go to London. Luckily Draco was already in the cab and Dudley pretending not to notice them got in the cab and they drove away without any confrontation or conversation with the two professors. They did leave them a note indicating that Harry had left the building and would only be able to found on September 1st, when he caught the train for school.

Prior to August 15, they surfed the web for a hotel that was classy, yet not too posh to be snooty. They settled on The Williams’ Arms near King’s Cross Station. It was in the hub of a high traffic zone where a cabbie could always be hailed, as that was the only mode of transportation that the boys found safe.

The rooms that they took was a suite that had a “common room” or living room with two bedroom doors attached and bathrooms attached to each room. This suite was usually too expensive during the regular season, but since they booked early and paid in cash they were permitted to settle in until September 1st rolled around.

Dudley told his parents that he wanted to stay in London proper with his friends to party hard before the beginning of the school year. His parents were proud of him, so of course whatever Diddums wanted, he got.

It was when they were watching some fun Disney films one evening that they discovered how to power Draco’s electronic heaven. They were watching a movie about kids building a solar powered car that had a back up battery for a race to gain scholarship money.
Draco was able to perform small magics within the trunk without being detected, since that was one of the manufacturers guarantee. The inside of the trunks, the last compartments were malleable, meaning that they could be manipulated to change shape and to close off an area to create a closet like room.

Draco changed the overall shape of his last compartment to include a large closet like space with a door separating it and his room. Behind the door they set up a portable battery type generator that ran on solar type energy. Draco figured that the charm “Lumos Solem” would be appropriate and only required an object to be charmed and recharged as needed.

He decided that ceiling of the closet should have a charmable mirror that could hold a spell for a specific length of time before losing effectiveness and required a recharge. The walls without the door were fitted with multiple solar panels, effectively making the room look like a giant mirror.

They figured out how to connect the generator with the solar panels and then Draco performed stabilizing spells that prevented anything from shifting within the room. He used magic to hide the electrical wiring behind the dark wood running boards of his room and then was finally able to fill the room with his “toys”. There was a couple of very comfortable “ergonomic” wire chairs, that were obviously top of the line, but suited to prevent discomfort when surfing or working too long on the computer systems.

In one corner he set up his computers and such, much like a corner office. The computer was set up kitty corner to his entertainment system, which was set up on the web in order to find a huge selection that would take Draco a long time to see. He chose a huge variety of music, as well as some consoled games for the latest systems on the market.

Separating the two sections was a huge leather couch set up to cut the room in half and it was placed diagonally facing the television, with a sturdy wooden coffee table in front, two small end table on either side of it and two large matching leather chairs facing each other in the direction of the couch. The chairs and couch were part of a set that Draco and Dudley had thoroughly tested for comfort.

In fact the chairs were recliners and on a whim, while shopping for them, Draco had Dudley sit in one and then Draco sat on his lap to test the comfort for two. It was somewhat embarrassing for Dudley, but Draco explained that Harry was going to be his bonded mate and said that he wanted to be able to share all of his private and personal space with his mate.

Well Dudley thought this was kind of sweet and imagined that if he ever found someone to care that deeply about he too would love to be able to cuddle in any given space. He agreed to continue the testing until they found the perfect chairs that allowed for cuddling and relaxing in close proximity without being too squished or pinched from the way the furniture was structured. They did the same with the couch and found one that was wide enough for two without having one of them roll over and fall off.

Dudley asked Draco to order him the same couch and chairs in another colour. He decided that he would find some stuff that would allow him to move out of his parents’ home, but since he was not prepared for such a move he rented a storage facility to store his furniture. After all that testing, he doubted that he would ever be able to find those particular pieces again in the future store without help. That had Draco laughing when he told him.

Draco converted more then a few galleons in order to purchase the furniture, when they were all set up he spelled them for durability, anti-scuff, theft, stain and scratch. He promised to do the same for Dudley’s when he was legally allowed to do magic or that he would talk Harry into doing it for him. He also planned to secure Dudley’s belongings with a security spell that prevented damage and theft.
from the storage facility.

It was nearing the twentieth of August and Draco was getting a little concerned that Harry still had not yet arrived. They had kept up a steady correspondence and he was looking forward to seeing the changes that have occurred in Harry. But he was still worried and he hoped that nothing went wrong for Harry’s travel back.

---------------------------------

August 7 - 20

Harry was slowly making his way back home. Uluru allowed him to use a ritual room to perform the seeking magic for familiars. Harry was looking for his own familiar, as well as Draco’s. He only needed some of Draco’s hairs which Dudley had sent to him when asked. Dudley had gathered them from Draco’s pillow when Draco was in the shower.

Harry then proceeded to purchase with the help from the Gringotts goblins, some travel necessities, since he was planning to hop from country to country. He needed travel papers for both the Muggle and Wizarding Worlds, plus he needed special governmental dispensation to gather the potion ingredients. He obtained a special carryall to bring them back so the ingredients wouldn't suffer any quarantine or stasis failures.

He ingeniously crafted the carryall from a residual image of some movie or cartoon that Dudley was watching while Harry was cleaning a long time ago. It was a double door armoire with five drawers under the doors.

The drawers had trays that lifted to reveal another below just like a jewelers that sometimes only showed a few items on display and when they needed a change of view, they changed the tray. All potions masters had their own versions of the carryall and they definitely were designed for them, but they were not exclusive to them and therefore Harry was able to obtain one and modify it to his specifications.

These particular trays were designed for potions masters and their ingredients. The trays were matched to the size drawers they were in and the drawers were varied in size going from the smallest at the top, to the largest at the bottom, which allowed for five trays to fit in the same sized drawer. Each tray had varying secure, stable compartments to not allow the vials or containers to shift while in transit. Harry also separated the trays just like his colour keys from his notes. Each tray was designated for a specific type of ingredient, magical vs. non, plant vs. animal, pieces or parts vs. the whole.

Behind the left hand door of the armoire, Harry had shelves stocked with the necessary items and tools to gather the ingredients and behind the right one Harry stocked the shelves with every possible tool needed to create potions. In fact the right side had a folding desktop that allowed for note taking during his travels.

Since the ingredients that Harry planned to obtain depended on the source, he made sure that he was able to have everything he needed to render an animal or cultivate certain plants. He even made sure that he had lots of stasis globes that preserved the full ingredients, in their natural state, to promote a fresh harvest.

He was very glad for the multiple language gift given by the brothers because it enabled him to obtain certain ingredients that could only be “willingly given” to him. The animals certainly thought
that some of his requests were strange, but then the requests themselves made many of them laugh that they tended to agree to his simple yet strange requests.

The overall armoire once closed and sealed by magic, converted and shrank to a portable size that fit in any ordinary Wizarding backpack, specifically made to carry such items. It kept them hidden in plain sight and the ingredients were placed in stasis, keeping them undisturbed by the outer magics needed to transport them.

The backpack itself was fully functioning with many pockets on the outside, which had an expandable space within to allow travel items to be added. The main compartment was reserved only for the potions carryall.

Harry, after taking his leave from his summer tutor and promising to return with his mate, began to travel in the direction of London, stopping at all the countries that he mentioned in his letters. His form of travel was a mix of apparating, popping like the house-elves did and legwork, meaning walking over various terrains. It allowed for greater visitation to other cities on the way home.

He picked up many gifts on the way for his mate and family. He learned quickly how to bargain and haggle down prices to reasonable outcomes for everyone, which in turn caused him to develop some reliable contacts for the future.

Haggling or barter itself was a form of currency and if it wasn’t done with certain flair then it was considered rude to the seller, which resulted in poor relations. However Harry took advantage of his lack of sight and caused many of them to reduce their prices to a reasonable rate when he got through to the line, (...but my friend you wouldn’t want to be accused of taking advantage of a poor blind man... I’m sure that we can reach an understanding...) from which there was always a protest similar to (...how do we know that the man is blind and that he is not taking advantage of his disability to extract a better price from this poor merchant...), which caused laughter and lead to serious bargaining.

He found his familiar and unsurprisingly she was a runespoor. He figured that it was due to his first animal language known. Parseltongue was the one he had without the aid of the snake brothers. He found her up in the mountains near the South Eastern border of Russia, crossing from China. She was small for this particular type of snake and explained that she was an outcast due to her size and colouring, but claimed that she was perfectly normal “thank you very much”.

He loved her at first touch and once the heads realized that he was blind, she loved him even more because he was always stroking her body or petting one of the heads. He named her Dauphin, which was French for dolphin. He explained that her skin was just as soft as that sea creature and she herself loved that she had a “large” name. She felt it increased her stature and said so, making Harry laugh.

Harry continued heading west, when he felt the tug of another animal calling, this time it was not for him but for his mate. He was near Tibet when the pull was getting stronger and more insistent. Using all of his enhanced magics he discovered a small abandoned temple, which was where the pull was coming from. Directing his senses he decided to leave his pack near the door to the entrance of the temple, securing it from theft and damage.

His runespoor was always with him, commenting, talking to him or guiding him over rough terrain. It never led him wrong, but sometimes the heads were all asleep at the same time. This was not one of those times, but something within or about the temple had put her to sleep. Harry knew then that he would have to travel under his owner power to get to the familiar that belonged to his mate.

He made his way to the rear of the temple sensing with his magic the contours of the structure. He
eventually found a broken statue of the temple’s deity at the back. Following the pull, he slowly found a hidden entrance leading down into the earth.

He prayed to the brothers for patience and guidance. He really did not want to trip up any old traps that may still be functioning. The walking stick that he first picked up in his dreams and then when he traveled to Uluru was still with him. He strengthened it and magicked it to be durable, unbreakable and stabilized it to prevent internal damage. He was tapping it along the walls leading further down into the hidden chambers, when he heard the sounds of an animal nearing death.

(...Hello...) he said, in what he hope was the proper language for the district that he was in. Harry tended to speak the last language that was spoken to him. He felt that it was easier then to adjust to a new one before speaking. (...Are you all right? Can I help you?...)

(...A human??...) He heard a soft voice rasping back. (...It has been so long since I’ve heard a human down this way. Come then human... I am ready to die...)

Harry frowned at that. That didn’t make any sense; his mate’s familiar was here. He sincerely hoped it was not the one claiming to be dying. (...I’m not here to harm you...) he said, adjusting his spoken language.

(...You speak??...) the voice came back in a soft tone within a growling undertone.

By the time Harry found the chamber, he was surprised by the smells of the area. It smelled like old death, like many animals had died here and there was the smell of decaying flesh too. (...Yes I speak...) He said, fully stepping into the chamber.

The creature was surprised at what was before him, a human child. There was magical power flowing through his veins. The power was so strong that the creature was turned back to a time when his predecessors roamed the world, freely flying through the skies.

(...You have such power young one...)

Not knowing what to say to such a statement, Harry said (...Thank you?...)

The questioning answer caused the creature to chuckle, which caused the ground to rumble under Harry’s feet. This made him realize that whatever was in front of him was really huge. Still he did not feel threatened by the presence that he sensed.

(...I take it that you are here to kill me...) the creature stated. Horrified by that Harry adamantly denied it. (...Then what is your reasoning for coming into this temple and how did you get past the monks...)

(...The temple is empty...) he began. (...I was following the familiar bond for my mate, since he is not with me and can not travel to this area at this time...)

(...Familiar bond??...)

(...I am a Wizard and a Draekon. I preformed a ritual that would allow me to locate my familiar, who’s here around my neck and to locate the one for my mate. I fear for his life and currently I am a figurehead for a war that is happening in the European Magical World. I thought that a familiar would assist in protecting him...)  

(...I see...) the creature said. (...I haven’t felt the presence of a Draekon in many years. Come closer so that I may see you...)
(...Is it too dark for you?...) Harry asked, (...I could light the cavern for you...)

(...Really? ... Please do, just a small flame would be nice...)

Harry performed a spell on the walls that made them light up as though the source of the light was reflected from a campfire. The light was muted to help the creature adjust his eyes.

(...Sir?...) Harry began, trying to keep his eyes in the direction of the creature. His question caused the creature to chuckle again at the politeness of the young human. (...May I ask you what you are?...)

(...Can you not see?...) The creature said bending his head close to Harry’s that he felt the presence nearing his face. Harry readjusted the direction he was facing to “look” at the creature, but then he heard the whispered voice in front of him and felt the sulfuric breath bathe his face. (...No you can’t. How did this happen?...)

Harry started to tell him the short version of his adventures, when the creature told him to settle down for the night and begin from the beginning. So, Harry summoned his backpack, set up camp for the night and told the creature his long story, well into the night, until morning came.

He had grown hoarse from telling his tale to the yet unknown entity, but was glad to be able to tell anyone the whole story once, without being overheard. It was also good that he didn’t to take many precautions on being overheard especially since the language that he was using was too old for anyone, but this being to understand.

(...Go to sleep young one. I will still be here when you wake...) The creature then pondered the youth’s story while he slept. He was very impressed at the resilience and strength of character that Harry had shown.

This creature, no longer had a name and his species was dying out. He was also tired of the world and after having found out about the “Familiar” ritual that the young wizard had performed, he knew that another option was available to him or more specifically his last seed.

This creature was slowly dying. He was one of the few ‘Old Ones’ that were direct descendents, from a different sect of dragons to the ones that had submitted themselves to change which created the Draekons. In fact he was quite surprised to see the results of those changes, which still persisted in this youth and his mate.

He pondered on Harry’s story and knew that he would release his final seed to this Draekon for his mate. His soul would be freed with his last breath, but the potential for his last child was still there. Each seed that he released into the world had gotten smaller and smaller and the children eventually became the present day dragons that the Wizards cared for on their preserves.

He fell into a meditation to resolve an issue that had been bothering him for a while now, actually centuries even. He hadn’t felt the presence of any other of his kind for several millennia, except perhaps for the last thousand years. The entity that he sensed was of his race, but not and this puzzle was part of the reason that he was reluctant to let go of his life too soon.

Still with the power that this youth had he was sure that the boy could “shrink” him down to a manageable size and place him in stasis so that he wouldn’t die just yet. Of course, knowing that the youth was collecting “potions ingredients” helped him to re-evaluate the situation.

Watching the young Draekon, as he slept, he came to a decision. He summoned a few of his treasures that were allowed to be shared with the world. He thought that the best way would be to
preserve some of his knowledge by exchanging it with this youth. His seed would need this knowledge, but the knowledge could only be imparted through a bond. Therefore, the creature made up his mind. He would share and/or exchange knowledge with the youth. The youth would be able to share with his mate and his mate will then be able to impart it to his seed, which will become the familiar that Harry is seeking for him.

The creature’s physical treasures would be handed over to the youth to preserve and use as he sees fit. There is just no way, that he would be able to leave these things behind for anyone to find. He had been contemplating their destruction, before Harry arrived. Some will still be destroyed, as they should never fall into the hands of any creature other than the ones who know how to use such tools, but those creatures have long left the world as well.

The creature took note of the magics surrounding the boy’s backpack and imitated it in approximation, thusly creating several plain satchels and containers from his old shed skin. These satchels and containers were made to be bottomless and were being filled with some of the oldest “lost” treasures of the world.

These treasures included scrolls and scrolls of historical, cultural and civilization data. They contained the lost manuscripts from fallen empires and from empires that no one in this time would even suspect of having existed. Jewels and lost coin that could be re-forged into other objects, tribal lore from the hidden magical species, like goblins, dwarfs, true-elves, etc....

Once the containers were filled, the creature reflected on his proposal to the young Draekon. Hopefully Harry would accept them. There was nothing harmful in the knowledge that he would be imparting, it’s just that he was so tired and needed this last adventurous release before succumbing to eternal sleep.

He settled down and waited patiently for Harry to wake up the next morning.

Next Morning

To say that Harry was shocked was an understatement. The creature had explained his plan and Harry was hard pressed to deny the simple request.

It took the greater part of the morning before Harry agreed to the exchange of knowledge and to accept the treasures of this great creature. (...Before we do anything, I have a question that I would like you to answer...) Harry said.

(...Ask away...)

(...What is your name?...)

The creature chuckled and the let out the laughter in him, causing the floor to rumble under Harry’s feet. (...No one has asked me that in a long, long time. Give me a moment to remember, young one...) He paused in thought to recall his name. He’s had several over the years, but knew that Harry would want to know the one he preferred. (...Antiok. Yes, Antiok is the name that I have preferred...)

(...Antiok, it is an honour to share knowledge with you...) Harry said sincerely. (...What do I do now?...
(...Stand up and face me, place your forehead close to mine...) Once Harry did that he felt the breath of the creature surround his feet. He reached with one hand to find the scaly bridge of the nose and the closest eye ridge. He waited a moment and then said. (...This may feel weird, but you will be able to do the same with your mate and your mate will do so with my seed once it has hatched...)

Then Harry felt something pressing against the middle of his forehead, piercing the skin and bone. Knowing that he could not move, he performed a self-paralysis spell that essentially made him a statue until everything was completed.

It did and did not take a long time, but Harry was able to share the lives that he gained from the ghosts in Australia and the creature in turn showed Harry his life. A life, that Harry, included in the soul vow that he made to the other ghosts, promising to write the story, if he was able.

The creature was able to see Harry’s true life and all of the events that lead him here. It was when Harry showed his school and the surrounding area that the creature realized what might have happened. Another of his kind had settled in the highlands of what is now Scotland and she must have passed away a long time ago.

Antiock knew that she never released her last seed, but Harry’s school looks to have been built above her last known lair. Perhaps her remains were what made that location ideal, as the remains of creatures like him were highly concentrated in the magics that Harry and his fellow wizards were able to manipulate.

He was about to release the young Draekon with his last request. (...Bury me near her, if you can...)

(...I will do my best...) Harry promised. He was suddenly released from the grip. Harry expanded his ‘sight’ looking for the seed. Once he found it, he followed the instructions that Antiock had given him for its care. He cut his hand and rubbed the blood all over the seed, then placed it in its own waterproof satchel. He then made an incision on Antiock’s forearm and let the blood pool with the seed’s satchel. Once the egg was completely covered, Harry sealed the container. He then prepared to perform the largest stasis and shrinking spell he had ever done.

Firstly he sent his magic to discover the actual depth and size of Antiock, so that he would not miss any part of him for these spells. Once prepared, he said his goodbyes to the creature for now and Antiock wished him well with his future mate.

Harry then gathered his magic and let loose a powerful blinding light. The sound of his spell reverberated across the countryside and the country was hit with a seismic event that was talked of for years to come.

______________________________

TBC....
Chapter Seven

One evening at their new location

Draco was getting impatient for his mate to come home. There was only so much that he could do in order to prepare for the new school year. He had worked non-stop whenever he could. First at Malfoy Manor, before his father arrived and then at Dudley’s house, followed by the finishing everything up at the Hotel.

He and Dudley had talked about many things, but one evening the talk had turned to sex. Draco admitted that he’d never, but for a very good reason. Dudley was curious about it therefore he had to ask, “Don’t you wonder what it’s going to be like with Harry? I mean he’s a guy and all.”

“His gender doesn’t matter. Yes, I’m a little worried about the actual act, but being with a guy has nothing to do with it. You see, in our world, magic is released during the act of sex and it’s dangerous to be too active, too soon, especially at our age. It depends on how strong your magic is. If your magic is not strong enough, you can be overwhelmed or taken over and in some cases you can be turned into a slave during the act.

It’s just like the levels in video games. Some creatures have more then others, which are just like us in the Wizarding world. It depends on your parents, your heritage and if you have any creature blood in the mix. The more powerful you are the more you can resist becoming submissive or subservient.”

“Well, do you actually think that you have anything to worry about?” Dudley asked.

“Yes. I do,” Draco said. “You see my magical inheritance came in far earlier then normal because of Harry’s change. His change, whenever it occurred was much earlier then it should have been for him and it triggered mine. I didn’t look like this when I left school last year and he probably has changed a lot more than I did. I believe that Harry is stronger, magically, than anyone else now.” He paused looking down for moment, “I know that he is much stronger then me. I just don’t know what will happen once we bond.”
“Bond?” Dudley asked. “I thought that you guys were just going to do the act, you know.”

“The act will create a bond between me and him. It’s like marriage and once done it can never be undone. That’s how it works in our world. It’s the magic, you see. That is how it works between two people with magical cores.”

“I still don’t think you have to worry that Harry will turn your bond into a slave thing. He wouldn’t.” Dudley said. Still nothing could stop Draco’s worry about the actual act or the bond until Harry showed up and claimed him. He would not be comfortable going to school without that assurance.

---------------------------------

August 18

The boys had decided to eat in the dining room of the hotel that evening. They had just been served their main course when Draco felt someone looking in his direction. He felt the roll of magic in the air and looking up he saw a tall man in the doorway of the dining room.

The man was very tall and wearing a dark coat that reached the floor. He eyes were the deepest green that he had ever seen. His dark black hair was tied at the nape of his neck in the back and braided down, secured with another tie. The intensity of his dark green gaze caused Draco to shiver.

Dudley looked up in direction that Draco was staring in and he gasped. “Harry?”

Draco frowned. It wasn’t possible Harry was supposed to be there on the twentieth. He wasn’t prepared for him to be here today. He still needed some time, but there was no doubt about who that was because Draco heard the hissing of a snake nearby and the man had angled his head to listen.

Dudley got up and walked over to the man. “Harry?”

The stranger turned his head in the direction of his name, “Dudley?”

Dudley frowned a moment, “Yes. We were just sitting down to dinner. Do you want to join us?”

“Yes?”

“Yes. I’m with my friend Drake Evans. He’s been staying here with me waiting for his family to show up.”

“Actually I would much prefer to go wash up and lie down. Do you mind?” Harry asked.

“Not at all, here use my cardkey. His room is the one on the left. We’ll meet you there after we’re done here.” He held out his key for Harry to take, but Harry just held out his hand waiting for the plastic card to be placed in it. “Harry?”

“Later…OK? What room number is it and on which side of the hall is it?”

Dudley gave the directions and returned to the still gaping Draco. He continued with his meal, coughing to get his companion’s attention. “He’s just gone to the room to clean up a bit and to rest Drake.”

Blushing at his inattentiveness, he returned to his meal, but did not even notice the taste. Draco would take a bite and then remember to chew then swallow. There was a significant time lapse between that and his next bite. It was as though he had forgotten how to eat.
Knowing that Draco was distracted, but not wanting to waste the food Dudley continued on with his meal. He knew that Harry needed some time to settle in before they could return to the suite for explanations. Especially for Harry’s explanation of why he could no longer see. Dudley spent a few moments wondering how long it would take Draco to realize that his mate was blind.

---------------------------------

August 18, evening

Harry made his way to the boys' suite and was grateful for the directions that Dudley provided. He was surprised that Draco was dining downstairs with Dudley, but then he figured that he shouldn’t be too surprised at their need to leave the rooms from time to time.

He found the suite easy enough, but had to use his stick to guide him around the room. His luggage was shrunk and in his pockets. He had gifts for Dudley and twice as many for his mate.

It was his courtship or dowry gift that he planned to give Draco. He hoped that the correspondence that they have been having was not any kind of deterrent.

Making his way around he located Draco’s rooms and proceeded to empty his pockets. Letting his nose and his magic guide him to the bathroom his immediately took his first bath in several months. Dauphin even joined him in the steamy room loving the heat that wafted from full tub.

Harry proceeded to shower away most of the grime first and then filling the tub he soaked for a long while til he was sure that Dudley and “Drake” would be returning. Once he was thoroughly clean, he stepped out of the tub, dried himself off and then stepped into a pair of black silk pajamas with dark green cuffs. He straightened the room as best he could and then used his stick to guide him to the sitting area.

He pulled out a journal that he was currently studying and waited for the boys to return.

---------------------------------

Dudley had to nudge the blond into waking up from his daze and into returning to their rooms. “Come on Drake, let’s go.”

Draco was startled, but then realized that he would never finish his meal because of his nerves. He stood up and they proceeded to return to their rooms.

They walked into the room to find Harry sitting cross-legged on the couch, looking straight ahead with a book in his lap and his right hand skimming over the lines of the book.

Draco was still shocked at Harry’s appearance, but then he always did find him to be attractive. He couldn’t decide what his next move should be, when he noticed the skimming hand on the book. Harry wasn’t even looking at the pages. He wasn’t reading with his eyes, he was reading with his hands. When Draco realized that, he gasped.

Harry lifted his head in the direction of the noise, realizing that he was no longer alone. “Draco? Dudley?” He asked.

Dudley kept an eye on Draco, watching to see his reaction, when he noticed that Draco was wobbling on his two feet. “Drake man, pull your self together.” He walked up behind him to steady him and then guided him to the couch next to his mate.
Dudley settled himself into a chair and just observed the two begin their interactions.

“Harry... Are you... Are you really...” Draco just couldn’t ask the question.

Harry placed the manuscript on the coffee table in front of him and turned to face Draco. “Blind?” He finished the question with a small smirk to his lips.

Draco stared at the smirk and flushed deep red. “Good thing you can’t see him Harry, he’s blushing redder than a tomato.” Dudley said, chuckling and providing his cousin with a running commentary. “Oh my, the red has reached his pointy little ears.”

Harry just grinned even more and drawled, “Really.” He reached out one hand to his mate and using a couple of the magic balls from his magical atomic field to guide his actions. He was able to reach Draco’s shoulder. Placing a hand gently on it, he then slid it to the supple neck of his mate. Continuing the motion he slid his hand further up to cup the face and to feel the heat of his mate’s embarrassing lapse.

Draco just dropped his head down, but allowed Harry to continue cupping his face. In fact he as leaning into the hand, when he felt Harry’s other hand on his waist and gently pulling him. It was a slow move that made him wind up tucked in close to his mate and had him ducking his red face into crook his mate’s neck. Harry’s arms just circled him like the last time in his dreams and Draco in turn clung to him in a similar fashion.

Harry then buried his nose into his mate’s neck and just snuffled, drinking in the scent, praying that this was not another dream. Draco returned the favor, clinging just as closely, fully enjoying the arms holding him secure.

After a small while there was a cough from Dudley indicating to them that they were not alone. Reluctant to let his mate go, Harry just readjusted their sitting position so that Draco was in his lap. Draco didn’t mind this in the least, as they were mates. He wouldn’t deny Harry anything regarding the need for closeness or anything that would prevent them from getting even closer to one another.

“Dudley,” Harry began. “In your room is a bag in which there are supplies for you to use before I spell away the excess from your frame. The instructions are quite specific and it will take at least tonight and most of tomorrow for you to soak in the potions.”

“You’re just trying to get rid of me Harry, so that you can claim your mate,” Dudley said. “All right… fine. I understand, just put up some silencing spells that I know exist.”

That comment only made Draco blush even more and caused him to tuck back into Harry’s neck with a faint, ”Dudley!”

Harry chuckled at his mate’s embarrassment and gently soothed him by petting his back, but he still turned in Dudley’s direction, “I’m not really trying to get rid of you. You need to take a special bath in a potion and soak in it for at least one hour. Then you need to drink another potion after which you need to be still for at least 12 hours. It is to assist in re-elastizing your skin. After 12 hours, you will have to take another potion bath soaking for at least half an hour and then there is a cream that I have to massage into your body while saying a spell to “remove” the excess skin from your frame. Then you have to soak again for approximately one hour in order for the changes to hold.

Today is the 18th and by the time we’re completely finished the process it will probably be the 20th. That will be the day for a final test. We shouldn’t delay, just in case someone catches wind of the magic I will be doing. We are, after all, in a muggle environment and the spells I will be using on you may cause some Aurors or the Ministry to come and investigate.”
“Geez, Harry,” Dudley said. “I was just teasing. I’m going now. However, I’m glad that you’re here. Drake was just beginning to panic and get worried that you were never going to arrive.” He left the soon to be lovers and began the ritual that would allow him to return to a normal appearance, especially now that he’s dropped so much weight in so little time.

His skin did not shrink as he lost the poundage, but just pooled in rather large bunches. Dudley was disgusted about it, but did surf the web for cosmetic surgeons just in case that Harry couldn’t do anything. Still he had faith in his cousin now because he was here and somehow tended to always keep his promises.

He found a smallish bag on his bed. Looking through it there were explicit instructions per bottle that he found. Harry was right it would take a long time to get through, although for the 12 hours of stillness that he needed, his cousin did provide him with a good dreams potion with an immobilizing component that would prevent his movement during sleep. The sleeping potion would last for the required hours and Dudley chuckled, thinking to himself that while he was sleeping Harry would have enough time to claim his mate. He decided to wait until later before beginning this ritual to allow for them to have some time together.

---------------------------------

Harry smiled once more turning to his mate and asked, “Were you worried?”

Draco ducked into his mate laying his head on the nearest shoulder and nodded. Harry chuckled a bit. “Now that he’s gone why don’t you go and get ready for bed.”

Draco didn’t know if he could possibly die from turning red, but he was well on his way. Swallowing noisily, he slowly started to stand. “Draco, we don’t need to do anything tonight. Honestly, I just arrived and I’m extremely exhausted. I would love to wake up next to you and we do need to talk before we do any bonding. It is important that we discuss all the possibilities of what might happen. Besides the ritual he is following will allow us the initial time to begin a bond, but nothing says we have to do that or even complete it now.”

Draco sighed, glad that they weren’t going to do anything, but was a little disappointed about it too. He built up such a store of anticipation that he knew he would wake up very aroused, like he did every morning since his rescue.

On that note he decided to cleanse and prepare himself just in case, for the morning. “I understand Harry. We do need to talk. I even tried explaining some of it to Duds, but since he is not completely magical he didn’t quite understand.” He was stepping away from Harry, when he suddenly said shyly, “By the way I like your PJs.”

“There’s a similar pair on the bed for you, Love,” he said chuckling, as he bent over to reach for the journal he was reading before the boys came in.

“Really,” Draco said, excitedly and ran from the room to see. “Oh, Harry these are great.” Running back into the room on an impulse he leaned over the back of the couch and kissed his mate’s cheek. “Thank you,” he said running back into the room eager to wear them, but first a very special bath of his own.

It had been a very long time since he was able to wear silk. His father had started to get rid of almost all of the material possessions Draco loved from the time just before the fifth year debacle, but in correspondence to his mate he had confessed that he missed some of those items.

Cotton just didn't cut for most days and his mate was sweet to provide him with something that he
used to love. He just hoped that his mate didn't think that he was too materialistic. He wasn't, he was just so used to having a certain level of quality that it had been hard to adjust to something of lesser quality.

Harry was startled by the kiss and then let out a pleased chuckle, smiling he returned to his book. He knew that Draco would be preparing himself, but Harry did say that he was tired and he really was, however there was not going to be anything to stop him in the morning.

He read/skimmed a few more pages before deciding to turn in. He made sure that the suite's door was locked and spelled secure, after he placed the do not disturb sign up. He then erected wards on entire suite to protect them all, as he was sure that once Draco’s collar was off someone might find them.

He made his way into Draco’s room, put away his book and crawled under the covers preparing to fall asleep. Draco was almost done his bath, when he felt wards go up on the suite. There were additional wards up on his room and he knew that Harry had set them so that when they finally bonded they would not be interrupted.

Smiling he dried himself off and slipped into the silk PJs that match his mates, except that his were a paler green with the cuffs being black and it had a pocket with a dark green dragon design on it. He opened the door of the bathroom in time to see his mate, stretch, heave a huge yawn and crawl into bed.

He smiled at Harry and then turning off the remaining lights he made his own way to the bed. Harry smiled when he felt the bed dent as another body crawl in with him.

Draco wanted to get closer to his mate to cuddle in their sleep, but he was a little shy. Harry however just moved closer, wrapped his arms around his mate and pulled him close. Draco made a happy little noise and wrapped his own arms around his mate.

They were not going to have any problems being with one another. It was just a matter of getting used to the presence of another. They had some time for that, perhaps not enough, but they did have some time. Cuddling, both Draekons fell into a deep sleep.

-------------------------------

The following morning was typical for most boys past a certain age. They both woke up with their morning erections pressing against the solid flesh of another leg. “Hmm,” Harry woke up humming his pleasure.

Draco mewled a little, while still thrusting in his half waking, half dreaming state. Harry loved that his mate was aroused and decided to help him along to release. He let his hand drift down to cup the turgid member. He pressed harder and rubbed, which resulted in his mate steadily thrusting for more friction. It didn’t take too long as he was nearly there in his dreams, but the cupping hand changed its grip and suddenly Draco was awake just as he came in PJ bottoms, creating a wet spot in the silk.

“Awake now, Love,” Harry said, petting his mates back in the afterglow of his release. Harry himself was only half hard now, but decided to keep his pleasure on the backburner at this time, as the longer his semi-erection or erection can be prolonged the better it would be for the claiming bond.

“Hmm,” Draco hummed. “Do you need me to do anything for you, Harry?”

“What?... No, it’s better if I hold off in order for the bond to work in our favor.”

“Oh,” he replied, blushing at the thoughts that were seeping into his mind. “I need to clean up and
use the loo.” He said, getting up and moving away from his soon to be lover.

Harry just smiled at him and nodded. “I’ll still be here. We do need to talk about a few things before we decide whether to bond or not.”

Draco frowned. This was not the first time that Harry indicated that they may not be bonding before school, but Draco was determined that it would be done in order to prevent any separation during their final year of school.

He finished his ablutions and returned to the room only to find that Harry had set it up with romantic lighting and subtle incense burning on a brazier. The incense was one that allowed for prolonged coupling without too much exhaustion. It has been said to keep the “juices flowing.”

Draco looked around the room and the looked at Harry’s anxious face. Harry had even turned down the bedding to the foot of the bed, in order for it not to be in the way. He held a single white rose in his hand and was waiting for Draco to say something.

Since Draco had yet to speak, he asked, “Do you like it?”

Draco was a little startled, but the he just walked up to his mate, took hold of his hand and led him to the bed. “It's beautiful.”

Harry smiled in relief and said, “Not as beautiful as you.”

Draco’s brow furrowed at the statement, when Harry continued, “I saw you in my dreams. When I exhausted myself with learning and some training, I used to travel in my dreams. I could see you, talk to you and hold you. You are so beautiful, exotic even.” He pushed his mate into the middle of the bed as he was talking. Slowly, he ran his hands up to his mate’s face.

“All through this onslaught Draco’s breath became laboured and with every word and touch his skin began to heat up. He yearned for more, hitching breath and mewling, purring sounds, encouraging further exploration of his body.

Harry finished his exploration of Draco’s mouth when he moved to slowly down the jaw to the neck. Draco tilted his head for easier access and Harry proceeded to seek out the bite site for the mating mark. It was the most sensitive site that may or may not be exposed, luckily for him he found it just below the earlobe and little to the back. The noise that was produced when nibbled it, had him harder then he had ever been, but that was not the end of the exploration.

"Harry," Draco began.

"Hmm," was his reply with a little sucking kiss that made Draco’s breathing became hitched.

"Harry," he said again this time using his own hands to softly touch his mate. "You've said a couple of times that maybe we wouldn't be bonding. Do you not want to bond with me before going back to school?"

"Oh, love. That's not what I meant. I just thought that maybe you needed more time to think about it. I don't want to rush your decision and you haven't seen me since the leaving feast..." he would have continued on, but was stopped by Draco’s arms clutching at him and a lovely mouth pressing against
his own, seeking to bring them closer together.

Harry allowed his body to be manipulated by the needs of his mate and laid down on him, making sure that their bodies were flush with one another.

Running out of breath from their snogging, Draco eventually released his grip and looked up onto Harry's face and said, "I understand what you mean, but please don't leave this undone before school. I'm afraid of what might happen, if we return without having the bond settled between us. There is lots of time for us to get to know one another, on a personable level and your letters have helped ease the way. I know that there are many things that we will have to overcome by being together."

Draco paused, wondering how far he should confess his feelings and wants. "I've always wanted you, first as a friend and later, well we are in our seventh form and frankly some of my dreams didn't involve anything as innocent as friendship." He blushed and then continued, "I want you now, as you are. I don't care if you're blind, I know that you have probably already learned to compensate, but I might, you know, make a few careless statements from time to time."

Harry listened to the needs of his mate and knew that they would be able to compliment one another. To put his mate at ease he said, "Thank you. I know that we will argue from time to time and we won't see eye to eye, but I'm glad that you're telling me what you really want. I'm so glad that you want to be my mate. I was also afraid. I was afraid that you might not want me, as I am now. You know, damaged and not able to see your beauty."

Draco looked up at Harry and then leaned up to kiss him softly. "Perhaps now that we've talked, we can get on to other things. I went to the Ministry with Dudley and had all of the forms filled out for our union. Only after we have bonded will the papers accept our signatures and be filed automatically in the Family Archives Section. I even found the forms for species bonding that is acceptable for any species, including Draekons. The goblins told me what to look for and helped me to fill out some of the forms."

Harry smiled at his mate and said, "You are so thorough. I'm glad that I didn't have to do that. I wasn't sure that I would be able to find the right sections in the Ministry to get the proper paper work. You're wonderful. You know that, don't you?"

Draco decided to let out some of his old personality and drawled, "Of course I'm wonderful, you're just lucky to be in the presence of someone so wonderful."

Harry chuckled and then decided that now was as good a time as any, he reached towards his mate and began to really look at him through his fingertips. Draco sensed a change in the mood and knew it was time. He also began to look at his mate with his hands, mapping out some of the differences with his palms and fingertips.

Harry lay down on one side with one hand petting and playing with Draco's soft hair. The other hand sneaking under the top of his pajama, brushed against the sensitive stomach making its way up the chest, slowly undoing one button at a time. Harry's hands kept brushing, petting and adding little pressures here and there drawing out little murmurs and moans from his mate.

Finding an erect nipple, he brushed his thumb against it, causing Draco to moan at the pleasurable sensation. Harry played with the little nub, pulling and plucking it when he changed his position to lean down to suckle it. His other hand found the other one and began to tug at it, just like the one he was nibbling gently on.

Draco's body arched, his head was tossed back and his hands where on Harry's head to keep him in
place. He didn't think that his nipples were that sensitive. The sensations of Harry concentrated efforts were felt all the way down to his throbbing penis. He was thrusting up in the air seeking attention for it, but met with nothing. Still that didn't stop the pulsing of it with every nibble and suck that Harry did.

Harry sat up, pulling up Draco with him. He removed Draco's shirt completely and then began to undo his own when hands swatted his away and took over. Those hands undid the buttons and divested him of his top quickly. The hands didn't stop touching and exploring every inch of the arms, neck, stomach and chest.

Draco wondered if Harry wanted him to return the favor. "If I don't like something, I'll let you know. If you don't like something, please let me know." Harry said, easing his mate's hesitation a bit.

Draco was pleased that his mate wanted to put him at ease and therefore proceeded to brush his hands against his mate's nipples. Harry sucked in a breath and knew that everything would turn out just fine. He leaned forward into the playing hands and his own began to tug at PJ bottoms of his mate. Draco paused for a moment and shifted his hips to allow his mate to remove the offending garments. Then Draco sat up to return the favor, anxious and nervous to see his mate fully naked for the first time ever.

He was pleased to find his mate had just the right stuff. His mate turned out to be a little longer and thicker then he was, but being Slytherin didn't mean that Draco didn't experiment with his own likes and dislikes. Yes he was a virgin, but the Wizarding world made such wonderful adult toys that Draco knew he would have to explain some of that to his mate.

Still those toys did help him out to learn a few things. In one case he had a feeling that one day he'd be bonded to someone, but knew that his sexual preference would be male. Should he have ever decided to take on a male lover, he wanted to know how to pleasure him orally.

Thus, once Harry's pants were gone, Draco's hands were roaming up the thighs and up the erect length of his mate. Harry's breath hitched, wondering what that little blond was up to when he felt it.

Draco pressed his curious little tongue onto the weeping head and licked the tip, tasting his mate. Finding the taste pleasant and unpleasant at the same time, he decided that he liked it. It was a sweet and sour mix that had him almost drooling for more. Continuing his explorations, he licked the erect penis from root to tip, pausing for a little sucking kiss on the head. He paused in his travels to concentrate on the sac just below the root. Licking each testicle, he sucked each one gently. He wanted to taste everything, but Harry pulled him away at this time.

"You're wonderful love, but now it's my turn," he said kissing Draco, pushing him to lie down on his back. His mouth made short work of those pebbled nipples once more, but Harry continued his path down to the ribs and stomach. He left marks all over his mate, worrying the skin between his teeth and laving it smooth with his tongue. The sounds from his mate were intoxicating and he wanted more.

Making his way further down to the belly button, he dipped his tongue into it and proceeded to nibble all around it. Draco's hands were impatiently pushing his further, but Harry worked at his own pace. Draco's arousal was strong scented and Harry found the leaking head. He proceeding to lick and suck all around it not touching it once.

His sucking attentions moved down to the creases and inner thighs causing Draco to spread open for him. Now that was a sight that he would regret never being able to see with his eyes, but using his magic he was able to sense it.
Harry moved from his marking the thighs to his mate's sac. He licked and tasted it, until he felt it begin to draw up. His mate was beginning to tremble and his breath was hitching at a faster rate. He sensed that his mate was so close to exploding. He returned his attentions to the poor neglected, leaking and throbbing member.

He licked his way up and the without warning, he captured it in his mouth and proceeded to suck hard, causing Draco to arch up into his mouth and after three or four hard sucks, he exploded into Harry's mouth. Harry swallowed everything that his mate graciously provided for him. He held it in his mouth for a while until the shuddering diminished.

His own erection and needs were placed on hold for the time being. He knew that to properly claim his mate the first time he ejaculated would be to seal the bond. Lying on his side he gathered his mate in his arms and was surprised to hear him wuffle, cuddle into him and then release a little snore.

Harry chuckled. His mate had fallen into a light slumber. He could wait and in waiting, he strengthened ties he would have with Draco.

-------------------------------

TBC...
Chapter Eight

August 15, Day of the Wills

Severus and Remus walked up to number 4 Privet Drive in Little Whinging, Surrey, just in time to see a very, slimmed down Dudley get into a cab and drive away. The muggle had glanced in their direction, looked into the cab and then looked back at them shrugging before finally climbing into the vehicle and taking off.

This had both the professors curious, but then Remus shrugged it off because he didn’t really care about the brat. Severus however was more wary of the event. It looked like that kid knew who they were and was just anxious to leave before they showed up. “I know that we won’t find Potter there,” he began. “But what was the look into that machine for. Who do you think that he was looking at?”

“I don’t think that he was looking at anyone in particular,” Remus said.

“I think that we will find something else out in Potter’s room other then the fact that the brat is not there.”

“Do you really not like Harry or is this an act for your Masters?”

The fact that Remus said masters, as in plural, showed that he had been considering Dumbledore and the Dark Lord along the same lines. “An act can be changed depending on the players, however now is not the time, unless that brat can provide me with a true reason for not returning to the Dark Lord...” he paused. “I really wish that he had provided the names of the traitors, but then I think that he wants to trap them at the school. My only question is whether they are real traitors or spies like me for whichever Master they choose to truly serve.”

“From the impression that I had from the letters, I believe that they are spies and not for Dumbledore,” Remus said solemnly.

Snape just pursed his lips and mumbled, “So do I.” Then in a more audible voice, he said as they
reached to door to number 4. “Let’s get this over with.”

They had little trouble getting into the house as the parents were not home and their boy just left. Breaking in with magic wasn’t hard and so was preventing the neighbors from being curious about their activities.

They walked into the house and calmly made their way through it. Snape was curious as to why there were no pictures of Potter on the family walls. There was a lot with a blond balloon shaped boy, a horse face woman and a walrus looking man, but there was nothing of Potter.

“Curious,” Snape muttered.

“What?”

“Where are all the worshipping pictures of Potter?”

Remus looked at the Potions Master incredulously and then began to laugh out loud. His laughter was deep and throaty, causing Snape to angle his head in wonder. This was one of the few times that the werewolf really let loose, but instead he frowned with his impatience. So he gave up and began to really look around the home.

He wandered around, poking his long nose behind several doors. When he reached the ‘Cupboard under the Stairs’ he noticed a tiny cot folded up against the far wall. There were a couple of childish pictures, faded against the far wall, as though forgotten. Shaking his head he closed the door and continued his exploration of Potter’s summer home.

Lupin had gotten a hold of himself and was now wandering around too. He was heading up the stairs, when he sensed Snape following him. Snape looked in every room upstairs, not quite able to detect where exactly Potter’s room could be.

Lupin found it quite easily, but was disturbed by the number of locks on the outside, including the pet entrance on the bottom of the door. He opened the door to look into the room and scented his godson. He even scented someone of Malfoy descent obviously not Lucius because that bastard would never have been able find this house.

Remus smirked. ‘So this is where Draco was hidden from his father,’ he thought, chuckling out loud. ‘Harry does have some Marauder blood in him to hide the boy in the last place that the Dark Lord or Malfoy Senior would ever consider looking, not even the Order.’

“What’s so funny, Lupin?” Snape asked, as he looked into the room if front of where Remus was standing.

“This was Harry’s room,” he said, stepping further into it to have a look around.

“That’s impossible,” Snape said. “It doesn’t even look like Potter has ever lived in this house. How could you know that this would have been his room? Judging by the locks, it looks like a room that they wanted to keep people out of.”

“True, but from what Harry has told me, it was to keep someone locked in,” Remus explained. “Harry’s relatives were afraid of him and they never considered him a part of the family. That’s why you won’t find any pictures of him anywhere in this house.”

Severus blanched at that. “How do you know that it’s not a lie?”

Remus looked at Snape in the eye and said, “A magical creature will almost always know the
difference between the truth and a falsehood. I could tell most times when someone was outright lying to me. It’s harder when half-truths are mixed in though. Harry has never told me a lie."

The werewolf walked into the room to have a look around when he scented something that he would recognize anywhere. ‘Blood, someone bled in the room recently,’ he thought. ‘The room hasn’t been sanitized for a while either. I can still smell Harry in this room, as well as Draco and one of the Dursleys.’

Snape walked into the smallish room and took inventory of everything that was in the room. There wasn’t much, but then again if Harry wasn’t welcome, they may have never given him anything. No toys, no books, nothing that he could call his own.

Glancing at the small desk with the rickety chair tucked under it, Snape found an origami dragon on top of it. The dragon was in a standing guard position. His curiosity rose because his godson, Draco, had a strong liking for the paper-folding arts, especially origami and animation spells.

Draco, also had a habit of sending these little origami animals to Severus for fun. The animal had to recognize Snape’s aura and change position before Severus could read what was written on the note.

This dragon looked no different, but Snape was wary of it, due to the fact that there was no way for his godson to come within any speaking distance of Harry Potter. Severus gently picked up the little paper dragon, holding his breath, waiting to see if it would become animated. Placing it in its original position on the flat of his palm, he waited.

He watched as the dragon stretched and yawned, before curling into a sleeping position, indicating that he was the true recipient of this note. It was also a sign that the spells protecting the note or letter went from active to passive.

Carefully he unfolded the note, with a touch of wonder and read:

---------------------------------

‘Aww, Uncle Sev,

You must have just missed me. I’ve left with Harry’s cousin for muggle London. Can’t tell you where, sshhhh, it’s a secret.

By the way I was recently disowned by Lucius and I also found out that I am the future mate of a creature called a Draekon.

So, hopefully by the time that September 1st rolls around I will be mated and bonded to him. Also, I can’t wait for that to happen because then I will have a new last name and family. I hope that you won’t be too upset with me about it.

Oh! Since I was disowned by my bastard father, I will be getting rid of my middle name, which of course was his. I want to tell you now that I plan on taking another middle name, after a man I truly respect.

I hope you won’t mind, but I will be adding Severus as my middle name when I sign the documents of our bond. I want to honour you and my future mate has already agreed to it. He’s proud that I would honour you in such a fashion.

I left some presents behind for you and Lupin. He should be able to find them in this room, by following his nose.'
Snape was a little choked by the contents of the small letter. He had a half smile on his face that he quickly removed. He glanced over at his companion and then did a double take.

Remus was on the floor crawling on his hands and knees, sniffing under the edge of the bed. Pausing closely where the scent was the strongest, he peered at the boards on the floor, intensely looking for something.

“Ah… Hah!” He exclaimed, leaning forward on his hands, bending over and almost pouncing on the loose floorboard that he spotted. In order to lean further under the bed, his ass was in the air. Rummaging in the cubby caused his behind to roll and undulate in a very provocative manner.

At Remus’ exclamation Severus’ eyes were fixated on the werewolf’s behind. The muggle clothing looked very good on Remus and of course the wolf was in fine shape. Severus couldn’t move his eyes from the sight and with every move Remus made, a shift here, an undulation there, it wasn’t very hard for the Potions Master’s mind to sink deep into a perverse gutter somewhere hidden in his well guarded mind.

His eyes went out of focus for a moment, his breathing rate increased and his body betrayed him with the instant hardening of his nether regions. Worse, he knew what he wanted and which end of the bedroom games he preferred. Severus’ eyes were fixated on the ghostly sensations of pounding thrusts and images conjured in his minds eye, were flashing quickly.

Suddenly recalling where they were and with whom he was with, he tried to reign in his mind and body, back to its ‘proper’ behaviour.

Remus was still kneeling and digging around under the bed, when he felt a heated gaze land on his behind. Better, his nose was filling with the scent of his dark companion’s arousal. Something he had never forgotten from their days at school. Severus couldn’t move his body from the sight and with every move Remus made, a shift here, an undulation there, it wasn’t very hard for the Potions Master’s mind to sink deep into a perverse gutter somewhere hidden in his well guarded mind.

His eyes went out of focus for a moment, his breathing rate increased and his body betrayed him with the instant hardening of his nether regions. Worse, he knew what he wanted and which end of the bedroom games he preferred. Severus couldn’t move his body from the sight and with every move Remus made, a shift here, an undulation there, it wasn’t very hard for the Potions Master’s mind to sink deep into a perverse gutter somewhere hidden in his well guarded mind.

Suddenly recalling where they were and with whom he was with, he tried to reign in his mind and body, back to its ‘proper’ behaviour.

Remus was still kneeling and digging around under the bed, when he felt a heated gaze land on his behind. Better, his nose was filling with the scent of his dark companion’s arousal. Something he had never forgotten from their days at school. Severus couldn’t move his body from the sight and with every move Remus made, a shift here, an undulation there, it wasn’t very hard for the Potions Master’s mind to sink deep into a perverse gutter somewhere hidden in his well guarded mind.

His eyes went out of focus for a moment, his breathing rate increased and his body betrayed him with the instant hardening of his nether regions. Worse, he knew what he wanted and which end of the bedroom games he preferred. Severus couldn’t move his body from the sight and with every move Remus made, a shift here, an undulation there, it wasn’t very hard for the Potions Master’s mind to sink deep into a perverse gutter somewhere hidden in his well guarded mind.

By the time Remus emerged from under the bed, Snape had gotten himself under control, but Remus looked him in the eye, with a knowing look and smirked at the man.

Severus couldn’t help it he blushed, like some virginal schoolboy caught doing something naughty. He returned that look with a glare, but the effect was muted, especially by the heat in the, still pinkened cheeks. His eyes widened when Lupin stepped closer to him with his nostrils flaring and taking in the residual scent. This caused Snape to step back and ask, “What? Can’t a man have certain thoughts without there being a big to do about it?”

Remus smiled at the Potions Professor and just shook his head, no. Then he held out his hands, showing Snape the contents.

Severus arched one dark brow and asked, “Was there anything else under there?”

“No,” Remus said. “But I can go back under if you want me to double-check.” Snape just shook his head rapidly from side to side, denying to himself that he wouldn’t mind another look at the firm
looking globes. “There was only this sheet, which has some blood on it and there is something wrapped in it.”

It turned out that there were two small boxes, beautifully handcrafted. One was a dark brown walnut with lots of simple, yet tasteful carving at the edges and there was calligraphic lettering of S.S. on the top. The other was a pale cherry red wood with similar carving on the edges, but had R.L. carved its top.

The boxes were about the size of muggle deck of cards and in fact they were just slightly larger because they were made to store muggle cards.

Draco and Dudley had gone into a muggle shop that specialized in handcrafted knick-knacks, ornaments and small boxes of this type. They had bet that these two would be the ones sent to ‘check up’ and verify how things were going at the Dursleys. Once they saw these boxes they purchased several of them and returned to the magical luggage shop. They commissioned the shop to place specific spells on the boxes.

The spells, included security, privacy, concealment, internal space expanders and a new feature called insta-mail. It’s a spell that directs your mail to the box until you have time to deal with it. Draco had one for himself, one for Harry and Dudley got one so that he could continue to write to Harry and Draco. There was another spell on the boxes that allowed them to be linked and that way a letter placed within the box addressed to someone whose box was linked to it, would be able to receive the letter without having to send an owl.

Remus handed the one with S.S. on the top to his dark companion. They both ran a few test spells to make sure that there were no pranks attached to them.

Both gentlemen opened their respective boxes to find two notes inside. One explained the spells attached to the boxes and how they worked, especially the insta-mail. The other note was wrapped around a Gringott’s key. The instructions with their key told them only to go to the bank and seek out Griphook, Wizarding Accounts Manager.

They secured their boxes inside their coat pockets and knowing that there was nothing left, but to report the absence of a certain green-eyed youth to an annoying blue-eyed twinkler. They left the Dursleys house, just as they found it.

They decided to delay their upcoming encounter with a possibly irate Headmaster, so they decided to have lunch together in muggle London, at a small Italian Restaurant that Remus was fond of. They had a few things to discuss and speculate about, concerning both of their godsons.

---------------------------------

**Headmaster at the Bank**

Dumbledore arrived at the bank with the full knowledge that Harry Potter was about to lose his parents’ and his godfather’s money, holdings et al... He walked into the bank and promptly demanded to see the Potter accounts manager. One trustworthy goblin that he had personally handpicked in order to be able to cheat the boy out of some of his money.

He was led to an office that had a large desk and a couple of comfortable chairs in front of it. Dumbledore had been in the world and in the spotlight at little too long. He held the firm belief that everyone looked up to him and would never deny him anything. The stuck up stupid old coot then
did the unforgivable in a goblin’s eyes. He sat down without so much as a by your leave.

Goblins in general were an understanding bunch and would never allow the elderly to remain standing, as long as permission to sit was asked. Many of the older wizards knew this and always asked, knowing that to sit without a by your leave, you’d have an unpleasant experience.

Once the Headmaster was seated he noticed that the Accounts Manager had changed. He said, “You’re not the Potter Accounts’ Manager. I think I was lead to the wrong office, if you’ll excuse me.” He was about to stand and leave when the goblin behind the large desk spoke to him.

“I am the Potter Accounts Manager. Is there something that I can do for you?”

“Oh?” Dumbledore asked. “Since… when?”

“That does not matter. What did you need to see me about Mr. Dumbledore?” Griphook asked. He deliberately called him mister and would continue to do so until the old fool left. It was his own way of getting back him for sitting down without permission. Besides the old man had another thing coming to him, if he thought that Harry Potter would ever allow him access to his accounts ever again.

The headmaster frowned at being called mister. ‘ Doesn’t that creature know who I am? I am the great Albus Dumbledore, Leader of Light in this war,’ he thought, but said, “I am the magical and legal guardian of Harry Potter. I am here on his behalf for the reading of his parents’ and godfather’s Wills.”

Griphook scowled, “I trust that you have the papers proving that you are the guardian of one Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived?”

Dumbledore frowned. He had never been asked to produce those before, but since the creature asked for them he whipped them out and handed them to the perverse goblin behind the desk.

Griphook took hold of the scrolls provided, unrolled each one and smirked the goblin way. He knew that Harry had been emancipated and he was fully aware of Harry’s wishes, since he had traveled all the way to Australia to speak to the young man.

The main reason he was smirking was that one no wizard could tell when a goblin was smirking, smiling or baring their teeth for a fight and two all of the scrolls that Dumbledore had produced had large diagonal red lines through the papers with a huge ‘INVALID’ flashing on them.

He handed them back to Dumbledore without rolling them up and said, “These are invalid. Therefore our business here is concluded. You have no rights to access the young man’s accounts or any will related to him. Guards!”

The guards arrived to forcefully cart off the Headmaster, while the Headmaster tried everything to see the Wills or access the accounts once more. He still had some of the keys, but when he pulled them out of his pockets, they melted into the floor of the bank. They too were no longer valid.

Dumbledore tried everything to get the goblins to let him read the Wills, as they were supposed to, according to his plan. He tried to reason, cajole, threaten and coerce them.

The head of Gringott’s then became involved and outright lied, telling Dumbledore that he had made a mistake for the day of the reading. He then informed Dumbledore that the readings had already taken place with Harry in attendance and the conditions of the Wills were currently being carried out according to the requests of the deceased.
Dumbledore then tried to find out when Harry could have attended and how, but was told that since he was not even listed as one of the participants required in the reading of the Wills, that he had no right to ask or even receive an answer.

Finally Dumbledore decided it was high time to visit the Founder’s vaults for the first time since he became Headmaster. He was holding off until such a time that would not make him look suspicious and now was the perfect time to see if Slytherin had anything that would make Harry fall under his control once more. Unfortunately that was no longer possible either, since the vaults were sealed about two Headmasters ago.

No record from those two was found in regards to the inaccessibility of those accounts because they were embarrassed to have been blocked. Dumbledore returned to his office and had that information confirmed by their portraits in his office. Frustrated, he blasted some of the knick-knacks in his office.

This was just not the Headmaster’s day. Dumbledore just had one of the greatest shocks of his life. Harry had actually managed to turn the goblins against the great Albus Dumbledore. He was the Wizarding Leader of the Light and had the bloody god given right to maintain the Potter and Black accounts, as he saw fit until Harry came of age. Of course he should have informed the boy about the inheritance clause, but then again he was a very busy man.

Harry Bloody Potter had inherited everything that he was supposed to and well before Dumbledore had a chance to raid the Black and Potter vaults. Well there was more than one way to skin a cat as the saying goes. If that brat didn’t cooperate fully and turn everything over to him then that brat will just have know that he may never pass his NEWTS without Dumbledore’s express assistance.

There was no way that the Headmaster was going to let Harry get away with removing the control of the Potter and Black funds. There had to be another way. Finally he decided that he would use the “Subliminus” spell in conjunction with the strongest complementary potion for that spell.

There was only one Potions Master that he could think of to do that potion, but he better not tell him who it was for. The snarky git might just develop a conscious, since he had already developed distaste for the Dark Lord’s antics.

‘Let’s just wait and see what our beloved Potions Master and that idiot Werewolf discover at Harry’s home. I hope that they can extract something from the brat, like just how he was able to leave the wards I left in place to keep him there. Not that I’d tell those two about them.’ He thought to himself, munching on his beloved lemon drops. He was pacing in his office at the moment waiting for the return of the two professors.

He was regretting that he had re-hired the werewolf, but then there were several parents that had complained to the Board of Governors that the only competent DADA teacher was the werewolf and because of the Wolfsbane potion availability, the parents felt that their children should have a better teacher. Especially when the media was filling up with morbid stories of the Dark Lord’s return, all the Death Eater raids and mayhem. The parents had listened to their children and then brought the proposal back to the Board.

Dumbledore was stymied in that instance and couldn’t find a reason to say no. He had been too happy in the knowledge that he would be raiding the brat’s vaults that he had Remus sign the contract for the year, before he could change his mind.

That stupid contract was extendable at the behest of Remus irregardless of anyone else. Dumbledore was sure that some of the events of the third year would repeat itself, especially if he paired up Lupin and Snape just to get on each other’s nerves.
Fawkes just watched the old coot pace back and forth, waiting, waiting. Bored he tucked his head under a wing and went to sleep. He knew that the time was drawing near for Hogwarts to revolt against the current form.

The founders had a set clause within the stones of Hogwarts. This was a school and rivalry was to be friendly and competitive only. Not to the extreme measure that the past four Headmasters and this one promoted.

Slytherin against Gryffindor was just wrong and the school was feeling it. She was also feeling some of the vibes that the current Headmaster was projecting and knew that something would have to be done, however like the phoenix, she was waiting for something to happen.

---------------------------------

August 15 - S.S. & R.L. at the Bank

Luckily for the professors they had arrived just after Dumbledore stormed out of the bank. The Headmaster was livid and too pissed off to notice that he was acting out of his grandfatherly character in the public eye.

Still the professors did not want to encounter him, even in passing. So they had waited a bit and when their curiosity took over their conversation, it was time to head to Gringott’s, figuring that enough time had passed.

Snape strode up to the general counter, in his usual swooping manner, and asked to speak to the goblin named Griphook.

The goblin before the general counter knew that Griphook had just finished dealing with the irritating Headmaster of Hogwarts and was not really ready to deal with any other demands regarding the Potter and Black accounts. However, true to form the goblin behind the counter asked, “Whom shall I say requires an audience?”

Severus got an odd look on his face at the wording of the question, but then answered for both, “Severus Snape and Remus Lupin.”

The goblin’s eyes widened marginally and then called another younger goblin to guide them to a waiting room. Soon they were once again escorted to another area and room that had a huge desk with comfortable chairs in front of it.

These wizards were not stupid. They waited for the invitation to sit before actually doing so. It was standard etiquette and both these men had just proven their worth in this particular instance.

Griphook was pleased at their courtesy, ‘No wonder young Mr. Potter was fond of them. He did say that they had good manners. I guess he won that bet,’ he thought and then said, “Please have a seat gentlemen.”

Both men seemed to realize at the same time, as they sat down, that this was the manager in charge of a very large estate. The estate in question they suspected of belonging to one Harry Potter.

“How may I help you today gentlemen?” He asked to two professors, leaning forward to have a better look at both of them.

“We were given these keys along with the instructions to see you,” Remus said, pulling out his box
and then taking out his key with the note that was wrapped around it. Snape pulled out his own and handed just the note for Griphook to inspect it.

Once both notes were in the goblin’s hands, a quick scan of the contents from Griphook had him once more pleasantly surprised. Both messages were worded the same with the exception of who it was referring to and the changed contents were actually in increased the number of words and changed the language.

The letters were now written in clear and concise Gobbledygook, the language of the Goblin Nation.

‘Griphook, my friend and Accounts Manager,

I trust that you are well and that everything has gone well for you on this day. I would like to extend my sympathies, if one Albus Dumbledore showed up to make a nuisance of himself. I hope that you were able to give him a good telling off.

Anyway, this note is to authorize the viewing/reading of the particular sections of my parents and godfather’s Wills pertaining to one Severus Salazar Snape.’ Griphook paused, looking at the other letter and found that only the name changed to Remus Jacobin Lupin. Otherwise the authorization was the same. It was obvious that Harry didn’t think that the two gentlemen would show up at Gringotts, at the same time and on the same day. Continuing on with the letters:

‘I will honour my parents’ wishes and those of my godfather. Therefore, this little deception was required to entice him to actually come here and see you, my friend. I know that he would never willingly come here, if I had just requested it, so I tricked him.

Besides once the section pertaining to him has been read there is no way for him to decline the contents and therefore will have to accept the conditions in both the Wills.

Many thanks for your assistance and I hope to see you again before I return to school.

Sincerely,

Harold Jamison Potter.

P.S. Did I win the bet?’

Griphook smirked at the letters’ contents and tried not to laugh at the last question.

He had been trying for a long while to contact these two gentlemen, but without any success. Now that he had them here, within his reach, he would be executing the requests within these letters and within the Wills.

“Well gentlemen. It seems that the two of you are right on time,” he told them, getting up. “Please follow me,” with that he guided them to separate viewing/reading rooms. They were cordoned off rooms that allowed for the private viewing of a specific section of a person’s Will. This ensured that, if the deceased so chose to hide the true extent of the benefits for one person, then they were able to do so without having other people viewing it, to comment or to contest the Will’s contents.

Each man was seated in a comfortable chair that had a small table beside it with a glass of cool water on it. Some of the Wills were interactive and required a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ response. As soon as both men
were seated, they seemed to realize that they would be witnessing the contents of Wills associated with them. Unfortunately or perhaps fortunately they could not leave the room until the readings are completed. Something that Harry was counting on.

-----------------------------

Remus

Remus was stuck. He knew who the Wills belonged to, but never once thought that he would be included in it. He was still an effacing, gentle and mild man, with the exception of his hairy situation. He never once thought that his friends would have anything further to say to him, after he took off once their seventh year was completed.

He had gained an education, but to what purpose. He had no direction at the time, so when he took off, he planned to return in a year’s time, hopefully after having found some direction. When he did come back it was just in time to see that everything had changed and the war was escalating. He was lucky that he was able to see James and Lily before they went into hiding. He even had a chance to meet baby Harry and was able to hold him, memorizing his scent in such a way as to add him to his Pack.

When James and Lily finally went into hiding, Remus turned to Dumbledore and the Order. He found a purpose then and continued on, since that time to fight for his beliefs and to fight for the chance to see young Harry once more.

He heaved a sigh and then said the words that would activate the start of the Will.

In front of him, the messy haired image of James appeared with Lily in his arms. He focused on them and found that they looked just like he remembered them.

‘Moony my hairy friend,’ James began speaking.

I hope that you are well. If you are viewing this, then Lily’s sight did not lie and we have passed away fighting for the life of our son and for the Light.

You have been a source of inspiration to me and I hope that you know you are a wonderful person. No one should have to live like you do and I hope that you have now found a purpose in life that will fulfill your desire to be useful in the world.

Now! On to the good stuff!

I, James Arthur Potter, being of sound mind and body, (at this time) do hereby bequeath to one, Remus Jacobin Lupin, 2 million galleons, in a vault specifically designed to receive the interest from the muggle companies that Lily has instructed the goblins to invest in, from the future sight that she has been filled with.

Hah, hah, you’re stuck now, Moony. That money is yours and there is nothing you can do about it. Please take it freely with no strings attached.

You are free to discontinue the investments, but according to Lily these particular companies will be doing very well for quite some time. In fact, the goblins have been instructed to sell the shares at specific times in the distant future, should you choose to hold on to them.

Spend, spend and spend. Get some new clothes, buy a car, buy a business, just do something for
once without thought to **how much** something will cost. You are no longer skint my friend.

Please look after our Harry. I am afraid that something bad may happen to him. Lily herself is worried from what she has seen.

Love to you Moony

From Prongs,

Now it’s her turn.’ James kissed his wife and let her take over the Will.

‘*Oh, Moony,*’ she began by trying to reach out for him and then decided to smile gently at him.

‘I was hoping that nothing would come to pass, but since you are here listening to this, it means that my visions have come true and that James and I are gone from this world.

_We will be watching you from afar. Give Harry our love and, um...*_’ Lily paused with a sheepish blush, but continued on, as though she was about to confess something terrible or maybe just naughty. ‘I want you to know something. When Harry was born, we had already decided to call him Harold, but that boy was born with so much hair on his little head that we nicknamed him Harry.

*He was nicknamed after you, Moony, because of your own hairy situation. We thought that you would appreciate that. I was the one to call him that when he was born. Actually, when I first held him, I said, “He’s so hairy! Just like Moony!”* James was laughing his ass off when I said that and he just said to me, “Lils you do have Marauder stuff flowing in your veins.” Remus smiled at Lily and then laughed in appreciation of the honourable joke.

He thought that Harry must have laughed, when he heard this, as there was no way that Harry would not know the entire contents of the Wills, if he had gone to this much trouble just to get him here to listen to them.

He listened to the rest of Lily’s section.

‘*My dear Moony, it is now my turn to bequeath to you, my gift.*

*I, Lily Anna Potter née Evans, being of sound mind and body, do hereby bequeath to one, Remus Jacobin Lupin, my secretly hidden and unplottable home named “Lily’s Field”. It’s a country cottage in the south of France.*

_Since I know about your predilections for creating and brewing different wines and brandies, I thought that you would like this. The cottage has a small vineyard nearby that’s included as part of the property and there is a large barn near the house for you to be able to set up a winery or distillery._

_The cottage has been recognized, by the muggle authorities, to be a place where alcohol can be brewed and all the legal paperwork, magical and muggle will allow you to start up your own business, if you wish._

_The cottage is a two story affair with the second story underground. It is a magical property, that I found in my senior year and had decided that I needed a project during school to practice my charms and spells. I was given special dispensation from the Headmaster and Professor Flitwick for_
It was also one of the places we visited on our honeymoon,’ she turned her gaze lovingly towards her husband, ‘He was surprised at it, but considering the fights we had when I left the school to fix it up, without telling any of you what I was doing or where I was going, well I had to just show him.

Anyway the place is now yours and I hope that you will now be able to settle down some, now that you have a home. I hope that one day you can show it and share it with Harry.

Oh! Before we end this, I have seen several things that I am not sure, if they will come to pass or not, but here goes.

1. You will teach Harry how to cast the Patronus charm.
2. You will lose another Marauder under mysterious circumstances, but a dragon will find him again.
3. Beware the rat, the teeth on it are poisoned from a dark venomous snake.
4. Seek out your mate. He (yes it is a he) is your other half. He is a darker more acerbic half, but one who will love you passionately and unconditionally. A word of caution, the timing of your love will occur later than you expect, but since you love wines, you do realize that some things are better with time and maybe with “a little dust on the bottle”.

With all our love,

Lily

Remus sat there thinking about his old friends. He was about to get up and leave, when he heard the barking laughter of another lost friend.

‘Don’t leave yet, Moony,

You’re not done here.’ Remus was stunned. He sank back into the chair and gulped several mouthfuls of water. He looked up to see his last friend, an image of Sirius was standing before him and he was just hit by the second prediction that Lily made. He choked up and tears began to fall.

Not long after, seeing that the image had paused, he knew that he couldn’t leave until this Will had played out too. He turned his attention back to the image to activate it further.

‘Hello Moony,’ Sirius was acting a little sheepish.

‘I guess if you are watching this then obviously I have passed on. Tell me did I die defending what I believed in or doing something incredibly foolish or perhaps it was a bit of both at the same time.’

The image paused for an answer and Remus paused to think about it. Then he gave the image a sad smile and clearly stated, “Both.”

The image took on another countenance, where he ranted and raved for a moment before beginning to speak the Will once more.

‘Well I guess that’s just me all over. Foolishly brave. Look I know that you probably didn’t expect this and I sure as hell didn’t expect to die this soon. So, I’ll just get on with it hum?

Let’s see...

Oh yeah! Please take care of our cub for us and get him away from the Dursleys, I don’t care how or when or where, just do it. Dumbledore is an ass. That man has sheltered him well enough in the beginning, but with this war escalating it is wrong not to take him out of that house and take him
somewhere else to train.

Next, I would like to sincerely apologize to you for the way I set up Snape. I was upset and jealous that he was the one for you. You know what I was like in school, a player and all. You rejected me and I was jealous when I realized just who you rejected me for.

I don’t know if you were even aware of where you focused your eyes for many meals in the Great Hall, but I did and I couldn’t stand it. I am so sincerely sorry for the results. I obviously didn’t think of anyone except for myself at the time.

Just to let you know, if you do pursue him now... You have my full blessing. I never wanted you to be without someone, so when the time comes and we meet again, wherever it is that I am now, I want you to have captured the snarky git’s heart.

Now on to the good stuff:

I, Sirius Ignatio Black, do hereby bequeath to one, Remus Jacobin Lupin, the full sum of 3 million galleons. I think that James might have left you some money, but I definitely know that you could use some more. For all that’s good, please, please, please... go buy some new clothes, books, whatever the greedy part of your heart wants. At the very least, get some new clothes.

I hated seeing you in tatters, it reminded too much of my time after I left Azkaban.

I also bequeath to you any furniture that Harry or Snape don’t want from Grimmauld Place. Just like I told them please do whatever you want with them, take them, use them, move them, and forget about the Order’s needs. If they need something, let them conjure it or fetch their own. No more mooching off me.

Also, just so you know I gave Snape the secret to removing the portraits. I figure he’d appreciate the havoc that he could create at that place. I willed all the books there to him. I bequeath to you the entire library, house and contents of No. 37 Snakes End to you and the rest of the properties and books go to a few others and to Harry.

Snakes End is perhaps not as big as Grimmauld Place, but it is a house that was specifically built for a bookworm just like you, we had a few of those in our family too. The house was set up with one room for sleeping, a small kitchen and a large loo.

The small kitchen, I suspect is because no one really lived at the place, it was used for research, so my guess was that whoever stayed at the time, only snacked. The large loo is because after sitting for a long while, no matter how comfortable the chairs, it was a place to relax.

All other rooms are occupied by books, shelves and desks. That’s it. Feel free to share, with whomever. I do suggest that you find yourself a pair of house-elves that would love to take care of that place. I think that they are the only ones that would be successful enough to preserve the works. Choose wisely, you don’t want something like Kreacher.

Sorry for passing on before getting in one last prank, but then maybe everything that will be happening at Grimmauld will be acceptable Messer Moony??!!

You have my blessing, all my love and friendship,

Padfoot’
With Sirius’ last words he turned into Padfoot, barked and wagged his tail, before the image faded. Remus smiled and then laughed out loud, through the tears that he had in his eyes. “Yes Padfoot. That will be one of the greater pranks,” Remus acknowledged.

---------------------------------

Severus

Snape knew how these things worked and he hoped that it wouldn’t take too long to view these blasted wills. He had no desire to see Potter or Black, but had the feeling that he would see them both before too long. He sighed, taking a gulp of the cool water at his side and then he said the activation words.

In front of him, the messy haired image of James appeared with Lily in his arms. Looking at both of them, he wondered what he could have ever done to deserve this torment.

‘Severus,’ James began. He looked a little sheepish, rubbing the back of his neck, like he had done in school when he wasn’t sure how someone would react to what he was about to say.

‘I know that I was a rotten bully to you in school and that, if you’re sitting here actually listening to this then you’re probably also slightly pissed that I never called in the Life Debt that you owed me. Honestly, I was never going to call it in, because you should never have been near the Willow at all. Sirius had a lot to answer for, especially since I also knew that Moony had a fancy for you at the time.’

This startled Severus, that he had to look away to pause the recording. He didn’t know that. He knew how he himself felt at the time, but he didn’t know that whatever it was; was returned in any way, shape or form. The rest promised to be a little embarrassing, but he was glad that the wolf was in a room of his own.

‘I know that I’m probably not the one you want to hear this from, but Moony would never have told you. In fact, I’m not sure that he even noticed it, at the time. I did notice you and your actions around him when the rest of us were not there.

I know, I’m not that observant, usually, but I had time on my hands, since Lily had been taking off during the seventh year without telling me...uh...us where she was going. I was going spare at the time and needed to focus on other things.

I noticed that you were disappointed and really angry that year. It was like a build up of what happened when Moony almost got to you.

Therefore, I, James Arthur Potter, being of sound mind and body, do hereby release you from the Life Debt owed to me as a result of that incident.’ The image of James had pulled out his wand and incanted the spell that would release Severus from that debt. Even if the image was a recording, the spell would still be activated as part the last bequeath or action that a person could take. However, there was no way for any Will image to cast any harmful or killing spells.

‘Please accept my apologies for being an ass to you for so long. Oh! I also bequeath the sum of 50,000 galleons, just to keep you up to your ears in potions ingredients.

James’
This was perhaps one of the strangest things that Severus had ever experienced. He had never been allowed to his own mother’s Will reading, but to get an apology from Saint James and in the form of a Will, was nearly too much for his mind to accept. The release from the Life Debt was not something that he would ever have expected, much less being given money.

The image of Lily stepped forward, as it was now her turn.

‘Severus, my dear friend,’ she began. His eyes had watered at this, knowing that she had always thought that and nothing had ever changed her mind from it. She had always called him, My dear friend, in every letter that they wrote one another and every time they met. “Lily,” he choked on the name. It got stuck in his closed throat.

‘I hope that you are well. I’m glad to know that you are still alive after all this time. Please tell me... are you still serving a Dark Master?’ The image paused, waiting for a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer. He took a deep breath and said, “Yes” in a clear truthful voice. He could never lie to her.

Lily’s face turned sad when she heard that, but continued on, ‘I see. I am sorry that you are still stuck in that situation. However I have two simple requests for you, well within your capacities. You see, I’m not sure that Professor Dumbledore will respect our Will in regards to the guardianship of our son, Harold Jamison Potter.

So, if you hear of Harry being placed with my sister, Petunia and her husband, a Vernon Dursley, I want you to go and kidnap him away from them. I fear that he will never receive much love in that household. Don’t believe what you are told about them. Here is the written address. This will help if some interfering old man decides to secret my son away.’ A slip of paper was handed to him with address of Number 4 Privet Drive, Little Winging, Surrey and another was handed at the same time with another address to someplace in France.

You know that I have seen things and this is one thing that I am sure of. They will hurt him and he does not deserve that. No one does.

I know how you feel about James, but this is my request and only a request. Once you have stolen him away, please bring him to “Lily’s Field”, my cottage in the south of France. I gave you the address for that too.

It is a cottage that I have repaired and built with magic for my final year’s extra studies. I have bequeathed it to Remus and know that he can take care of Harry, much better then anyone else. It doesn’t matter to me that he’s a werewolf or not, he’s just better suited to it.

Also, please teach my son what he needs to know in order to protect his mind. I have a feeling that his mind will be very vulnerable, but I don’t know under what circumstances that would be.

Now, onto some predictions for you:

1. Accept all future apologies, no matter what the issue was. I want you to grow to become a happy person.
2. Beware the rat, it will hide and then return to bring forth evil.
3. Know that your soul-mate is still out there and will be seeking you. Don’t shy away from his affections, they will be strong enough for you and he will protect you with the possessiveness and fierceness of a wolf.
4. When the dragonlings appear, it will be the time for you to change your act, without fear of repercussion.
5. Listen to Hogwarts when she begins to speak.

I wish you well in the future, Severus. Look after my boy,

With love,

Lily

The images faded and now Snape was stuck in his mind thinking about what just happened and what was said. Lily had wanted him to kidnap her son away from the Dursleys and bring him to Remus, to a hidden location.

He had always known about Lily’s seer talent and he had always believed in it, but it was too late now. The meddling old man had to have known about some of the contents of these Wills in order for it to be too late to adhere to any of the requests. He was saddened by it. He had mistreated the boy, so badly he didn’t have a hope to have been forgiven.

Still glad that that was over he got up to leave, when another voice from the not so distant past reared its ugly head. It was as though his standing up was the trigger for the next Will to begin.

‘Leaving so soon Snivilus,’ Snape whirled around shocked that he had to remain longer and to receive something from Black. “Oh, no...,” he groaned.

‘Oh, yes. I finally have you in front of me and you can’t leave until I am done. You know this puts me in mind of a muggle film about a man who goes to some muggle governmental power and argues his case for the longest time until he wins, preventing any other from speaking until he was finished.

You’re stuck here until I’m done with my say, so if you’re standing, then I suggest you sit.’ Snape glared at the image and knew that Black’s reading might contain the most interactive spells on it, just to piss him off. So once he sat back down in the chair that he had just vacated, he said, “I’m sitting down mutt.”

‘Good... now let’s get on with this.

First I would like to apologize for my thoughtless actions, when I sent you up against Moony.’ Sirius grimaced at this point, but just plowed on. ‘You see at the time I not only hated you, but Remus had rejected my advances. I didn’t know why, but he said that he couldn’t be involved with anyone. That was not true because I did see him looking at you from time to time and I saw you doing the same to him.

I know I was a player in school and I had hoped to find someone that wanted me for me, but at that time I was an arrogant sod and no one had ever turned me down before. I didn’t think that Remus would, but he did and I knew it was because of you. I didn’t know why, but I just knew it was because of you.

After all these years, I realized that I was wrong in the way I acted at that time and now I am apologizing to you. I will not force you to accept it, but I will force you to accept everything else that I am bequeathing to you.’

Sirius took a deep breath and then said, ‘I, Sirius Ignatio Black, being somewhat of sound mind and of sound body, do hereby bequeath to one, Severus Salazar Snape, all of the books located within
No. 12 Grimmauld Place. All books that are currently marked as property of that house will now answer to only one person and said person is the man before me, one Severus Salazar Snape. Sirius took out his wand and then incanted the spell of ownership to Severus. Basically the spell changed the book plates, identifying the Black family and property on which they were fastened to, to now belong under Severus’ name and his current living address.

‘You will of course have to go collect them yourself. Just so you know, you can Accio them, but if any are hidden by secret doors or panels in that house, you may need Harry’s help to access them. The house was bequeathed to some others. Also, there is a chance that some of those secrets cubbies could only be opened by a Parseltongue, as we’ve had a few of those in our family too. Harry has been made aware of this and has in fact already agreed to help you out.

Secondly I will bequeath to you the secret of how to remove the portraits from the walls of Grimmauld Place. I didn’t want to do it while I was alive because I loved the fact that Dumbledore was troubled by my screaming mother and a few others.

The secret is tied to the last faithful house-elf owned by my mother, named Kreacher. You have to behead the foul creature and burn his body with the Dark Spell for Hellfire. The portraits will then be burned right off the walls and so will those trophy elf heads. I didn’t want Harry to cast that spell because of the sheer power he wields. It would have burned down the entire place. Harry has already agreed to this, as well.

Next all furniture within Grimmauld Place is to be divided evenly between you, Remus and Harry. I don’t care who gets what, I just want that place emptied. If Harry or any others decide that the Order can still meet there, then that Order will have to provide or hunt for their own seating arrangements.

Lastly, knowing that you would never leave the school because you could not afford to, I bequeath to you a vault with 1.5 million galleons. I think that should be enough for you to get away from teaching, if you hate so much. It is enough to buy a business or open up your own private lab or just do whatever the hell you want, but no more sniveling.

That’s all I have to say.

Oops! One last thing, Remus still fancies you after all this time and frankly I think you should go for it. It’s only for his sake that I say this, not yours.

Ta... You greasy git.’

The image of Sirius vanished, as it was finished with his spiel. Snape was shocked at the amount of galleons that was left to him. Not only that, but all the books at Grimmauld Place. He smiled at the number of books that now belonged to him. Belonged...to...him...

His eyes widened and then he let out a roaring laughter. His magics were possessive of anything tied to him, so now that his name was on all the bookplates he could, effectively and from a distance, prevent anyone from reading those books.

In fact he enacted the locking spells now. All the books at Grimmauld were shutting themselves up and floating back to the shelves where they belonged. Once all books were secured in their proper locations on the shelves, the shelves erected a protective shield preventing anyone else from taking any of the books from them.
He couldn’t wait until the Order meeting this evening. He planned to shove that know-it-all’s face in the fact that only he could access the books. She deserved to be taking down a peg or two.

He got up and left the room with a dark grin on his face. He didn’t want it to go away just yet and so that was how Remus encountered him coming from the final reading of Sirius’ Will.

Remus was surprised at the dark grin, but even more so were the sparkles glinting in the depth of his companion’s dark eyes.

He knew that grin and it promised mischief. They were not too old for that. He couldn’t wait to get rid of the furniture in the place. Most it would be burned, as they were not worth anything, but he knew that he would wait for Harry to return so that they could divvy them up.

---------------------------------

**Grimmauld Place minutes after Sirius’ Will**

All of the books that had been stashed in Hermione’s assigned rooms, as well as some of the other Order members’ rooms had all closed on themselves and were now floating out of those rooms. If fact any books that were taken from Grimmauld had popped back and were stored back into their proper locations.

No one was in the house that day, as the students were shopping for their school items and the other Order members were away on missions. So there was no one there to witness the flurry of activity taking place in the house.

There was a meeting planned for much later in the evening. It would allow Snape enough time to look at the books selecting a few to read and pocket within that bitch’s sight.

The furniture and household stuff knew that they were now completely in some new owners’ hands and were now being polished and cleaned with the spells that had been placed on them. All of the furniture was then moving into the largest room of the house, namely the ballroom. Beds and such remained in their respective locations, but all wardrobes, dressers, desks, chairs, tables etc... Gone!

Also, the recently used items like the dressers and desks were emptied of their contents all over the floors. Any furniture that had not been opened or used since the demise of Mrs. Black retained their contents due to the secretive nature of that house. The contents will only be disclosed to their new owners.

The reason that the Ballroom was closed off before was because it had not been used in almost a century. The ballroom’s location was never stationary, well the doors anyway. The doors of the ballroom were created to roam around the house and could from time to time be mistaken for a closet door.

This was one of the reasons that the ballroom was never used for Order meetings, despite it being the ideal size to hold those meetings. They just couldn’t find the doors to them on regular basis.

The other reason was that the house didn’t like the Order nor did it like anyone that entered its doors. There were a couple of exceptions and those exceptions have now just been made completely aware of it.

---------------------------------
TBC...
Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn’t really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what’s this about a Draekon?...

Chapter Nine

August 19

Draco was surprised to wake up to an empty bed, then again he was equally surprised the he had fallen asleep soon after releasing his seed in his mate’s mouth. He hadn’t lied to Dudley when he told him about the anticipation that he felt for the completion of the bond. Still he was a little disappointed that Harry was not in bed with him and that’s when he heard him talking to someone in the other room.

Getting up, he went to the loo first to refresh himself and put on a silken bathrobe that he found on the chair near the door.

Going into the living room he was astonished to see Harry dressed in the sleep bottoms he had worn the night before, no top with a snake around his neck, standing in front of a strange table.

“That tickles, Harry,” Dudley’s voice said, coming from the table.

“I imagine that it does, but I need to see my way in order to be able to continue,” he said. “Morning Draco.”

Startled that Harry knew he was there now, but didn’t know about them last night when they entered the room, he returned the greeting. “Good morning... How come you didn’t detect us last night and what are you doing now?” He asked curiously, making his way to see what his mate was up to.

“Hmm? Oh, last night I had placed a silence spell around the room. I needed a little bit of privacy when I unpacked some of my things. I guess that I forgot to take them down after I was done.”

“Harry that still tickles,” Dudley complained. “Drake there’s some breakfast on the table, help yourself. Harry’s spelling the excess right now.”

“Sorry Duds, I’ll numb the area first, but I have to see it with my hands. Just pretend that I’m a
doctor that doesn’t care what you look like. If I had my eyes, I wouldn’t be doing it way,” Harry explained.

Draco was looking at the procedure that was taking place in front of him. His eyes widened. He didn’t know that the reducing that was taking place in front of his eyes at the Dursleys involved more than what he had seen when he first met Dudley.

Dudley had been losing steadily since his birthday, which was approximately a month before Harry’s. Draco only showed up near the beginning of August and had not really seen how big Dudley used to be. The spices that Harry had been providing Dudley with, was actually a potion in powdered form.

The powdered form that Harry provided was different from the liquid form of the potion. The powder mixed with additional spices changed the property of the potion to a less harmful outcome, thus providing Dudley with an easy way getting rid of his excess fatty tissue.

The liquid form was deadly and usually used in an offensive battle, due to the nature of the reactions it has when it comes into contact with the flesh of any creature. If it comes into contact with any flesh, the potion is instantly absorbed and then proceeds to expel the body’s fatty tissue through the skin, like a sieve, and that’s in the most painful manner. The rate at which the potion works is extremely fast. Once the potion hits the flesh and once all the fatty tissue is expelled, the potion then attacks the body’s water reserves, effectively mummifying who ever the potion hit.

Harry had studied it from the memories he had been given from the ghosts and found that it could be modified to be beneficial for those hoping to lose excess weight. However, he was very clear in his instructions to Dudley and had explained that it would only work if a strict dietary and physical program following it. Otherwise the ingredients may have some unknown and adverse effects that Harry had predicted and provided to him.

Harry was also very clear that it was up to Dudley to see if he wanted to try this experimental procedure, but that if he did, he would have to inform Harry of any and every possible side effect that he may experience.

Dudley kept very accurate notes from the beginning to the end and one noticeable side effect was that his bowels were used to expel the excess, in solid and gaseous form. Unfortunately that had caused him some embarrassing moments, but Harry then provided him with a charm on a very fancy watch that would allow him and everyone around him clean breathing room, when he pressed one of the watch’s buttons. No one noticed anything after that.

Draco was shocked at the volume of loose skin on Dudley’s body and was fascinated at the way that Harry was ‘fixing’ it. Harry was massaging a potion into a certain area on the thigh, seeking the muscle beneath and then with a whispered spell, in some strange language, caused the skin to shrink back to the way it should have been in the first place.

Harry could only do a bit at a time, but he was already more than half done. He had done Dudley’s front half and was now working on his back. Dudley wanted Harry to do the front first, even though he was embarrassed to expose himself to his cousin, but he knew that if he missed any section that was affected by his gluttony, he would never be happy.

His fat had accumulated in the worst places, but Harry’s spice had reduced the total amount that he
should have been carrying. Still having his entire front done was embarrassing, not to mention somewhat intimate in procedure. Harry offered to put him to sleep for it and for that he was glad, but now that the front was done he was wide awake for the procedure taking place on his back. Worse Drake was now up to witness it.

“Dudley? Um…” Draco began, not sure how to ask about what he was looking at.

“Yeah, it’s true,” was his reply from the massage table. “Harry could you get my wallet from my room.”

“Sure,” he said and then with a hissing whisper, Dudley’s wallet floated to him. Harry didn’t stop his treatment when using the spell.

Dudley pulled out a couple of photos of himself from the school year that just finished. He had some left over from the ones he normally handed out to his friends, but this time kept a few. It was those that he looked at every time he wanted to stop the diet or the exercise. Those photos were a constant reminder of what he no longer wanted.

Dudley sighed and handed the pictures to Draco in order to show him the truth. “Here, look at these. They are the most recent ones. I know that you weren’t able to leave the room often, so you never saw the ones in my family’s living room.”

Draco took the pictures and looked at them. He blinked as he realized just how huge Dudley really used to be. He sat down on the couch and continued to flip through them, looking at them in wonder. ‘How could anyone get so huge?’ he thought.

Then he recalled some of the programs that they watched on television and then Draco knew that the muggles had a problem that was not common in the Wizarding world. He remembered watching all those T.V. ads for weight-loss systems to diets to exercise equipment that targeted specific areas. He remembered laughing and talking to Dudley about how silly muggles were for obsessing over their weight.

Magical folk were naturally fit in the sense that they didn’t gain too much weight due to the magic that flowed in them and around them. There were some exceptions, like Molly Weasley, but Draco and a few others believed that to be caused from the number of children she had brought into the world and the way their magics may have interacted with hers in the womb. The others that he had seen, were explained away by his parents, as having been backfired spells.

This is what he explained to Dudley, but to know that Dudley was affected by his weight in such a way and that he thoughtlessly laughed at the predicament of others. Draco was now feeling ashamed at what he had said. “Oh, gods,” he muttered, hiccupping. “I’m so sorry for everything that I said that…”

“Hey, Drake,” Dudley said loudly. “Snap out of it.” Draco looked at Dudley’s face, through watery eyes, for the first time since he came into the room to find Harry treating Dudley. “I didn’t give you those for you to feel bad. I know... and it’s OK. Please don’t worry about it. You were allowed to your own opinions and of course you didn’t know.”

“But, I made fun of those people on the T.V.,” Draco said. “I made fun of the machines and diets and of the people.”

“Draco,” Dudley began. “It’s all right. I’m all right now. Those pictures in your hand are what allowed me to continue with Harry’s experiment. It allowed me to decide for myself what it was that I was looking for in my future. A person needs something about them that makes them unique and
my father was all talk about promotions and such from his company. He didn’t know that I overheard some of his co-workers talk about how he’d never get another promotion until his image and health improved.

The company that my father works for is huge, but in order to be promoted the employee has to help the company maintain their image of hard workers. They don’t necessarily promote just skinny people, but as long as the health was there it proved to the outside companies that everyone working at Grunnings cared about their own health. Obviously my father didn’t and wouldn’t hear of it. He kept putting it off as being big boned just like his sister, my Aunt Marge.

In the end I was disgusted with myself and I finally asked for help from Harry. I’m glad that he was able to do something to help, despite everything that I had put him through in our younger years.”

Harry just listened to Dudley’s explanation and was glad that his cousin had figured out for himself that he needed to lose the poundage. “Dudley,” he said. “You’ve taken care of my mate when you didn’t have to and you’ve helped me keep that flock of useless birds off my tail. I know that you were raised to be a certain way. I just hope that you don’t continue your bullying ways after we leave for school this year. I’ve already forgiven you for your past actions.”

“Thank you Harry.”

Draco took a deep breath and expelled a shuddering sigh. He looked at the photos and then handed them back to Dudley. “It’s a good thing to forge ahead and make your own plans for the future. Sometimes it’s harder to do that in the magical world because magic can coerce you, if you’re not prepared to resist. My father also molded me into what he wanted, but I was lucky because of Harry too. He helped me when I was about to give up. He gave me hope.” He said all this beaming at his mate.

Harry sensed the action, turned around and returned the smile to his mate. “Why don’t you have some breakfast Drake? I’m almost done. After this Dudley needs to go back into the tub for a re-soak in order for the skin to seal itself the way it is now.”

“OK,” came the reply. Draco went to the table and had a light breakfast while watching the procedure happen from where he was sitting. “Harry?”

“Hmm.”

“How did you discover a way to help Duds?”

For the rest of the time it took to complete the treatment, Harry explained the potion and what it was originally used for. Also he explained how he came up with the idea to modify it and the procedures for the modification.

Draco was impressed. He loved potions, but Harry took it nearly to master level. It was as though something in him changed in regards to potions. Draco knew that he wasn’t really interested in potions like his godfather and now the way Harry seemed to be. He was anticipating some lively debating conversations between the two. He couldn’t wait for his godfather to see the new Harry. He hoped that the two of them would get along now.

“There,” Harry said. “Draco come here and tell me if I missed anything.”

Draco stood up and walked over to the table. Dudley was still embarrassed, but knew that a human set of eyes was required for an honest opinion of the changes. He took a deep breath, stood up and turned around for Draco to see.
Draco’s eyes widened, “Wow. That’s amazing.” He looked from top to bottom, seeking any loose or marked skin. The only evidence that he had ever seen was from Dudley’s reduced chins. That’s all that he saw at the time when he first met him. The fat under chins was no longer there, but the skin was loose and stretch marked from the excess. The spell that Harry used took all that way and now Dudley’s skin was taught and well defined from the exercise that he had done.

Dudley blushed, but turned around completely for his friend to see. “Did I miss anything?” Harry asked.

“No, you didn’t,” Draco answered, in wonder. There were no marks or loose skin anywhere.

“All right then Duds,” Harry said. “You have one last bath to take. You have to soak for one hour, you can let the time go overboard, but you can’t go under that time. I can spell the bathwater to remain warm for you.”

“Thanks,” Dudley said. “I would appreciate that very much. Last night was murder when the water turned cold.”

The boys just laughed and Dudley went to his room to prepare for the last bath in the ritual. He wasn’t stupid. Everything that he just did had the earmarks of a ritual. Still he was very glad that it worked. He would have to remember to give Harry the left over spices and his journal of the changes.

“Harry,” Dudley called, when the tub was filled. Harry entered the room after a bit, tapping his stick to guide him.

“Ready?”

“Yes, please spell the water,” Dudley asked. “By the way did you claim you mate yet?”

Harry chuckled, “That is none of your business.”

“In other words… No,” he said laughingly. “Seriously Harry. You should do it while you still can. I promise to stay here and after my hour bath I think that I will go out for the afternoon and shop for some new clothes. I already have a bit, but I would like some others. That should give you enough time to take care of him. I know he wants this to happen before you guys return to that school of yours.”

“Thank you Dudley,” Harry said. “Don’t worry. Draco has already told me what he wanted and frankly, for now, what he wants he gets. I’ll spell our room for silence.”

“Please do,” Dudley chuckled, as Harry left the room.

-------------------------------

Harry walked back into the living room chuckling. “What’s so funny?” Draco asked.

“Duds’ request,” he replied. “He wanted to make sure that I used silencing charms for when we finally finish bonding.”

Draco blushed, but looked at his mate with anticipation. Still he knew that Harry wanted to hold off a little bit longer before claiming him so he said, “Did you have breakfast yet?”

“No, but I’d love to have breakfast in bed with you,” he said. Draco gulped and Harry continued, “Why don’t you bring the fruit with you and resettle on the bed. I’ll join you in a bit. I need to clean
up some from the potion I’ve been using, it smells too much.”

Harry made his way into their room and into their washroom to clean up, leaving Draco to make up his mind. It didn’t take long. Draco took the fruit bowl with him and set it up by his side of the bed. He removed the silken robe and place back on the chair that he found it on.

He moved the covers back to the way they were early this morning when he and Harry first woke up and settled back onto the pillows. He didn’t have to wait long, because Harry came out of the bathroom.

He was hissing to the snake around his neck. They seemed to be having a conversation, when Harry unwrapped her from her comfortable position. He settled her into an enclosed container from which she helped to create, so that she could easily come and go as she pleased. It was also for her safety and was dark, warm and comfortable enough for her to sleep in. (...I warn you that we may get vocal in our mating...) Harry hissed.

(...That’s OK...) She replied. (...The brothers will be using us to impart their gifts to your mate once you have completed your mating dance. It is best to happen when your mate is passed out from the exertion...) She hissed her laughter.

(...Of course...) He replied with the same hissing chuckle that his familiar graced him with. He stood up, making his way to the bed. His magic sight showed him that Draco was nude and waiting for him. He smiled at his mate and then removed his sleepwear, to join his mate.

Draco’s eyes were fixed at the masculine beauty that his mate exuded. His breath was speeding up and he became aroused just by looking at his mate.

Harry could smell his mate becoming aroused and knew that soon they would be considered one entity, bonded forever together. He climbed into the bed and settled next to his mate.

Draco sat up and rearranged the pillows behind him so that he was facing his mate. He took the bowl and cupped it in his hands. He took a piece of fruit and brought it up close to Harry’s mouth.

Harry sensed the action and smelling the fruit, he opened his mouth obligingly accepting the sweet melon. Draco become bolder and allowed his fingers to brush up against Harry lips, when after several pieces his fingers were suddenly sucked in and playfully nipped. His breath hitched and his heart started fluttering rapidly. Better yet he was getting so hard that his penis started leaking pre-cum from the tip.

Harry smiled with the digit between his teeth and then decided that he’s had enough fruit, took the bowl away from the hands of his mate and placed it on the bedside table. Taking hold of the limb attached to the hand he was cleaning, he rubbed his hands up and down it the length of it. With his mouth he followed his hands up Draco’s arm with little sucking and marking kisses. He pulled his mate closer to him and then proceeded to seek out those luscious lips.

Draco emboldened by the actions that Harry had taken to put him at ease before plus fact he was entranced by the action of his mate. He moved forward seeking to replace his fingers with his tongue. Something that Harry had no objections with. Harry continued petting and touching his mate, seeking out all of those little noises that Draco had produced for him earlier.

Harry moved from his mate’s beautiful mouth when they were running out of air, but moved on to the cute little ears he had yet to explore. Nipping at them between his lips, he ran his tongue along the edges. Draco was running his hands all over his mate, seeking the heat that Harry was producing and also seeking to please Harry.
Harry was making his own noises due to his mate’s explorations. Harry gently laid Draco down on his back and proceeded to mark him once more. He made sure that his memory was correct about all of the spots that drove Draco to murmur were still the same or to verify if more had come into play.

Draco was at this time still very aroused and knew that with every kiss and nibble he would be driven over the edge quickly. That was the case when Harry began to nip and suckle his nipples just like this morning. Unrelenting attention to those hard little nubs caused Draco to release his seed once more.

This pleased Harry in more than one sense. What is not known to Draco was that Harry had to hold off, not in consideration to his mate, but to increase the strength of the bond. Ideally the minimum number of releases or orgasms that the dominant Draekon brought forth in their mate was at least one before claiming.

Harry had read of one Draekon forcing his mate to orgasm seven times before fully claiming their mate. Although in that case the mate was a female and as females tended to have multiple orgasms, Harry wasn’t going to push it. He was hoping for at least three or four and his mate was proving to be very accommodating.

So the more that Harry made his mate release his seed and the longer Harry didn’t, made the bond very strong and allowed for more partnered gifts. Gifts that Harry could give his mate, like some of the knowledge that the ghosts had shared with him, gifts that Dauphin would give to his mate with the help of the Snake God Brothers and all without the fever that it had produced in Harry.

Draco’s body trembled from the release, but Harry didn’t stop his attentions. He leaned down and proceeded to lick up all of his mate’s seed. Ensuring that his was very clean and he then proceeded to kiss, nip, suck and generally mark his mates long legs.

Strangely enough, to Draco, all of this attention had him fully aroused once more. He didn’t think that his knees were sensitive and he certainly didn’t believe that toes were meant to be part of a seduction, but when Harry sucked and tongued each one thoroughly, he was hard pressed not release once more.

Harry sensing that his mate was close once more and started his way up to the inner thighs, sucking and marking all the way. His nose sought out his mates’ arousal and then once more his attentions were turned to that wonderful leaking length. He tongued the entire length several times, scooping the pre-cum that was flowing from the tip. Then he began to suckle the tip and sinking the head further into the heat of his mouth.

He began slowly at first with enough pressure on the base to make his mate hold off for a bit. His paced was slower then before, but his attentions were very thorough. His tongue learned each vein and tickled the ridge around to the head. Then he heard it, he mate was pleading for release. How could he resist such provocative mewlings and his mate was begging so sweetly. He took a deep breath and then proceeded to suck with for all his worth. He let the base go to allow for his mate’s release and swallowed everything that his mate had to offer.

Draco was all sensations. His body was still shuddering from his third release this morning, but his skin was feeling very hot, like there was something missing. His senses were expanding and diminishing at the same time. He felt the magic that Harry was using to guide some of his actions and those little balls were electrifying against his skin in the most pleasing way. Suddenly his was turned over so that his mate had access to his backside.

He knew that the time was near. He also knew that the first time had to be painful because he had read, in one of Harry’s more informative books, that the blood of the first coupling was important to
the bond. So Draco knew that from this first claiming he would have to bleed and that scared him, but it also made him understand what it might be like for a woman’s first time if her shield wasn’t broken. ‘Virginal sacrifice, indeed,’ he thought ruefully.

Harry turned his mate over, but knew that there was one thing left to do before preparing to claim his mate. His hands reached up and removed the collar that had protected Draco from being seen. Removing it released the spells on it and now it was nothing more then a bit of leather with one chain link and a useless charm at the end of it.

He tossed to the ground and then began to massage his mate’s neck, gently rubbing the area that the collar had covered. He leaned in and began nuzzling and kissing the now empty space, moving gently to his lower back.

He sucked at each vertebrae bump and used his hands to knead and rub up and down his mate’s back. His path was clear and he was longing to get to the end of it. He was anxiously anticipating it too. When he reached the lower back, he knew that it was only a matter of time.

Harry knew that he had to control the strength of his magic during this time or he would end up with a catamite or sex slave, which to him was in no way appealing, whatsoever. He had come to love Draco through the correspondence that they had and he loved Draco’s mind, there was no way in hell that he would take that away. So his magic was forcibly contained for Draco’s first time. He thanked every star above that he was magically strong or else those bitches that used the Subliminus spell would have made him their sex slave.

He turned his thoughts and attentions back to his mate, more specifically to the beautiful round globes of Draco’s behind. First one then the other received all the same attention that Harry had subjected the rest of Draco’s body to. He nibbled, sucked and marked each one, slowly spreading and exposing the treasure within.

Draco for his part was just feeling everything. Everywhere his mate had marked him was hot and itching, but in a very good way. He felt the nips and suck on his butt cheeks and felt himself spreading his legs to allow himself to open up for his mate.

Those hands, oh those hands were marvelous. Harry was rubbing and spreading him even further and then he felt it. He felt himself opened by those hands, completely exposing him to the hot breath that his mate was expelling onto his hidden opening.

Harry just breathed in the scent of this new area and leaned in closer, spreading and expelling his heated breath onto it and his hands were rewarded by the twitching and relaxing of the muscles beneath them. So he leaned further in to take his first taste. His mouth had been watering for a time with anticipation of this and now with his tongue coated in saliva, he tongued the creased crevasse in one solid up motion.

Draco wondered what Harry would do now, but instead felt the textured muscle slicked with drool. “Oooohhhhh,” he groaned out. “Morrre,” he purred, shifting back into his mate’s questing tongue. Harry continued to lick the ridges at a steady pace.

Up then down, a little twist here, a little twist there and the occasional stiff thrust into the sweet hole. Over and over, Harry performed his little tongue dance, slicking the entrance as thoroughly as possible, thrusting his tongue in and giving it little flicking motions prior to pulling out again.

Draco was next to insane at that and knew that he was close to losing it again. “Please Harrrrrry,” he throated a purring tone. “Please take me...hhmmmm... m...m...Make... mm.m...me.... yourrrrs.... pp...p... p....ple..ease.” He was murmuring over and over.
Harry knew that the time was right. The magics were building up within the barriers that he had set up in the room. Still licking and kissing around the opening he gently pushed one finger in order to begin to spread his mate some. He knew that he couldn’t spread him too much, but had calculated that a two-finger stretch might be enough for him to make his little mate bleed enough to satisfy the Draekon bonding magics without causing too much pain.

One finger in and Draco was pushing back seeking “Morre....ohnnm....yesss....morre,” he beg. Slipping in a second finger Harry was now actively seeking the pleasure centre of his mate, in other words the magic button or the prostate. Curling his seeking fingers and scissoring them at the same time he found it.

Oh boy. Did he ever? One brush against it and Draco was mewling and shaking from the sensations he got. Another brush against it and Draco was now on his hands and knees pushing him-self onto those very talented fingers.

Harry was pleased with the way it was working and slowly extracted his fingers from the hungry little opening. His own penis was hard and dripping so much pre-cum that he was sure that it wouldn’t take long for him to finish claiming his mate. He took himself in hand spread the pre-cum all over himself and slicking the head preparing to penetrate his mate. His slicked hand returned to finger the gaping entrance, slicking it and marking it with the sticky substance, transferring it into that waiting hole.

Harry spread his mate’s cheeks and leaned in close rubbing his hard length against the hot entrance several times. One of his hands had a clear spread of the opening and the other guided the head into the dark heat. The opening was tight, but he told his mate to take a deep breath and then release it. As soon as the breath was released, Harry thrust in deep and hard into his mate, causing his mate to cry out in a mix of agony and pleasure. Harry had angled himself to nail the prostate, which would cause pleasure in spite of the forced entry causing the pain.

His nails had expanded and were hooked into his mates' upper hips and bone, causing more blood to flow. The location indicated possessiveness yet the hold was not tight or bruising this time. The nails were part of the marking process and each crescent will change to a protective rune that would prevent his mate from ever being taken by another.

Harry pumped in an out steadily and didn’t stop the pace until he found that his mate was matching him, as the pain dissipated. Harry knew that they had succeeded in ‘bleeding the virgin’ because he could smell the blood mixing in the slickness of the flowing fluids in his mates entrance, not to be mistaken with the blood from were his nails pierced his mate.

He was close, but so was Draco.

Draco was pulled up into a sitting position and when he spread his legs even more he as able to assist in the pounding that he was receiving. It wouldn’t take much more and so Harry wrapped one arm tight around his mates' chest, his bloody nails of his right hand, digging into the flesh above Draco left nipple and over his heart. The other was scratching gently at the inner thighs before heading towards the erect leaking member awaiting his pumping hand.

Harry wrapped his hand around his mates pulsating member and began to fist him in quick hard up and down motions, occasionally pressing his thumb across the slit a the tip. “Oh... Harrrrry....I’mm.... I....I’mmm..... g...g....gonnna.....cumm..ffasssster......I’m...I....ah...I..I....aaah...AAAAHHHH.”

Draco shuddered and went very still for about two seconds before screaming out Harry's name one last time and releasing ropey seeds of connected pearls.

Harry knew that when Draco went very still in the two second period that was when he made his
move. He had been nuzzling and suckling his marking site when he had pulled his mate into a sitting position. When Draco paused that was when his bit down hard forcing Draco to release his seed and causing his own to spill within his mate. He said the bonding words, “One together, now and forever.” He heard his mate whisper his reply, “Now and forever, one together.”

That was when the magic dove into the boys and began to initiate the knowledge exchange that Harry had experienced earlier in the summer. Draco only received a portion of the knowledge and most of it was random, with a few exceptions in the written, historical and cultural differences. That was what was imparted to him to assist his mate. The knowledge of the nuances for different accepted written languages versus culturally written documentation, which are rarer finds.

Harry spelled them cleaned, as his mate was now in a “little death” and would not come out of it for a few minutes or he may even fall asleep. He slowly pulled out of his mate and gently laid him down on his back. He lay down next to his mate curling around him protectively. He moved his mates’ member out of the way like he promised Dauphin, so she could access certain areas on his mate and fell into a slumber next to his bonded. He would just have to remember to check the claiming marks for any changes, although he had an idea on what some might be like and he knew where they would appear.

---------------------------------

Dauphin came out of her carrier and slithered drunkenly up onto the bed where the two bonded Draekons now slept. The left and right heads slithered up Draco and at the junction or groove of the thigh and pelvis where the large femoral arteries were. She bit down and released the venom that would protect Harry’s mate. Just like what happened to Harry and the venom allowed Draco to have knowledge of several of the spoken languages, similar to Harry’s gift from the Brothers.

Draco was given complete immunity like Harry, but less languages. The Brothers had another gift for the blond Draekon and it was Dauphin’s middle head that would provide it. Once the other two were done, she slithered up to the belly and stationed herself above the small bellybutton. She struck in a swift move. She bit both left and right sides of the bellybutton, producing four pinpoints that would be forever there and pumped a special type of magical venom that could only have come from Gods.

This venom would allow Draco to carry children when the time was ideal. Draco and Harry would have to decide at the same time for children to be produced and the magical venom would do the rest. The Brothers decided on this gift, as Harry had passed many of their trials and had indeed taken poor little Dauphin as his familiar, when even the runespoor did not believe that he would.

Dauphin, done with her task returned to her container and returned to her well deserved rest. She was glad that it was finally quiet in the room. Harry hadn’t lied to her about the noise those two would be making and knowing that this kind of activity would happen on a frequent basis, she was going to ask for silencing spells on her container to prevent her sleep from being interrupted.

---------------------------------

TBC...
Ten

Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:

'Thoughts or emphasis'
"Normal speech"
(…Words spoken in another language…)  

Chapter Ten

August 19 - Founder’s Law Enacted

The creature that Harry had encountered in the abandoned Tibetan Temple was right. Antiok was right. The sense that he had felt coming from the Scottish Highlands regarding another of his kind was in fact quite right. Her name was Athena and she had died there without ever releasing her final seed into the world.

These ancient creatures had an awareness of the other planes, including where the souls of the unborn reside. The creatures were given a gift and that was the ability to communicate with their unborn, just prior to releasing them into the world.

Antiok released his last one, knowing that that was its’ wishes, despite coming into the world far smaller then his brethren. It wanted to become the familiar or companion of a long-lived creature such as the Draekons were.

Athena on the other hand was already dying and could not release her seed safely. She spoke to her child and agreed to pass away by sinking into the world’s connecting ‘Lay Lines’. She sank into the largest node, which is a crossroad of merging lines and agreed to release her seed into it.

Her seed then waited and rested there until four magically strong beings came along and created a magical centre for learning. These four were, of course, the four Founders of the school known at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

They had decided build a structure on the site where Athena had chosen, millennia ago, to sink into the earth. During the construction of the castle they had decided to employ many different magical beings, one species, of which has already passed from this plane of existence, never to be seen or heard from again.

However, this particular species was known to have been adept at tapping the ‘Lines’, which they did, but which also allowed Athena’s final seed to merge with the school’s creation. All this resulted...
in the castle being rumored to be semi-sentient.

Rowena was fully aware of the full extent of the castle’s consciousness and had told this to the other Founders. They conspired with the building and found that the entity now inhabiting the walls was actually something positive and very beneficial. They included her in all the decisions they made and made her the keeper of the Founders Law.

They had chosen the perfect location away from ‘political eyes’, but they all knew that in time some of their ideals would fall by the wayside. Indeed all the Founders had studied various civilizations that had risen and crumbled throughout time and history. They knew that the way they ran the school would change within a few centuries.

The Founders were an idealistic bunch, but with projections towards the future, they knew that some political entity or form of governmental body would try and perhaps succeed in taking over the running of the school. They plotted for the future, with this in mind.

They began to run the school together. Each having a say and their ideas were brought before the others. The merits or benefits were discussed, debated, argued over and then eventually the idea was either: used, modified or discarded.

Four heads were better than one for making these types of decisions hence they developed the four houses with four Heads of House. However, one person would have to eventually take the lead for a final decision. So, on a rotational basis each Founder served a four-year term as the Headmaster or Headmistress of the school.

In truth the Founders like the idea of four heads better then one, that the Heads of the Houses were all elevated to the status of Deputy Headmaster or Deputy Headmistress. They assisted with administration and the total running of the school. The true Headmaster or Headmistress was chosen by the school, herself, in order to promote the ideals of the Founders.

They were: (1) an area of safe learning for magical children, (2) a secure site of Sanctuary during times of conflict, (3) a place of growth and advancement in magical studies, (4) a preparatory place in order to turn out useful, productive members of the magical community, no matter the race, colour, or creed and that included species.

The rumored ‘Historical Conflict’ between Godric and Salazar was just that, a rumored conflict. They never fought any battle against one another and certainly not over a muggle separationalist point of view. They did have their moments, but then so did all the Founders, as most friends do when they disagree with one another from time to time.

Overtime, some of Godric’s and Salazar’s more memorable disagreements had escalated to tales of epic battles and eventually an all out war. These tales occurred by word of mouth, long after the Founders had passed away.

After about 579 years of watching and guiding, the school informed the Headmaster and Deputies that she would be slumbering for a time. She was just a newborn entity and therefore needed to replenish herself, like any other.

She was confident that the future would follow in the Founder’s footsteps and dreams. Unfortunately, nearly one hundred years later, war broke out and the political climate changed. It had been steadily changing and affecting the school’s policies. This had been steadily occurring since her final conversation and after the last Deputy that had ever heard her speak, had passed away.

The ministry grew to demand taxes and a say in the magical education of the children. The Board of
Governors was developed by concerned parents in order to prevent too much ministerial influence. However, that too became corrupt over time.

The goblins knew that with the changing times, they were to watch and wait for the time when Hogwarts woke up again. They had a body of individuals whose main tasks were to seek and maintain a connection with the guilds of the leading magics in the world. They did, of course maintain connections with other guilds too, just in case.

They knew that a time was going to come, that once the school had awoken, she would wake up to a mess. So, they kept accurate track of all the professors currently employed at the school. They kept accurate records of all the courses that had been eliminated through time. Listing which Headmaster or Headmistress had eliminated which course, under what circumstances and under whose political influence.

The goblins also kept track of potential teachers, instructors, aids and apprentices or journeymen that could come on a moments notice, should there be an educational revolution in the near future.

Better yet the school has a way to notify them via the buildings’ stones that the goblins’ ancestors had helped set up when the school was being built. Through an ancient branch of goblin magic, some ancient structures could speak to one another in ‘Stone Speak’.

They knew that should something happen to awaken the school they would need to have all paperwork in order. They followed all the current laws and the changes in laws, in order to evict the current Headmaster out and actually be able to enact the Founders Law, which can’t be overridden by any governing political body once it was fully enacted.

The school was created and still is a boarding school, hence a law unto itself. No outside interference was to have ever influenced what was taught within those walls. No outside beliefs were tolerated, so that there was to be no black and white view of the world. Once the students had finished their schooling, they left with a clear understanding of the outside world, politics and should be able to make informed choices. It's not like that today.

So now on this day, the day that the Draekons have formally bonded, the school woke up. The first thing she did was yell had Headmaster Dumbledore, telling him that she was enacting the Founders Law and that he had 72 hours to get out, before he was forced out. Her voice escalated in the air, like that of a howler.

After that she contacted all of the house-elves, ghosts, portraits and every other living magical entity to fall under her command until the new Headmaster arrived. They were to clean up what they could and prepare the Founders’ tower for him and his mate.

Next she contacted the Gringott’s bank and told them who the new Headmaster was and to get him to sign all contracts of that nature. She also requested that the new Headmaster accept the four-year term on a condition that it could be renewed without question for an additional four years. The school needed time to re-adjust to perhaps new courses that the goblins would be presenting to the Headmaster. It also needed the time to allow the stagnation and corruption to be removed from the glorious halls of Hogwarts.

---------------------------------

Albus Dumbledore never once suspected that the school was anything other then just a building from which he was safe, secure and in a position to mold young minds. He thought he had job security, boy was he ever wrong.
He thought that he had everything under control, but was now realizing that everything was not going according to his carefully laid plans.

Indeed after that disastrous meeting on August 15, when every Order member could not find a place to sit. Nor could the people living there find any wardrobes left to store their clothing, which resulted in several shouting matches with him. The only way things could have happened was that a new owner had taken over. This was in spite of the all secrecy and other protective wards that he had added to the place.

He had to concede that no. 12 Grimmauld Place was no longer safe. He had now been planning to move the meetings to Hogwarts, only to find that if he did not move out by August 22, he would be forcibly evicted and perhaps even be stripped of some of his magics.

All of this was almost too much for him to handle. However, he did have other places to go and therefore he left messages to the Order with directions of who is now in charge and of how to get a hold of him. He left behind a few other instructions, packed his belongings and then just walked out of the school.

He was determined to leave them to their own devices. Especially after the way his Potions Master had denied him. He had wanted Severus to brew that potion in order to get Harry under the Subliminus control once more, but that snarky bastard said no.

He threatened him with prison, but Severus just reminded him that he was released into the school’s custody and not Albus Dumbledore’s.

Fawkes did not go with him. There was no way for the phoenix to do so. There was a general misconception about this particular phoenix, he was never owned by one Albus Dumbledore. He was not a familiar to any wizard and had chosen to companion the school rather then any human. He just hung out in the Headmaster’s office by choice and now with that distasteful one gone, he was fully prepared to hang out wherever he wanted and with whomever.

He consulted with the school about whom he should pester and when the school mentioned a name, he agreed. He was just going to wait for the professors to return before becoming a nuisance to the one the school wanted him to companion, for the time being.

-----------------------------

Grimmauld Place - Flashback August 15

Severus and Remus had decided to show up early at Headquarters, hoping to be able to deal with the portraits before any of the others showed up. Seems that their luck was still holding because Severus was able to successfully behead the foul house-elf and burn him with the Hellfire spell. He did it in front of Sirius’ mother’s portrait as a bonus to see her gape mouthed expression as he did it.

“Well, that felt particularly pleasant,” Severus said, with a small dark, mischievous grin. “Now what should we do next?”

“If we only knew when the rest would show up and if we had an army of house-elves...” Remus began. He paused and the grinned a Marauder grin at his dark companion.

“Well... the school’s elves are available. They do tend to be slightly bored, especially the younger ones.”
Remus full out smirked and then called, “Dobby!”

In popped one of the more colourful elves that they had ever seen, but they knew that this one would do anything for Harry, so they stretched the truth.

“Oh, the great Harry Potter’s Wolfie and...,” he turned to look at Snape and shivered slightly at the glowering looks. “Potions Master Professor Snape, sir. How Dobby be helping?”

“Severus, please stop scowling at him if you want to gain his help,” Remus said. “Dobby, are any of the elves at the school a little bored? Do you think that they might want to do a little job for us? We’re in a bit of a hurry because we don’t know when the others will be arriving back.”

Severus did stop scowling and nodded at the house-elf, indicating his agreement. “Yes, Dobby know of 15 that be needing something to do,” he replied.

“Perfect,” Severus said. “Call them here, now and be quick.”

“Severus?” Remus asked, wondering what was going on through that dark mind.

Before the Potions Master could answer there was several popping sounds. There were now 17 house-elves waiting for instructions. They all stopped to look at both professors and just waited silently, because they knew that Professor Snape could not tolerate chatter.

Severus spoke to them, “This house has recently been cleansed of the Dark Influence that it had been under. Now that some portraits are off the walls, I find that the walls are in desperate need a new coat of paint. As you can see, the portraits that have been removed left behind their marks.” He indicated the scorch marks on the walls and also pointed out that some of the other frames needed to be removed in order to remove the surrounding dust stain.

Remus was catching on and continued giving the instructions, instinctively knowing that the ballroom was off limits, “That’s right. This place needs a good dusting and good overhaul with a new coat of paint, the floors and carpets need cleaning, too. However, there is one room that you will not touch. Do not touch the ballroom, is that clear?”

Several heads nodded. “A moment,” Severus began. “I know that there are occupied rooms here still and I feel that they should be coloured special for these guests.”

Remus smirked and so did Dobby, knowing full well who resided here at the moment, “Something special for Harry’s Wheezies and Grangie.” Dobby said, hoping to pay the back for the nastiness that he had witnessed from a distance.

“Gred & Forge’s rooms should be coloured in their own style. I don’t think that those two...,” Remus began.

Dobby nodded knowingly. He mind spoke with Winky, as she was the seventeenth elf here, and got her to direct the other elves to the tasks requested. Soon there was only one elf in front of the two professors.

“I be taking care of the Wheezies’ and Grangie’s rooms,” Dobby said. “What colours?”

“I believe that a neon pink and yellow room for Miss Granger would be suitable,” Severus said.

“Slytherin green and silver for Ron Weasley,” said Remus. “That brat is just too full of prejudice.” Severus continued, “I believe that we will leave the rest up to your good tastes.”
Remus agreed, but added, “A freckled room for Miss Weasley. She must have a matching set to the ones she already owns and I know that she hates.” Dobby nodded and popped out of there.

The two professors were hard pressed not to laugh, but were able to maintain their countenance, barely. They could hardly wait for this evenings’ debacle.

It didn’t take the elves that long to finish, in the mean time both gentlemen decided to look at Severus’ new books. Walking into the library that housed the books, both noticed the additional shelves and the added books.

“I didn’t think that there was this many,” Remus muttered. He reached out to look at one that he had never seen before, when his hand was grabbed and pushed down away from the bookshelves.

Severus was just in time, he didn’t want his protections to harm the werewolf. “The shelves are warded. They’ll give you an electric shock, if you try to take one. I’ve set it fairly high and there are, of course, other tricks.” He pulled the book that Remus was interested from the shelf and handed it to him.

“Thanks,” he said. “I don’t recall ever seeing this one before. Now that we’re waiting, wherever shall we sit?” He chuckled, looking around the empty room.

“You’re a wizard, conjure up a chair,” was the reply he got. “Albus is not the only who knows how.”

The two professors set up a comfortable reading area and had even conjured up a table between them. Winky came in to offer them tea and both men agreed to it, thanking her politely.

The elves worked like small tornadoes, completely overhauling the house in record time. With the exception of the rooms belonging to some of the Weasleys and Miss Granger, the rest was tastefully done in soft tones, creamy accents and that basically changed everything from dark and somber to bright and cheerful.

In due time the house was completed and all of the elves popped out, except for Dobby. He went up to the two men to petition them on a position for Winky. She needed a home soon or she would soon pass away from depression. Winky did not know that Dobby would be doing this for her.

It was a very happy Winky, a couple of hours later, that left merry old England and was happily preparing her master’s new house, getting it ready for him. Remus agreed to take her bond, figuring that she needed to be away from the darkness surrounding these times here. Since he didn’t know what Lily’s Field needed, he had her go there and take a look around. He needed an inventory of items that were there and that would be needed there.

Also, he sent her to Snakes End to find out what was required of that place. She was to also keep an eye out for elves that were freed and that preferred to work in peaceful, quite, library type of situation.

It was later in the afternoon, when the others had returned from their errands. They found the entire house empty of furniture and completely repainted. They also found the two professors quietly reading in the only chairs to be found in the house.

Going through the house everyone looked in nearly each room to try and locate the furniture that had
once been there. Only to notice that some of the portraits were no longer on the walls. A quick check found that the portrait of Mrs. Black was indeed gone from the wall.

The only Weasleys that were happy with their rooms were Fred and George. They had been moved from the closet sized room with a bunk bed to the master suite.

The twins had no choice at the time because everyone else in the household wanted to keep the peace among Ron and Harry. Ron would have complained too much if Harry had his own room, which would have been right.

Hermione was given her own because she was a girl and because she had so many books that she took over the place, besides Ginny wouldn’t be around that much. When she eventually moved in she settled for her own room, which was about the same size as Hermione’s.

Now the twins were in the room that had housed the missing Buckbeak and it was very clear that the hippogryph would not be returning. Why would he? Dobby had set them up in that room, in order that the closet room they had to use returned to its closet status. Dobby had outdone himself for the twins. He moved them and actually painted the entire room plaid. It was a brightly coloured plaid, but plaid in tones of dark green, bright daisy yellow, mid-blue and a very dark royal purple. They absolutely loved it.

Of course, everyone thought that they were crazy and were arguing with them to move out of that room, since it was the Master Suite and no one should be in there. The twins got around that by saying that since, in the beginning, they had been very understanding and they accommodated to the requests of others, in order to prevent fights from breaking out over something so trivial as room size, they should be allowed to remain where their belongings were now. Besides, since they were not the ones that moved their belongings in the first place, they felt that it would be an insult to whoever moved them, to move out of the room now.

Ron was insulted that his room was now coloured like the Slytherin common room. Ginny was insulted because she absolutely hated her freckles and by default anything that reminded her of them. Hermione was insulted by the colours now in her room, it was really too much. Some very intrepid house-elf had even added frills and lace.

She had also been shocked several times, when she tried to remove the books that she had been currently using in her studies. Professor Snape had pointed out that the other students of the school did not have access to the same references that she did and therefore it was hardly fair for her to be studying from these ones.

“How dare you tell me, what references I can and can not study from?” She said shrilly. “Sirius allowed me to look at them and he even Willed these ones to me.”

Snape glared at her and said, “Miss Granger, it does not suit the Gryffindor in you to lie. How dare you presume to have witnessed the magical Will of Sirius Black?”

“I didn’t say that I witnessed the Will. Headmaster Dumbledore told me at the beginning of the summer that they were Willed to me.” She said calmly. “Now, if you don’t mind, I would like my books back.”

Remus and Snape developed astonished looks and then looked at one another. It couldn’t be helped there was too much going on for Severus to maintain his cool collected self. Especially, since Hermione’s hair was standing straight up. They laughed, loudly and more to the point, in her face.

“How dare you laugh at me?” She fumed. “Remus, I thought you had some respect for Sirius’
wishes and you Professor Snape, how dare you tell me that I lied.”

The two calmed down quickly at her tirade. Severus then said, “Miss Granger, if you were not a witness to the magical Will of Sirius Black then you’ve inherited nothing, but a lie. These books were indeed bequeathed to someone, but that was not to you.” He then took one from a shelf, without getting shocked and showed her the bookplate with his name on it.

She blanched and then asked, “How was Remus able to get one then?”

“I handed it to him,” was the reply.

“Well then, how about you...”

“No,” Snape interrupted. “You no longer have access to any of these books. I will not hand any over to you or your posse.”

She stomped her foot and stalked out of the room, mumbling, “We’ll just see about that.”

-----------------------------

Albus Dumbledore had arrived on time for the meeting, but had stumbled into the argument between Ron and the twins, regarding the room situation.

“Now boys what is this all about?” He said in his normal grandfatherly tone. Once the situation was fully explained there was nothing that the Headmaster could do about it. “It seems to me that the magic in the house decided to move the twins. In order for the twins to move out, they would have to petition it.” He said, eyes twinkling in their direction. Sure that they would do so because they were always prone to listen to him.

“Really...” George began.

“Magic did this...” Fred continued.

“Well, then since...”

“It is the house’s decision...”

“We wouldn’t want to....”

“Offend it by moving...”

“When it clearly...”

“Wants us to be there,” they finished in their usual twin speak. No one was going to be able to change their minds about it. They were right, some buildings would be offended and since no one knew that it was Dobby’s doing, they weren’t going to argue about it.

“Well, now that that’s settled, let’s move on,” the headmaster said. He paused looking around the room, wondering how it could have brightened so much, when he noticed that there was no furniture around. Shrugging his shoulders, he conjured himself a very comfortable chair. As he was sitting down in it, it vanished.

“Now boys really,” the headmaster said looking at the twins, thinking that it was a practical joke. No one was laughing.

“Professor Dumbledore,” Molly began. “We’ve tried that already. We have all conjured chairs and
have been unable to sit in them. The only ones who can successfully conjure and sit in their conjured chairs are Severus and Remus.”

“Really,” he glanced at his two professors and they demonstrated. “Then why haven’t you gentlemen...”, he was cut off as he watched Bill Weasley sit in Remus’ conjured chair and watched in astonishment, as the conjuration didn’t last. Bill fell to the floor.

“We don’t know why it works for us and not you, but again maybe the magic in the house had been released since the portrait of Mrs. Black is no longer around,” Remus said.

“I agree,” Severus said. “Now that that portrait is gone a few things seem to have changed.” He shrugged like he didn’t care and leaned up against the far wall with his arms crossed. “Could we get on with this? I have a potion to brew.”

“Yes, of course, of course,” the Headmaster said. He began the meeting, decisions here and there being made. Missions handed etc. etc., but then came the time for him to find out about what the two professors found at the Dursleys.

Professor Dumbledore turned his twinkling eyes to the gentlemen that were conversing quietly and asked, “So, how did you find our young Harry?”

Professor Snape smirked and said, “We didn’t.”

“He wasn’t there at all, Albus,” Remus said. “In fact I don’t think that he has been there for quite some time.”

The noise generated from that statement was deafening. After all Harry had been writing to the order, he should still be there. They did observe Harry’s owl coming and going from the house. Harry had even been writing to the others, full letters etc... etc... etc....

In the end they discovered that Harry had indeed been gone for quite some time and was currently at an unknown location.

Dumbledore rationalized that since Harry was still writing to the Order then he was in fact fine. After the argument with Severus, because he declined to brew the potion Dumbledore wanted, everyone decided that perhaps it was best to leave Headquarters to the possible new owners.

The Weasleys were forced back to the Burrow and Hermione with them.

Hermione did complain to the Headmaster about the books, but as they were now all plated in Severus’ name there was nothing that he could do. In fact that made him question his Potions Master’s motives, since he obviously was in attendance to the Potter and Black Wills that he himself was denied viewing.

The twins looked at one another and knew that they were thinking of coming back, but didn’t know how to do it. Just as they were leaving, Remus handed them a note that he received in his box from Harry. It was a similar note with a Gringott’s key. The boys left for their own viewing of a Will.

---------------------------------

TBC…
Eleven

Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:

'Thoughts or emphasis'
"Normal speech"
(…Words spoken in another language…)  
---------------------------------  
Chapter Eleven

---------------------------------

August 20

Harry and Draco were late in waking up that morning. They had slept the entire day and night away of their bonding. Harry and his mate were now linked in such a way that if one needed to recover from something the other's physical presence was required. Therefore both slumbered until the one that needed to recover was well. They would now wake at the same time and sometimes share dreams, but they were not telepathic. They had too much in their minds to incorporate telepathy.

Draco woke up trying to stretch, but was just too sore and he groaned his discomfort. This caused Harry to wake up concerned. “Draco? Are you all right?”

“Yeah,” came the muffled reply. “I’m just very sore at the moment.”

“I understand,” Harry said. “Stay put for now, I’ll run you a bath.” He tapped his way into the loo and proceeded to fill the tub. He had potions prepared for his mate and selected something mild and soothing to use in the tub.

Ensuring that there was nothing in his way, he returned to the room, scooped up his mate and carefully carried him into the steaming room. He helped him to stand in order to be able to pee, but once Draco had done that, Harry scooped him up and deposited him gently into the warm water.

Once in the water, Draco was relaxing nicely with the heat, but was disappointed that he had no company. “Join me,” he said.

Harry chuckled and then slipped in behind his mate. He gently washed his mate, massaging the back muscles with care. He the washed his mate's hair and was somewhat surprised at the length of it. “Wow! Your hair really grew during your change.”

“So did yours, you know,” Draco said.
“Well, yes, but I cut mine to make it manageable,” Harry explained. “With everything that I had to do, it was better if I cut some. That’s why it only goes to my mid-back and to near shoulders when it's tied properly.”

Draco was surprised. He was under the impression that he had to keep it and said so. Harry laughed. “No, you don’t. I would not force you to keep that length, it’s not practical and if you’re not used to it. Well then that could be a danger. I’ll cut it for you or we can go somewhere for that.”

Draco sighed, “Thank the gods. I don’t want to keep that length. It’s too much. I know a place that we can go to. Duds and I spotted it. It’s actually a place that specializes in tiny braids. I thought that that would be kind of fun to have.”

“You mean like dreads?”

“Yes,” Draco confirmed.

“Sure,” Harry said. “I can even provide the beads for you, if you like?”

Draco snorted and knew that whatever Harry wanted to provide him with for his hair would contain protective magics. He did not mind that in the least.

Now it was Draco’s turn to wash his mate and he did so with a little too much enthusiasm that Harry became aroused. Draco took care of that by facing his mate and grinding his own erection into him. The tub was excellent in that it was a reclining tub, so Harry leaned back, stretching out, letting his slippery little mate cover him.

Harry’s hands were traveling all over that lithe body and pulled him to grind onto his own turgid member. Draco continued to thrust down, loving the feel of Harry’s hands running up and down his back. The hands were pausing from time to time to knead his cheeks. Running a finger between, teasing the sensitive flesh found there.

“Oohnn, Harry.”

Harry thrust up and slid a hand between them to fist them both to completion. “Come on love,” Harry said. Draco shuddered once. Harry continued to pump until both were releasing their seed. Draco then collapsed on him, trembling every now and then.

Harry spelled the water to drain and then spelled the tub to re-fill itself. He added some mild cleansing potions and then brought one to his mate lips for him to swallow. It was a simple pain relieving potion, but it was flavoured nicely. It was something that Harry discovered for himself, when he decided to brew his own potions.

There was no way he was going to put up with that foul tasting shit that passes for potions in the school’s infirmary. Besides, he no longer trusted potions that he did not brew himself. That’s how he landed in that mess at the beginning of summer.

Once both Draekon’s were cleaned and dry. Harry took his mate back into their room and produced another pair of silk pajamas. This time it was in a mandarin style with a Chinese collar and little frog buttons to hold it closed. They were a pale blue and the top was a called a quarter. Meaning the length went down a quarter or to the mid-thigh. The pants were long, but there was the design of a dark black and red dragon winding up one of the legs. The top had accents that complimented the dragon design.

“Oh... These are beautiful Harry,” Draco gushed over the silken design. “Did you buy a lot of these?” He asked watching Harry pull on his matching pair, only his were black with a red and blue
“Define, a lot,” Harry said in a teasing tone. “I have enough for us to go one month without ever wearing the same pair twice. I bought several Hakamas in Japan and more then a few Cheongsams from China. I bought a lot of unfinished pieces too. I want to gift Professor Snape and Remus with some, but I need your eyes for their colours.

In almost every place I stopped I bought the native wear, as well as some of the high end evening-wear, you know suits and tuxes. I even shopped in some of the magical alleys and picked up, more then a few interesting gadgets that I’m not sure what they do, but they had an interesting magical feel to them. Before you say anything, they are not really Dark magic, more like in the Grey area.”

“I got you some things too, Harry,” Draco said. He then showed off his trunk with the electronic equipment in it and that surprised Harry. Draco explained how the discovered that those items can work in wizard space. They couldn’t work in highly magical areas, like Diagon Alley or Hogwarts, but they did work in wizard spaced items like the trunks.

He explained how he got the machines to run and all the shopping that they did. He had picked up things here and there. He showed Harry’s own trunk, explaining that the first layer held his school supplies and the second his clothes.

He lead Harry down to the third level and said, “Right on three of the walls we added floor to ceiling shelves. We filled them as best we could and uh...” he led him to one shelf that had protective magics and a set of doors.

Draco opened them and explained some of the contents, “Me and Duds found lots of magical items in muggle pawn shops. We kept the more interesting ones and sent the rest to the Ministry. They have a place for these things and do not question where the objects came from as long as the parchment used had a truth spell on it and that the contents of the note indicated that there were no other items at the shop. They do require the shop’s location so that they could monitor the activity there for a time.”

“Draco this is amazing,” his mate said. “I love it. How big is the wizard space in here?”

Draco blushed a bit and confessed that these were matching trunks for couples. He then said that he gave the largest one to Harry, not knowing how much stuff Harry would be bringing back. “The space in this one is twenty feet long, thirty feet wide and sixteen feet high. Mine is slightly smaller, but I’m happy with it now that I can bring my computer and stuff with me.”

Harry laughed, then kissed and hugged his mate, “I’m glad. I do have a lot of stuff. Most of it is shrunk, but I am going to need your help to find a few things. Let’s just leave this for now.”

The boys left the trunk and made their way into the living room. “Whoa, guys. You do look like you’re married. Aw, matching jammies, how cute.”

“Oh! I almost forgot,” Draco said and returned to their room for a few moments, returning with a couple of scrolls and a pen. “We have to sign the papers to register the bond.” He then paused biting his lip and asked, “Harry do you really not mind that I take Uncle Sev’s name as my middle one?”

Knowing that this was a sticky situation, but ever since Draco explained everything that Severus had done for him. Indeed, knowing everything that Severus has done for Harry, there was no way that he would deny his mate this. It would be good for that man to be acknowledged.

Harry walked up to his mate, reached out to him and held him. He something more of the Wizarding
World, but now was not the time to reveal just what he knew. His mate needed to take the name in order to completely rid himself of his father. “Of course I do not mind. He is a very honourable man and if he could just drop the acts he has to maintain, I’m more then sure that he would turn out to be a very fair man. He has saved my life a few times, you know. Please take his name.”

Draco wrapped his own arms around his mate grateful that Harry understood. One squeeze later and the papers were signed. Copies were popped to the appropriate locations, like the Ministry of Magic, Gringotts and Harry’s secure travel pack.

“My turn,” Harry said, going into their rooms. It took a little doing and a lot bartering, but he had found the perfect, well hopefully the perfect rings. They came straight from the forges of the dwarves of Everest. Now I know why the muggles always strived to get to the top. It was so that no one would think of digging into that mountain. Harry was following a map at the time that was provided to him by Uluru and it led him into the apparating room of the mountain, known as Everest.

---------------------------------

He was going to give that old Australian coot an earful when he saw him again. The dwarves were not pleased to say the least, but after a while Harry was able to explain everything. They knew that he would be able to find them again without the map. Harry swore that he would never divulge that secret, but couldn’t promise never to seek them out again.

When they had asked why, Harry explained that he was blind due to certain circumstances and that the magics he could feel right now, were very interesting. He said that he hoped to be able to visit in the future, perhaps to study them or bargain with them again.

The audacity of the youth impressed these stonemasons, so they agreed conditionally. Harry then had the further audacity to ask if they had ready-made pieces for the outside world. He was looking for something specific for his mate and himself. He wanted rings. The rings could remain on their hands forever, but would also be safe to wear when they worked with spells and potions.

The dwarves liked him. The fact that he told them his tale freely and explained how he could understand what they were saying impressed them.

They helped him out and he picked several pieces from earrings, bellybutton rings and studs, to necklaces and rings for himself and his mate. He picked out five sets of rings, knowing that he could sell them or give them away in the Wizarding World with the permission of the mountain people. They had the protections he needed. The dwarven work was immaculate and the dwarves allowed him to be the only one to sell those pieces by choice.

Of course, the next time that Harry visited they told him that he had to bring his mate. Which Harry agreed, because there was no way he was going to remain apart from his mate any longer.

---------------------------------

Harry returned from their room with a jeweler's case in hand. Gulping he brought it forward and explained what they were. He then sat next to his mate, as Draco sat staring at the beautiful craftsmanship. He took one of the pale hands in his own, gaining his mate’s attention. “Draco, I have grown to love you through our letters and I wanted something to show the world that we are together. I would like you to pick our wedding bands.”

“Oh, Harry,” Draco launched himself at his mate laughing and sniffling at the same time. He had been afraid that Harry wouldn’t want to publicly acknowledge their union. He should have known better. “What about during classes, especially potions?”
“They are already spelled with protections and we can actually wear them in Potions class without fear. These are spelled by creatures which not by definition human Wizards. Anything that Wizards use or throw at these rings will not affect them. Please pick out your favourites. I plan on giving a set to Moony, once he has his man. I think that I will wait and see about the rest.”

“That’s a wonderful idea. This is so fun. It feels like I’m in a jewelry store.” He then took his time looking at each set, but they were all so wonderful that it was a hard choice to make.

On some instinct he closed his eyes and he let his left hand hover over the tray. Then he felt it, a small tingle. Gingerly he followed the sensation and let his hand land on one particular set. Looking at the set that he magic chose, he smiled. They were perfect, neither to big or too little. They had a Celt-like woven design interspersed with a rune, shaped in precious stones, here and there. Each rune was like proclamation for their married life, like Love, Joy, Understanding, Eternity, etc... They were perfect.

“I have them,” he said.

Harry lift one of his hands palm up to feel the ring. “Let me see,” he said and Draco placed the chosen band that would be his on his mate’s palm. Harry smiled, his mate made a good choice. He was also smiling knowing that the ring in his hand was the one that Draco wanted him to place on his finger.

Harry lifted his mate’s left hand, kissed the empty ring finger and then slipped on the ring. He looked towards his mate and said, “With this ring, I thee wed.”

Draco had tears in his eyes, but also had a beautiful smile on his face. He repeated the actions that Harry had done and managed to choke out, “With this ring, I thee wed.” Sniffling with sentimentality, he was tugged towards his mate and kissed soundly. Then he was tucked into him and just held.

Dudley was witness to the moment and he even had tears in his eyes, although he was too manly to let them fall, he brushed them away and waited them out. Draco had fallen asleep again, lulled by the proximity of his mate.

“Duds?” Harry asked, wondering if his cousin was still in the room.

“Yeah,” he whispered.

“Did you have any plans for today?”

“Not really. I tried to go shopping yesterday, but I didn’t know what to look for or what would look good on me. So I thought that today we could go with Drake. He does have the better taste. He also said that you could spell my storage unit against theft and damage. I bought the same type of furniture that Drake has in his trunk and I would like for them to last until the time comes for me to use them.”

“No problem. It’s probably a good idea to get out today and get used to traveling in a crowded area. Plus I have to make sure that you’re both comfortable with me and my cane,” Harry said.

Draco snorted and said, “Why would we need to get used to you and your cane? We’re fine and if any others make comments, well it’ll just be because their jealous of our good looks. Honestly we could pass for those models I’ve in the mags on the stands.”

Harry chuckled, but Dudley caught something that Draco missed in Harry’s original response and asked, “Today?”
Harry blinked and ducked his head, “Yeah, tomorrow I have to pass on some information to Draco in a magical way and then he has to take over the care of his familiar. We’ll need to visit the butchers for fresh meat and the grocers for fresh fruits. It will need them.”

Draco sat up, “You have my familiar?”

“Yes, but it hasn’t hatched and won’t until you get the information needed and perhaps a few other ritual steps.” Harry explained.

“Oh, well that’s all right then. How about we leave in an hour’s time? That way we have enough time to spell Dudley’s storage and shop, shop, shop.”

The boys chuckled at the blonde’s antics, but if there was one thing that Harry had long since been aware of and that Dudley had come to learn, was that Draco loved shopping. What Dudley knew, but Harry didn’t was that Draco had taken to the muggle world shopping centres like a terror. He had to go in every store and see everything. It would take hours just to tear him away to go to the next shop or centre.

-----------------------------

August 21

Harry had successfully exchanged the knowledge that Antiok wanted to pass on to his seed, with his mate. Draco had to do a small ritual cleansing and then cut his palms before removing the seed from its protective container.

Harry had re-sealed the container and stored it in his ingredient cabinet. He would eventually be in need another cabinet soon, but for the time being it would do. He chose to save the blood that had contained the seed. In fact Harry was hoping that Draco would allow him to keep the shell to.

Draco then had to hold onto the seed until it hatched. The seed was cradled and held for hours. His mate was allowed to assist in relieving the ache in his muscles, but he wasn’t allowed to handle the seed after it had passed hands. Eventually the little creature cracked his shell and began to squall like an infant.

Harry was allowed to keep the shell, as it was highly unlikely that such would ever been seen again.

The familiar was a miniature dragon that would grow no larger then a Shetland pony. Draco was proud that this creature had chosen to be his familiar. They fed it and it fell asleep. When it woke up again, hungry they fed it some more, but then Draco initiated the exchange required, passing on the knowledge that Antiok wanted the little dragon to have.

All through that day they spent it feeding the little guy and sleeping in between those feedings. It was a fairly uneventful day.

-----------------------------

August 22

Dudley knew that they were all exhausted from the day before and knew that they would eventually need more food for Draco’s familiar.
He left them a note, telling them that he stepped out for more meat and fruit for the little guy. He was pleased to have actually seen a dragon in his lifetime. He hoped that he would be able to visit them sometime in the future, maybe to see some other creatures that only lived in the fantasies of muggle literature.

When he came back though, he was surprised to see nine *Little People* in front of the door to their suite. It looked like they were trying to figure out how to get in. It didn’t occur to them to knock. As Dudley got closer he noticed that they were not *Little People* from the muggle world, but actually goblins. ‘What on Earth are they doing here?’ He thought, ‘Oh… Guess I might as well let them in. It’s obvious that they want to see Harry.’

Walking up to them cautiously, as five of the nine looked like they were dressed for battle. He approached them and said, “Hello gentle beings. Are you here to see Harry Potter?”

The leader stepped forward, looking at the muggle up and down. “Yes, we are. Could you let him know that we are here?”

“Of course, allow me to open the door for you,” he slipped in the cardkey and they all watch as it beeped with a green light and the door unlocked. Turning the handle he stepped aside and let them enter.

Two of the armed guards stayed on the outside with notice me not charms. Once the door was closed, two other guards remained in the entranceway. The fifth looked to be a leader or General and he took note of the surroundings before allowing the other four to walk into the room.

Meanwhile Dudley walked in and knocked on the boys’ door. “Come in,” he heard. “I’ll be just a moment,” he said to the goblins in the room. Walking into the boys’ room with his groceries he was pounced on by Draco.

“Thank the gods you went out for more food,” Draco said. “He’s still hungry.”

“That’s all right,” he looked around for Harry. “Where’s Harry?”

“I’m right here.” Harry said, stepping out of the loo. “Something wrong Dudley?”

“I’m not sure,” he said. “There are some goblins here to see you. Five look like warriors and four look like suits and they’re all here for you.”

Harry wondered what that was about, but then shrugged and told him to offer them up a seat and then drinks. Not tea, but the strongest alcohol that could be found here.

Dudley and Draco smirked at one another, they hadn’t told Harry yet that Dudley had invested in his own triple lock trunk. His third compartment had ten distilleries for the brewing of various alcohols. He had always been interested in the do-it-yourself kits that he had seen advertised.

He was currently testing different variations, mixing magical components with muggle. His second section contained the ventilation system that kept the fumes out of the distilling room. The first held the finished products.

He had five completed products that were very different from anything seen in the Wizarding and Muggle Worlds. They were waiting for Harry to come back and test the level of magics within them to see if they could be sold in the Wizarding market without causing harm. The boys had, of course, tested them for fun.
Dudley then thought why not offer those. The products were definitely stronger then anything that he could offer from the Muggle World. So when he returned to the living room he said, “Gentle beings, please take a seat. Harry will be out shortly and I have been instructed to offer you a drink. Is that acceptable?”

The goblins were shocked that this muggle was polite and therefore agreed on the drinks, silently hoping that it wasn’t some muggle swill that they had to choke down in politeness. The leader said, “It is acceptable. Thank you.” They all sat down and waited while Dudley entered his room and retrieved the five finished products.

Luckily Draco had obtained the proper tools for him in order to be able distill magically, as well as the bottling magics he needed, because there was no way Dudley would be able to produce as much as he had in the short time he had. He wanted to finish the processes and use the remaining ingredients, before his last school year began.

Proceeds from the sale of those would give him a comfort cushion for his future finances. Besides he liked brewing this way because the little magics that he did possess helped to run the machines. Draco showed him how compensate for the rest.

Dudley picked up the five different bottles and then made a decision to inform the goblins that these were new products that had never been brought to market. He made sure to bring out his notebook to record their reactions, just in case.

Bottles in hand, he returned to the living room and placed the bottles on the table. Going to the bar area he then brought forward all the shot glasses that he could find and set them on the table.

The goblins were staring at the bottles, knowing that they had never seen these before. Two were a dark burgundy, one was a pale orange, one was clear like water and the last was a golden yellow with white sparkles floating in it.

“I feel that I must inform you that these products have never been marketed. They have been tested and were found to be too strong for muggles. Wizards should only drink them with shot glasses and only filled to these specific amounts,” he explained. He then showed them which ones needed to be filled where for wizards and then clearly said, “I have not tested these in any other mixes or for any other beings and I am not sure what the reactions would be to any of you. However, they are the strongest drinks that I can offer.”

The goblins looked in wonder at this youth. He knew that the drinks were strong and how much to serve a pure sample, no mixing, to a human wizard. Goblins never had a problem with human drink before, but conceded that the varying amounts, which were from three quarters to a quarter of a shot glass full, had them curious about the strength of these drinks.

Harry walked in and sat down, as the goblins were debating on whether to test the drinks, when the General said, “I will do it and so will Negik.” He said pointing to one of the goblins guarding the door. “Negik, your palate is younger then mine, we will compare.”

“Sir,” Dudley said. “May I take notes of your reactions and impressions?”

“Whatever,” he grunted. He set up a second row of shots filled just like the first. Both goblins then took the matching glasses of a burgundy about three quarters full and gulped the first one down. “Weak,” the general said.

Negik on the other hand said, “Passable, his palate is jaded.”
On the next burgundy they both turned away from the table and spit it out. They shook their heads. That one was not for goblins. Mouth cleaning spells without flavour allowed them to really taste the alcohol and not allow the previous taste to override a new one.

Next was the pale orange in a half full shot glass. They took it and swallowed, nothing happened. Then it hit them, both goblins were hit with an alcoholic dizziness that had the room spinning for them and forced them to sit down or fall over. “Whoa,” Negik said. “Good one.”

“Yep,” the general agreed. One of the other goblins performed a Goblin sobering spell on them. “There was next to no taste to it and it went down like water, but it hit our systems forcibly.”

They tried the clear one, which was stronger then moonshine, but they didn’t like it. Then they tried the final one, the gold one with the white sparkles in it.

It was the strongest of them all for a muggle and a wizard. The shot glasses were only filled to about a quarter of the glass. Dudley would have made it less, but then he and Draco had had a quarter, only to pass out and wake up the next day. No headache though, but also no memory of anything stupid that they might have done. Draco cast a memory spell in the trunk and confirmed that they had only passed out and slept.

Gulping down the last drink Negik and the goblin General felt it hit their tongue like ice and then burn down their throats. They waited like the other times to see if there was a side effect and then it hit. They expelled frosty air, but the taste was different a spicy cinnamon mixed with clove.

That’s what Negik said, but the General said that he tasted something else, something more to his tastes which was like the Dragonfire Brandy that he had tasted only once in his life. This drink was, more then passable, it was acceptable.

This particular drink was strong and it was also one that the goblins could savor. The bonus was that for some reason it turned into something strong that the goblins liked, but more importantly the flavours changed according to the goblin drinking it.

A couple of the suits, one of which was Griphook, mentioned to Harry that his cousin could sell that one and the pale orange one for a very healthy profit in the goblin market, after it had been thoroughly tested of course.

Harry looked toward Dudley and said that they would discuss it later. Dudley just nodded and removed the other bottles and the used glasses. He left the last bottle and clean glasses for the others to use. It wouldn’t do for the goblins to be falling down drunk, if he left behind the pale orange one.

Harry waited until all the goblins had been served with a drink and then they began to explain the reason that they were here. First however, Griphook handed over a pouch of coins to Harry. “You were right lad. You won that bet. They were courteous and polite.”

Harry laughed, “Thank you my friend. Now what is going on, could I not have met you all at Gringott’s?”

“First let me introduce my colleagues. There is General Knokthorn in charge of our goblin armies, Sir Gronk in charge of the Instructional Records and Sir Gobknok head of Gringotts Bank.” Griphook explained, as Draco walked in and sat down next to his mate.

The goblins were staring at the sleeping creature in his arms. The tail was long and wrapped around Draco’s arm and the rest was cradled in his arms. It looked like a baby dragon, but it wasn’t like any dragon that they had ever seen. It was a pale purple with a slightly silver belly, very tiny claws, six
super short legs and a very long body. It had tiny silvery purple wings on its back and a tiny pearl like nub on its forehead.

“My turn,” Harry said. “This is Draco Severus Potter my bonded life-mate, the creature in his arms is his familiar and that is my muggle-squib cousin Dudley Dursley. Now I have a question, Instructional Records?”

Sir Gobknok took over and said, “Allow me to give you a bit of history that you may not know. Since it is about the time of the Founders and how they actually ran the school.” He went on to fully explain the entity that was Hogwarts and the relationship it used to have with the founders. He told them that in the past there were four deputies, which were also the Heads of House, plus one Headmaster or Headmistress.

He then went into great length and detail on the courses that the school used to have and how they had all, but disappeared. He brought forward statistics from the other magical schools around the world and showed how far behind Hogwarts was in their curriculum, but that the potential for growth was there.

Then, after all of that, the goblins produced a large parchment with the details of the Founders Law. They watched as Harry read the law line by line and they knew that changes would soon be taking place at the school. Then they produced the contract that Hogwarts wanted signed, which is when Harry fully realized the implications.

“ME!” He exclaimed; his voice slightly cracking. “The school chose me?”

“Wow, that’s wonderful love. Think of all the changes you could make and the Ministry won’t be able to say a word,” Draco said, without a hint of jealousy. He certainly didn’t want to run the school, but he was sure that he could present ideas to Harry and they would be considered.

“But how do you know…how would the school know that I wouldn’t abuse the position?”

“Harry,” Draco said. “You wouldn’t. It’s just not in you. I may not have shown it, but I have observed you and I have never once seen you abuse your fame. You could have, but you never did. So why do you think that you’d abuse the Headmaster position. You’ve certainly had an example of what not to do.

Besides, if you take over now, the changes you make will increase the protection in the school for all of the students this year. You will also be able to correct everything that has gone wrong, by keeping the Ministry away and kicking the Board out on their collective asses.”

“Draco, love, you do realize that if I sign on it’s for four years, plus an additional four if the school decides extend it. That’s eight years before we could ever really leave the school.”

“Yes, but then we are long lived creatures. Eight years will be nothing. You’ll be able to know that things will be running smoothly. Plus, you can set up special defenses against the Dark Lord and his goons. I know that you want a chance to prepare for that battle and I know that you know things need to change at that school. What a better way than this.

Besides you’ll be able to get special dispensation from the Headmaster to miss your classes and pursue independent study in order to prepare for any battle or war with the Moldering Man and his crew. As a bonus, you do have a beautiful set of Slytherin eyes in your classes to see how the students are accepting of the changes.”

Harry looked at his mate ruefully and said, “You really want me to do this don’t you?” He chuckled
when Draco admitted that it was power and that he was fully confident that Harry would listen to the school’s requests. “All right, I’ll admit that this is too good to be true, but that it is not something that I can turn down on a whim or through weak protestations of ‘but I shouldn’ts’, and ‘I’m not qualifieds’. If this is a trick...”

The goblins shook their heads and said no that it wasn’t. Harry signed the papers and once they were all signed, copies were made for all parties and filed accordingly. “By the way what happened to Dumbledore?” He asked. Then he received the story about how the school sent him packing, they were all laughing.

Once everyone settled down, Harry turned back to face one of the goblins and asked again, “Instructional Records?”

Sir Gronk took over this time, explaining about the Department of Instructional Records. How the guilds and potential teachers aides, assistants and replacements were kept on an availability list that they could be called in to assist the professors or teach new courses. It was also how they kept track of ineffective Professors at the school and listed potential replacements.

They had all been vetted by the goblins and this would shake the school, however if Harry wanted to make changes to this school year, he would have to so quickly. There were funds that he could access from the Founders vaults and in fact several portraits of the Founders were stored in these vaults after there had been some conflicts. They could be returned to the school to provide guidance to the young, new and powerful Headmaster.

Harry excused himself for a moment, went into his room, picked up Dauphin for moral support, hissing some of his reasons for the nervousness that she had felt and picking up a new Journal, his special ink and pen. (...Congratulations...) she hissed.

(...I’m still nervous, but I believe that I can do this with love and support from Draco and my family...) he hissed back at her walking to the others.

(...Don’t worry, you are not a bad man and you can always consult with Uluru or pray to the Brothers for guidance...) she hissed.

He settled back in the seat that he had vacated and hissed, (...You are wise my friend now let me finish this...)

(...She’s right Harry...) Draco spoke to him, hissing, not realizing that he was now speaking Parseltongue.

“I agree with her too,” Dudley said.

Startled Harry looked at Dudley and then Draco. “You both understood what we were saying?”

“Well, of course Harry,” Draco said. “You were speaking English.”

Harry chuckled and said, “No I wasn’t, just ask our guests. Dudley spoke English, but you spoke back to me in Parseltongue.”

Draco and Dudley were confused, but Dauphin decided to pipe in and distract them while her friend was occupied with the goblins. She told Draco about the Brothers’ gifts of immunity and languages and who the Brothers actually were. Although he didn’t receive as many languages as Harry, she did mention that he was given another gift to be revealed at a later date.

Both of them tested Dudley and found that he could only understand Parseltongue, not speak it.
Something that he didn’t mind, since Draco obviously couldn’t tell the difference when it was spoken and that was not something that Dudley needed to happen in the muggle world.

Harry made several notes in his journal about the potential courses that could be added and who the assistants, journeymen or teachers for them could be. He was pleased that the goblins had a historian ready to take over the classes for History of Magic, providing that accommodations could be made for his special needs. He was a vampire, so having lived through some of the history he had a better perspective on the whole issue.

He would now have to contact all of the professors currently working at Hogwarts and determine whether, if they remained, would they be for or against the changes. Still the boys’ summer plans had just been cut short. However, Dudley asked if he could come along, as a treat to see this infamous school.

Harry, Draco and Dudley made their plans and then with the assistance of the goblins were given port-keys directly to the school for the next day.

Harry said he would keep in touch. He knew that the goblins wanted a safe place to teach their young and there was an idea in progress to diminish racial prejudices between the races.

----------------------------------

August 23

The boys arrived at Hogwarts and since she was so pleased that Harry accepted, she quickly explained what she had been doing. She can control most things and was also an aide herself in the time of the Founders.

She guided them to the Founders quarters and tower, allowing them to choose their suites. Draco wanted the Slytherin ones and Harry agreed. The boys let Dudley decide his own, in which he chose the Hufflepuff one and settled in.

There wasn’t much furniture in the place as it had been emptied over time, but Harry knew that the time was right to visit the old Headquarters and pick up some furniture from there. He also thought of getting the same sofa and chairs like Draco had in his wizard trunk to occupy the common room of the suite. He didn’t want Draco to use his and he figured that since they were really comfortable why not get more of the same.

Before leaving Hogwarts they informed her of a few of their plans and instructed her to get the teachers back to school within the next two days, as there will be a revision of duties. A meeting needed to be held with them in order to rush a change in the requirements for uniforms and book lists, especially if new courses were to be added on short notice. A meeting will also need to be held with them before bringing the assistants and journeyman.

As Headmaster, Harry now had control of the wards and was able to apparate them directly to no. 12 Grimmauld Place through them. He called Hedwig to the Weasley twins telling them that they were on their way. Draco used his insta-mail box to send massages to Professor Lupin and to his Godfather, to meet the boys there.

They were going to divvy up the furniture, as soon as they arrived.

Weasley twins greeted them. “Harry, welcome back...” Fred said.
“It’s about time you showed up...,” continued George.

“Do you know....”

"What happened?....”

“We were moved from....”

“That tiny closet room.....”

“Into the master suite....”

“Not only that, but....”

“Did you know that....”

“We inherited this house from Sirius,” they finished together.

Harry laughed, “I missed you guys. Yes I knew that you inherited. We’re just here to divy the furniture.”

The twins looked at each other and then turned back to look at Harry. “What furniture mate?”

“We can’t even conjure anything long enough to sit down,” George complained.

“Really,” Harry said. “Let me just see what is going on, then.” He closed his eyes and sent out a magical echo to see what could be affecting the house and their conjurations. He laughed out loud when he detected a very special house-elf signature. He just couldn’t stop laughing. It was too good. Dobby had cursed the areas where the Order members congregated with the two exceptions being Professor Snape and Remus Lupin.

“He’s cracked,” George said.

“He’s lost it,” said Fred.

“My goofy mate,” Draco sighed. “Quit that and tell us what's wrong with the house.” That's when the twins noticed the two extra individuals that had tagged along with Harry.

“Malfoy!!” They both exclaimed and then they turned to the other youth with them. “And Duddy dinkens, have we got something for you. What a minute, what happened to the rest of you?”

“I lost weight and I no longer have much of a sweet tooth. Sorry guys, but I don’t want anything from you. Harry’s warned me off,” Dudley said.

They then turned to Draco, “So Malfoy, would you be interested in our new products?”

“That’s Potter to you two chuckle heads and no I’m not interested in being your guinea pig either,” he said.

Harry was still chuckling on and off, but was now seated on the floor from the exhaustion that came with laughing too much, when the twins turned to him and said, “Bad form Harry! You married the ferret and didn’t tell us.”

He stood up suddenly, immediately sober and said, “Do not insult my mate.” His eyes darkened and began to glow with a hunter's light. His nails and teeth seemed to gleam with deadly intent, showing the twins that he had changed more then they knew. He was wondering whether to uncase his wings
and attack when a sneering voice spoke to him.

“Still can’t control your temper Mr. Potter,” a voice of darkened silk, shattering Harry’s anger.

“I can control my temper just fine, but I will stand for no insult against Draco. Is that clear?” He turned in the directions of the twins.

They were nodding their heads in agreement, not knowing that Harry couldn’t see. Draco then said, “They’re agreeing to it, Harry.”

“Oh,” he said, deflating a bit more. “Well that’s good. I’m sorry guys, but there was no ceremony.”

“Well, Love,” Draco began. “If they want to see the exchange of our rings, perhaps Dudley could submit his memory? Duds?”

Dudley thought about it, smiling as he remembered the sappy little scene. “Sure, I can share it, but you have to tell me whether it’s gonna hurt or not. If it’s going to be painful, then I don’t think so.”

“Don’t worry Dudley,” Harry said. “I can take it from you. It’s just like copying a recording, but without anything being lost in the copy. You’ll just have to concentrate on the memory so that I can locate it. We’ll wait to do that a bit later. I guess if Professor Snape is here, then Moony is here too?”

“He’s standing right next to me Mr. Potter, what are you blind?” Snape said in a condescending tone.

“Yes,” he replied blandly.

Remus moved in close to look at all of the changes in his godson. Then he looked closely at the unfocused eyes. “He’s telling the truth.” Harry reached out to his godfather and pulled him into welcoming hug.

“I missed you Moony,” Harry murmured into the strong shoulder that he leaned against, pulling back a bit he then said, “Don’t worry I’ve learned to adjust. If I hadn’t, I would never have found out who was responsible for the conjuration problem in here.”

“You know who did it?” The twins asked. “Please tell us who.”

“In a moment,” Harry said. He walked up to his mate that was currently being glared at by his own godfather. He took Draco’s hand and guided him towards Remus and said, “Remus, I’d like to introduce to you my love and bonded life-mate, Draco Severus Potter.”

Remus smiled gently and held out his hand for Draco to take, “Welcome to the family. It’s a pleasure to finally see you. It seems that you gave us the slip, back on the fifteenth.”

Draco beamed at Remus, “Thank you. It was easy with Harry’s charm. You do remember Dudley, don’t you? He helped me out a great deal.”

“Draco,” Snape snapped out. Draco was startled. Then he walked over to his godfather, looked down at the ground, but realizing that his godfather might have been worried about him. He decided then that he was proud of his decisions and boldly looked his godfather in the eye.

Severus noticed all of the changes that occurred in his godson, but then startled nearly everyone by pulling him into a hug and holding on, saying softly, “I was worried, my little Dragon.”

Draco’s smile was hidden in the dark folds of cloth wrapped around him. “I know,” he whispered, wrapping his own arms around his godfather. “I’m sorry I never wrote to you, but I was...”
“I’m just glad that you are well, safe and free. Now let me see the mark,” his godfather said. Draco stood tall and moved his braided hair off the side of his neck. Snape didn’t touch it, but knew it for what it was. It was a marking, specific to the mating with one of creature blood. “Are there more?”

“There are, but you’ll not see them,” Harry said. He walked up to stand next to his mate, taking a hand in his own. “They are private and the only way for you to see them is for you to become his primary healer.”

“Harry,” Draco began. “I don’t…”

“He has the training, Love,” Harry said. “It is his choice and yours, but if you choose him then you will never be seen by any meddling infirmary medi-witch.”

“Uncle Sev,” Draco said. “I would be honoured.”

Severus gave a very small grin to his godson and said. ”All right then, but I insist that you have a backup healer, in case I am unavailable. You’ll show me the marks later when I examine you. I’ll need to begin keeping records.” He was hugged by his godson, once more and then was released quickly.

“Uncle Sev, I would like to introduce you to my love and bonded life-mate, Harold Jamison Potter.” Harry paused a moment and held out his hand and waited for the Professor to take it. Snape looked at the earnest face of his godson and could not deny him. He took hold of Harry’s hand in a firm, yet welcoming grip.

“Welcome to the family Mr. Potter,” he said.

“Maybe you should consider calling me Harry. After all, Draco’s last name is Potter, too.”

“We’ll, see,” he said, not committing to anything.

“Well, now that everyone has been introduced…” Fred started.

“And now that everyone has had a chance to get all huggy…” George continued.

“Not that we got any…”

“But we didn’t want any either…”

“Could Harry finally…”

“Tell us who’s responsible…”

“For the lack of furniture in here…”

“And for the reason why…”

“No one could conjure and keep their own,” they finished.

Harry grinned and then asked a few pointed questions first, “Was there a major cleaning or overhaul done in here recently? Were any house-elves involved?”

The twins answered that they didn’t know, but the Draco noticed his godfather’s twitching mouth and Remus’ own grin. “Uncle Sev?… Professor Lupin?”

The boys turned their attentions to the two professors and suddenly Severus let out a very small snort
like chuckle and Remus broke down laughing.

Severus began explaining, “Well on the fifteenth, when you two left the Dursleys you left behind something for me and Lupin. We followed the recommendation to go to Gringotts, where we witnessed the Wills of the Potters and Black.”

“My reading only involved a few properties,” Remus said. “Severus’ on the other hand had a positively Marauder aspect to it.”

“That’s correct,” Severus continued, nodding in agreement to Lupin’s explanation. “Sirius Black had given me the key to removing the unwanted portraits from the walls, but after I had done that the walls were in such a sad state that…”

“He decided a new coat of paint would be in order,” Remus continued, pointing to Professor Snape. “It was amazing how much the house-elves could do in such a short time. We called in one that we knew would help us out, just because we’re associated to Harry.”

“That’s correct. He was able to bring in 15 elves from the school. They were a tad bored, due to the lack of something to do in summer.”

“Severus also suggested that a few rooms needed particular colour schemes to reflect the current users of those rooms.”

“We left the rest of the rooms up to their good tastes of course, however I believe it was Malfoy’s former elf,” Severus always enjoyed saying that, “that had the pleasure of painting those specific rooms.”

“We did not ask him to move you guys though,” Remus said to the twins. “But I liked that it had been done.”

“Of course the resulting arguments about it were an entertainment bonus,” replied Severus.

Harry, Draco, and the twins were opened mouth watching and listening to the two Professors talk with such familiarity just like the twins, nearly finishing each other’s sentences. Exchanging a few looks amongst themselves, they laughed. Dudley just smiled knowing that he was missing some of the exchange, but was glad to be included in the humour.

Harry and Draco insisted on being told about the colour schemes in the rooms, laughing when they found out about them.

“Now that everyone has been caught up to date, perhaps you would be so kind, Harry, to inform us, as to who is responsible for the conjuration problems in this house,” Professor Snape asked, miffed that it was taking so long to get that particular answer.

The twins were patience themselves, they knew that eventually Harry would spill, but they also knew that they were not going to let him leave Grimmauld Place without telling.

“Of course, Professor,” Harry said, pausing for effect. “It was Dobby.” Knowing that once he said the house-elf’s name the funny little creature would appear before him.

In popped the mischief maker himself, all excited and saying, “The Great Harry Potter Sir has asked for Dobby?”

Harry grinned at the little creature and said, “I believe that I owe you some socks, don’t I?”
Dobby looked at everyone around him and grinned back at Harry, saying “Yes sir, that’d be three pairs.”

“Well done,” Harry said. “I did think that one of the Professors would have figured it out by now, but they didn’t.”

“Harry,” Remus asked. “Did you set this up?”

Harry just grinned at them. Waiting for them to come to their own conclusions and once they did they realized that Harry had indeed set it all up.

Severus looked at the youth and Dobby and then he asked, “The 15 bored house-elves?”

Harry just continued to smile. He nodded at Dobby for him to tell the tale. It seems that Harry knew that Dobby would be the one called upon by either Professor in order to help fix up the house, after the foul portraits had removed. Harry also knew that the furniture would pack itself away after the Will had been read, because Sirius had said as much during Harry’s own reading of it.

So, he organized the house-elves from his other estates to be available and set up the prank on the Order of the Phoenix, preventing them from being able to conjure any suitable seating arrangements, tables, etc… The exceptions of course being the ones that called on Dobby for assistance.

They had bet on socks because Dobby loved them and Harry didn’t care if he received more of them. He was so used to not getting any, that Dobby’s gift of them during the winter holidays were right up there with Molly’s jumpers. Harry loved them because they were made just for him.

The professors were shocked at the little house-elf and the twins loved it. It was a perfect prank, because no one suspected that a House-elf would ever be capable of doing that. Only Harry would think to gain the assistance of a House-elf for such a thing.

“Thank you Dobby,” Harry said. “I think that you can release the spell. Here is your payment.” He handed Dobby three pairs of very gaudy mismatched socks, in varying colours and patterns.

Dobby nodded and said, “Anything for the Greater Harry Potter Sir.” Popping out, once he lifted the spell, returning to his duties at Hogwarts. The school had asked him to help Trelawny pack her belongings and only her belongings. She was a tricky witch trying to pack some of the crystal balls that belonged to the school.

“Well, now we know,” the twins said. “I wonder if he was the one to move us into the Master Suite?” One of them asked.

“I believe so,” Remus said.

“I told him that you two would inherit the place,” Harry explained.

“Brilliant,” they said. “What about the furniture?”

Remus told them the contents of Sirius’ Will with regards to the furniture and how he wanted them distributed.

“We’re here now for them,” Draco said. “We have a new place that we’re living in and it’s pretty bare at the moment. So coming here and following the bequest was the best idea we could think of before having to go out and actually purchase some.”

Dudley nodded in agreement. “Harry also said that he believed Headquarters would no longer be
used for the Order after certain events had occurred and said that it would perhaps be a good time to
seek out the hidden rooms of this house for the remaining books belonging to Professor Snape.”

Snape was surprised, but secretly pleased that Harry had considered helping him. “The furniture is
stored in the Ballroom, isn’t it?” Remus asked.

Harry nodded and then explained about the roaming door. The twins were tickled to find out about
that. Harry also explained that once everything from the bequest had been taken care in regards to
Grimmauld Place the twins would then know all of its secrets.

The twins grinned and decided to help the gentlemen find everything that they wanted. They did
admit to one another that with the empty rooms they were able to decide how they wanted to fill
them. They did not however tell their mother where they were living. Their father had a small inkling
about where they were, but refused to be involved in nosing about in their private business.

It took the greater part of the day to locate the hidden cubbies and rooms and to separate the
furniture.

There was a very heated and amusing argument between Harry and Professor Snape regarding
several potions armoires that were available, but they could only be opened with Parseltongue
passwords. Such things would have been useless to Professor Snape and that is what Harry pointed
out.

The Professor then argued that they would be useless for someone who was just mediocre in Potions.
Harry turned that back at him, saying that the Professor couldn’t be a good judge of that since he was
prejudice against anyone not in Slytherin and worse against the bloody Boy-Who-Lived.

Harry then said if the Professor really needed another ingredients storage unit then he could have
Harry’s after he transferred his ingredients out of it. The Professor said that he would have to wait
and see what it looked like first. He was thinking that he would probably accept anyway, those
cabinets could get expensive.

Professor Snape then wanted to know whether there were any rare ingredients within these ones, but
Harry was adamant on not opening them, in case there had been spillages when the furniture moved.
He did promise that once they were opened any ingredients that he had excess of, he would give
them over to the Professor. The professor did not want to accept that claiming that Harry would
probably want to keep the rarer ingredients, to which Harry agreed, causing the Professor to lose
some of his steam and sputter.

There were other minor conflicts regarding some wardrobes and desks, but in the end everyone was
nearly satisfied with everything that they had chosen to take. Professor Snape was still grumbling
about the cabinets and possibly rare ingredients that Harry was sure to butcher in an attempt to make
passable potion. But the remaining furniture was given to the twins to do with as they pleased.

Everyone returned to their homes exhausted from the moving, shrinking, unshrinking, setting up and
of course, the arguments, which Harry knew full well that he had one day’s grace before confronting
the rest of the Professors on the twenty-fifth.

-----------------------------------

TBC...
Chapter Twelve

August 24

The boys spent most of the day within the Founders’ Tower and chambers. There were many things to think about and to present to the Heads of House.

Harry and the boys also went to review the contents of the Founders’ vaults and were surprised that many of the books stored there were what was used for teaching in their times. Since the goblins were planning to bring back the larger portraits of the Founders, Harry had decided to bring with him a set that was just a general poster size for their main room. He felt that he would need their assistance to come up with a set of mandatory courses for each year to attend.

There were new classes that Harry wanted to add to the curriculum, due to the fact that some students had inconsistent training or education, namely the so-called ‘Purebloods’. They did not attend school on a regular basis and not all of them could afford tutors, so their scholastic discipline was somewhat lacking.

The teachers often complained about the poor writing, comprehension and deductions skills. Not to mention a serious lack in researching and how to do most of the basic things, like properly structuring an essay or even proper writing skills.

Dudley was a great help with explaining to the Founders the differences in the types of courses that he started with when he was eleven, compared to the increased options, year after year. Some future courses could only be taken if he had taken an introductory course in one of his previous years.

Harry and Draco felt that the first and second years, who are the only ones to have a set of mandatory courses prior to having a choice in their third year, were not being given the opportunity early on to make decisions. It was as though the Ministry, the Board of Governors, the Professors and previous Headmasters did not trust that the young could make informed decisions.

Harry wanted to change that. There would still be mandatory courses, but they were going to be
changed into an Introductory Level. The levels he wanted were Introductory, Intermediate, General, and for a select few, there would Advanced Level selections available.

All Introductory courses could be taken during any year however the first and second year students will still have to have the basic set of mandatory classes. Classes were not going to be doubled until their third year.

The boys with help of Hogwarts and the Founders had made the necessary changes to the mandatory courses for each year with some added options. All of which, Harry would be presenting to the Heads of House on the following day.

--------------------------------------------------

**First & Second Year Courses: “Introductory” Levels I & II**

*Introductory English* - incorporating, reading, effective writing (essays, etc...) and comprehension skills.

*Introductory Mathematics* - improve their numerical understanding and general calculating skills, which will, effectively help with several other areas of spellworks and potions.

*Introductory Charms* - incorporating magical theory, learning normal everyday charms that assist to improve the quality of life, charm movements that help to improve body memory

*Introductory Transfiguration* - incorporating magical theory from a calculating point, learning normal everyday transfigurations to improve the quality of life and forming a solid base from which the future courses can be built upon

*Introductory Potions* - incorporating a ground work of understanding ingredients and ingredient interactions, as well as classroom safety, precautions and procedures to follow in potion making. The potions learned in these two years are not battle potions, but household and medical. Including, effective note taking for deductive testing and thesis works.

Also since Harry found one particular book in the Founders vaults, which was titled “*Simple Single Serving Potions*”, he added that to the book lists of the first and second years. This book was perfect for them in order to learn the basic steps to potion making. It used the least amount of mostly harmless ingredients. It also showed, at the end of the book, how to proportionately increase specific ingredients to make larger batches.

*Introductory History of Magic* - will incorporate basic geography, as per the new teacher’s request. Harry had maps and globes ordered and there were several sets of different books, Wizarding and Muggle that showed the differences in their histories, as well as where magic influenced muggle history or vice versa.

*Introductory Defense Against the Dark Arts* - now incorporates a physical fitness program with the learning of what the Dark Arts are and what measures can be taken for defense. For the first and second years, it was a class that would instruct each of them to know their limits and what they can do to protect themselves with or without magic.

*Introductory Herbology* - students learning plant properties, the differences between the Wizarding variety vs the docile muggle variety. Dangerous plants will be demonstrated only. Students will be learning the basics of managing a mini greenhouses and growing the plants they need for their potions. Poorly maintained plants will result in poor Potions.
Muggle Culture Studies - two classes per week, Mondays and Wednesdays for the wizard born, Fridays will be a combined class with the Wizarding Culture, in order for comparative study and debates.

Wizarding Culture Studies - two classes per week, Mondays and Wednesdays for the muggleborn, Fridays will be a combined class with the Muggle Studies, in order for comparative study and debates.

Optional Courses (only two permitted for first and second year): “Introductory” Levels I & II

All introductory level courses will be available to all students and should a first year student be ambitious and wish to take any “Introductory” level courses available to third years they can. It would only be after a three week trial and a fair evaluation will be made to ensure that the first year student can keep up with the third years, of course. If they can’t keep up, then they forfeit that time slot to a study period until the next term where they will be allowed to enter into a half year optional class.

Introduction to Music Studies - instrumentation and playing, only available instruments are strings, percussion and piano. Singing in the first year is reserved only under Professor Flitwick’s choral and incantation enunciation class.

Introduction to Arts - drawing, painting, sculpting and visual studies of the famous past masters and those not so master-like...

Introduction to Metallurgy - ground work for blacksmithing, welding, structural calculations, etc...

Introduction to Woodworking - ground work for carpenters, house builders, etc...

Introduction to Martial Arts - ground work for specialized training available in Karate, Tae Kwon Do & Ju-Jitsu

Introduction to Gemology - ground work for gem workers, jewelers, learning the different properties of a gem, how magic affects them and to what degree.

Introduction to Accounting - for those interested in learning to budget and how things are taxed in the muggle and wizarding world.

Introduction to Creative Writing - ground work for future writers, newspaper workers, etc...

---------------------------------

Third & Fourth Year Courses (four optional courses): “Intermediate” Levels III & IV

The third and fourth years will be counseled by the teachers or assistants in order to determine their future interests. Knowing that some of those interests may change in time, the counseling for third years will be more fluid and will help to determine the best course at the time. Fourth years will become settled into their studies for the future and will have a greater understanding of their own selves and what they truly want.

No double classes will be offered, but most the optional courses are permitted on a per semester basis, depending on the Ministry Level of the course, i.e.: any courses that have O.W.L.S. or N.E.W.T.S. assigned to them will be year long, like Care of Magical Creatures, Divination, Arithmancy, etc...

Any student having completed the previous level of “Introductory” course will be permitted to
continue onto the “Intermediate” levels. Therefore all levels of I & II must be completed prior to moving onto level III or IV.

*Intermediate Mathematics* - further study into geometry, algebra and calculus

*Intermediate Charms* - continuation of charms

*Intermediate Transfiguration* - continuation of transfiguration

*Intermediate Potions* - learning different potions, comparative studies on benign vs dangerous ingredients and how potions are affected by them, continuing the deductive testing and thesis reasoning

*Intermediate History of Magic* - Learning in depth the history of certain spells, Dark or Light, or how some light spells became Dark, as well as the history on the Ministry of Magic and a bit on the Laws, how they came to be and how some can or can not be changed.

*Intermediate Defense Against the Dark Arts* - physical regime to be followed, incorporating more practical studies and theory

*Intermediate Herbology* - students still maintain their own mini greenhouse, incorporating newer with the existing, learning the plant interactions and paying attention to the environmental needs of the plants. The students are still responsible for growing and maintaining these for their potions.

*Muggle Studies* - one class per week Tuesdays, for wizard born. Thursdays will be a combined class with the Wizarding Culture, for diversity debates pro and cons of each society.

*Wizarding Culture* - one class per week Tuesdays, for the muggle born. Thursdays will be a combined class with the Wizarding Culture, for diversity debates pro and cons of each society.

**Optional Courses (four, permitted for third & fourth years): “Introductory” I & II or “Intermediate” III & IV**

*Music Studies* - further study in chosen preference of musical studies

*Art* - further study in a preferred medium

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Metallurgy*

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Woodworking*

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Martial Arts*

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Gemology*

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Accounting*

*Introduction or Intermediate studies to Creative Writing*

*Introduction to Runes*

*Introduction to Arithmancy*

*Introduction to Divination*

*Introduction to Entrepreneurship* – will show basic business concerns and practices as a start-up
program, problem solving for beginner businesses, methods and managing, etc… for those that
dream of one day owning their own business.

Introduction to Care of Magical Creatures

---------------------------------

Fifth Years (five optional courses): “General” Level V

Fifth years will receive counseling on their potential career paths, the courses required for their future
studies and the grade requirements for College or University studies, if their paths go in that
direction.

The optional courses increase, due to the diversification of the options themselves. Example
Metallurgy, the students will be allowed to branch into pure Blacksmithing, Jewelry Crafting (arts
required) or Ferrier (specialized in Horse shoe making, Care of Magical Creatures required).
Carpentry can be branched out from cabinet making to creating blueprints for houses (math
required).

Students in these years have a better grasp of the courses they need for their future, so many will be
dropping their unnecessary or unwanted courses. However, they need pass their chosen O.W.L.S. in
order to continue forging for their chosen future. O.W.L.S are administered some mandatory
Ministry Courses. The students themselves can choose to attend whatever O.W.L.S they want.

Doubled classes may be offered, but the optional courses are still permitted on a per semester basis,
depending on the level of the optional course and the course itself.

Some “Intermediate” level course options are such that they are completed in one year and not on a
semester basis, as they will depend on the depth of the subject needed. These students will also have
the option to move into an “Intermediate” study of any optional course that they may have already
completed the “Introductory” level of.

---------------------------------

Sixth & Seventh Years (six optional courses): “General” Levels IX & IIX or Advanced “A”-
Classes or Specialty “S”-Classes

Sixth and seventh year students will receive in depth counseling on their potential career options. A
series tests will assist those that may have changed their minds and may help the students weed out
the interests that are hobby versus career making.

The sixth and seventh year courses will be available at a General Level, at an Advanced Level or a
Specialized Level, depending on the number of students that can attend an Advanced Level or
Special Level of instruction. Professors who’re planning to teach any Advanced or Specialty Levels
will need a minimum of five students. If there are not five, then the students can gain additional
instruction and studies after regular classes from tutors.

At the beginning of their schooling, in first year, the students will have eleven courses, but the course
times are going to be shorter and the students will be given less course work.

Now that the students have reached nearly final years the course intensity will increase and classes
will be significantly longer, based on the needs of the instructors and the courses themselves.

Double classes will be offered for the mandatory N.E.W.T. courses, but the optional courses that are
not N.E.W.T. based may also be doubled depending on the number of students present.
Advanced Level or Specialty Level optional courses are such that they are completed in one year and not on a semester basis, as they are more in depth. Therefore the total optional courses per year for sixth & seventh year students will be six. They will still have the choice of starting an “Introductory” level course, even though they are nearing the end of their schooling. It will help to ground their choice and possible develop potential hobbies.

The boys had discussed, debated, argued, with Hogwarts and Founders, to find a balance in the courses that they were going to offer. They had the list of teachers and aides ready.

Dudley and Draco wrote the above for the Heads of House to review the next day. It was for them to be prepared for changes to occur, effective immediately. Harry wrote to the Instructional Records of Gringotts and listed all of the teachers, journeyman, aides and assistants that he wanted. He also asked if they of any secretaries or receptionists that were available in order to assist the Heads of House in their administrative duties.

Harry also wrote to Gringotts Bank to find out the normal rate pay for all the teachers at Hogwarts and requested a comparison list from the other schools.

Sir Gronk was in his element. He dispatched owls here and there. There were many on the list of availability that were prepared to leave whatever position they had in order to be a part of this new system at Hogwarts.

The journeyman heard it first and the news spread like wildfire. There was new Headmaster and Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was having a course overhaul. They all planned to arrive on the next day and they all did not care which course they would be assisting or teaching in. It was Hogwarts and they would do anything for that school.

So would Harry and Draco. Once the decisions were made, Harry felt better about the changes he had planned. Draco was there with him and Dudley was helping out too.

At the end of the day, they all went to bed slightly exhausted from the previous day and from the debates they had today. Harry was nervous about the next day, but then he treated it like a Quidditch match. He’ll let his nerves take over later, much later.

August 25

It was nine in the morning, when all the Head of Hogwarts’ Houses met in the staff room. All of the regular professors were a little miffed at having to show up a couple of days earlier than planned. Normally they would work an extra two weeks at the end of term to get everything in order for the next one and only need about three days to get settled in at the school.

A couple of them were peeved to have found out that they were fired, especially Professor Trelawny. She never left for holidays so the new Headmaster had the school evict her, just like it had the previous Headmaster.

Unfortunately for the other Professors, the Headmaster demanded that they return to the school or forfeit their positions. This was highly unlike Headmaster Dumbledore, but with the political climate as it was they had no choice. Hogwarts was the most secure site that they had and they loved to teach. So now the Heads of House were all there waiting for Professor Dumbledore to show up. The
other professors and teachers were made to assemble in the Great Hall.

The Heads of House were therefore surprised when four goblins walked in, instead. They were carrying large frames, obviously belonging to portraits, but then the Heads of Houses heard a female voice directing the goblins to position the paintings on the walls just so.

Once the paintings were up, a scroll appeared in front of each Head of House, from which they were to read the contents before the paintings would even be uncovered. Cautiously they took up the papers, unrolled them and read the contents.

They were given an abridged version of the Founders Law and they were all astonished at the contents.

Professor Snape, Head of Slytherin was frowning, wondering how this would cut into his potions research and how this would affect his spying for the Order or any duties that the Dark Lord may request.

Professor Flitwick, Head of Ravenclaw, squeaked periodically at a line every now and then, not knowing where to begin to direct his thoughts.

Professor Sprout, Head of Hufflepuff was thoughtful and wondered about the scroll and its contents.

Professor McGonagall, Head of Gryffindor was nearly outraged at having to share her hard earned position as Deputy to the Headmaster, but then her thoughts turned towards all of the time that she had lost away from the transfiguration research that she loved.

Dumbledore had conned her into the position, making her feel that as a Gryffindor she should be the one to assist him. Now however, if she read this correctly, she would gain much more then just time.

“Does everyone in this room understand what the parchment implies?” The disembodied voice said.

The four Heads, all acknowledged it. It meant that they would be taking on more responsibilities, but that they would have a greater share in making decisions for the entirety of the school. The final decision will remain on the shoulders of the Headmaster, though. Still there was a lot of room for improvement.

The portraits were then unveiled. Low and behold there were the Founders. The professors had never seen any portraits of the Founders around the school, but here they were now. As goblins were the ones to have brought them in, it stood to reason that these paintings were stored at Gringotts Bank in a vault somewhere.

The Founders looked down at the current Heads of Houses and soon were speaking to them, answering what questions they could, with that female voice interjecting every once in a while. Finally when the Founders had outlined what their true intentions for the school had been, the Professors were surprised.

It would have been so nice to have all of those course options during their lifetime. Indeed the professors hoped that they could participate in some of them in the future, if new courses were going to be added to the curriculum.

Now they were asking themselves where Professor Dumbledore was, when Snape figured it out. “The disembodied is the School and Dumbledore is no longer Headmaster. Correct?” He addressed this question to the voice and the portraits.

“You owe me Ricky,” Salazar gloated. “I told you it would be a Slytherin that would figure it out.”
“Bah, stupid snake-speaker,” Godric grumped. “At least the Headmaster is a Gryffindor and don’t call me Ricky.”

“Really boys,” Rowena said.

Helga said, “Don’t tell them who it is. I want to see their shocked faces when he walks in.”

“Fine, fine,” Godric said.

Salazar nodded his agreement only too happy to have won the first bet. They had a few others on the go, but he did have the patience of a snake and could wait to see it all play out.

“Now that everyone has caught on. Are there any other questions?” Hogwarts asked.

McGonagall spoke up, “Is that all there is to this meeting, other than finding out about a new Headmaster? Surely there is more in order for all of the Professors to be requested to the school at this time.”

“There is,” said Hogwarts. “The new Headmaster wants the current Heads to review the booklists sent out to the first and second year students to ensure that the lists were accurate. It seems that he was able to view his own lists and compare it to that of another student in a different house, only to find that there was one book missing from his list. I had the house-elves get copies of all the first and second year lists from the student files.”

The lists were then popped onto the staff table, all shuffled so that the Heads did not just receive the ones from their houses, but a mix to be able to accurately compare.

Needless to say they were shocked at the little bit that they sorted through. Professor Flitwick told them to hold off on the rest and then preformed a charm that sorted the lists into two piles. One pile with all the books listed and one pile with the missing book. He sent another charm to separate the piles into the houses and there they found the problem.

Slytherin house received the complete book list. The other three houses received a half and half proportion, half getting the full list and half not.

Professor Snape was livid. It was a book that was required for his course and if most the students he taught had never seen it, much less read it, no wonder there were such problems in his classes. It made him look to favor the ones that knew what they were doing and punish those that didn’t know better because they didn’t have that book. Worse, if the muggleborns in the school had no knowledge of what might be required and only followed the lists, they were going to be left behind.

The book was called, “Comprehensive Potion Ingredients, Interactions and Brewing Safety”. The students who are failing or that have failed may not have, if they had this book on hand in the first place.

McGonagall was angry as well. She had charmed the pens to send out accurate lists and it looked like someone had tampered with them, secluding the muggleborns. The lists were standard for first and second years, so it never changed. It made her look very bad, as well.

“We need to send out list corrections, immediately,” she said.

“Well at least it will only be to half the students,” Professor Sprout said.

Hogwarts spoke up, saying, “Wrong. The entire student body will be receiving a completely new student list for the new courses that the Headmaster will be introducing. Also, because there will be a
change in the school uniforms for the entire student body. The Headmaster has already compensated the tailor, Mme. Maulkins for any student that will show up for a change to the ones that they had ordered. There are also some house-elves here that will help alter the school robes to fit the new standards.

These new standards are for the safety of the children, but also to accommodate the new courses that the Headmaster wants to implement. The added reason is that all students need to be prepared for battle. This school will defend itself, but we will not have students tripping over their uniforms to get to safety. Here are the new standards."

Hogwarts called up four images that shifted from the old uniforms to the new, showing the differences and their practicality.

The boys’ uniforms consisted of black muggle jeans or very dark brown leather or suede pants, spelled for durability. All tops consisted of dark brown or black coloured jumpers with their house colours in piping on the cuffs and collars. The undershirt was to be a thick, comfortable material and no ties because of its potential choking hazard. The robes were to vary in length from the mid-thigh to the knees only.

Houses colours would be on a scrolled runic edging around the collar and from the shoulder down to the cuff of the left sleeve. Runes were added for protection. There would be no shoes at the school for the time being. Solid dark boots with heating and cooling charms built in, were to be purchased and worn at all times. They were also to purchase 3 dark pairs sweatpants and sweatshirts, piping to be added to reflect houses.

The girl uniforms consisted of the same materials and colours as the boys, but to preserve femininity the ‘skirts’ were lengthened to mid-calf or the ankle and were made like skorts or bolero pants. Basically they were pants that could be masked as skirts and were highly comfortable.

The undershirts and jumpers were to be the same as the boys’. The robe length for a girl was to the knee or ankle length. Houses were differentiated in the same manner as the boys. They were also required to purchase boots, sweatpants and shirts like the boys.

Professors Sprout and McGonagall immediately saw the practicality for the girls’ uniforms. They wouldn’t be exposing themselves to the elements or to the boys’ scrutiny, but the sweatpants?

Professors Snape and Flitwick, saw the female practicality, but questioned the muggleness of the boys’ uniforms. Still they had to agree that the shorter robe length would prevent students from tripping on the hems.

All the Professors wondered whether they would have to dress in a similar fashion. They were curious about the sweats though and asked the school and Founders if they knew about them.

Hogwarts then said, “I was asked to clean up several of the larger school rooms that had never been used and to modify them into what the Headmaster called a gymnasium. The floors have a solid running track on the outside and a wooden floor on the inside with peculiar coloured markings. They look like barriers, but there are no spells on those.”

“He told us that the students needed more exercise and was going to introduce workout schedules and sports to get them into shape,” Godric said. “Personally I agreed. We trained our students to be physically fit in order to at least be able to dodge properly.”

“It is a shame that the courses this school has maintained are the ones that only require marginal interaction, at best.” Helga said, “I mean even I knew how to physically defend myself, should I lose
my wand.”

Salazar nodded, “I’ve heard that most of the exercises that these students get is from the distance they have to travel from class to class.”

The Founders were shaking there heads, despairing at how far their ideals had fallen. The Heads of House, themselves wondered why nothing had been done to correct these things in the past.

“How will this be corrected now?” Professor Flitwick asked.

The door to the staff room opened by the one person they had been waiting for. “Sorry, I’m late,” said the green-eyed Gryffindor. He sent his magic pulses around the room locating the Headmaster’s chair and realized that it was one that used to belong to Dumbledore. He frowned at it and then banished it away, conjuring one of his own in plump leather, it was infinitely more comfortable. Sitting down with his papers in front of him, he smiled at the Heads of House and waited for the explosion that he sure was going to happen.

“Potter what do you think your doing?” Snape demanded.

“This is not the place for you Mr. Potter, you’ll need to leave,” Professor McGonagall said.

“There’s no way that you are qualified for the position,” said Professor Sprout.

The only Head of House didn’t say anything right away, but paused and remembered the Founders Law that he had just read was Professor Flitwick. When he did finally speak, he caused all of the protestations to cease. “You were the one that the school selected, were you not, young Mr. Potter?”

“That is correct Professor Flitwick,” Harry replied. “Hogwarts has been keeping me up to date on the meeting, while I was previously occupied.”

“Occupied, doing what exactly?” Snape demanded.

Harry faced the professor and calmly said, “Greeting and settling the journeymen that would be taking over your first and second year classes. The new teachers, that have been hired to add more classes and diversity to our curriculum and the teachers’ aides that will be assigned to every Professor in this school.”

The Heads of House were gobsmacked. They were astonished and further astounded by the list that Harry had just handed out. “These are the added courses for this year. I have already contacted the bookstore in Hogsmeade to ensure that the additional course books would be readily available to the students, once they have decided on their extra curricular courses.

The only students that would really be affected by this newer curriculum are the first to fourth years. They will have the better chance to adjust and benefit from it. Unfortunately the fifth years will only be able to take advantage from some of the new courses, but the sixth and seventh years will be heavily dependent on the career counseling that they will be receiving prior to selecting their courses for the year.

I have made it mandatory that all the students take a one and a half hour course in physical education as part of their Defense Against the Dark Arts course. They need to be able to match the standard of education that the other magical schools have been turning out. This school has the room available and had the potential to compete in a world wide market, but after seeing the statistics on the low productivity from the adults that this school has turned out, I was sorely disappointed.”

He paused to take a sip of water that Dobby had just delivered, “Thank you Dobby.”
Surprisingly Dobby didn’t gush at him. He just said, “You’re welcome sir,” and popped away to his other tasks.

“Hagrid will be continuing his education and the expulsion against him is no longer effective. I provided the Board and Ministry ample evidence that they agreed to allow him this chance. He will be studying in the evenings with me, my mate and some other teacher who’re excellent with one on one teaching. Since I have been made the Headmaster of this school, I will no longer be formally attending classes, as I do not want preferential treatment from any of the Professors here.

In fact I would find that to be a conflict of interest. The Founders have graciously accepted to tutor me in the required courses. I will participate in some of the extra curricular classes and will show up for tests, but will probably be training with different experts, in different subjects, some of which may be offered at a later date, but at this time I will be testing the suitability of most courses.

I will be in the Great Hall for all meals, but I will be sitting with the other seventh years and I will not be announcing to the school that I am the Headmaster. At least not until the Dark Lord is no longer an issue or there is a pressing need to reassure the student body or their parents.

I want to protect the students and the students will learn to defend themselves, without me standing up and placating them with false platitudes. I will need the four of you to show a united front to all the students and the additional teaching staff. The fact that Headmaster Dumbledore is not here will cause a stir. The fact that another has been delegated Headmaster, but refuses to be seen or acknowledged will also cause some friction.

There is a battle or war headed in this direction and no child coming to this school should feel threatened or even be involved in this. We will have plans and have back up plans to our back up plans. They will be cared for and I do mean all of them.

If they request sanctuary from this school or from any of you, tell me and we will figure something out. They will not be made into spies or traitors, they will be saved.” He took another sip, wishing that he could see their faces. He knew that they hadn’t left yet and he knew that he was reaching them.

“I am aware that some of the students are already Marked, but I don’t know under which conditions they were Marked. I don’t know if they were forced or willing, but I do have something in mind that will monitor their activities in order to prevent any coercion of another being in this school. Everyone will have a monitor, including all the instructors and yourselves. This item will be handed out after the sorting.”

He held up a small two inch sphere and explained that once activated by tapping it with your wand or by picking it up, the sphere would levitate and either circle your head like a halo or remain stationary about three inches away at all times. He would be using this to communicate with the teachers and students.

It would also monitor everyone’s health and allow the medi-witch some advance knowledge, should a student suddenly her assistance. It would not interfere with any of the class studies and once everyone was used to it, it would cease to be a concern. It was not in any way, shape or form an invasion of privacy and it would certainly not allow anyone to peek at another’s activities during a private moment.

“I’m sure that the four of you need to think on everything that I have said here,” he said. “I need to know that I can count on all four of you. Please feel free to contact me after you’ve discussed these courses, the new curriculum and everything that I have presented. The Founders and Hogwarts can clarify some of these decisions and the statistics can be provided to you by Sir Gronk from the
Goblins Instructional Records Unit.”

He rose from his seat, leaving it there so that they would have a focus and remember that this was not a prank in any way shape or form. He even left them a copy of the contract that he signed for the position of Headmaster.

Hopefully, they could work through it.

Professor Snape said, “I need a strong drink in order to process everything that was just said. In fact, I think I need to get drunk because I could have just sworn that Harry Bloody Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, Gryffindor Martyr, is now in charge of this school and my salary.”

The others agreed and Accioed their favorites, beginning to debate, review, argue, consider, etc... Everything that was presented was gone over with a fine tooth comb, so to speak.

Harry had even left behind the sphere for them to test it as much as their hearts desired in order to prove his words were sincere. He had thought of almost everything that he could do, in the very short time he had and now it was just a matter for the Head of Houses to integrate everything that he had just presented and realize that they had no choice, but to agree.

---------------------------------

TBC...
August 26, a little while after the Big News

Harry returned to the staff room, just before the noon meal, to look in on his Deputies. He had Dudley and Draco with him, but the boys were shocked to discover that the professors were drunk and out of their gourds. This was not something that he had anticipated. It was not yet noon and all of the Heads of House were drunk.

Harry chuckled, “I did not think that they would do this.”

Draco was shocked that his godfather had resorted to drinking this early in the day. “Severus Salazar Snape, what the hell do you think you’re doing, drinking this early in the morning?”

Snape’s head was on the table and he was almost drooling on it, but when he heard that tone of voice, he automatically slurred, “Noshin’ mother.”

Draco’s eyes widened in shock and Harry began laughing at that statement. Dudley was in his own corner chuckling at them too.

Severus turned and looked around, seeing only a blurry white-blond head looking at him aghast, he said, “What’ sa matta Luce, never cared whether I was drunk a’fore or not. You come to sort me out again?”

It was Harry’s turn to be shocked. There was no way that Snape had just suggested that! “Professor Snape you’ll watch what you say to your godson or I may just have to take drastic measures.”

Snape just looked at him confused, slurring, “Potter? I coulda swore that Harry bloody Potter is the ‘eadmaster and responoble... reshpnibabble... uh, in charge o’ me pay.”

Dudley spoke to Harry, “Cousin, maybe you should sober them up, before he says anything more incriminating.”
“Good point, I didn’t think that Professor Snape’s language skills would fall to gutter cockney.”

Harry extended his wand and said, “Sobrietas Puritas.” It was the pure sober charm that rendered the individual completely sober without sickness.

The Heads had all been looking goofy and were giggly when the Potions Master was speaking to Harry and his godson, but once they were all sobered, the reality of the words were shocking to remember.

Snape blanched and blushed when he remembered the exact words that he said to Draco and in that awful dialect of his muggle father. It was not something that he wanted anyone to know about. The Dark Lord’s Mark did not allow him to be intimate with anyone that didn’t have the Dark Mark.

All of the Death Eaters were that way, but since he was gay and hadn’t bonded with anyone prior to being Marked he had no choice. He had to take what was offered and there was no one in the Inner Circle that he would ever permit that kind of intimacy, except Lucius. The reason for that was that if he didn’t accommodate that Malfoy Asshole, then the Dark Lord would become involved and that usually meant repeated beatings and rapes from both of them.

“We will be discussing this later, Professor Snape,” Harry said, somewhat sternly. He was somewhat disappointed in them, but the implications that Snape had brought up would devastate his godfather should he find out. Harry was in the middle of researching the Dark Mark, but this was something he hadn’t come across. “You will be dining with us this evening to explain what you meant.”

Severus just gulped. This really was not something he wanted his godson to ever know about, but he had the feeling that he had no choice now. There was something about Potter now that prevented him from speaking out against it.

“Later,” he agreed still white and still embarrassed at having let slip such an intimate detail of his personal life. However, knowing how powerful Harry Potter had become he was allowing himself to have a very teeny tiny glimmer of hope that something could be done about it.

“Now, how about, we all go down to the Great Hall to meet the new teachers and greet the returning ones?” Harry suggested.

“Just a couple of things Headmaster,” Professor McGonagall said. “We have a few questions that we’d like answered before heading down.”

“Of course,” Harry said, taking his seat and conjuring two more on either side of him. Draco followed and sat on his left, while Dudley sat down on his right.

“The increase of teaching staff and assistants will be creating a lot more administrative work for us,” she began.

Professor Sprout asked, “Also, what if we wanted some of our own students to be assistants?”

“Who will be determining our pay from now on or paying us for that matter?” Professor Flitwick asked, as this was a point of concern to all of them.

Professor Snape was about to ask something, when Harry held up his hand. “Just a moment Professor, please allow me to answer one question at a time before asking another.”

Snape closed his mouth and decided to listen to the answers before asking his own questions.

Harry began by putting them at ease with regards to the administrative duties, by explaining that when he hired the additional staff that he had also hired administrators to help oversee the vast
number of changes and duties.

“Even Mr. Filch and Hagrid will have assistants and helpers with their positions as caretaker and groundskeeper. Your pay has been changed and set to be comparative to other private magical schools available and therefore you will all be receiving a pay increase. The Founders had vaults specifically set up to pay for any employees at that worked for this school. The Ministry had been taxing the school and that’s why fees were set up. Your previous pays came from the fees that the school administered to the students. These fees varied, depending on the political climate and who paid off whom.

Now all fees have been altered to allow all students to attend without undo stress to parents and caregivers. They’ve also been altered to match parental income on a percentage basis. Therefore poorer students will be paying less than the richer ones and the richer students will not be overpaying their fees, as a standard fee has been set at a top level not to go over and beyond that.

I found out, this summer, that I was paying three times more then Draco and only because I was not aware of the fees. The Goblins have straightened it out, but had figured that I over paid several years of schooling and had in fact been paying for a several of the students to be attending here. That has been fixed of course and those students will be coming here at the expense of their own parents, under the new percentage payment plan. No more political influence in any way shape or form will affect this school.

Professor McGonagall, you will receive back pay for the differences in salary for the past ten years, as you should have been paid as a Deputy Headmistress, instead of your pay remaining that of a Transfiguration Professor. I am only allowed to go back ten years or I would have compensated you for the entire time you were working in the capacity as Deputy Headmistress.”

Dobby came back and delivered coffee to all of the professors, plus juice for the boys. Harry then addressed Professor Sprout’s question. “I know that some students will be able to fulfill positions as assistants and I certainly would not prevent them. You are asking about Neville Longbottom, aren’t you?”

“That’s correct.” She said and then asked, “How did you know?”

Harry smiled and said, “He’s a genius when it comes to plants, too nervous in Potions class, but a true genius with plants and their properties. I was thinking of him when I was coming up with the idea of the mini-greenhouses. Plus I, myself, will be taking over the first year students in Potions and DADA, alternating the teaching of the second years in those classes.”

“That’s another thing. Mini-greenhouses, I’ve never heard of such a thing,” she said.

Dudley answered her unspoken question, “It’s something relatively new in the muggle world. A company has come up with miniature greenhouses for people who live in the city and in apartment complexes. It allows them to have the same benefits of owning a green house, but the added bonus is that it is small enough for them to work at and to maintain. I have some pictures here, if you want to see them.”

She had nodded and so he showed her what they looked like and said, “Obviously with magic, the older students could make them and then younger will learn to take care of their own plants. Also, Harry showed me some of his environmental stasis globes for the ingredients that he’s collected and that system can be incorporated with the mini-greenhouses for the older students or students who might want to pool their efforts with other students in order to increase the variety of plants available for their potions. They would be shrinkable without placing stress on the plants.”
We also know that some students may not show an aptitude for growing plants, but they all must make the effort in the first year, as that is where most of their ingredients will be coming from for their first year Potions class. Those that do not have an aptitude will be thoroughly tested before being declared incapable. Laziness or sabotage will not be tolerated.” Draco explained.

“Draco why are you here?” Snape asked. “How do you know all of this? Potter what do you mean that you’ll be taking over the classes for the first and second years, especially in Potions and DADA?”

“I live with my mate, Uncle,” Draco answered. “Surely you didn’t expect me to live away from him and as for knowing all of this. Dudley and I helped him hash all of this out yesterday, along with the Founders here and Hogwarts, of course.”

“Who’s your mate?” Professor Flitwick asked.

Draco nodded, wrapped his arm around Harry’s and leaned in, laying his head on the broad shoulder of his dark haired Draekon mate.

That’s when the rest of the Heads of House noticed the matching rings. At least Snape wasn’t surprised at that one, due to his re-introduction of Potter at Grimmauld Place, when they went to fight for furniture. Although he had yet to see the promised memory that Dudley had said was “Uber Cute” and full of corn, whatever that meant. He strongly suspected that it was a Romantic’s wet dream, still he curious and wanted to see it.

The professors were a little surprised with the ease that the two had adapted with each other’s presence, but Dudley explained that they had been corresponding for a good portion of the later half of the summer and that Harry had kept in touch with Draco for longer then that. “I’m not sure how he did that, but I know that he did,” he said.

Harry answered part of Snape’s questions returning the conversation back on track. He was pleased that Draco was not afraid to show his affection publicly. Harry was slightly concerned about the Malfoy mask that his mate had perfected over the years. "That's correct. I will be taking over those classes because I want to be sure that everything will go as I have planned. I do not want you taking over the first and second years because, to be quite frank, you talk over them and you don't seem to be able to bring yourself to understand the level of learning that they are at.

You’re more suited to older students, perhaps something of a university type standard, but I know that you would like to remain here for a while til the war subsides. Also, you are actually still a ward of the school and can not leave without Ministry sanction before the war is officially over.

Teaching those levels will improve my understanding better in both those subjects. Plus it will free you to have an optional class or two on experimentation. Showing the older students, how to experiment, with ingredients, since they will not be able to take advantage of the new system. Should you choose to teach that option?"

"Also, Professor Snape," Harry said. "We all know the parts you have had to play by being a spy for the Order, but I want to make one thing perfectly clear. If you are not summoned before September 1st, you will refrain from going anytime after that, should you be summoned then.

These monitoring devices will prevent you from leaving, just like the students, and should any Death Eater show up to demand your whereabouts, you may choose to explain that you're confined to the school or that you are no longer interested in the Dark Lord’s campaign. I am currently researching how to get rid of the Dark Mark and will need your cooperation in order to succeed."
“Of course,” he said, glad that Harry was not going to demand that he spy anymore. He didn’t want to and he had to admit that the idea on a couple of Potions Experimentation classes was intriguing. “What about the Order of the Phoenix? What if they still want me to spy?”

“That will of course be your choice, but I do not want you teaching at this school and spying at the same time. It is wearing you down and quite frankly, you don’t need to spy. I’ve been able to refine my connection with the Dark Doofus and can readily see what needs to be seen whenever I feel like looking. I can sift through his mind and know everything that he does, has done or is planning to do.”

Severus was startled. The information that Harry claims to be able to access was tremendous, but he didn’t know whether to believe or not. Harry then allayed his fears by saying, “You can test me later and I’ll show you what I mean.”

Severus nodded and then asked, “The three of you came up with this plan to revolutionize the education given in this school?”

“That’s right,” Dudley said. “Is that such a difficult concept to accept?”

Professor Flitwick spoke up, “Just a minute young man. We know young Mr. Potter and young Mr. Malfoy here, but who are you?”

Draco then corrected the little professor, “Sir and ladies you need to know that my last name is no longer Malfoy. My name is Draco Severus Potter, registered properly at the Ministry and Harry is my bonded life-mate. Dudley Dursley is Harry’s muggle cousin.”

“How are you able to see Hogwarts, young man, let alone be in it, if you’re a muggle?” Professor McGonagall asked.

“Oh, I’m not completely a muggle. I’m more of a squib and am able to use some small magics too. So I can see things normally, just like you do,” he said and then turned to Professor Snape and re-asked his question. “How come the three of us planning this “Educational Revolution”, as you’ve put it, is difficult for you to accept?”

Again Severus paused to think before answering in a knee-jerk reaction to the question. He wanted to be sarcastic and sneering, but Harry was now the Headmaster and he wasn’t quite sure how his ‘old’ attitude would be viewed by him. “Mr. Potter has never showed an interest in his education or the lack of it. It is somewhat difficult to accept that he has gained any respect for learning. I suppose that it is possible that I have been bit misjudging and a lot harder on him than some others, but he never seemed to appreciate the efforts we took to teach him. So, yes the concept that he could be interested in learning and has actively changed his attitude does make me wonder.”

Harry smirked at his professor. “Sir, you are a Slytherin and the Head of Slytherin House. You should know better by now that many people can have many different masks. The-Boy-Who-Lived is an act. One that I absolutely hate to play up to and yet know that if I acted any different the students and the Wizarding world would cry out their objection. I hate placating the masses and I loathe the publicity that has bombarded me since I entered this world. In short, I think being famous sucks and would rather leave it to the glory seekers like Lockhart.

I’m sorry Professor McGonagall, but I feel that you need to know that I have never approved of the actions that Professor Dumbledore took at the end of my first and second years. Not to mention any of the times that he appointed extra house points at the end of a year in order for Gryffindor House to come out on top, due to the actions taken when I and my friends had supposedly ‘saved the day’. It was wrong the way he manipulated the points. Worse he had set-up those situations and they should
never have happened in the first place.”

“You believe that those situations were set-ups?” Professor Sprout asked.

“Of course,” Harry said. “How else would Hermione know about the spell for the Devil’s Snare to free Ron, in our first year? How else would Hermione become one of my friends if Professor Dumbledore wasn’t aware that another Professor was responsible for releasing a troll in the school? The school whether she was asleep or awake would still have been able to relay the information to the current Headmaster, if that headmaster was listening. He took a gamble with that one because there was no guarantee that I would have become her friend and she was the only one with enough logic in her, at the time, to figure out Professor Snape’s logic puzzle. I could not have done it then.”

The Heads of House were looking thoughtful at his speech, when Hogwarts spoke up and told them how she was connected to the Headmasters and Headmistresses. There was no way for any of those things to have happened within her walls without the Headmasters or Headmistresses knowing.

They were connected when the position was accepted, but almost every Headmaster or Headmistress used that knowledge for their own purposes. This was not something that she was happy about either, that’s why she chose Harry. He was not corrupt and he had the time to learn and grow into the position. Besides, he was one of the few who actually gained the respect of other creatures, which she pointed out in reference to the goblins that ran Gringotts and the respect he showed to House-elves.

“As for my seemingly recent interest in my education,” Harry continued. “Well, it has never been recent. My mask was just that, a mask. I knew that I could never seem to do better then my friends because Hermione needed to shine with her knowledge, besides it would have been an added and unwanted burden to be one of the top in school and put up with the…ugh…adulation of being famous too.

Really how high of a pedestal do I need to be on? There was just no way that I wanted to be up there in marks, besides I only needed to do well enough to pass the O.W.L.s I needed in order to get into the more advanced classes of my choosing. Thankfully none of the Professors in Hogwarts were administering those, so I could do as well as I pleased. Therefore I did just well enough to get into the advanced courses that I needed.”

“Now that you can not see, what career are you aiming for?” Professor Snape asked. The other Heads of House had not noticed his disability and all gasped in shock at the revelation. “Please, you can see that his eyes are not focused on any one of us when he faces us, so don’t act so shocked,” he snarked at the others.

“Really Severus,” Professor Flitwick said. “We did not notice because of everything that he has been presenting here. It almost seems inconsequential, at the moment. Our teaching careers here have just been turned on its end.”

The others nodded and Harry said, “You’re right Professor, it is not important. Please believe me, I have learned to compensate for it and I have been seriously considering a change to my career options before now anyway. Being an Auror now is no longer an option, but then again I was becoming disenchanted with the prospect of working a job of Dark Wizard Hunting and working for the Ministry. I figure that since I’m contracted to Hogwarts, I’ll have more than enough time to find the career that will be my future passion.”

Snape then decided to ask his true question from the beginning, which pertained to the information that he received earlier in the morning meeting. “That book for the first years, where did you find it? You stated that I won’t be teaching the ankle biters and that I can pawn the first two years, maybe
three onto someone else?”

Harry grinned at him and confirmed that, “That’s correct. I do not want you teaching the first years nor the second year students. They actually need to learn and not be afraid to ask questions. When you eventually do get them, they should be grounded enough to please even you. We’ll go through all of that later, when the other Professors have been introduced to their assistants and aides.”

“Thank all the gods,” Severus said.

“As for the book, I found that in one of the Founders Vaults yesterday, when we went to confirm the rate of your pays with Gringotts. Sir Gronk is the one who suggested that we go through the vaults to see if there was anything in there that could help us out. The book, though, has to be copied at a Muggle copier store, due to the fact that this book was not in print for long and Flourish & Blott’s did not have any on hand. I’ll have extra copies made for the other students, if they’re interested in it. I’ll save one for you and I know that I will be making a few of the potions before I allow the students to do so.”

The other Heads of House were relieved too, that Snape would not be teaching the first or second years because he had little patience for those young ones and now would not be able to take away too many points during the day because of them.

“We will discuss that later this evening too. I’m sure that you will want to re-test my competence in potions. I assure you that you have nothing to worry about, but since my grades seem too poor for your tastes feel free to test me in that subject too, but I ask that you do so without prejudice.

We will be meeting here at least once a day until the beginning of the year, same time in the morning, to discuss further needs and issues however we must now go to the Great Hall. I will introduce you to the new Professors and to your aides or assistants.”

They had several more questions from this morning, but Harry was right they had time and did need to meet the new Professors and aides. Harry would be answering many queries from different directions, plus they were sure that some answers would be provided when the met their assistants.

Harry had planned to swear the Professors to secrecy regarding his Headmaster status and Hogwarts agreed to help. Rowena and Godric were the ones that came up with the monitoring balls and with the help of Salazar they were able to modify them further to assist the Professors and aides in keeping the secret. They would all know who the new Headmaster is, but they would not be able to say his name, the only word that would ever come out in regards to him would be just that, Headmaster, no first name or last name.

Draco’s own ball would be like that too, just in case he slipped up. It was entirely possible for that to happen and Draco agreed. He was proud of his spouse and knew that he could slip up in order to show up the Mudblood and the Weasel.

Helga had helped out with the mini-greenhouse idea and loved the conversation she had with the only muggle-squib she had ever met. Seems that Dudley wasn’t completely into just sports, he had a green thumb and was a part of an outside club, called the “Grower’s Network”.

The Grower’s Network was just that. It was a place that plant growers came together to introduce themselves, find jobs, find people interested in the same things that they were into, etc… It was like any other group or organization, but the local chapters came together one or twice a week to discuss plants, fertilizer and nutrients, begin growing things, potting procedures, etc… Most of the chapters
were also part of the greenhouse business that wanted to allow people the chance to attempt growing things.

There were several outside clubs, like the auto club, the builder’s club, etc… These clubs were a growing affair in the business world, due to the needs of the current market. Not many young people were interested in the Trades type subjects anymore, but these clubs opened up many eyes to another form of earning money, other then the electronic or computer industry.

Still Harry, himself, was surprised that Dudley was interested in plants to such an extent and somehow wished that Dudley could remain at Hogwarts, instead of returning to Smeltings.

Dudley had even admitted to the fact that he didn’t like his current school and wished that he didn’t have to return to the muggle world. Still it was a comfort to him that Harry and Draco were only a phone call away and that he could write to them have the letters delivers via insta-mail boxes that they had.

The meeting was at an end for now and they were all making their way to the Great Hall, when Harry pulled out a copy of two new Potion recipes to discuss with Professor Snape.

“Professor Snape,” he said, walking along side him and tapping his sticking in front of him. He pulled out a scroll and was holding it out in the general direction of the Potions Master. “Please have a look at this and tell me whether you will be able to provide this, as well as the Wolfsbane potion, during the school year.”

Severus took the parchment, giving a quick glance he was surprised at the contents. He had heard that there was a potion, specifically made for Vampires made to assist them in functioning normally, without going into a blood rage, due to a lack of an appropriate food source. There never was any confirmation of that in any of the Potions magazines or journals that he subscribed to. It was an underground rumor that he had heard a few times in the Darker alleys.

Better still there were two potions on the list. One to assist with the need for blood and the second was a cloning potion to clone willingly given human blood, almost like a Blood Replenishing Potion, but in this case it provides an instant food source for a hungry vampire.

They were walking into the Great Hall when it hit Snape; one of the new Professors was a Vampire. There was going to be a Werewolf and a Vampire teaching at Hogwarts??!! He just looked at Harry, as though he had grown another head.

“What’s the matter Uncle Sev?” Draco asked.

“I just realized that Harry has hired a Vampire to teach here,” he said, answering his godson.

“Are you sure that this is wise, Harry?” Professor Flitwick asked.

Harry smiled at him. “Of course, Professor De Luka has been vetted by the goblins. In fact his name has been on the list of potential replacement professors the longest. His credentials are without reproach and the students will love his teaching methods. The goblins had kept everything up to date and this particular individual loves History. Who better to teach the student about History, then someone who has been through it, he certainly won’t just focus on the Goblin Wars.”

The Heads of House had not seen the changes that had been occurring in the Great Hall and they
were not aware that changes would be taking place in there, but it happened. The seating in the Great Hall had been re-arranged to an old format that had been around during the Founders’ time.

The teachers’ tables were no longer raised as high, which was about a foot and a half higher than the students’ tables. They were now only a half a foot higher, which allowed approachability to them from the students. Also, the teaching tables formed part of a U shape which was finished by the seventh year tables.

Along the right side of the hall was the table of the assistants and aides or journeymen, under the larger portraits of Rowena Ravenclaw and Godric Gryffindor. The head table was set up for the actual professors and teachers. The left side of the hall, under the equally large portraits of Helga Hufflepuff and Salazar Slytherin was the seventh year tables.

The other tables and benches were set up in rows in the middle just like normal, however there were coloured numbers hovering over them and carved into the tables. Starting from the right, near the teachers’ aides, the numbers were 5 & 6 next was 3&4 and near the seventh year tables were the numbers 1 & 2.

---------------------------------

Harry was walking and tapping his cane here and there. The Professors and teachers’ aids were all seated where they were supposed to except for the four Heads of House. Harry motioned the four to their new places at the head table. He took the reigns and began addressing them all.

“Hello everyone,” he said. “As you may already know from this morning my name is Harry Potter and I will be the one of the assistants to the DADA and Potions classes for the first and second years. With me are the Four Heads of Hogwarts Houses and they are also now the new Deputy Headmasters and Deputy Headmistresses of this school. If there is any concern about the school, the students, the curriculum…anything, feel free to bring your concerns to one or all of them.

You have all been notified about the courses that are now available and you’ve all signed the contracts accepting these positions for the duration of two years, which, by the way, I am very happy to know. Now if each of you would kindly open the box in front of you.”

In front of each person, in the hall, there appeared a small square box and within that box was a small one and a half to two inch round marble like crystal ball. The Heads all knew what these were, but the faces of the others showed that they did not. “Please either tap it with your wand or pick it up with your hand. Professor Snape, you may choose to wait until September 1st to do so. I’ve already explained this to you.”

Snape just nodded and tucked the package into his pocket. He wanted to wait and see whether he would be summoned anytime between now and the first of September. He didn’t want the Order to know that he was going to refuse to spy any longer during the upcoming year. He was too interested in the new changes and preferred the chance to show his students that they had a choice that did not involve Dumbledore or the Dark Lord.

The others did as requested, even the other three knowing that they just might be confined to the school because of it. All the balls began to float around their heads in varying patterns or elliptical formations. Harry then explained what they are and what exactly that they do. “Please understand that the Heads of House have thoroughly tested them and can answer any question that you may have.”

A voice came from the aides’ table and it was a voice that Professor Sprout was happy to hear. She sent a huge smile to Harry and even though he could not see it, he felt it and returned her smile.
“Harry, why are you directing all of us like this?” Neville Longbottom asked. “All you’ve told us so far was that the Headmaster told you to assist us in getting settled, but where is Headmaster Dumbledore?”

Neville was happy to have been asked and had readily signed the contract just like the others, but now he was curious about Harry’s motive, but also about the tall blond boy that walked in next to Draco and about the fact that Draco Malfoy was here as well. He trusted Harry, when Harry had sent him a letter asking if he was interested in being an assistant to Professor Sprout for a revolutionary new idea for first and second year Herbology students. It allowed him to be employed safely for the next two years. His grandmother approved knowing that he would be safe at Hogwarts, but now he was wondering why Harry was the one that was leading them and seemed to be making the decisions.

Harry smirked and said, “Excellent questions Neville. First up, now that these monitoring devices have been explained in general, I need to add that the ones you’ve all just activated has an extra charm that will prevent any of you from revealing what I am about to tell you or perhaps I should just let our dear Hogwarts explain while we have our meal. Would you be a dear?”

“It will be my pleasure, Headmaster,” she said, startling everyone and causing everyone to look at Harry with new eyes. He just looked at everyone and bowed. Then he took his seat next to Draco and began to eat while she and the four portraits explained the Founders Law to all the Professors, Aides, Journeymen, and Assistants.

They were surprised that the school had such power and that there was even such a Law, but many were glad of the changes. Hogwarts explained why she chose Harry and why she wanted someone without true experience in these matters. He was willing to take advice before making any decisions and he was not afraid of making the necessary changes to improve this school.

Also, he had the guts and power to prevent Ministry or the Board of Governor’s interference. It was a matter of time before they found out, but they were planning to hold off as long as possible. Although there was the possibility that Dumbledore would spill the beans, but Harry sort of had the feeling that Dumbledore would only do so after the school year had begun. It was a strategic move that would either expose him earlier to the students or would allow him time to come up with a counter plan.

It was a good thing that the meal was now, since mostly everyone needed to think on the news that they have just received. There were several questions regarding the new curriculum, books, supplies and classroom needs. Ideas were further bounced, but they all agreed that Harry’s concept and ideas were the best point to jump off from.

---------------------------------

Harry directed the administrative assistants to the Heads of House and told the Heads that Dumbledore’s old office had been converted to allow the four of them to jointly work in the same space. They could be there on a rotational basis with a rotating door that connected to their personal office for House duties in the section of the school where their House was located.

The administrators were set up in an adjacent room to the House offices with a connecting door to the Deputy office and to each other, in case they ever needed to pool their tasks. They decided to pool certain tasks, like the sending out of the new lists for all the years and in order to change the prefects mainly two more prefects per house were added. The lists have been made and were being sent later this evening.

There would be no Head Boy or Head Girl this year, which was something that would piss off
Hermione, because she was hoping to have the Head Girl position. There were enough assistants and aides for the lowers years that Prefects were all that were needed for this year. Perhaps the other two positions will be resurrected in the future, once this black and white war was over. For now it was best not to place a student in charge of the others when their alliances were questionable.

Harry explained this to everyone, but Professor McGonagall was fuming. She wanted to know the real reason and Harry just said that once Professor Snape activated his monitor, then he would explain why and not before. Also, she wanted to know why Hermione was not considered for being a teachers’ assistant.

Harry answered her question frankly, “I know her and she would not be interested in teaching. Nor could she teach at the same level as the students. She takes certain things on faith and does not allow for any deviation or thinking, she’s extremely book learned. I had her try to teach and show me a few things, but her methods are incorrect for the new environment that we are creating. Besides she has been panicky about the seventh year since she found out about them in third year and worse now that she’s passed her O.W.L.s. She will be too busy trying to stay at the top.”

McGonagall was still miffed that she had to wait for the true reason why Harry didn’t want Ms. Granger to be the Head Girl, but she did admit that there were enough adults in the school to compensate and if she was truly being honest with herself, Hermione really would be a terrible choice because of her very strict mannerisms. To be truly honest, would be to say that Hermione Granger would take to dictatorship rather then democracy, if given a position of authority over other students.

Once the lunch was cleared, Harry brought out the book he had used with Sir Gronk. It listed the interests of all present. The Professors were then able to evaluate the assistants and in effect choose the most suitable amongst all that were there.

There was only one Potions Journeyman that was interested in working with the Potions Master, but no other assistant there was interested in working with the Snarky man. That’s when Harry said that he was the one that would be working primarily with the first years in the DADA and the Potions classes. He pointed out to Severus that the Journeyman would be able to look over part of the new program, where the plant ingredients were grown by the students and that the Journeyman would be able to team up with the Herbology one for that.

Neville was made assistant to Professor Sprout and would be working in conjunction with an office aide and two Journeymen for two full years. He was in heaven, but he still did not know the name of the blond that was constantly talking to Draco Malfoy.

Dudley had noticed the curiosity of the curly brown haired boy, but was unable to find out what it was that the other wanted. Still he knew that he would be here until the thirtieth and would probably help out with the Herbology and Muggle Studies courses. The setting up of the classes and bouncing off of ideas, especially for the Muggles studies classes.

Draco didn’t know if he wanted to be an assistant or not, but he was guarded like all the teachers, with the secret of Headmaster Potter. Unfortunately it was still a honeymoon time for him and his mind was not completely focused on the information flowing around him, since his mind drifted occasionally into the gutter with tiny scenarios of a naughty student being punished by his Headmaster.

Later he figured that the best way for the future counselors to begin analyzing the students, would be for them to test him first, since he had no idea of his potential interests. Also, since Draco was going to be living here for three extra years after his seventh with an additional possibility of four more, he knew that he would be able to take advantage of nearly all the optional courses and be able to
complete nearly every level of them. That might help him out in figuring what his future career passion would be. He had a feeling that his mate already knew what his own passion was, but was just waiting for Professor Snape to break down and acknowledge his mate’s interest and intelligence on the subject of potions.

Soon all the new teachers and assistants were placed satisfactorily, except the ones who were waiting for the History Professor. They had been told that the new Professor was a vampire, prior to accepting their positions, but that if they were ever really uncomfortable that they would still be employed to tutor the older years or to assist with the Wizarding studies, because some of those classes will cross over with the study of History. In fact many of the classes were going to cross over in order to improve understanding on many of the core subjects required in the British and Scottish communities.

Europe and other countries were a different matter and hopefully the new History Professor would be able to provide a different point of view. Especially since he was of Spanish decent, but had lived in South America, North America and many of the other countries in the world.

His name was Professor Antonio De Luka and he has been around since Cortez invaded the Aztec empire. He was actually there when it happened, but he had an additional Wizarding perspective of that time and would probably cross teach the Muggle perspective versus the Wizarding during his classes.

This year certainly promises to be a lively one.

A contingent of House-elves popped into the Great Hall and one was assigned per course to a specific professor and two were assigned to the administrative assistants, due to their current needs to rush out the new course and items lists today.

Dobby was in the process of making a list just like Harry’s, in a different journal, for the house-elves outlining the varying interests. Any free house-elves were to be offered a safe place and would be offered bonding, if that was what they wanted.

Dobby, himself, was assigned to the Headmaster and would listen to no other. He had wanted Harry to choose him, but he wasn’t sure that Harry wanted to be bound to a house-elf. He wasn’t prepared to present himself, but Winky knew this and had petitioned for Dobby just like Dobby did for her.

Dobby’s job was to list all of the elves in the school, including the ones on Harry’s various estates and find out their interests and how to keep them from getting bored. The intrepid little house elf was a genius and had been increasingly open to suggestions and was no longer really subservient in his manners.

He was able to locate a couple of elves that Remus had asked for his library property, ‘Snake’s End’ and he had even found a set of triplet house-elves that wanted a minimal bond that left them free enough to pursue their own interests.

One was a male, who liked practical jokes, experimenting with magic and items; the second a female liked to clean, listen to and make music; the third, who was also male, was a cook and loved potion work. It was a good arrangement because two would cause a mess and the third would clean, as long as she was not the butt of any jokes or testing, which if she was she was permitted to refuse to clean up after any of their messes. Of course these three bonded to the Weasley twins with the understanding that they all had one day off, one evening off, were paid 10 sickles a week to feed their interests and were allowed to wear whatever they wanted.
The twins loved all three of them on sight and agreed to everything that they wanted. They even insisted that the elves have a pick out of any of the rooms for their own. Turns out that the one who loved jokes, took Ron’s old room, the female of the triplets took Hermione’s, toning down the fluorescent aspects and reducing the amount of lace and frills. The cook of the three took Ginny’s old room, but only after the two flesh tones were changed to a Robin’s egg colouration of light blue with the ‘freckles’ changing to the dark blue-black spots found on a robin’s egg.

Dobby had been listening to the stories about the house-elves of the past from the Founders and Hogwarts. He even had the Sorting Hat on his head for fun. The Hat was very informative and was able to tell him that should he have been human he would have been difficult to place because he had Ravenclaw and Slytherin tendencies in him.

It was great that the House-elves were being employed in a larger and stronger capacity. In fact many were now sitting under the Sorting hat for fun and it was a very happy Hat that chatted with all of them, equally. It answered any question they wanted to know about. The house-elves had only one other concern, but when it was brought up to the Headmaster and Harry fully understood, he didn’t deny their request.

It turns out that the Headmasters and Headmistresses of the past only allowed the mating of the house-elves once every five years, to allow for each generation to train the next.

Dobby and Winky were the ones who were volunteered to explain the conditions in the bonds that prevented them from mating on a regular basis. Both elves were embarrassed, but Draco put them at ease and they were able to fully explain that one night of every year they had a gathering, in a private location to seek out a mate for the night. That entire night was basically an orgy, in order to produce elf children. Elves did have the option to mate for life with the permission their masters, but the gathering was the easiest on them in order to get offspring.

Harry didn’t see anything wrong with house-elves doing what nature intended, but he was concerned about the statistics of the situation and asked clarifying questions about the number of young born versus the survival rate of a house-elf. It was clear that the number of house-elves was diminishing because of the strictures placed within the bonds that the Wizards had been currently using.

An elder elf explained that the system of the gathering only worked for now, as there were less house-elves being born. When the numbers increase to an adequate proportion to the Wizarding population, then less house-elves would be born. It was natural to them for that to occur and then they would be mating for life instead of mating for species survival.

Harry wrote all this down in a larger journal in order to recall his official Headmaster decisions and why, pertaining to any new situation and then allowed Hogwarts to alter the bonds on all the House-elves to allow them to procreate, as their nature intended. He didn’t ask or want to know the specifics, but told the house-elves that no young one would be bound unless they had completed their training and wished to be. The level of binding would also be optional, like the triplets that the Weasley twins had taken in.

The house-elves all agreed that it was fair because of his acceptance they collectively decided that they would not protest the fact that Harry wanted them in a different uniform.

Each uniform was distinctive to the position that they were working. He had Dobby explain to him the differences in their tasks that the House-elves performed and their safety measures versus the injuries they tended to acquire.

That was the reason for the change in uniform for the house-elves. Protective clothing would be worn for the tasks that required it. He had the male elves wear children’s short pants or just normal
pants that would protect their legs. The females knew of the changes to the girls’ uniforms and chose a similar fashion of *fake skirts* for their lower halves. They were, also, made to wear something to protect the soles of their feet, sandals were used by most and a few chose shoes or boots to cover their feet, but these elves were the ones that worked outside.

They all had to wear something of a shirt and they had collectively decided on a tunic style top, short sleeve for summer and longer sleeve for winter, with the same design as the students.

Many elves added the scroll work in accordance to their ‘*houses*’ that the Hat would have placed them in. Not surprisingly, many were Hufflepuff, but a few were in the other houses. Dobby was proud of his blue-green scroll works acknowledging both houses.

All of this was occurring during the time that Hogwarts woke and between the time that Harry first arrived at the school and then the day before, when they were making plans.

He did accept a modified bond with Dobby, as the little elf was so looking forward to it and Winky was a very good negotiator. Dobby still had the same day off, plus two evenings free and his pay was increased to five galleons a week.

Dobby had to fight Harry on the ‘*Master*’ deal, but then Harry consented to decreasing the amount of pay for a change to accepting just the word ‘*Sir*’. There was a re-negotiation clause that would occur after five years of service.

Dudley and Draco were watching this process in fascination. It seems that Draco was impressed with Harry’s haggling skills and Dudley was impressed that the little fellow could hold his own against Harry’s stubbornness.

---------------------------------

“Those of you who have been students here in the past have known what our sorting feast was like.” Harry began to explain the new formation of the tables in the Great Hall. “Any new student to this school was sorted into a House and then made to sit with that House, despite the fact that they may have made friends along the train ride. It is a separation that should never take place during the feast. I agree that the House system in and of itself does promote a harmony of like personalities, but the students should not be only exposed to only those personalities during their meals and after hours. That is too much segregation.

The students should also feel free to consult with the teachers or the assistants during the meals, just like they should be able to consult with any student in the higher years. So, first and second year student will be seated at the table nearest to the seventh years. Fifth and sixth years will be near the teachers’ aides and the third and fourth years will be between the two. This will allow the lower years to be able to approach the higher years without feeling that the must see a teacher for assistance. Each year is paired in such a way as to be able to assist the others and to be able to gain assistance.

Further I would like all of you to consider being sorted like the students so that you would feel the same House association and pride, just like the first years do. Please reach a consensus for tomorrow afternoon. If the majority wishes to be sorted, then all of you will be sorted. Those of you that have attended Hogwarts and wish to be part the House you graduated with, please feel free to do so.

I myself will not be re-sorted, but as I will no longer be attending formal classes due to my needs, I will acknowledge the houses that I belong to just like our house-elves have done. In fact, Dobby would you come here a moment?” He called out to the very happy elf.
“Yes, sir,” he said, as he popped into the great hall.

“I would like you to show the scroll work of your houses.”

Dobby stood on one of the tables and showed the scrolling of blue and green twined together. They were surprised because those colours were for Slytherin and Ravenclaw, however Dudley and Draco were not, as they had noticed this yesterday. Everyone had noticed the uniforms on the elves that showed up for assignment, but were now able to look at it closer, understanding what the scrolling meant.

“Dobby, I need your help with mine,” Harry said. Dobby nodded thinking on it and then a pattern in a series of Celtic knots came together in a complementary formation of all four colours of red, gold, green and silver. They did not look like a nasty mix of Christmas deco. They had discussed this evening before. Showing all the colours of Harry’s houses surprised many there. “Thank you Dobby, that’s all for now.”

Dobby just said, “You’re welcome, Sir,” and Popped back out of the Great Hall. He was looking into a few rumors of house-elves that had been freed, but were languishing over the lack of work.

Harry continued on, “As you can see, should you have more then one house in you there is no pressure to take one house over another. I believe that the students may be more receptive to an assistant or aide, if they were dual housed or showed an association with their House. So tomorrow will the day were the course plans will be figured out and a small synopsis of the expectations will be prepared to present to the students. I believe that all of you have enough, for now, to work through with your aides and to settle in comfortably. We have five days in which to resolve most issues. I will see all of you tomorrow. Good Day!”

Then he left the Great Hall with Draco. Dudley stayed behind for a bit to confirm a time with Professor Sprout and Professor Morgan (muggle studies), when they wished to speak with him regarding any of the subjects or ideas that has been brought forward. He still didn’t have time to speak to the curious boy, but knew that the following day he would be able to.

Neville understood that and also knew that tomorrow he wasn’t going to be put off from an introduction to that interesting person. He was curious, Herbology and Muggle Studies was a strange enough combination, but he knew that this person had never attended Hogwarts, either. Still his curiosity was up far enough that he would meet him tomorrow even if it meant talking to Draco Malfoy.

---------------------------------

TBC...
Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Legend:

'Thoughts or emphasis'
"Normal speech"
(…Words spoken in another language…)  
-----------------------------

Chapter Fourteen  
-----------------------------

August 26, Evening  

Harry and Draco were cuddling and petting one another on the couch in their main room when Professor Snape and Professor Lupin arrived, guided by an assigned house-elf. Severus was surprised at the location of the boys' rooms and asked to know where exactly they were.

Hogwarts then explained that they were in the Founders’ tower and in their combined quarters. It was the best solution that they had at the time when they were building the school, to reside in the same location as it was easier to bring their ideas together.

He noted that Draco and Harry were comfortable in each others’ presence and that they were not afraid of what they felt for one another or felt that they had to hide their relationship. He sat near them and looked around the room. Lupin took the opposite chair and took a look around him.

The main room that they were in was furnished with a couch and chair set-up similar to Draco's third compartment, but that there were extra desks, tables, chairs and a few other items that they had picked up from Grimmauld Place, scattered about the room. Severus was disappointed that he was not able to see the Potions armoires that Harry took from the old Headquarters. He was still miffed about those.

The evening meal took place in an adjoining dining room and was very good. After that was done they got down to discussing his actions this morning. He didn’t want to bring this up to them, but still felt that teeny tiny glimmer of hope that Harry Potter would be able to free him.

He did not want to explain this in front of Lupin, but knew that if the wolf found out about this any other way, the chances of his...happiness?... might be compromised and a Slytherin will find any way to prevent anything that might sabotage their own future. Snape knew that the wolf a long sharp nose and it would eventually sniff out the secret. ‘Yes, it’s best that he knows what is going on and why I must act and be the way that I do...For the time being.’
His actions and attitude during his seventh year were caused by the Mark and the conditions stored within it, but then the Founders spoke up, expressing their wish to see the infamous Mark that they were constantly hearing about. Once they saw the form of it, Godric roared with laughter while Salazar chased him through the portraits of the school.

Rowena then explained that they had had an ongoing prank war that lead to a temporary tattoos marking the loser. That particular one was one that Salazar had probably written about down in some journal, but never had the chance to use it.

Helga even explained that all the pranking done by the other two was sometimes damaging to Hogwarts and that the building, herself, had gotten upset with them and had decided to create a play area for them, in the bowels of the castle. It was a place that they could hex each other or duel to their hearts content.

Severus and Remus were in a daze with that information. Both were also surprised that Salazar had managed to catch Godric, binding him and gagging him and then dragging him back into this room's portraits.

Harry explained to the Founders that this one was not a temporary tattoo, but a brand. With his altered sight he was able to see the connection and the way it inhibited certain functions and how it was altered to be more like a slave mark.

Draco was intrigued by the play area that Hogwarts created. "Would that play area happen to be called the Chamber of Secrets?" The Founders looked at the blond Draekon and said that it was. He turned to Harry and said, "I want to see it. Can we go?"

"Perhaps tomorrow or another day. I'm more concerned with the properties of Severus' Dark Mark," he replied.

Dudley admitted that he was curious about the Chamber too, but was equally concerned about the differences in the marks that could occur in the Wizarding world. “This Mark, what does it do? Does it hurt you in any way?”

Professor Snape scowled, when he thought about the pain that having the Mark caused, including pain from it. He heaved a sigh and Remus looked at him with concerned eyes, as began his tale. "I was fifteen. My step-father sold my services to the Dark Lord because of my huge potential in Potions. I was Marked without knowing about the additional conditions stored within the Mark and I was Marked without consent. I never wanted to follow such separatist ideals.” He became a bit flushed, knowing that he was about to impart a very intimate personal fact about himself to these boys and the one that had gained his interest over the years.

"In school I wasn't sexually active like many of the others my age, but I had begun to develop an interest in someone from my year. I had dreams and woke up like any others your age, but it was rare and I was not too sure what my feelings in the matter were at the time. I just know that this person fascinated me.” He said, glancing into the amber-brown eyes of the wolf, but quickly turned away to continue his tale.

“Other people in the school, Marked people, had noted my interest, and had taken matters into their own hands in order to prevent me from ever acting on it. Even Sirius Black and James Potter had noted my interest in one of their friends. That person apparently had the same interest in me, but was as aware of it as I was aware of my own. That is to say not really. Knowing now that Peter Pettigrew was a spy and traiter to the Potters, you guys can guess who the person I had an interest in was.

I'm sure that Sirius Black had either mentioned this to the others or had ranted on about this in private
and was overheard. His Will indicated that his advances been rejected by the one I was paying
attention to and that he had taken action to "take care of it" at the time. That's when the "Whomping
Willow” event had taken place.

Due to the fact that Pettigrew was Marked and likely taking anything of interest back to the Dark
Lord or whether it was one of the inner circle it was obvious that word had gotten around to the Dark
Lord. I was called after a while and Lucius Malfoy was on hand to explain that those who are
Marked, but not bonded were to be the toys of the other Death Eaters and that of the Dark Lord.

These toys could bond, but only with the permission from the Dark Lord if, and only if, they brought
their intended forward to be Marked by him too.

I refused. I refused everything. I vowed to myself that I would not bond to anyone under such
conditions. I also refused to be anyone's plaything. I am not made that way.

Lucius was there... because he wanted to... break me." His breath hitched at the emotions that were
brought forward with this particular story of his involvement with the Dark Lord. He continued on,
"The Dark Lord allowed it, as long as he was there to witness it and participate in it.” He took a
shuddering breath, a gulp of tea and could not look at anyone in the room as memories of those times
surfaced.

"I fought for a long time before I chose to appear broken. I wouldn't give them the satisfaction of
winning. I let it look like they won. My appearance changed because of it. That's why I never fixed
my nose since the last time it was broken and why I refuse to improve my looks to correct the
"Greasy Git" image. I'm a Potions Master, of course I know how to clean up my appearance to look
all right, but why give them something tolerable or slightly appealing to look at when they were
taking me against my will." He took another sip of tea.

Remus was horrified by everything that he had heard because it meant that if he wanted to be
intimate with Severus he'd have to be Marked by the Dark Lord. Now, however, it looked like
Harry was looking into correcting the situation and he sincerely hoped that his godson could do
something about it.

Harry asked, "What are the conditions within the Mark?" Remus' attentions were turned back to the
conversation at hand.

Snape sighed, "I can not be intimate with anyone who doesn't have the Mark. I can't even kiss
someone on the cheek, hold their hand or hug someone without feeling pain." He looked to his
godson's astounded face and his worried expression. He clarified the situation, "Not you. It's with
anyone that I'm interested in, sexually interested in. Anyone that I'm interested in and that can arouse
me is noted within the inner circle, that's why my sexual relations have been limited to Lucius. He
gave me no choice in that matter.

My magic has also been filtered to the other members of the inner circle and I'm more than sure that
my life force is drained with every forced act whether of intimacy or against what I feel is right. It has
to do with the sexual magics that occur at puberty. I'm sure that you are familiar with some of that."

‘If I were to even kiss him, he would be in pain. The Dark Lord's posse would know through the
Mark.’ Thought Remus, but then he knew that Harry was thinking of something.

Harry frowned. He didn't like this at all because it was another form of coercion that he was not
willing to put up with and certainly did not want to see Professor Snape remain trapped under such
conditions. It looked liked he would have to take a trip into the Dark Lord's mind. He would need
Snape's cooperation in the matter because he wanted to see a Marking from another point of view.
With two points of view, he would probably be able to find out how to counteract some of the conditions in the Mark before trying to get rid of it completely.

"I can see the threads that feed the Mark from yourself, but before I can take any action, I would need to see a Marking ceremony from your perspective." Harry then explained that he would gather the memories and pull them out for the Founders to help. Perhaps Salazar had left something behind that Tom Riddle had accessed while in school.

Knowing what the Chamber of Secrets looked like, Harry wondered if there were more secret areas that Salazar might have had in the school. Perhaps the Founders had their own bolt holes away from the others for privacy.

Harry questioned the Founders about this and they all confessed that they had their own private studies or calming rooms around the school. When the Chambers of Secrets was brought up again, Harry asked, "Are there any other ways into the Chamber, besides through the Parseltongue entrance?"

The Founders were confused. "Parseltongue entrance?" Rowena said.

Helga continued, "There was no entrance to the Chamber that was activated by Parseltongue passwords." She said, but then turned to look pointedly at Salazar, who promptly denied ever having set Parseltongue passwords to the Chamber.

Godric had finally gotten out of the bonds and gag to have his say in the matter. "It's not like you were the only one able to speak Parseltongue in our time. You had several cousins from your father's side of the family that could do that too. Perhaps one of the nasty little blighters made some changes after we left."

Salazar nodded saying, "That's true. My father's brother was a little extreme with their ideas. I'm sure that one or more of my cousins just followed him blindly."

Draco piped in, "You know I bet that the whole Slytherin versus Gryffindor issue was because of them and not the two of you. If your cousins had the surname of Slytherin then there was also the possibility that any fight that broke out under the two Founders’ names were not these two, but another Slytherin and Gryffindor."

Snape and Lupin were surprised by this little insight, but then quickly realized that any offspring or close family member could have been the ones that brewed the political conflict and escalated the rift between the Houses in the school. No one actually knew how the conflict started, but it was obviously clear from talking to the portraits, that Godric and Salazar were not the ones involved.

"It could also have been one of them that had placed that Basilisk in the Chamber, unless Godric and Salazar were the ones that got it to play with," Dudley said. Harry had already told him about the events of his second year and therefore he knew about the great snake that used to be there.

"The monster of the Chamber of Secrets was a Basilisk?" Snape asked, he was sure that Professor Dumbledore had claimed that it was another animal altogether.

"Didn't Dumbledore tell you?" Harry asked. "I was sure that he told all of the Professors because the students and Mrs. Norris were petrified from the indirect gaze of the animal. Professor Sprout was growing mandrakes that year for the Anti-Petrification Potion that you provided."

"Indirect gaze...? He said that it was another creature altogether that petrified the students and nothing about an indirect gaze. He didn't mention a Basilisk. Where is it now, do you know?" Snape
wanted to know because of the potions ingredients that could be obtained from it was key to some of the older potions recipes that he had.

"I killed it in my second year," Harry said.

"Do you happen to know if Dumbledore vanished the beast or if it's still there?" Snape asked sharply.

"It's not in the Chamber anymore. I rendered it for Potion's ingredients."

"What?" Professor Snape asked.

"How and when?" Draco asked curious as to when Harry could have done such a thing.

"In my third and fourth year," Harry said. "I was not permitted to go to Hogsmeade when Sirius had escaped from Azkaban and when my name was placed in that Goblet, I was no longer responsible for my final exams. I had lots of time on my hands at the beginning of those years to render the carcass. Hagrid showed me how to render several animals, including snakes. I asked him about Basilisks and he told me the differences in rendering different snakes."

Harry shrugged, to him it was no big deal. He knew that the Potions Master would be interested in the ingredients from such a great snake. He had rendered it completely in order to be able to present some parts of it to the Potions Master. However, since Snape's attitude never changed towards him and his efforts in the class were never noticed, he never presented them to him.

"You rendered the entire creature without permission from the Headmaster? Without telling me?" Snape asked.

"Well sir, I was prepared to give you some of it, but you were a right git. I didn't need the Headmaster's permission to render an animal that I had killed in self-defense," Harry said. "I rendered the animal for myself. I had learned from Hagrid that any person, who finds an abandoned carcass, disposes of or kills a dangerous creature had the rights to do with the remains as they please. I thought that rendering that beast would help me to understand the structure of it and give me the time away from all that unwanted attention."

Snape shook his head. Then he recalled that Harry wanted to bribe him for his assistance to figure out the potion that he had sent. Not only that, but Headmaster Dumbledore had ordered more Occlumency lessons for Potter. He was lost in his thoughts, when it hit him again that Potter was the Headmaster now and no longer required to take those lessons. He was going to lose those lovely ingredients that he could have negotiated for under Harry’s supposed bribe request in his letter.

"Professor Snape," Harry began. "I know that I am no longer under the order of Dumbledore, but I would still like your assistance to train me for the upcoming conflict with Tommy-boy. Everything in my letter still stands, but I believe that we will need to redefine the requirements, as I do have other tutors that will be coming to help me."

Severus looked up and had a renewed hope that he would eventually be able to haggle or bargain for those ingredients. In the meantime Harry said that he would be concentrating on the Dark Mark, so that the Potions Master will not be able to feel the effects or at least hopefully be able to change the properties so that no pain would be transmitted with the Dark Lord's displeasure.

"Thank you Harry," he said. "I hope that something will be found in time. I'm sure that the Dark Lord is able to modify them whenever we are in his presence, but also when we're in his presence there are times that the Crucios and tortures he does cause us to fall unconsciousness. Modifications
could have been done then too, to the Marks."

Harry nodded. The he stood up and went to his room to pick up three single memory pensieves that he had picked up during his travels. One was for Professor Snape's memory of a Marking Ceremony, one was for when Harry managed to extract a memory from the Dark Doofus and the third was for Dudley's memory of the ring exchange between the two Draekons.

Harry then told the professor to extract the memory of a Marking ceremony that he was witness to, while he walked through Dudley's mind for the cutesy exchange.

He knelt in front of Dudley and said, "Think of the time that Draco and I exchanged rings." Dudley was nervous because here was his cousin with that wand of his pointed at him. He knew that he would not end up with a tail this time, but still he was nervous.

"Okay," he said, indicating that he was ready.

"Legilimens," Harry said. He went in gently and saw the memory that Dudley had brought to the forefront of his mind. It included the matching jammies comment and finished at the point where he was watching Draco slumbering in his mate's arms. He pulled the silver thread gently from the mind, copied it and dropped the copy into the single memory pensieve while the original returned to Dudley's mind.

Severus watched as Harry extracted the memory and knew that the boy was now able to Occlude his mind from intrusion. There is never one without the other in regards to Occulmency and Legilimency. "That looked like a successful extraction. How did you develop this skill?" He asked.

"I had gained many skills and memories over the summer. I needed help to differentiate the useful versus the frivolous. I had a capable instructor that helped me sift through it all and help me to bring forward what I needed to learn at the time. All I had to do after that was practice a couple of times before the lessons took hold."

Harry explained a bit about the spiritual exchange that occurred when he came into his magical inheritance. "It was something that I could not stop, but then with everything that I have been able to sort through, I have found several ideas or plans that may help for the future battle. It certainly helped with coming with ideas and some of the decisions I made for the school too."

Severus handed the pensieve with his memory in it and told Harry to study it well before giving it back. Harry nodded and handed the one for the ring exchange to him. "I suggest that you allow Remus to view it after you're done or with you if you like."

Lupin looked interested in viewing it and said, "I'd like to watch with you, if you don't mind?"

Dudley said, "Send it to the Weasley twins when you're done. They want to see it too and Harry you did promise to send them a copy."

The potions professor nodded his head and then took his leave, saying, "I don't mind Lupin, but think that I will be going now. It's getting late and the Headmaster did call for another early meeting in the morning."

The boys laughed, watching both men leave. "I'm knackered," Dudley said. "I'll see you both in the morning. Night Draco. Night Harry." He received a "Good Night" in reply. The Draekons took the pensieves to Harry's trunk.

They were organizing it bit by bit every night. Harry's gifts to his mate were plenty and were not all given at one time. Still Draco was pleased that Harry had taken the time to find things that he thought
would please him.

Dudley had told Harry about Draco's fascination with films and movies. Harry had picked up several in different languages that had the subtitle options on the DVDs. Harry couldn't wait to listen to some knowing that he would be able to understand what was being said and in the original language of the recording.

The four potions armoires were set up side by side and Harry had already conversed with the snake guardians of the three he obtained from Grimmauld Place. There was several Dark Potions in them that matured over time and increased in potency because of it, but would require thorough analysis before being able to clearly identify them, as some of their labels had faded over time.

Still Harry was able to clean them up, bit by bit, as he had to re-enforce some of the spells on the one of the armoires. Another was a complete right off, but he still had to cautiously maneuver the contents because some of those were still good enough for use.

The last one was a more recent purchase that had belonged to Regulus Black, but he had never been able to use it as he had disappeared under mysterious circumstances. He wouldn't have been able to open it either due to the Parseltongue locks, but he had been hoping to present it to the Dark Lord for his own amusement. He never had the chance.

Harry and Draco finished the tasks that they had planned to complete by the end of the day. They went to their rooms and prepared for sleep, well it was their honeymoon, so they did eventually go to sleep.

---------------------------------

August 27, Sex Ed??

The following day, Harry had confirmed with the administrative staff that all of the letters had been sent the previous evening. They were now organizing the syllabuses for the new courses with the new teachers, all of whom were hoping to have at least six to ten interested students, as that was the minimum that Harry felt a class could be before the class should not be offered. The maximum number of students per class was to vary, but not go above 20, as some teachers would not be able to handle that number. Classes were not to be separated in to just two houses, which was a source of complication in the past, but of all four that way the students’ schedules could be greatly manipulated, hopefully, to everyone’s satisfaction.

The next morning, during their meeting with the Heads of House, Harry presented another trick up his sleeve for September 1st. Dudley and Draco were present for this discussion, as they had more input to bring forward.

Sitting in the chair that he had conjured the day before, Harry was seated at the head of the table with Draco and Dudley on either side. The table size was reduced to a six foot round, bringing everyone closer together and to prevent shouting.

Professor Flitwick brought up the changes that occurred in the Great Hall and asked, "What about promoting house unity?"

Draco explained to them, "House unity can be maintained within the dorms and through some organized inter-house competitions. Each student will be encouraged to cultivate friends outside of their House and classes. Forcing the years to sit together will give them a greater chance to note that
they are the same and here to learn the same things. Forcing the Houses to sit together, as they did, only re-enforced segregation in the classes, the segregation of the students and ultimately the future adults of the Wizarding world."

"From what I have been able to understand," Dudley said. "The students who are known as Muggleborns were further separated by not allowing them access to all the Houses. Reviewing the older records we found that the muggleborns are more likely to be sorted into Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Gryffindor. It was very rare that a muggleborn that had the affinity for Slytherin to be sorted into that house."

Harry continued, "There is also the problem that muggleborns have been stifled in their need to adapt to this new environment. We are going to incorporate a muggle concept at this school to allow the students to diversify their time in activities that will promote House unity. There will be inter-house sports days, once the students have learned a few other sports besides Quidditch. Many muggleborns that come here are often surprised that there is no football, rugby, basketball, baseball, etc… available. That is why some of the physical education that the students will be learning in DADA will be these sports because it teaches them how to work as a team, as a unit together."

Severus was surprised that they had done research into the past placements of the students, but couldn't fault the statistics that came out of it. It was true that the muggleborns came to this school sometimes found it hard to adjust as everything seems to change for them.

He secretly agreed that there is more out there than just Quidditch and couldn't understand why the previous Headmasters never allowed for more sports. Even the Olympics had a Wizarding division, but that was not something that anyone learned about at this school.

Dudley then presented a new issue for the Heads of House to think on. "I've attended a private boarding school, just like Harry, for the past six years. We have had exchange students every year from other countries and we have never denied them the rights to practice their own religions or culture. However, whenever there have been any altercations based on various misunderstandings, the students were brought before the Student Court and Counsel in order to resolve the issues."

Harry continued, "Ideally a student counsel or court would allow the students to collectively present their problems or grievances to neutral parties rather than their Heads of House. It is an idea to keep in mind for the future because I am planning ahead for the next year and will be bringing this back up during a meeting next semester."

"Once Harry defeats Voldy-whatever or even before he does," Dudley said. "The students, who require or ask for sanctuary, would probably be the best ones in a position to implement the initial stages of a Court or Counsel. The counsel will also allow the students to bring up their issues collectively and be able to present them to the professors, the Heads of House or even the Headmaster."

Again the Heads of House were intrigued by the forward thinking of their new Headmaster. Harry then moved on to another topic that needed to be discussed at this meeting. Another change that would be occurring in conjunction with the changes to the course schedules were the changes in the train times.

"The students will be arriving earlier then in the previous years," Harry began. "We will be receiving the influx of students around four in the afternoon. This will allow ample time for the students to be informed of the changes in the seating arrangements in the Great Hall.

In fact half of the Journeymen and aides will be riding the train in order to inform the prefects of the changes and be there for additional security. Announcements about the students’ arrival order will
occur as the train pulls up into Hogsmeade and the years will arrive at the school in that order. Also once the sorting of the first years is completed, there will be a few standard announcements and then feast will begin. Any other announcements can wait until after the feast."

“The ones making the announcements at the feast will be the four of you,” Harry said.

“So we make the announcements after the feast for you,” Snape said.

“There’s nothing wrong with that,” Professor Sprout said. “It will help the Headmaster hide in plain sight.”

Professor McGonagall asked, “Do you want us to explain about the new classes available and hand out the schedules too?”

Harry nodded and Draco said, “It would be best for the students to get acquainted with the number of new changes.”

“Not only that, but it will allow the students time to reflect on their optional or alternate courses.” Harry continued. “Since September 1st is Friday, the students have an extra two days to get used to the new ideas, besides if we show them what the options are they will be able to take Saturday and figure out which ones they wish to take. It will also allow time for the older years to visit the counselors in group sessions for career advice. We’ll have them turn in their schedules by the end of Saturday or by Sunday morning the latest and have them sorted out in order to hand them a complete schedule on Monday.”

“They should list their choices in order of priority. Like which class they want to take as their number one option, followed by two and three,” Dudley suggested. “Maps to the school would also be advisable. In my school, one was provided every year that I have been there. This was due to the changes in subjects or teachers and the new class locations varied, if I happen to be taking a new course.”

Professor Flitwick was excited now. “Perhaps… I could charm one that will disappear after a month or so, depending on the year of the student. We do need the students to learn how to rely on their memory. That’s why one was never provided before.”

Harry thought on it and said, “That’s an excellent idea. Now, while we’re all here I believe it would be the perfect time to tackle a slightly difficult and sensitive topic,” Harry said. “Dudley you don’t have to stay for this, but you can if you like. Draco the choice is also yours.”

“I’m staying. I would like to know the answers,” Dudley said.

Draco said, “I’m not going anywhere. I, too, want to know the answers.”

The four professors and Founders were surprised that they Harry was allowing these two to stay, but it was very apparent that Dudley and Draco were advisors of a sort and were slightly above the Heads of House, due to their proximity to Harry. Draco was there as Harry’s mate and Dudley as part of his blood family.

“I have not seen, heard nor attended any class for sexual education at this school. Now just because it’s not something that I may have heard about, I am sincerely hoping that such classes are taking place.” His questioning, but blank eyes shifted to every professor in the room, Founders included.

The four Deputy Headmasters looked at one another and all of them had felt some degree of shock register on their own faces and be reflected in the others’.
Professor McGonagall began, “Classes of that nature begin with your Head of House during the third year, but only to the point of explanations for the girls and instructing them on appropriate behaviour. Girls do mature at a faster rate and we feel that they need to be aware of some precautions prior to engaging in any activity of that sort. They are also instructed on what to look out for with regards to possible coercion.”

“The boys usually mature later and therefore are given the same instructions during their fourth year,” Professor Flitwick said. “Boys tend to be the aggressors, but we have had a few that were not and felt that similar instructions on how to prevent being coerced were to be part of those classes.”

“It is during their fifth year that the students are given further instructions on how to prevent disease, pregnancies and accidental bonds from occurring,” Professor Sprout said. “They are even instructed on how to detect the level of magic that a potential partner may have in order to make an informed decision.”

“Surely you recall having attended those classes, Mr. Potter,” Snape said.

Draco answered, not caring that the question may not have been addressed to him, “Yes I have, as you were the instructor.” He didn’t want is godfather falling into the habit of singling out Harry and revert back to snarking at him. “But Harry hasn’t or he obviously wouldn’t be asking.”

Snape didn’t mind Draco’s answer because his question was addressed to both Potters that were now in the room.

“There is a reason why I’m bringing this up now,” Harry explained. He took Draco’s hand in appreciation of his defense, but managed to convey his feelings that Snape wasn’t acting malicious. “I suspect that some 5, 6, & 7 years may have engaged in that kind of activity and have developed bonds that may or may not be complete nor are they registered with the Ministry.”

Draco continued, “We also suspect that several muggleborns were not in attendance to any of these classes just like Harry. It is kind of late to investigate this information after the fact, but I suspect that the reasoning for this neglect was to trap them under the control of a witch or wizard.”

Harry then explained that there were a couple of times in the past school year that he had been coerced into physical relations that he had never even considered prior to them occurring. He then submitted his memories of the parties or events of those times and how he came to the realization about the potion ingested and the “Subliminus” spell used.

All of the professors here were in shock. “This is one of the main reasons that I wanted to implement the monitoring marbles,” he explained. “During the announcements the 5, 6, & 7 years will be asked to remain behind in order for you to review their magics and find out if they had bonded or were left with incomplete ones.

The ones that are incomplete will either have to be completed or we will have to instruct them on how to close off the partial bond. Closing it off will further prevent them from being manipulated in the future. The marbles will be able to help you out with that, as I will be providing the four of you with a more in depth access to the monitoring spells on them.”

“Another reason to monitor the students is to track the ones that have been Marked. They won’t be able to leave the school grounds with these activated. Also for this year, all Hogsmeade visits are cancelled. If the students need anything, they can send owl orders to the stores or request it from their parents. Their safety is still a top concern.”

Professor Flitwick spoke up, “What do you propose that the students do with their free time?
Hogsmeade is a diversion from their studies, what are they to do now?"

“Well, my school had clubs that the students joined,” Dudley said. “The clubs fell under several categories, like Intellectual, Athletics and the Arts. Clubs that fell under the Arts varied in subject, as there was Performing Arts, Showcasing and Radio & Journalism. Those that fell under Athletics depended on the sports preferred, like Football, Rugby and Basketball. The Intellectual Clubs were for those that were not inclined to sports and they included Chess & Strategies (as there is more than one military strategy type game), Mathematics and Sciences. All of the clubs allowed students with like interests to join and allowed them expand their knowledge in those areas.”

Once again the four Deputies and Founders were surprised at the news from their Headmaster and the ones seated by his side. Then Harry spoke, “This may seem strange to many of you, but we had small clubs in our primary school, so these ideas are not exactly new to me. I’m glad that Dudley has reminded me of them because it will also allow students to gain experience in some future fields like Arithmancy, Sports or even proper Journalism and News-casting. I’m certainly looking forward to seeing the potential club ideas that may crop up during this school year.”

Draco nodded and wondered what his courses should be. He knew that he wanted to help Harry out and be by his side when the time came, so he asked him in front of the others, “Harry?” Harry turned and focused his attentions to his mate. “Since you’re going to be fighting the Dark Lord, I was wondering if I could attend some of the courses with you instead of formally attending classes here. I don’t want to be a liability to you and I do know that I will not be able to play Quidditch either. So I was hoping to work out with you.”

Harry smiled, “I don’t mind you working out with me, but then who will be my eyes in the classes. You should take counseling first before making any decision. It will also be up to your Head of House, as he and I will be discussing the additional training that I will be taking.”

“We’ll discuss this later,” Snape said. “Are we done here? I seem to have a Journeyman to speak to about my potions classes, including you, Harry.”

Harry smiled at him and just nodded. “Any queries or solutions into our discussion today will be addressed tomorrow at the same time. We’ll announce the possible clubs during lunch, as the others may be able to provide us with some insight on which clubs should be started and which teacher or teachers’ aide that want to be advisors to a club. We will need their names to provide have a list on hand of those available and interested.”

They discussed a few more details before leaving the staff room with their minds in whirl. Harry certainly was not hesitating in his decisions. Hopefully the students wouldn’t be too disappointed about the lack of trips to Hogsmeade.

Dudley took leave of the other two, as he planned to team up with Hagrid in order to learn about the food gardens that helped out the school.

Draco left to meet up with the counselors and Harry made his way down into the dungeons to pick up the first and second years syllabus from Professor Snape.

-------------------------

TBC...
Author's notes: At the end of sixth year, Harry is giving a potion by two of his best friends. "An early birthday gift for you Harry," Hermione said. Drinking it was supposed to correct his sight. He didn't really want to drink, but why he did... what happened after... and what's this about a Draekon?...

Chapter Fifteen

August 27, later that day – Part I

The Great Hall was again bubbling with conversation about the school, but this time things were being discussed in order to organize the classes and courses.

The teachers and aides were allowed to have morning meals in their own quarters until the thirtieth and then they were to attend the Great Hall for all meals. The only exception was Professor De Luka and a few others like Professor Snape, who were too busy with supplying potions for the school. He had the Journeyman and Harry to help him out, but he would have preferred his godson’s company for this. Whether he had an interest in potions as a career or not didn’t matter when it came to mass amounts of potions ingredients preparation.

However, Draco did need some career counseling as he did not really know what direction to take for his future, now that his life was no longer dictated by his father. He did promise to help them out later in the afternoon, after he had been used as a guinea pig for the counselors.

Dudley was a little nervous when he went to meet up with Hagrid, especially since the one time that he had met the man, that man had given him a pig’s tail.

Hagrid was outside, hitching an old fashioned plough to something that Dudley thought was a horse, but obviously it wasn’t. In fact the creature looked awfully familiar, when its head turned to face his direction and chirped. That’s when he noticed that it had wings and a beak. The wings were protected and covered to prevent it from taking off, but the rest was just like he remembered.

Grinning he stepped forward and bowed to it, looking it directly in the eyes. “I did not think that you would know what to do Mr. Dursley,” a deep voice boomed from where the hippogriff was being hooked up.
The hippogriff bowed in return and then went back to waiting for Hagrid to finish up. The large man had promised to play with him or let him go play after he helped with this thing. Dudley approached them, now that he had permission from the animal.

“Harry told me all about him,” Dudley explained, petting the large creature's neck. “I met Buckbeak this summer when I was helping Harry out with his mate.”

“His mate?” asked Hagrid, lifting his shaggy head. That’s when Dudley noticed where the monitoring ball was. It was nestled with the big man’s shaggy beard, like a small bird in a nest.

Dudley chuckled and then answered his question. “Yes his mate. You might remember him as Draco Malfoy, but his name is now Draco Severus Potter. He may have been rude before, but that was because he had to play a part or act in a way that would benefit him for survival. From what I’ve learned, his father is not a kind man.”

Harry and Draco had told Dudley that he could tell Hagrid anything, including the fact that they were mated. It was something that the big man would understand. They still had not told him about the decision for the continuation of the larger man’s magical education, but they would soon be going to visit him for tea to explain that to him.

“Really… Now tha', I understand,” Hagrid said. “Why are ye here, now?”

“To learn how you work the land,” the tall blond said. “I want to see how it’s done in the magical world versus the muggle one. Obviously you can’t use the larger gas powered machines that the muggles do and I’m curious to see how it was done not so long ago in the muggle world.”

“Tha’s not what I meant,” the big said. “I mean why r’ ye at Hogwarts?” He motioned for the youth to stand behind the plow and then showed Dudley how to strap in and move with the animal and machine. The blades on it were sharp. Their purpose was to till some new section or area of land for the students to prepare and learn from for the coming semester.

Hagrid would be following behind them with a rake shaped four pronged tiller to further break up the earth. “Well?” He said motioning to the area that was sectioned off with a bright orange rope.

“I’m on vacation,” Dudley said. “I came to see the infamous school with my own eyes and Harry let me come. That’s all… Hee-yah, let’s go Buckbeak.” He tapped the reigns gently and the large animal pulled forward.

Hagrid was surprised that the muggle knew what to do with when encountering a hippogriff, but then he hardly knew the boy. He stood up watching a few more moments and realized that Dudley was not that round anymore and he wondered if Harry had something to do with it.

It was time to work up a sweat. The amount of land to work was not small, but Hagrid had a feeling that he would be finished earlier then expected because of the extra help. He stood behind his own plow and animal and motioned him to begin moving.

---------------------------------

Neville was returning from the greenhouses for lunch, when he came upon the two men working in the field. Now that was a sight that he had never seen before. ‘Hippogriffs used as plough-mares?’ he thought. ‘How silly! But that guy…’ He watched the back muscles play under the harness and the leg muscles shift with every step.

When he first saw him, Neville was curious to know who he was. He had never seen that kind colouration on a guy before, well that’s not entirely true because of the various combinations in the
magical world still this was different to him. He’s seen blond-haired blue-eyed girls and knew that sometimes it was just magic enhanced beauty spells that helped them to achieve that look, but it was not found on many guys and this guy was all natural. He was tall, looked muscular and was tanned too.

Dudley had been working out that summer to build up the muscles he needed to replace the fat that he was losing, but he did not neglect his appearance. Draco and Harry had dressed him up on the day they went shopping, but to top it all off Draco insisted that Harry perform a tanning spell on him that would allow for the newer skin to have some protection from the sun. It was too new to allow it to burn and they didn’t know what the effects would be if it did burn.

Neville was curious to know more about him because he was Muggle-studies assistant, helping out with the new greenhouse concept and now here he was plowing a field. ‘Something’s not adding up, is this guy a transfer student?’

Neville’s interest in the guy wasn’t surprising to him. He had always watched people, taking in how they looked, who they hung out with and some of the time he even had dates to the school’s parties, but he never cared whether his date was male or female. It was always someone that he could be with for fun and it was usually with someone that he knew or that knew him.

He never dated someone he wasn’t sure about and he certainly did not play the field like some of the others in his year did. He respected himself too much for casual sex encounters and his grandmother would be disappointed to know that he acted in less then a gentlemanly fashion.

However his eyes were now on someone that was visually pretty, but he knew better then to judge someone on how they looked. Still, watching that guy plough was better then watching strangers walking in the street and it was definitely better then returning to the Great Hall to have something as ordinary as lunch.

He sat down on a hill nearby and just watched them work, thinking about nothing, just enjoying the view.

It was peaceful to see someone hard at work and enjoying themselves while they were at it. His eyes were half closed, resting, when he heard laughter coming from the field. It was the kind that was infectious and it wasn’t booming, so he knew that the laugh came from the stranger.

He opened his eyes and saw that the guy was laughing at Hagrid. The big man had stepped into a hole that caused him to have one leg buried up to the knee. Neville frowned, ‘Is he making fun of him?’ He watched as the guy removed his harness to go help the larger man out of the hole.

Then he heard words float up to him and they put him at ease, “I told you to watch out for that hole. I don’t know what made it or how far down it goes. Are you all right?” He said as he got under one shoulder and helped to heave the man out or least let the man use him as a lever.

Slowly the leg came out of the hole. “I’m fine, thank you for your help Mr. Dursley,” Hagrid said, huffing from the exertion. It was an awkward effort before he had managed to free his leg.

“Just call me Dudley. Mr. Dursley is my father and that man... well, please, just call me Dudley,” he replied still chuckling. “Oh and you’re welcome.” He got up to have a look at the hole in the ground, shook his head and returned to Buckbeak, who was waiting patiently for the work to be done so that he could go flying.

Hagrid was chuckling himself as he looked into the hole and realized that it was the burrow of an animal that had long since moved on. He chuckled some more, knowing that he had tried to side step it, but still ended up in it. He turned his gaze back to the youth who was not making fun of him when he laughed and had actually helped him out. He could see the humour of the situation.
Dudley turned back to look at the big man grinning. “You keep standing around and I will be finished long before you start,” he said. “Let’s go Buckbeak, we have to finish this before I can go bug Harry.”

Buckbeak chirruped in his way trying to say that he wanted to bother the boy too. Hedwig heard him and hooted back that she would find out where the boy was. It was time that he came out of that stuffy building for some sun. (...I’ll go harass him into coming outside this afternoon...) she said to the large animal.

(...We should be done by then...) Buckbeak replied in the common language of the birds.

Dudley was still smiling as he listened to the noises coming from the two animals. Hedwig swooped down and landed on Dudley’s shoulder, going along for the ride in the meantime. His gaze wandered over the fields and then fell on that brown haired boy that was sitting in a nearby hill watching them. He smiled at him and waved.

Neville was entranced with the way the blond was at ease with the large animal. He was then surprised when a Snowy Owl landed on the guy’s shoulder and the guy looked at ease with the whole chirruping conversation happening around him. He was then startled when the guy looked up smiling at him and then waved.

Poor Longbottom was embarrassed at being caught looking, he turned slightly red in the face, but he smiled back and shyly returned the wave. He stood up, turned and walked back towards the castle. ‘What is going on with me? Why am I embarrassed by this guy? He only smiled and waved at me. Maybe he thought that I was someone else. No... That can’t be it.’ His confused thoughts were plaguing him slightly, as he made his way into the Great Hall.

He didn’t see anyone that he knew, so he sat down and began to serve himself some lunch. He didn’t notice when someone sat down next to him, but was a little surprised by the clicking that he heard nearby. Looking up and around he found that Draco Malfoy was sitting next to him and that the clicking sound came from the beads in Malfoy’s hair.

Malfoy’s looks had changed over the summer. Neville noticed the changes in his teeth and eyes, plus there were some black strands at the temples of his shoulder length hair. He looked at the multitude of tiny little braids that was now in longer hair and the beads, varying in colour and size, were what held the braids’ form. Suddenly silver-grey slit eyes were looking into his light-brown ones.

Neville blinked and blinked again. “I’m sorry Malfoy... I didn’t mean to be rude by staring at you,” he said.

Draco snorted with a smile and said sarcastically, “I hadn’t noticed. Please, just call me Draco.”

Neville just blinked once more and the asked, “That guy that walked in with you and Harry yesterday. Who is he?”

“Dudley Dursley,” Draco said after swallowing a mouthful. “He’s Harry’s cousin.”

“Why is he here?”

“He wanted to come along,” Draco explained. “He was curious about the school that Harry had been coming to and it was a nice vacation for him away from the muggle world. Why are you so curious Longbottom?”

Neville flushed a bit and said, “I’m not sure and please call me Neville.”
He turned his attention back to his meal and decided that maybe he didn’t really want to know more. He had overheard conversations about Harry and his family when he talked to Ron and Hermione. He heard that the guy was a bully and had hurt Harry.

“He’s changed,” Draco said after he saw the bumbling Gryffindor frown.

“What?”

“Dudley has changed,” the blond Slytherin repeated. He looked knowingly at Neville.

“Why would I be interested in knowing that?” Neville said, feeling guilty that he was telling a half-truth.

Draco quirked an eyebrow and looked at the blushing Gryffindor. He was impressed. Longbottom had told him the truth and yet it wasn’t complete. It looked like Neville really didn’t know why he would be interested in knowing and yet Draco was hardly stupid. He’d seen the curiosity in Neville’s face.

“You’re good,” Draco said. “That was almost believable. But I think you should know that the guy helped me and Harry out over this summer. You should know that everyone grows up over time. Everyone changes over ti...” His voice trailed off when the bond with his mate surged for a moment. “Excuse me,” he said getting up and running out of the Great Hall.

Neville was concerned by Draco’s actions and therefore he stood up, following the running blond down the stairs towards the dungeons. “What’s going on?”

“I don’t know,” Draco said. “Harry might be in trouble, but I’m not sure how.”

“I don’t know,” Neville said as he was running and keeping up with the Slytherin. “Did something happen in the dungeons with Harry and Professor Snape?”

The building was currently focused on maintaining the structure around her headmaster. Two house-elves popped in front of the two boys, causing the boys to halt and when the elves took hold of them, they were popped to a section of the building that looked to have collapsed inward.

“Bloody hell,” Neville said.

“HARRY,” Draco shouted.

“Yeah,” a voice replied within the rubble. “It’s OK Drake. My magic’s holding up the wall, but you need to clear some of it away in order for us to get out.”

“Come on Longbottom, start moving some the rubble nearby and levitate what you can to the side,” he said. “You elves get some emergency medical supplies now. Dobby!”

The two elves popped out and Dobby popped in. “You go get some extra help from the charms teacher and his assistants. Get someone else to find that bastard Filch. He’s the caretaker of this school. I want to know how this could happen.”

Draco then spelled the walls to remain upright. The others came running and soon the rubble was removed. Harry’s magics had created a dome around himself, the potions Journeyman and his Professor. The journeyman was injured, but not too much, so his injuries were stabilized and he was soon taken to the infirmary.

Harry refused to go to the infirmary and so did Snape. “I’m not injured Madam Pomfrey,” he said.
“I’m just shook up a bit, but that is all.”

“Well some calming potion for you is in order and I just need to scan you to be sure,” she said.

“I’m sorry Madam Pomfrey, but I don’t need to be scanned and I certainly do not need any calming potion,” Harry said wrapping his arms around his worried mate. “My potion is right here,” he murmured, turning his head into the crook of his mate’s neck and nuzzling the mating mark.

Draco wrapped his arms around Harry and said, “I think that I can take it from here Madam Pomfrey. We won’t be doing anything too strenuous for the remainder of the day. I hope.”

“Where do you think you’re going Severus Salazar Snape?” She asked in a tone that indicated he should not be heading anywhere, but the infirmary.

“I am uninjured as well and I am going with the Potters,” he said. Walking in the direction that Harry and Draco was heading in.

“The Potters?” Neville asked quietly, watching them walk away. He didn’t know whether to follow them or not, but then knew that he had to return to his duties at the greenhouses.

Mr. Filch was found and directed to the secretary’s office that appeared to guard the doorway to the Deputies’ Office, which used to belong to the old Headmaster. Obviously there was going to be some extensive discussions regarding the building maintenance or lack of… He brought a copy of the lists of items that he has submitted over time to Headmaster Dumbledore and the resulting contracts and repairs that did or did not take place.

The secretary, an elderly, but competent woman, took the folder from Filch’s hands, said a spell that copied the contents and placed the copies in a coloured folder matching the houses. Then she sent the folders whizzing up the stairs just behind her, only to have them settle on each of the Deputy Headmasters and Headmistresses new desks. She returned the original to Mr. Filch and then told him to have a seat in on one of the chairs that were lined up just in front of her. “They will be with you shortly,” she said. “They have not all arrived yet to the summons for a review of this incident.”

He nodded and sat down in one of the most comfortable chairs that he’d ever been in. “I wonder if I can get one for my office,” he muttered, looking through the contents of his folder. He was the caretaker after all and all repairs or reporting the need for repairs was the Caretakers job. He knew that something was off with the old coot, but he did the best that he could with whatever supplies he had. He was only one man after all.

A note popped up shortly after he sat down, indicating that the meeting would have to take place the next day, as the time was running short. “I’ll be back tomorrow then,” he said. She just nodded and made a note on the magical calendar sitting on her desk.

---------------------------------

The boys headed in the direction of their rooms and Professor Snape returned to his own rooms to rest for a bit. He wanted to give the boys some time to recover from the accident that had just occurred. Plus it looked like he was going to begin his Deputy Headmaster duties early because he just sent a summons to the others.

It wasn’t anyone’s fault that that happened. The walls were weakened and they had been only looking into another classroom as a possible location for potions experimentation to occur. The place needed to be secure, but the room that they were currently looking into was iffy at best. One spell to clean the room and it collapsed. He knew that they should have consulted with Filch on the matter,
but they had been too curious to explore a part of the building that barely anyone had been in for a while.

He wasn’t going to live this one down with that wolf, once that situation was explained. He just hoped that the mangy wolf would allow him to keep some of his dignity. He highly doubted it because he could just picture in his mind Remus standing there and telling him that he was acting like a Gryffindor.

‘I’m not a Gryffindor,’ he thought, although he could see their point of view in the matter. A knock came at his door.

“Enter,” he said. The door opened to a very worried looking DADA Professor.

“Severus, are you all right?” Remus asked.

“I’m perfectly fine,” he replied. “You needn’t concern yourself about me.”

Remus wasn’t fooled. “Do you need anything? Can I get you something to calm your nerves? Don’t say you don’t need it, I can see you shaking from here.”

Severus bowed his head. He hoped that the werewolf wouldn’t be able to tell. “I have calming potions over there,” he said and proceeded to get up to get one.

“Stay put. I’ll get it for you,” Remus said.

Snape did as he was told and then he even allowed Lupin to hold the bottle while he swallowed the potion. Remus made sure not to touch the Potions Master, but the close proximity did much to ease the wolf’s edginess over the incident.

The two men had spent the previous evening, after having left the quarters of their respective godsons and talked well into the night. It seems that after Remus discovered the extent that the Dark Lord would go to in order to bind his followers, the wolf in him raged. It was a strange sensation, but it was one that he recalled from his seventh year.

Remus had not been unaware of the pain that Severus was in during that time nor were his senses blinded by his surroundings or friends in school. He had a pretty good idea that Severus was in trouble and in pain from repeated rapes because he could smell the pain, the blood and the semen. He was just unable to do anything because he had run out of time in order to claim the one his wolf instincts called mate.

He was the DADA Professor after all and he knew that the wolves had mates for life. He was a very learned man, but he couldn’t stay around and watch the one he knew to be his, fall further into the trap that had been set by his parents and his peers. That’s why he left after seventh year and that’s what he explained to Severus the night before.

Severus had been shocked to learn that Remus was aware of some of the events that occurred during the seventh year and that the only regret that the wolf had was not being there in time to prevent it.

The previous night’s conversation opened up a path for the two men, but caution would have to be taken with their actions until Harry could find a solution to the Dark Mark issue. Remus did admit that the wolf in him needed to be close in proximity to the snarky man and Severus didn’t mind that too much.

He was a private man, but then he found that if they couldn’t touch one another, then they could do other things for each other, just like Remus was doing now, taking care of him as close as he could
without touch. It didn’t activate the Mark and the Dark Lord was not aware of these actions or of Snape’s interest.

Touch sparked the Dark Mark and was triggered by emotions that accompanied touch. This was something that Severus had taken time to explore years before the first fall of the Dark Lord. It was a step in the right direction. They would get to know one another, just like their godsons had and they could take their time until they can be physically together.

Now that Severus had finished swallowing the last drop from the vial the two men just looked at one another. Remus smirked and then said, “You need a bath. I’ll go get one ready for you.”

Severus blinked and slowly nodded his head. “All right, but remember...”

“Don’t worry,” Remus told him. “You still need to go meet up with the boys after. I’m just going to prepare it for you. Besides I need to return to my assistants and continue planning classes for the DADA.”

“All right,” Severus said. “If it helps, Harry’s taking over my first years and half of my second years. That might help you to divide the tasks. However you might want him to take over one of the physical fitness classes for the first years, instead of having him teach your second years. You do have more teaching aides for DADA anyway.” He then looked into the concerned amber eyes, after Remus had returned from preparing the bath and then said, “Thank you.”

“You’re very welcome and thank you for the advice.” Severus just nodded and shooed the werewolf out of his rooms.

Severus went to his bedroom to undress and then he stepped into his bathroom, carefully getting into the foamy bath that Remus had prepared for him. He smiled in the privacy of his bathing room, washing away the dust and thinking about Potter’s revelations.

‘The boy certainly knows what he’s doing in potions,’ he thought. ‘I still haven’t seen him brew anything, but I will only need to see his potions armoire and some samples of his finished potions to know more about his abilities in brewing.’ Anyone truly interested in potions will have an armoire organized in such a way that everything needed will be close at hand.

That was true, as Severus has two such armories of his own. One was a gift from the Potions Master that taught him and helped him to earn his Mastery. The other came from a surprise inheritance from a very distant relative named Great Uncle Fergus Prince, who came from his mother’s side of the family.

The inheritance included a very small getaway cottage in Ireland somewhere. He’d never been able to go visit it yet. There was also a modest vault in Gringotts that contained just a bit of money, but had more books and junk in it. Severus never complained about that because amongst the junk is where he’d found his second potions armoire.

That armoire contained a few potion volumes tucked away in a secret cubby, whose language was still difficult to decipher. He was also surprised to have found a couple vials of potions, plus some other vials containing unknown or seemingly rare ingredients.

As soon as his bath was completed and he was dressed, he gathered up what he needed to meet with the others, taking a page from Harry’s book and bringing an empty journal for the purpose of recording the meeting. He also thought that it now was a good time to visit the boys to see how they were doing and to drop off the pensive memory.
He had stored two memories in it, one of his own memories of a Marking Ceremony and one of the more recent Marking ceremonies that had taken place after the second ride of the Dark Lord. He thought that it might help Harry to make a comparison of the two times.

The single memory pensive could actually hold up to 3 complete memories and not just one. It’s just that hey were great gifts for giving copies of single moments that not many read the instructions that come with the device; other then how to copy a memory and store it properly.

Taking them in hand he made his way up to the Founder’s Tower.

---------------------------------

The boys were now in their quarters, quietly talking to one another. “What happened down there, Harry?”

“Hmm,” he murmured from his comfortable position within the arms of his mate.

“Harry,” Draco said exasperated that his mate was holding off. “I felt something through our bond now please tell me what happened.”

Harry faced his worried mate and then shifted so that he was the one holding onto his mate. “It was just a normal accident. I think I used too much power behind the Scorgify spell,” he began to explain. “Professor Snape was interested in the prospect of teaching a class on how to conduct potions research and experiments. We were just looking into some of the rooms and cleaning them up as we went along, but that one room wasn’t stable and we were not aware of it.”

“I told one of the house-elves to look for Mr. Filch and have him take an explanation to your Deputies. Although I’m more then certain that the only reason something like happened was that repairs had been neglected over long periods of time,” Draco told his mate.

Harry nodded in agreement with that conclusion. “It will be fixed. I’m sure that this is a perfect time and situation for the Deputies to come together and begin working on something other then just their classes.” Draco cleared his throat to show Harry that he didn’t really care about that at the moment. He just wanted to know that Harry was all right. “I really am fine,” he said kissing his mate, further calming Draco down.

Draco sighed and knew that to be true because he had given his mate a thorough look over. There were only small cuts on his arms and face from the falling debris, but that was the same for his Godfather and that Journeyman. “So how did it go this morning with Uncle Sev?” He asked curious about the testing his mate had to go through in order to prove to the Potions Master that he was competent in the subject.

Harry smirked and said, “It was a blast because once he found out that I was perfectly capable of instructing the first years, I could hear the joy and relief in his voice. Journeyman Lang and I will be splitting the second years between us and the journeyman will be taking over the third years completely.” He chuckled recalling the situation and then told Draco how his godfather was gobsmacked with Harry’s abilities.

---------------------------------

Earlier

Harry made his way down to the dungeons in order for Professor Snape to test his abilities.
Journeyman Lang was already there waiting for them. Thankfully the man didn’t gush at him, but that was something that Harry already knew about the Journeyman.

Sou-Kim Lang was only interested in potions. Potions were his life and when he found out that he had been selected to go to Hogwarts’ School for Witchcraft and Wizardry, he packed his bags and said goodbye to his dead-end, lab assistant days at the research facility. The facility was way under a budget and his only task there was to maintain the lives of the creatures that they experimented on.

He never liked that place because he was sure that it was associated with the Dark Lord and his cronies. He thanked his god that he was a foreigner and he didn’t feel the need to become involved with the politics of this country. He further offered thanks when he was contacted by the goblins, once he had his working visas they had taken his name for a list of possible assistants or replacements.

Sou-Kim didn’t believe that anything would come of it, but now he was extremely glad that his name was on that list. He was so ecstatic that he could work under the guidance of one of the greatest Potions Masters in the known world, Severus Snape.

When Harry got down there, it was with relief that Professor Snape greeted him. It seems he got a small taste of hero worship and was hoping to pawn it off onto Harry. It didn’t work because once Harry was introduced to the journeyman; the journeyman just went back to looking at Severus with adoration and awe in his eyes.

Harry chuckled at the Potions Master’s predicament. “It’s not going to work Professor Snape. I did a thorough background check on Journeyman Lang. It’s obvious that he wasn’t born and raised in this country, which makes him perfect for the position. He has no pre-conceived notions about how to teach the students from certain families that will be coming to this school. Plus he is a Journeyman working towards his Master Certification in Potions. Why wouldn’t he look up to someone who’s earned his Master Certification at the youngest age ever?”

Severus had to agree with that statement, he was proud to have broken the record when he earned his certification. It was also true that Journeyman Lang would not care about the possible nobles or social structure in the classroom.

The Potions Master set about testing Harry’s potions knowledge. He even allowed Harry to consult with any books that he may have brought with him, thinking that there was no way the boy could have any on him.

Harry smirked because he knew that Professor Snape did not expect him to have any on hand and said, “Really...”

He pulled out three large tomes, two small compiled journals and his own personal journal that looked like it was bigger then the other two and filled with sectioning tabs. “Well that’s good because I happen to have several here with me.”

Severus was surprised by the fact that Harry had books with him. He was further surprised that he didn’t know what they contained, but the fact that Harry was prepared showed him that the boy was sincere in his request to be tested and taken seriously. “Very well, shall we begin?”

Harry smile at the Professor and said, “Yes.”

The next hour Harry was asked so many rapid-fire questions regarding potions ingredients and their interactive properties that even Journeyman Lang was hard pressed to remember that information. He was impressed that Harry knew all of the answers.
Harry answered every question thrown at him and consulted his own personal journal only once. He never needed to consult the other books that he had brought along. All he did when a question made him pause was to run his hands over the covers of the books, let it settle on one before he answered the question correctly without fail.

Severus was trying to think up harder and harder questions, trying to stump the Boy-Who-Lived, but it wasn’t working. Some of the questions were from the Journeyman and Master levels and that stubborn Gryffindor knew the answers. It seemed that he had finally stumped Harry, forcing him to consult one of his books, but it looked like he only needed to consult one of the journals and not one of the larger tomes.

The Potions Master knew then that Harry understood the properties and the interactive proportions of the ingredients. Somehow the boy even understood why it was better to mix one thing rather than another. Recognizing his defeat, he sighed, “All right... You win... You know enough to teach the first and second years.”

Harry laughed and Journeyman Lang was stunned. Lang said, “First and second? I think that he could teach all of the years and you’d be out of a job.” Severus just grumbled a bit at that.

“Don’t worry Professor. There’s no way that I want to teach the upper years. They’re going to be your burden.” He said gleefully. “Besides you can still be mean and snarky to those years without having to worry about noticeably changing your teaching methods. I’m sure that there will still be some that will irk you therefore I foresee large points deductions in the future for those students should they do so.”

The Potions Professor grinned darkly at that statement, pleased that Harry wasn’t asking him to change completely. He had seen and heard what Harry had said in the memory that he’d been given for the time the two boys exchanged their wedding bands, about him being a fair man. He could be fair and still be mean in teaching, as long as the students were learning properly.

Harry was right in the fact that the students were not comfortable asking him questions, but that was something that could be changed over time. He certainly didn’t have to appear changed for the sixth and seventh years, but perhaps he could mellow out his teaching methods for the fourth and fifth year students.

‘We’ll see about that and take it one day at a time,’ Severus thought.

At the moment there was an interesting conversation happening between Harry and Lang. “How did you know all those answers? I would have consulted the texts in front of me, why didn’t you?”

“I only needed these in front of me for association. I already knew the answers, but I was also sorta testing my own abilities to research,” Harry explained.

“What do you mean?” Lang asked.

“The majority of the answers to Professor Snape’s questions can be found in these tomes and journals, but I needed to re-assure myself that I would know where to look for the answers, if I didn’t know what the answer would be. Luckily for me, I only had to look up one answer and that was because the question was tricky and somewhat obscured, like a riddle you have to figure out.”

“Mr. Potter, do you mean to tell me that each one of these books contains the answers to the questions that I have asked you?” Professor asked, intrigued by such a possibility.

“For the most part, yes Professor. Feel free to look them,” Harry said. “You too, Lang, feel free as
well. You’ll see what I mean by needing to know where to look for the answers.”

The three tomes varied in colour and texture, but the most amazing thing about them, were their titles and who they were compiled by.

“Magical Plants: Properties & Potions Interactions” compiled by Salazar Slytherin with contributions by the World Masters of Potions, Alchemy & Herbists (from 625BC - 1125AD).

“Creatures Great and Small; Parts & Properties, Interactive Analysis” compiled by Salazar Slytherin & Godric Gryffindor with contributions by the Veterinary, Muggle & Magical Medical Guilds (from 473BC - 1139AD).

“Potions through Ages & Time” complied by Rowena Ravenclaw & Helga Huffelpuff with contributions from the Witches Guild & Historical Mages Compendium (from 1103BC - 1198AD).

The three journals were similar with the exception of Harry’s larger one. The journals were compiled by Harry with a mix of old recipes versus their newer counterparts and the differences that occurred over time, plus an in depth analysis of the cultural differences, as well as geographic anomalies. In his large journal, there was further analysis into each potions origins and it held literally hundreds of partial potions recipes or formulas to complete in part or as a whole, as well as puzzles or riddles to ancient potions formulas in different languages.

Some of the ancient Masters in Potions were very protective of their formulas and if someone didn’t figure out the keys to the riddle, well it would be their own fault if the results were not the ones that they were looking for. Harry’s larger journal contained a section for timeline and a mini-history of different nuances that show where the wording of something or meaning of the words had changed over time and species, language or a mix of all three.

When he had to consult his journal for the verbal test, it was because Professor Snape had mentioned a timeframe in regards to a particular potion, which was altered in the past and it’s most recent application was no longer what it originally set out to be, that included the name of it. It was to stump Harry, but obviously Harry was prepared for such questions.

Professor Snape and Journeyman Lang were impressed by the tomes and journals. “These tomes, how did you get a hold of them,” Professor Snape asked. “I have never seen them and they are certainly not available to the general public.”

Harry smiled enigmatically and said, “I told you that I have journeyed a long way. These were rare finds for me, as the country that I found them in did not even speak English. They were foreign works that had no value to anyone there and it was just luck that I found them. As you can see, these are not originals, but a third printing.”

Professor Snape then said, “I hope that one day you’ll be able to tell me the truth about them.”

“Professor, I am telling you the truth,” Harry said. “There was this shop in the far side of a small town to the West of Tibet, I don’t even recall the name now, but you do know that there are pawn shops everywhere. If a traveler is out of funds or in a bind they will pawn what they can for money. That’s where I found two of the tomes. They were in that shop. I have different versions of them in other languages because these were the most complete works of their time. The Founders were known by the Guilds world wide and some of those guilds still exist today. I wonder if they have updated copies of these, it’s not like they’d be available to the general public.”

Journeyman Lang blinked and was impressed. It was true that many of the pawnshops didn’t care what the objects were and knew that money was a factor when someone came in to give away their
treasures. “How could the shop not know the value of such?” Lang asked. “Most wizards or mages know to cast spells to uncover these kinds of treasures. How could these have not been found?”

Harry then smirked and opened all of the tomes. “Can you read these ones?”

Both men looked at the words in the books and found that they did not understand a single one. There was something at work here because it felt like the words shifted before their very eyes and now they were developing headaches.

“It’s probably best if you two don’t look too long or hard at the words written in here,” Harry said. “The shopkeeper warned me about getting a headache, but I never told him that I was blind and couldn’t see the words.”

Severus and Lang both looked away from the book, blinking and slowly realizing that their temples were throbbing. “Ow,” Lang said.

“Here,” said Harry. He held out two potions vials for them to take. “This should help. It's just a simple headache reducer.”

Lang just took it and swallowed it before realizing that that was a stupid thing to do. What if Harry had been evil and wanted to poison him, but the potion that had a pleasant taste and that surprised him. There was nothing that could change the taste of potions or else the effects would be lost, however this potion was working and working fast. “Wow,” he said.

Professor Snape took his and looked at it. The colour was off and it didn’t smell like a ‘Headache Reducer’ potion. In fact, it didn’t smell at all and that caused Snape some concern. He smirked when he saw that Lang took the potion and swallowed it before even pausing to consider that it could have been poisoned. He waited a moment and noticed that Lang’s tension had noticeably eased and that the strain that came with headaches had diminished, only then did he considered taking the unknown potion.

At his exclamation of “Wow”, Professor Snape lifted the vial and took a small bit into his mouth. He was surprised at the taste. It wasn’t foul and his tongue tingled, which meant that there was a numbing property to the potion that would help to ease the headache. He swallowed the rest and waited. It didn’t take too long and his headache was gone.

“Would you care to explain this Mr. Potter?” He asked.

“You’ll have to be clearer on what you want explained Professor? Is it about the headache effects from the books or anything about the potion that you’ve just taken?” Harry asked.

“All of it,” was the answer he received from the irritated Professor.

Harry just chuckled and then went on to explain that the books may have been compiled by the various Founders, but that the person who bound the third version of those books had been Salazar Slytherin. The books were protected by runes, set into the bindings and Salazar printed everything in Parseltongue. An incantation was needed to alter the words back, but Harry would have to study the runes and consult with the portraits of the Founders, as they may remember the incantation.

"Altering the potion to reduce headaches was easy once I had access to the different ingredients, especially those that were only available from another country." Harry explained. "There is also something known as building up immunity to a specific ingredient, kind of like developing an allergy. I had developed that with one of the main ingredients to the base of the headache potion. In fact that particular base is used in several healing potions, so I had to alter it in order to be able to
have effective potions on hand for my personal use."

"And the taste, how did you manage that?" The Potions Master asked.

"Who said that I had to make it taste like the regular, mass produced stuff?" Harry said. "There no truth to the old saying that states 'All potions must taste bad to be effective', that's just a misconception. It's just a fact that most potions taste bad because no one has thought to improve the taste of them for fear of losing their effectiveness. Unless they really needed to take such potions on a regular basis and then it was altered. It's kind of like the muggle saying, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Those that were altered were usually done so by Potions Experts or anyone with enough determination."

Lang asked, "But those recipes are private and not found in the regular books or tomes."

"True," Harry said. "However, I have visited several pawn shops over several countries and have purchased many private journals that families or people no longer wanted or no longer understood the language within them. I made several finds that allowed me to construct this journal of timelines and nuances. You'd be amazed at what people throw away or get rid of."

"May I see that journal?" Professor Snape asked. Harry handed his larger one over to him and let him look through it. It was an amazing piece of work that obviously took some time to compile. There was no way that Harry could have done that over just one summer and that's what he was asked. "How long have you been working on this?"

"Let me think… The one in your hands… Hmm," Harry thought back over the time it took, sneaking away from his two 'best' friends in order to actually be able to study. He's been doing that for longer then either of them knew. "I'd have to say since about Christmas of first year. It wasn't easy to compile those or know where to begin, but I knew what I wanted the end result to be, so I copied what I could from the library and started from there."

"First years don't know how to use the copy charm. It’s a sixth year spell." Professor Snape said, clearly thinking that Harry was lying.

"I never said that I used a spell," Harry explained. "I made notes about the books and the pages that I wanted to copy, including locations of the books in the library. I learned how to use librarian spells for finding the appropriate books and when I finally learned a copy spell in the second year, I began to compile my journals to fit my needs."

"In second your year Mr. Potter?" The dark man quirked an eyebrow to show his incredulity, not that Harry could see it, but he could detect the note of it in the question.

"Parseltongue-spell, Professor Snape," Harry said. "I was curious to see if there would be any differences to spells cast in parseltongue, rather than in the common language of the spell. I know that most spells require the Latin or an archaic tone, but how do you improve spells if that language can not improve over time. It was during the time that everyone shunned me for being Slytherin’s heir that I had a lot of time to consider languages and wondered if French, German or even Japanese people cast in Latin or in their own tongue.” He shrugged and then explained that to him that parseltongue or snake language was just another language and that’s when he decided to cast a couple of first year spells in Parseltongue and in English.

“I started with the basic Lumos spell. First I said Lumos in parseltongue and then I said Light in parseltongue, which is basically the same thing and got the same results. Then I tried the spell by saying Light in English, I got the same results that I would get by saying Lumos. There are some words that will not translate well, but some of the basics are similar.” He further explained that magic
was basically about intent and that the learning taking place was just how to direct the outcome of the magic with gestures and words.

“The concept of copying or making copies is not a foreign concept to muggleborn, as they often have copying machines for that. In fact they are called photocopiers, but those won’t work in the magical environment. However, before photocopiers there were carbon copy machines that started out manually before becoming electric and those probably could be used in the Wizarding World because they don’t run on electric power.” Since he couldn’t see their expressions, he was deprived of their gap mouthed gold-fish imitations to his explanations and reasoning, but what a sight it would have been. “So, yeah... That’s how I copied what I needed over the years.”

“Well Headmaster,” Professor Snape said. “I’m impressed. I think that I will be re-evaluating everything that I thought I knew about you.”

Lang was stunned as well. He had studied for years and never once thought to try spells in his own language as opposed to the commonly used Latin, which was considered a ‘Dead’ language because it never evolved past what it used to be. He was seriously re-considering his position under these two because Harry seemed far more competent then he was.

However, he squashed that idea fast because he needed to teach in order to continue learning and Harry was the Headmaster of the school, so he couldn’t just be a Potions Instructor. Re-thinking it, he knew that he would learn a whole hell of a lot with these two Masters. ‘Yes, Harry Potter is a Master and not just one of potions. He’s got innovative thinking that will open up the Wizarding World for growth, especially the stagnating parts that are floundering in their own past. Boy, am I ever glad that I had my name on that list.’ He thought, still overwhelmed by everything he had just learned.

“Well Mr. Potter,” Professor Snape began. “I think that we will have to explore part of the dungeons for a suitable room for potions experimentation. I believe that I will have time to offer three extra curricular or optional classes just for that and it will be opened only to the third, fourth and sixth years. Fifth and Seventh years have their O.W.L.S. and N.E.W.T.S. to think about. I may reconsider it for the other years later on, once your new system has been in place for a couple of years.”

“Thank you Professor,” Harry said. “Journeyman Lang can assist with the Third years in that area, as you may need to ease them into being taught by you. Since you’ve handed off their class to him and you did mention that you’ll only be teaching fourth to Seventh, unless you wish to split the fourth years with Lang. I’m sure that he would be able to handle them just fine and that would leave you with extra time to familiarize yourself with your Deputy Headmaster duties and perhaps a bit of time for your own personal research.”

Journeyman Lang then thought up of a Club that he would be interested in supervising.

“Headmaster, with all of the potions required for the running of the school and with this new book of recipes, plus all of the practical potions we’ll be producing, I wonder if I could open an after Class Club for fun potions. To let the students know that there are potions out there, that are frivolous and fun.”

Harry bit his lip to stop himself from chuckling at the groan that came from Professor Snape when he heard the words “frivolous & fun” in association with his beloved Potions. “We’ll see when the time comes. I believe it would take the children’s minds off of the impending war and from their worries about getting good grades. Perhaps something for the first and second years, as Professor Snape might want the third years to have an optional class in potions experimentation. I wouldn’t stop any student that wanted to join your club though. Clubs should be opened to all years.”

“Club announcements will be held off until the students have been able to settle into their routine of
schedule. It will be announced in the middle of September, after the first Prefect meeting.” Harry said, not against the idea at all, but he knew that Snape wanted to have a look around for an experimentation room. “How about we put our ideas on the back burner for now and explore for that room.”

“What does 'on the back burner' mean?” Lang asked.

“Muggle expression,” Harry said collecting his books and shrinking them to place in his pocket. He chose not to clarify that expression, as another idea popped into his mind for the Muggle Studies classes. He pulled out another Journal, the same one he was using to keep track of the teachers and the decisions he was making for the up-coming year and made a note in it regarding his idea. “Where’s my large journal?”

“Here,” Professor Snape said. He had been glancing through it, making note of the colours and tabs, as well as the method that Harry used to track the timelines. He was utterly fascinated by that Journal, but since they were now preparing to leave the room, he handed it back to Harry. “I hope that I can look through it again sometime.”

“Of course Professor,” Harry said. “It would be interesting to discuss different aspects of it with you and I look forward to it.” They headed down a likely looking corridor, consulting with the school from time to time about the rooms in the area, but even she had no idea how long they had been empty or how stable the rooms were.

-------------------

TBC...
Sixteen

Chapter Sixteen

August 27, Continued – Part II

Neville was returning to the greenhouses when he realized that Dudley and Hagrid hadn’t come in for lunch and wouldn’t be in until they had finished their work. “Dippy,” he called to one of the house-elves that he knew was assigned to the kitchens.

“Heard you be helping Master Neville,” the excited house-elf asked.

“Could you take a lunch basket out to Professor Hagrid and Dudley Dursley? They both didn’t come in for lunch and I know that they have been out there working hard. Oh and could you add some treats for two hippogryphs and an owl, please?” He said hoping that the little elf wouldn’t be too afraid to go near the large teacher or the stranger.

“I’s be happy to do that for yous, young Master. Any’ting else?” She asked eagerly.

“No that will be all for now. Thank you,” he said politely. She was always kind to him and he always answered the house-elves with politeness to show his appreciation for their efforts. She curtsied and popped out. ‘Now that was new, but I suppose with their new uniforms the elves are adopting a more advanced or perhaps a more free form of acknowledging our requests’, he thought with a smile.

He continued heading towards the greenhouses to meet up with the three other assistants that were assigned to Professor Sprout. Two were Journeyman Herbalists and one was a Landscaping Journeyman, who wanted to improve her knowledge of plants and plant formations, as well as what worked well together in a garden.

Landscaping, as a guild, was something that Neville had never heard about, but it was apparently popular in the Americas, which is where this girl came from. She had explained that the environment and concern for it was a big issue where she came from. That was why she was here, she wanted to spread the word about this new guild and explain what they actually worked towards.

It was actually small a branch of the Herbalists and Herbologists, but they mainly focused on how to preserve the plants’ natural growing environment and how to improve or protect it. If all else fails,
how to reproduce that environment to be able to move them out should something occur that required such drastic measures.

Neville understood what she meant. Meanwhile he was the only Herbology assistant among them. The other two were Herbalists not Herbologists. Herbologists were quiet rare in that not many people wanted to become one, it was far easier to become an Herbalist.

Herbalists were the ones that helped to grow potions ingredients for healing potions or ingredients for cooking and nothing much more then that. They generally didn’t care about the more complicated plants needed for more difficult potions or property protection, but that was all right because the Landscapist would assist with the students in that respect.

Neville was there to begin to learn how to become a Herbologist and was hoping that he could speak to Professor Sprout about an apprenticeship under her tutelage. He took his Gryffindor courage in one hand and approached her with his request. “Professor Sprout?”

“Ah, yes Neville. I’m glad that you’re back we have much to discuss today and much to prepare,” she said happily. She may have been a short person, but her personality bubbled.

“I was wondering if you’d consider apprenticing me in Herbology,” he asked.

She looked at his earnest face and was very glad that he had approached her. That was how many apprenticeships worked. The student would look for their teachers and it was only on rare occasions did a Master select or approach a student. A master was under no obligation to accept an apprentice and could be approached many, many times with a request to teach and never accept. However, once they did accept an apprentice they then had to follow guild strictures.

Pamona Sprout was hoping that he would approach her before the end of summer. If he hadn’t then she would have approached him because it would have been a waste to lose such a promising Herbologist to the Herbalist section of the guild. It was only friendly rivalry and the Herbalists knew that Herbologists were required in the world, but with the way that many of the students turned out in the past from Hogwarts, the field of Herbology was losing ground to the easier branch in the field of plant growers. With the young Headmaster’s ‘Educational Revolution’ happening now, she was sure that the future would hold more Herbologists.

She smiled at Neville’s worried expression and said, “We’ll discuss that after we talk about the classes and possible options or maybe even a Grower’s Club. Now ladies and gentleman, let’s get the talk over with so we can play in the dirt.”

The others just laughed, but were eager to finish the discussion. This was something that they all loved about working in the gardens or greenhouses, playing in the dirt. It was just something that they all had in common and it was further enjoyed by watching their hard work succeed when the planted seeds grew.

They couldn’t wait to begin teaching and assisting with the classes and the new mini-greenhouses that the Charms and Transfigurations Professors and their assistants were creating, based on the outline or image provided by the new Headmaster.

---------------------------------

Hagrid and Dudley finished the plowing about an hour after lunch was finished from being served in the Great Hall. Hagrid was about to invite Dudley to take a meal with him when a house-elf delivered a picnic basket to them explaining that it was to make up for their missing meal. She even told them that there were treats in the basket for the hippogryphs and the owl that was still on
Dudley’s shoulder.

They thanked her and ate their missing lunch with a lively conversation about everything that’s going to be taking place at the school. It was a wonder that they could get along, but Hagrid was not one to hold a grudge and didn’t seem to have any bitterness in him.

Once they were done he asked whether Dudley wanted to ride Buckbeak and that’s how Dudley became this first muggle-raised squib to ride a hippogryph. Hedwig was flying around with them for a while before going to fetch Harry to play with them, but soon her attentions were drawn to a commotion in the Forbidden Forest.

“Hagrid,” Dudley shouted from above. “Go into the forest, head north towards two o’clock, there’s something going on. Hedwig go to Harry and get us some help.” He heard screams coming from the woods and as he was not one to hold back he said. “I see multiple flashes of light that way,” he pointed in the direction that he planned to head in and have Hagrid follow. ”Let’s go Buckbeak… heeyah!”

Buckbeak reared back in the air and then took off towards the direction of the flashing lights. Dudley guided the active animal and had him set down near the area of the conflict. He wasn’t stupid as he was well aware that the lights were magic spells that were released in the area and he had no protection against it, but if there was one thing that he knew about the wizards it was the fact that they could be taken by surprise with physical attacks. He jumped down from Buckbeak and crouched down to pick up several sizeable stones to chuck. Buckbeak remained quiet, knowing that he may be needed for the fight ahead.

Dudley began walking cautiously towards the area and observed the moment before taking any action. He saw six dark cloaked Death Eaters, masks and all. He wasn’t surprised to find them sniffing around the school, but he was shocked to see that one of them had a little girl up in the air held there by only her wrist.

‘She’s going to have a dislocated shoulder,’ he thought. Then he saw three others on the ground, one was down and not moving the other were huddled together trying to protect the one that was down. The Death Eater that was holding the young girl had them at a disadvantage because he had a captive and was shaking her violently for emphasis.

“Put down your wands,” he yelled at them. One of the boys in the center of the group scowled at the ultimatum and nearly growled out loud because they had just run out of options.

The other that was still mobile was another girl with light-brown hair that frizzed from the magical static in the air. She too was scowling at the lack of options. The third was another boy, but he was the one that was unconscious due to the injuries that he received trying to protect the others.

Dudley watched from the shadows, creeping close, but not too close in case someone saw him. With several rocks in his hand, he hoped that it would be enough to distract the Death Eaters and that Harry would arrive soon.

---------------------------------

Hagrid heard Dudley’s shout and saw the direction that he took off in. He also saw Hedwig winging towards to castle. So he took up his crossbow and made his way towards the commotion. Luckily it was near the edge of the forest. He walked in that direction swiftly and silently through the trees.

Just because he was larger and taller then a normal human, it didn’t mean that he stumbled loudly through the forest. It didn’t make any sense for a groundskeeper to be unable to hunt or cull a herd if
he couldn’t sneak up on them silently.

Quietly he approached the area where the sounds of fighting and magical light were taking place. He looked around and saw that Dudley was approaching from one direction. He then made a decision to come in from another angle in order to be able to take out the other Death Eaters.

---------------------------------

Hedwig had been flying alongside Dudley and Buckbeak having fun, when she sensed magic being expended from the direction of the forest. Then she heard Dudley telling her to go get Harry.

She took off in the direction of the Founders’ Tower because that was where she sensed her friend.

---------------------------------

Harry had just finished telling Draco about his morning and they had just settled down for a long cuddle, waiting for Snape to show up, when his monitoring crystal rang in alarm. It was Hagrid’s that was sending an alarm because it was connected to the emotions of panic, fear and anger. Anytime one of those emotions was released the monitoring crystal would send an alarm.

“Draco we need to get up,” he said to his blond mate. “Go get your emergency kit and send a message to Madam Pomfrey, she may be getting some patients.”

Harry said all of this while he was heading towards his trunk in order to get his own emergency kit, complete with potions, disinfectants, salves and lots of sterilized bandages. Draco ran to gather his own kit which contained much of the same on a lesser scale because his kit also contained collapsible splints, braces, blankets and more bandages of different types. He then took his own monitoring crystal and sent a message through it to Madam Pomfrey in order for her to be prepared for an emergency.

Harry took Dauphin out of her carrier and wrapped her around his neck while walking towards the window. Hedwig was there talking to him, explaining what she knew was going on. (...There’s a fight happening in the forest. Dudley was riding Bucky when there was someone screaming from inside the forest. He’s gone in there to help and told me to get you...)

Harry listened to her and then said (...I’ll need you to guide us to the fight and Dauphin will guide me in flight. We’ll take off from here, after my mate is secured to me...). He then translated his conversion in Parseltongue for his familiar which Draco understood in a confused sort of way.

“Secured to you?” He asked.

“Do you trust me?” Harry asked.

“Of course I do,” Draco said in a miffed tone, as if there was any doubt to it.

“All right then,” Harry said. He gestured his mate to come forward and step up on the ledge of the tower window. The window ledge was large enough to hold him and his mate. Draco had a pretty good idea of what was about to happen and was a touch nervous, but only looked at Harry with love and trust, standing where he was told.

Harry then climbed up just behind to his mate and said, “Dauphin will be guiding me, you just need to hold on. It’s the fastest way short of apparating and I can’t apparate because I don’t know the coordinates I need to get to. Besides I always wanted to take off from here like this.”

He took a hold of Draco around his waist and around his chest, he said a spell that will allow Draco
to stick to him and then they both took a step out of the window, diving down out the tower headfirst. It was just to gain momentum and then Harry uncased his wings and soared up through into the sky and flew towards the forest.

Dauphin was guiding him in order to avoid obstacles just like the time that he decided to fly and nearly got tangled in muggle electric wires. He explained that part of the reason she was his familiar was to assist him when he couldn’t see with his magic because of certain areas affected it or because of his method of travel. She had told him once and once was enough because she re-enforced it by biting him, but she told him that she wanted to be of good use to him for which he was continuously glad to have her as his familiar.

Draco was startled and then nearly scared shitless when they dove headfirst out of the tower window. His heart was thumping rapidly and when he realized how secure he was in those arms and with the charm that held him in place, he slowly relaxed his death grip on Harry’s arms. He opened his eyes and watched the ground zip away as they skimmed near it.

He heard Daupphin hissing or talking to her master, directing his flight and that was when Draco realized that the bond of trust Harry had with the runespoor was absolute. He trusted the little snake completely and Draco knew that it was something that he wanted with his own familiar. His own familiar was with him most times, but it was still very young and still needed lots of sleep.

They were approaching the edge of the forest at a rapid rate and soon he was released from his mate’s grip into a smaller clearing, just about a hundred yards away from the noises that they heard. “You go on foot and I’ll drop down from above,” Harry said. “It will surprise them and I don’t care if they find out that I’m the Draekon. It will serve to piss Voldie off when he finds out.”

“Okay, but promise me you’ll be careful,” Draco said. Harry promised him with a kiss on the mouth and the wind from wings caused Draco’s hair-beads to click. The blond cast a ‘silencing spell’ on them and one on his body, except his mouth and voice. It was to prevent him from making noise to attract the attackers.

---------------------------------

Dudley was crouched in the brush and was listening to the demands of the Death Eaters. He was growing furious when he noticed the movement of a large shadow on the opposite side of the clearing. That’s when he knew that Hagrid was in position.

The four children in the middle of the Death Eaters were obviously students of this school and it looked like they had been through quite an ordeal before even arriving here. They had scrapes and blood splatters all over their clothing. Their hair was matted and their clothing was even tattered. The girls were lucky to still be somewhat modestly covered and yet it was clear that the eldest may have gone through something that she had never meant to experience until she was ready. It was the same with the two boys because they had blood stains on the seat of their pants.

Dudley and Hagrid were both horrified by the children’s appearance. ‘I hope that Harry gets here soon,’ he thought and then heard Buckbeak chirp in a tone that imitated Hedwig. That let Dudley know that help was in the area. He picked his target and threw one of the stones in his hand, hitting the guy on the back of his wrist, forcing the one that was holding the little girl up to let her go.

Hagrid got two shots off from his crossbow and Buckbeak gave what could only be described as a war-cry charging one of the Death Eaters that was looming over the prone student. The other two students, noticing that help was in the area began to fight back physically pushing off their attackers. They scrambled for their wands not caring if they would be expelled for underage magic use or not. They were both casting a shield around the four them to prevent stray spells from hitting them.
Hagrid was occupied by three of the Death Eaters, who tried to gang up on him. Buckbeak was playing tag with one chasing him all over the area and cutting him with his razor sharp beak and clawing him every time the Death Eater tried to cast a spell.

Dudley had kept two fair sized rocks in his hands and charged the one that held the girl, basically tackling him and pummeling him with his fists. It was effective because that one had lost his wand when he was tackled to the ground. His fists connected with any part of the body that he could reach and the Death Eater didn’t know what hit him.

Draco ran towards the clearing, stunning the last one and then approached the students, one of which recognized him. “Draco!” The boy exclaimed shocked by the changes he noticed at a glance.

One of the Death Eater’s attacking Hagrid heard the name called out. He stopped and refocused his attentions on the blond Draekon. “Well my son,” a voice came from within the mask. “It seems that this is where you’ve been hiding. I’ll teach you to defy our Lord... Cruc...”

Harry dropped down from above and landed heavily on the Death Eater before he could finish casting the spell. “Gods... He’s just as annoying as Voldemort... He’s always talking. Draco, take my kit and help the others. You two drop the shield and let him in. I’ll set up another once he’s there with you.”

“Gotta,” he replied to his mate. The two lowered it to allow Draco in their little circle and then he said, “I’m in Harry, put up something that will allow friends in.”

Harry hissed in Parsel-tongue, which caused all four to shudder, but then they felt the shield and the strength of it. It was three times stronger then when the two were combined and they knew that they would be safe for the time being.

Meanwhile Hagrid had grabbed both of his attackers by the scruff of their necks, when they were distracted by Harry’s descent and banged their heads together, causing them to pass out from the pain. He dragged them over to the side and tied them up with rope that he had brought along just in case.

Harry turned his attentions to Draco’s father by focusing on the magical signature surrounding the man. “Malfoy,” he hissed gleefully. “Aww, little Tommy let you come out to play.”

He pulled out his wand and began to cast several spells that would prevent the Death Eaters from leaving the area. In fact he used the Dark Mark as the key to prevent them from apparating, portkeying or shifting their forms to get away.

“Harry Potter,” Malfoy senior growled out. He saw his son catch the kit that the Boy-Who-Lived Brat had thrown. “I should have known that the Golden Boy was the one behind this.”

“This...” Harry said in a questioning tone. “This is just you failing again. Were you expecting Dumbledore or one of his cronies?” He said trying to antagonize the aristocrat.

Draco ran to the children and began to help treat their wounds. He cleansed the open ones and wrapped them up in bandages. Then he administered potions to prevent extreme blood loss and salves for the cuts. He gave them blankets for cover and for their shock. “Let’s get you guys stable. Harry should be done soon,” he said. “We’ll talk later after you’ve all been taken to the infirmary. You guys did the right thing by coming here.”

They looked at him relieved that they had made the right decision. “Thank you,” said the one that called out his name. “I’m sorry I shouldn’t have...”
“That’s enough,” Draco said. “We can talk once you guys are safe inside the castle.”

“Do you think that the Headmaster will allow us to stay until the school begins?”

Draco had an enigmatic smile and said, “Oh, I’m absolutely sure that you’ll be able to stay.”

He continued to hand out potions and then turned his focus on the one lying on the ground. He poured potions down that boy’s throat, massaging it in order to force him to swallow. He used his hands to seek out the injuries and noticed tender ribs and a few broken bones.

Dudley finished pummeling his opponent. The guy looked like he was just released from a meat grinder. Sometime during his fight he had dropped his rocks and had put the guy in a sleeper hold, cutting off his air supply. It was not enough to kill him, but definitely enough to render him unconscious. He heaved a sigh and took a look around to see if he was needed and then noticed that Draco was tending the wounds of the children.

He walked towards the group and began to assist with the others. They were shocked until Draco reminded them that the shield would allow anyone in that had no intentions to harm.

“Drake you need to tell the Deputies to meet and call in the cops,” he said. “I’ll continue working on this one. Oh, make that you get some reliable ones.”

Draco nodded and took up his crystal, sending a call to the Deputy Headmasters and Headmistresses. “Gather in your collective office,” he ordered on Harry’s behalf. He knew that Harry didn’t want to be exposed yet as the Headmaster, so they would have to be organized. “Call in the Aurors, make sure that a couple of them come from the Order. We have Death Eaters on the forest grounds and we’re bringing them in. Madam Pomfrey is already aware that she will be receiving guests.”

His crystal shone in the colours of the collective houses, indicating that they have received the message and were on their way. He turned to look at how his mate was doing.

“Come on Lucius,” Harry taunted. “Cat got your tongue?” He was laughing a bit because he had cast a spell at the older Malfoy and caused him to speak like a cat. He couldn’t get any spells out because he didn’t know about Harry’s little trick with the languages.

Harry was growing tired of this game and therefore he quickly cast a stinger with an immobulous so that Lucius’ last sensation was like static shock, but with the immobulous directly after it caught in him in a spell loop the left him getting zapped, over and over again. “Harry,” his mate called out to him after he had done this. “Quit playing and conjure us a couple of stretchers. We need to get everyone back to the castle. The deputies should have the re-enforcements in their office by the time we get there.”

“Aww Drake,” Harry pouted in fun. “But he’s so much fun to play with. I wanted to try out other things with that one.”

“Harry!”

Harry just let out a laugh, but he sobered quickly when Dauphin hissed at him. (...You’re making the others nervous...)

Harry sighed and stopped the stinging spell. “Don’t worry I’ve had my fun for the day.” He said and then conjured up appropriate stretchers for the injured children.

He tied off every Death Eater and then levitated them like balloons over his head like a kid at the fair. He did make sure that they were stabilized, but immobile. ‘At least they’ll have a great view,’ he
thought looking up at them.

Draco used his wand to levitate the stretchers after he secured the children to them. “Dudley, come on. Help me push these through the forest. Harry will keep an eye out on his balloons,” he said laughing at the glares he felt from above.

Even the three conscious children were amused that the Great Harry Potter had Death Eater balloons. Buckbeak was tempted to fly up and poke at them, but Harry stopped him. (...They need to stand trial and I’m more then certain that a couple of them will be going right back to prison without one...)

(...Very well, but the next time I play with one it will be for keeps. I don’t follow your laws, Draekon...) Buckbeak said.

(...I understand...) Harry replied. (...I won’t stop you...)

All of the children were unconscious just as the group broke through the edge of the forest. “Hagrid,” Harry said. “You don’t have to come with us. Most of this is self-explanatory and if they do need to question you then they can just come to you to ask. If you need one of us with you, just call us through your crystal.”

“Tha’s right kind of you Harry,” the larger man said. “I do need to finish putting the ploughs away and throw on some mulch in the field. Dudley you’ll be a welcome help anytime.”

“Just don’t step into that hole again,” Dudley said pleasantly.

"Scamp," Hagrid said, waving them off. This let them pick up their pace to reach the castle entrance. There they were met there by Madam Pomfrey and her assistants.

Draco explained everything that he did and what he had given them to make them sleep. “I’ll be back later to check up on them and we’ll to talk with them once they have rested,” he told the matronly woman.

Harry waited and then three of them pulled down the Death Eaters to haul them into the school and up to the Headmaster’s former office. The boys allowed the ropes to have enough slack for the Death Eaters to bump into whatever happened to be in the way. Peeves showed up for a moment and threw a couple of water balloons at the floaters before zipping away in his manner. Even the armor in the hallways seemed to drop their weapons on them, as if they knew about the true nature of the dark robed men.

It was going to be tricky to get them up the stairs behind the secretary’s desk, until Dudley suggested that they be shrunk to fit. Draco started laughing because it was funny to see the big bad Death Eaters become no bigger then a foot and a bit long. They weren’t so scary now. Even the secretary had to agree that they were better off that way.

Once they were up the stairs they were treated to a view of the new room. Four large desks were in a semi-circle and all the portraits of the former headmasters had been moved to a gallery on one of the main floors and all of Dumbledore’s gizmos were removed from the office. It was now a serviceable place for the four of them. Over time they would bring things to make it more comfortable, but for now it was painted in such a way as to be welcoming.

There were three Aurors, plus the old Headmaster standing there waiting to take them away. Dumbledore had been there when Snape called on Kingsley Shacklebolt and he couldn’t think of a reason to prevent the old meddler from coming into the school.

He had a quick conversation with the other Deputies and the school in order to allow that old geezer
in on the conversation. The school said she’d warn Harry and she did by talking to him in Parseltongue, as they were walking up to the office. “You two don’t say anything once we’re in there Okay,” he said. “I doubt that anything else will happen, but just let me handle the old coot.”

He knocked on the door and entered when someone told them to come in. “Hello everyone,” he said cheerfully. “Welcome to the party. Here are some balloons for you.” He handed Malfoy and another over to Shacklebolt. Dudley actually handed one to the former Headmaster and to the Auror next to him and Draco gave the other two to the remaining Auror.

Dumbledore was surprised to see the young muggle in his school and he was even more surprised when he looked up and saw that the balloon he was holding was actually a shrunken Death Eater. The rest looked at their own balloons and noticed the same. They were shocked at the various bruises and injuries that they were sporting.

In the meantime, Harry had conjured chairs for the boys to sit in, as they were all exhausted in varying stages due to their exertions. Harry from flying, Draco from running and Dudley from all the work he had done prior to the fighting.

“Mr. Potter, Mr. Malfoy,” Dumbledore paused a brief moment to hand off his Death Eater to an Auror. He then asked, “Boys, could one of you begin to tell us what happened and why you’ve treated these people in such a manner?”

Draco gripped the arms of his chair in anger at being addressed by his father’s name, but Dumbledore didn’t know, neither did the Aurors. Harry took his mate’s hand and squeezed in gently in his own in order to calm the blond down. It helped because Draco visibly relaxed at the touch.

Dudley began to tell them what happened, as he was the one to notice the commotion coming from the forest in the first place. He then explained what he told Hedwig and Hagrid before heading into the forest and how he saw Hagrid place himself in position for an attack.

Harry then told how he and Draco were around and that his owl had come to get him. He told the Aurors that they flew over to assist them. Everyone in the room assumed that the boys used brooms and the boys never corrected that assumption.

He then said to them that the plan was for Draco to go on foot and for him to drop from above in order to surprise them. “What do you know...It actually worked. They were certainly surprised.” He said after his explanation was completed.

“That doesn’t really explain the extent of their injuries,” Dumbledore said.

“Well, two were fighting Hagrid. I had Malfoy and a hippogryph played with another. Dudley took on one of them and the last one was stunned before he could getaway. I think that one fell on a boulder or something,” Harry said.

“I stunned him before I called the Heads of House to assemble,” Draco said.

“Why would you do that Mr. Malfoy?” Dumbledore asked.

Draco ignored him. His question was not clear because it could be taken as to why he stunned the Death Eater or why he called to gather the Heads of House. He was also pissed to be addressed as ‘Mr. Malfoy’ and wanted to tell the old man off.

“He was given a device to allow him to communicate with me,” Professor Snape said. “I called the others together because as the deputies to the new Headmaster we are the ones that have to deal with this situation.”
“There’s a new Headmaster?” One of the Aurors asked.

Another said, “Deputies? I thought that there was only one deputy Headmaster or Headmistress at a time.”

“Due to the times that we are living in, it was a revolutionary idea to have more then one at the post in case one should fall during the upcoming conflict,” Professor Sprout said.

Professor Flitwick said, “Truthfully, it is best to have more then one to rely on, just in case.”

“Being a Deputy is difficult when you’re alone with the duties.” Professor McGonagall said narrowing her eyes at the Auror who asked the question and at the former Headmaster. “I’m relieved that I have some help and that the work can be split in four. It allows more time for other things.”

Dumbledore’s eyes began their infernal twinkling. Snape knew that the old man was going to say something that was about to infuriate them, so he cut him off by saying, “Well now that you gentlemen have all of the details, shouldn’t you be returning to conduct your own investigations. You do realize that Mr. Malfoy should not even be free and yet here he is.”

“He’s right,” Shacklebolt said. “We need to take these criminals back before something else happens. Albus we need to leave now.”

“I’ll be there in a bit,” the old man said. They all watched as the Aurors left with the Death Eaters, leaving behind one meddling old man. “Now Harry do you have anything else to tell me. I notice that you’re close to young Mr. Malfoy here.”

“Albus,” the Gryffindor Head of House exclaimed. “That is none of your business.”

“That’s correct,” Professor Sprout said. “Just what are you doing back here. I was under the impression that you had been fired.”

“It heartens this old man to know that you’re all working together, but I have found out that I can not be fired,” he said. “The Board of Governors and the Ministry of Magic have given me this.” He pulled out a scroll and held it out in his hand waiting for one of them to take it.

Harry surprised the old man by summoning it to look at. He performed the Braille reading spell on the parchment and skimmed it with his hands. He was reading it, but he was also scanning the magics within the parchment.

Of course it was all official by Ministry and Board standards, but it was not official for the school since Hogwarts was not under the Board or the Ministry’s rule. That’s why he did something that no one should have ever been able to do to any piece of ‘official’ paper. He ripped the parchment in half, twice, he then crumpled the pieces into a ball followed with a swish of his wand he ignited them in a small flash of fire.

“Well that should take care of the Ministry and Board meddlers,” Harry said smirking. “If I couldn’t do that, then of course it would have been official, but since I was able to and since my actions are reflected on every copy. It’s obvious that the scroll and all decrees within it were bunk.”

Dumbledore was shocked and the Deputies were no longer surprised by anything that Harry could do. They sent indulgent smiles to the old Headmaster, as though to convey the fact that they were just patronizing him by letting him into the school to visit. The old man wasn’t pleased. “How were you able to do that Harry? What do you mean every copy?” He asked the smug looking young man.

“Every copy means every copy, of course.” Harry said and then quoted something that caused Albus
Dumbledore to blanch. “In the Ministry Convention of Magical Education of 1223, the law states that all Private Schools only need to allow for a set standard of courses that can be administered by any Ministry of Magic, but is not to be limited by such a body, as the World Guilds Confederation supersedes them all as being considered neutral to any Government Educational System.

No Governmental Body can overturn the rules and regulations for the running of any private school, as long as the school meets the minimum requirements set by the current Governing Magical Ministry. All private schools must have an originating plan and can, through time have their regulations amended to meet the needs of the current Governing Body.

However, should the new regulations be in conflict to the schools original mandate or if the original purpose of formation has been altered beyond recognition then the Private School in question is entitled to revert to a previous regulatory form in order to meet student demands or particular requirements.

In short, since the original mandate of this school was a place of innovation, learning and safe sanctuary during times of conflict that is the form that this school has reverted to. In that reversal, what was old law or obsolete law, has now became new again. Therefore, you can no longer be Headmaster of this school as per the original laws set out at the formation of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry by the Founders and their Law.”

Draco was so proud of his mate that he didn’t care about propriety in front of the old man. He changed his seat to his mate’s lap and basically snogged him senseless. Dudley was laughing at the gobsmacked expression on the old man’s face. Harry was too occupied to continue answering the questions, but even Professor Snape had a satisfied look on his face, pleased with the outcome.

“That also means that as long as we still maintain at least the minimum of one course that can be administered by the current Ministry of Magic, this school can function just like it did in the time of the Founders,” the disembodied voice of Hogwarts piped in. “Which means that you are still fired.”

Dumbledore had blanched even more that he now started looking gray around the edges when he heard the voice of the one that chased him out of the school. “We have re-formulated the school’s course list and have maintained the core subjects from the beginning of Harry and Draco’s school career. It is unfortunate that they will never be able to take advantage of this change in curriculum, but all the students from year five and under will now be following a new standard,” Professor McGonagall said.

“I think they will have a chance with some of the newer courses for fun,” Professor Flitwick said knowing full well that Harry was going to apply for a couple of the first year optionals and so was Draco.

“Just who is the Headmaster now,” Dumbledore asked.

Professor Snape said, “That will be revealed in due time. Meanwhile, the new Headmaster has charged the four us to review some of the old decisions that were made in the past. So while you’re here, perhaps now would be a good time to go over some of the neglected repairs in the dungeons and the unstable or unused rooms that seem to be around in abundance.”

“Yes,” said Professor Sprout. “I think that now will be a very good time to discuss the small greenhouses that have never been expanded based on your decisions or the lack of field hands for the growing of foodstuffs that this school used to be able to sustain on its own without having to purchase from the outside world.”

The Head of Ravenclaw piped in. “I, myself, would dearly love to know why the library hasn’t had
an overhaul of the books it contains nor has it ever been expanded. Perhaps you would be so kind as to let us know the reason for some of those decisions as even Headmaster Dippet had been able to add books to the school’s archive.”

Dumbledore was backing up towards the fireplace and he was surprised that they all seemed to have a feral gleam in their eyes. They weren’t going to stop him, if he chose to floo out of there right now. “You know Albus,” Professor McGonagall said. “You always did say that help would always be available if you have faith. I have enough faith in the new Headmaster that I believe that his ‘Educational Revolution’, which is what the papers say, will be an extremely good thing for this school. But I digress, I too would like to know how come the transfiguration class rooms were always too small for the number of students and why no improvements could have been made or why no funding could have been given for special projects for the students classes.”

Harry was finished being kissed by his mate and still had his arms around his blond, when the familiar trill of a bird of Light sounded within the old office of the Headmaster. He was smiling because he sort knew the phrase that called the phoenix.

Fawkes got tired of waiting and therefore had decided to make an appearance. He burst into the room, flew around in lazy circles, hoping that one of the Professors would make him a stand. Everyone watched the bird fly around are the room, kind of at a loss on what to do. Finally Snape was fed up with the glowing sparkles coming off the bird decided to conjure a very large stand for the bird in one corner of the office.

It was as far from him as possible because he wanted no reminders that the old Headmaster used to use that bird for summoning him. However, being the phoenix of the school and not belonging to any one person, Fawkes settled onto the shoulder of the Potions Master and refused budge, even at the threat of being plucked like a chicken and dissected for potions ingredients he refused to move.

Dumbledore had had enough shocks and decided that now would be a good time to make his escape out of the office that no longer belonged to him. He couldn’t leave fast enough because Harry had hexed his robes so that the moving parts on it froze in place and had changed them to the colours of the school. It was still an eyesore, but since the old man was leaving nobody focused on it too much.

---------------------------------

Madam Pomfrey had run several scans over her new patients and was shocked to see everything that they had been through. It saddened her to note that all of the children had been abused in varying degrees and she sincerely hoped that the new Headmaster would allow the little girl to remain at the school, due to the fact that she was two years younger then those who begin here at eleven.

She also hoped that with everything being changed at this school that the boys and the older girl would be able to obtain the counseling that they need. Maybe this was something that she could bring forward to the Headmaster as the children may need psychiatric counseling and the school should have someone available for the children to consult when in need.

She prepared the files that contained the results of her analysis and the treatments required and arrived just in time to see Dumbledore leave the office through the floo.

Strangely, she wasn’t present the other day during the big announcement in the Great Hall and had not gotten the monitoring crystal at the same time as the others. It was on her desk waiting for her with an explanatory note of what it was and what it did. The note indicated that hers and the assistants’ monitoring crystals would be different and they were much smaller and on chains that would not allow them to be lost during cases of an emergency. If they had to leave the school grounds, then they were the only exceptions for the time being.
Nor was she around when her assistant nurses showed up, as she was in Hogsmeade taking care of an emergency at her summer clinic. When she returned from her emergency, she found that she had two assigned house-elves to her infirmary and two assistant nurses that were there to continue their education privately through correspondence in order to become full medi-witches. It was her choice to assist them or not, but they were not her apprentices as they were considered to be journeymen in the nursing field.

So, when Madam Pomfrey arrived in time to see the old Headmaster flee, she was at a loss at who she was supposed to report to. “What is going on here?” She asked.

“Madam Pomfrey,” Draco asked. “How are they doing?”

“They are stable for now, but no one has answered my question yet,” she said. “What is going on here? If the Headmaster has just left then who am I to give my reports too?”

“You give them either to the Deputies here or to me,” Harry said as though it was obvious, but then he remembered. “Oh… Of course, you were in Hogsmeade during the time of the announcement, weren’t you?”

“What announcement?” She asked.

“Poppy,” Professor Sprout said kindly. “Perhaps you had better sit down for this.”

“Mr. Potter some tea would be good right about now,” Snape said to his godson. He knew that the blonde wanted to be acknowledged as Harry’s bond-mate or husband to get rid of any reminders of his own father.

Draco knew who the Potions Master was addressing. He sent him a grateful smile and snapped his fingers for a house-elf to deliver some tea for everyone. He returned to his own chair and watched as Harry conjured another chair for the infirmary’s head nurse.

“This will take some time to explain,” Professor Flitwick said. That’s when they started to explain everything from the beginning of being summoned back to school, to the new school’s courses and who, exactly, was the true Headmaster of the School.

It was a lot for the woman to take in, but she was used to emergency situations where things can go either way in the outcome of a patient. Still this one was a little overwhelming for her, so Harry stood up and provided her with a calming potion for the duration of the conversation, telling her to take it if she needed to.

It took quite the rest of the afternoon to explain everything and even after having taken the potion she still needed time to think on things. However she did present her findings to the children’s Head of House and allowed Professor Snape and the new Headmaster to sort out what can be done for the children.

They deferred that decision for later, as those children were still sleeping and were not going to wake up until the treatments had run their course.

-----------------------------

It turns out that three of children were all students and Slytherins. They were Pansy Parkinson, Vincent Crabbe and Blaise Zabini. Annabel Crabbe was the fourth child and wasn’t due to start at Hogwarts for the next two years, but the older students couldn’t leave her behind. Vincent was old enough to take custody of her, should he choose to do so and should they be disinherited.
All three of the older students had been surprised at the summons they received from their parents on August 25. They were sent to Crabbe Manor and that’s when they realized that they had run out of time.

The Dark Lord wanted to Mark some of the children of his followers before the school year started, but the students kept on saying that they were going to checked. Blaise had heard a rumor from one of his very distant relations that Hogwarts was calling in extra Journeyman to help with the coming school year.

The Slytherin tried to keep that information to himself for the time being. These three children were the next in line after Draco to be Marked and they couldn’t believe that the younger Malfoy had allowed himself to be Marked so soon. They all knew that Draco didn’t want that ugly thing, but what they didn’t know was that Draco had escaped from his father’s hold, until they were questioned about it.

The three eldest were confined to the dungeons and were questioned over and over again about the possible whereabouts of Draco Malfoy. The Dark Lord was not a patient man. Right now he didn’t care if these three were bonded to another person or not, he just wanted results and wanted them fast.

Annabel Crabbe may have been young, but she was far from stupid. She tried to help them whenever she could by bringing down potions, salves and clean food and water to drink. It seems that she wasn’t careful enough because a certain rat caught her at it and informed the Dark Lord of this. He was further pushed into a rage and had some of his newer recruits physically hurt the little girl through pain and cutting spells.

Vincent, Blaise and Pansy were all brought to witness this, but Vince had escaped the arms that held him in place and tried to get to her. That is when the Dark Lord decided that he needed more broken toys. He never once called on Professor Snape or else Voldemort would have known that the man was no longer a faithful follower. Either way it didn’t matter now because he offered what looked like two little boys and a little girl to a couple of known pedophiles among the Death Eaters.

These Death Eaters were allowed to do whatever they could for the next 24 hours to get them to join him or die. Annabel was too young for such activity, but one of his new recruits offered up a potion that would allow the three oldest to appear like they were young children. That pleased the Dark Lord and that suited the nasty Death Eaters who liked to molest young children.

Annabel had been released for the next day, but would be brought back before the group and then the outcome for the four would be decided collectively. Again she was far from stupid and she prepared everything that she could with the help of her personal house-elf and the ones that were part of the Zabini and Parkinson household.

These elves were loyal to their young masters and mistresses that they had been bonded to and therefore they were the ones that gathered everything that the students would need for the new school year. Annabel’s own pack everything of value that belonged to the girl and her brother. She left her brother’s house-elf gather his school supplies and other private things.

It was by chance that one of the house-elves had been spotted by Dobby, during the errands they were doing and he found out what was going on. He quickly popped to the school and liberated more potions and extra bandages that the students would need. He even provided a very powerful portkey that the school had given him upon his request.

Unfortunately the portkey could only take them to a clearing in the Forbidden Forest near the edge closest to the school. It was better then nothing so Dobby took it and told the house-elves to follow the masters and mistresses when they came to the school. They were bonded to the children and not
the rest of the house, which is something that he convinced them about and when they looked into their bonds and saw that it was true.

Annabel then made sure that she was not seen again and waited for the older ones to be returned to the dungeons. She knew that they were going to be called forth on the next day, but she had to let them know that there is another choice.

She had tears in her eyes when she saw the condition that they were all in and snuck into the cell that held her brother and his friends. There was only one guard at the end of the hall and no other. She walked over and started handing them potions to keep up their strength and surprised them by handing them their wands.

“I know that you’ve just been through something very awful, but I need to know the choice that you plan on making,’’ she said tearfully.

“What do you mean Ann?’’ Vincent asked her.

“Do you plan to take the Mark? Did they break you to that point?’’ She asked.

“I’d rather die,’’ said Pansy. She felt dirty, completely unclean. She had been waiting for love instead of an arranged situation. The only thing that she can be thankful about was that her magic was stronger and that she was not overcome with a need to be with the one who took her virginity. She was able to deny the bonding magics that were generated by the first act of intercourse.

Blaise nodded, “Me too. They took away what was mine to give. I wanted to hold out before doing anything like that.’’

“I’m sorry Ann, but I too would rather die then join them,’’ Vince said. “I know that I played dumb at school and at home, but that was because I didn’t want to seem to be of use. I was hoping to continue and save you from being noticed.’’

Annabel sighed in her relief and noticed the glint of anger and hunger for revenge within their eyes. She whispered because she noticed the approach of the guard, “I’m glad that you told me the truth, but I have suspected it all along. Besides I’m here to give you guys another choice, if you want to take it, then stick with me and we’ll find a safe port to the next Harbor. We need to learn a bit more before having the key to unlock our knowledge.’’

The guard in the mean time was bored so he decided to pace the length of dungeon corridor when he heard the whispering tones. He didn’t hear what said, but the three that had just been returned were just lying around and whispering in pleading tones for the torture to “Please stop,’’ with several “Please no’’, and a couple of “No, not again.’’

The guard snickered, knowing exactly what they had been through and that it was nothing to what they would go through when they gained the mark. Voldemort’s magic was stronger and once the children were Marked, the Dark Lord would take them and make them all his personal catamites.

He returned to his post, never once noticing the fourth person in the cell with the others. Annabel didn’t say anything else and let the older ones decide their course of action. It was unanimous, they would take the offered out and hope that the Headmaster of their school would allow them to remain there until school began.

However, they had to wait to get out of the cell because the whole dungeon did not allow for portkeying or apparating, but where they were brought to next was another story.

On the afternoon of the 27th, they were brought before the Dark Lord and they were given their
choice. They fought the spells and the ones that held them; and managed to huddle together in the middle of the Death Eaters’ circle.

Annabel took the portkey and activated it, but not before six of the Death Eaters figured out what was going on. They sent spells at the children, but since the spells were strong they were pulled into the portkey in that manner and that’s how they all ended up in the Forbidden Forrest.

Vincent took the brunt of those spells and one of the Death Eaters sprang forward grabbing the girl, while Blaise and Pansy were sending spells of their own to the surrounding Death Eaters. However, their attempts were feeble due to their lack of energy.

That’s when Dudley heard the noise and help did come. Now all four were safe within the walls of Hogwarts and they didn’t know the decision that was being taken, but their house-elves were there speaking to the Headmaster, his mate and their Head of House with regards to what they knew their masters wanted and what had happened.

---------------------------

TBC...
August 28 - 29

Things were pretty much getting together for the school and their guests were recovering well. Madam Pomfrey had been able to convince the Headmaster that a Psychiatrist or Psychologist would be an asset to the school. Harry didn’t complain. His only question was, “Why wasn’t there one around before now?”

“It’s a muggle field, but one that I believe should be required,” Madam Pomfrey explained. “Witches and Wizards can cure many things, but the simple fact is that we do not have people like psychologists to speak to about any matter. Sometimes we just need someone to talk to that will not judge us.”

Harry was all for it and allowed her to seek out a couple of good ones, as long as they were vetted by the goblins and that their credentials were clean. He did advise her that perhaps a squib or someone from a muggleborn family that knew about magic would be the best.

“I trust you to fill the position Madam Pomfrey, but please be sure to let me know. We have to give them the monitoring crystals just like everyone else.” He said and she nodded in agreement. Those devices were useful because one had been given to each of the four guests, since only touch was required to activate them.

They were placed the hands of the sleeping children, to activate them and that assisted Madam Pomfrey with some of the scanning that she had to do. She got the help of Professor Flitwick to modify hers and those of the nurses because some of the information coming through was not important to the diagnosis or treatment of the children.

To know that they had nightmares may be important in a sense, but they were triggering the crystals to the Headmaster and the Heads of House too, so all of the crystals were modified to only show that the students were sleeping. Harry decided to keep the emotions part of his own crystal active, but he modified it so that it was muffled when the children were asleep and that helped.
Harry was more concerned by the fact that Professor Snape hadn’t been called to the meeting when the decision was made to Mark the children. He was even more concerned over the fact that he hadn’t even had a vision of the events like he normally would have. Something was wrong with the connection and he was going to have to resolve that very soon or else more children might fall to that same fate.

He was planning to meditate for 24 hours and had discussed with Professor Snape the possibility of allowing the children to remain in the Slytherin House for the time being. He talked with his mate and told him to tell them about the new school courses and the fact that Hogwarts was now a sanctuary for them, if they chose to stay.

Harry had the counselors and the teachers test Annabel and they have found that she was still behind in a few subjects, but that she could attend the Hogsmeade School for those missing subjects. She was also given special permission to attend any of Hogwarts new classes that they were setting up. In fact a letter went out to the Hogsmeade School to allow their older students to take the new optionals from Hogwarts.

It was a collaboration that was approved as soon as the word had gotten out about it. The parents were eager for the children to be at Hogwarts and the town had a meeting with one of the Deputy Heads, stating exactly what the new courses were and which would be available to the Hogsmeade children. The town agreed to a trial run of it until Christmas came around.

There was also the promise that carriages from the school would be sent to pick up the children at their school and return them after the classes were over. The privilege would only happen twice a week and the children were only allowed to take up to two optionals, provided that they maintained their current level of study in the Hogsmeade School.

Harry had prepared a meditation room in his Slytherin Quarters and was about to drift in thought until he could figure out what was going on with the connection that he had with Voldemort. He needed to know because if he no longer had any connection or if the connection was weak, he would have to break it and use an alternate method of gathering information.

He had several already in place and it was not going to be through the use of spies, like Dumbledore had. Well that’s not entirely true, but these were going to be unmarked spies that truly wish to help in order to get rid of the evil, but they were not human.

The new Headmaster had a respect for life and had found several interesting things that were not available in the United Kingdom. They were only available in other countries because the U.K. was trying to preserve their old ways, which is in fact one of the reasons that the Ministry of Magic in England was stagnating.

He was not going to rely on Professor Snape. ‘I’m going to free that man, I swear it,’ he thought. ‘Professor Snape’s been through so much and he deserves some measure of peace and happiness. I know that the same goes for Remus. There are many who were able to find something or someone after that bastard’s first downfall, but their are others who were stuck in the past with hurt and pain that just didn’t go away.’

“Harry,” Draco called out.

“I’m in here,” Harry said from a side room.

“Oh,” he said. “So this is where you set up the meditation room. Very nice,” he said, not even
Harry grinned knowing the direction of Draco’s gaze and walked over to his mate that was standing in the doorway. “I’m hoping that I can figure what is going on with my connection with old Moldy. It’s going to take some time.”

Draco frowned and asked, “How much time?”

“Hopefully only half a day, but it might be longer,” Harry said truthfully. “It is something that needs to be resolved before the rest of the students arrive at school.”

Draco pulled at Harry and said, “Can it wait for a couple of hours? You have a situation that needs to be resolved in the bedroom and that also needs to be taken care of before that.”

Harry let his hands cup his mate’s firm tush. He squeezed them gently and pulling his mate flush, saying, “Well, we can’t leave anything unresolved in the bedroom now can we?”

Draco moaned and replied, “No we can’t. Let’s go.” Harry just lifted his mate and the blond jumped a little wrapping his arms and legs securely around his mate, allowing him to carry the sneaky little Slytherin into their bedroom.

It wasn’t difficult for Harry to find his way, as he had the layout of their quarters completely memorized. Once they were in their room and the door was closed behind them. Harry was still carrying his mate, promptly dropped onto the bed completely covering his mate and grinding into him.

‘Draco’s making those noises again,’ he thought. His dick hardened every time he heard his mate make those little noises. It was intoxicating because it was cute coming from his mate. It sounded like something between a hiccup, a squeak and a moan.

Harry kissed the full lips that were begging for his attention. He knew that his mate didn’t want to technically be left alone for the next 12 to 24 hours, so Harry was going to try his best to exhaust his mate before that time came around. He also knew that he had to make up some ‘Honeymoon’ time for his mate and Harry had a plan on the back burner for later.

---------------------------------

The Slytherins were surprised to see some of the changes that had happened in the school. They noticed the increase in the number of Professors and it was something new to see so many assistants around and... ‘Are there more house-elves around?’ Pansy wondered. ‘What is going on around here?’

The students had recovered enough from their injuries to be released and they were now walking down to the Slytherin dorm rooms that had been prepared for them. They were told to go straight there, where their Head of House would explain a few things to them.

Once they had entered and settled in the chairs and couches of the common room, they began to talk about a few of the things that they had noticed. “Did you guys notice the changes in the Great Hall? It looked like huge portraits were placed on the walls,” Blaise said. “Just what are these floating little balls around our heads? It’s making me nervous.”

“Did any of you notice that there seems to be a lot more house-elves and they aren’t dressed in tea-towels like many of them normally wear,” Pansy said. “Yes, I did notice these things, but they don’t seem to do much other then whiz about.”
“We’re here to get answers and perhaps a solution to our problems,” Vincent said looking down at the top of his little sister’s head. “Did I hear one of you call Draco’s name in the forest?”

“Yeah, but I think that it might have been just a dream because I haven’t seen him since then,” Blaise explained.

They heard a noise by the entrance. All of them looked to see who could possibly be coming into the Slytherin dorms. There was a small collective sigh of relief that it was their, Head of House, Professor Snape. He strode into the room and sat in one of the chairs near where his students had settled.

“I hope that you’ve made yourselves comfortable here?” He asked then and when he got various nods, shrugs and affirmations, he continued on. “The Headmaster wishes to let you know that you are welcome to ask for sanctuary from Hogwarts. It’s an offer that is given to you freely.”

“Really,” Blaise said. “What’s the catch?”

“Is the old coot going to ask us to spy for Death Eater activity in the school or what?” Vincent asked.

“Vinny, you can’t!” Annabel exclaimed. She turned to the Potions Master and said angrily, “I won’t let you or anyone take him away. He can’t spy for y...”

“That’s enough young Miss Crabbe,” Severus said, holding up his to stop her tirade. “Calm down. No one is being asked to spy.”

“Bullshit,” said Blaise.

“I don’t believe that that twinkly eyed old man isn’t going to ‘persuade’ us to do some of his dirty work. Just because he doesn’t want his precious Gryffindors to be tainted with darker side of things, he’s willing to let the rest of us, students, down,” Pansy groused folding her arms in her irritation.

“He’s not one to offer us something for nothing,” Vincent said.

“Let me explain a few things first,” Snape said. “For one thing, Albus Dumbledore is no longer the Headmaster of this school and don’t ask me who the new one is, I can’t tell you in any way shape or form. Every teacher here is spelled to secrecy for the Headmaster’s protection and the protection of the students.” He paused for a moment, enjoying their stunned expressions. They never once thought of Dumbledore as replaceable.

“Secondly your own personal elves may be permitted to remain here, but there needs to be a review of your bonds with them. The new Headmaster does not like any creature or person being mistreated. Next up, all of you will be scheduled to see a Guidance counselor to assist you in deciding a future career path and a private Medical counselor for the trauma that you’ve experienced. You have no choice in this matter, am I clear?”

“Yes, sir,” they said.

“What happens now?” Annabel asked. Professor Snape then began to explain some of the newer things that were going to happen at the school like the new classes available and the new uniforms. He told them about the extra assistants and Journeymen at the school.

"If any of you are interested in apprenticing or even assisting, you will be permitted to do, depending on your level,” he explained. "Vincent, you will have to redo most of your tests and exams in order for us to gauge your levels, as you seem to have developed a little something called intelligence.”
Vincent just smirked at his professor's slightly vague compliment and then the door to the common
room opened once more to let in the one person that Blaise thought was just a ghost. "Oh, good you
guys are all here," the Slytherin Prince said, walking into the room and carrying some books with
him. "Professor Flitwick and his charmers have just finished putting this together. The Deputy
Headmistresses have already looked at them and the Headmaster says that they seem fine. Only your
approval is left and if it's okay, Professor Flitwick will do a mass charming on the piles for the rest of
the students. He did these six in advance and they can be modified, if you think that there is
something wrong with them."

The others in the room were all staring at the changes that have occurred in Draco since the last time
that they saw him. It was amazing the changed that one person can go through when they're bonded
to a magical creature. But that was not what they had observed the most.

It looked like he had been thoroughly shagged because some of his braids were tucked in under
several others and some of them looked matted. His lips were swollen and it is obvious that he's been
kissing and been kissed due to the number of hickies that he's sporting all over his neck. Let's not
forget that he seemed to be limping just a bit and had a dopey smile as he was explaining everything
to Professor Snape about the books.

Blaise started it by letting a small snort pass through his lips. Pansy tried to stifle her giggles, but even
those pushed through. Vincent smirked as he watched the blond maneuver to a nearby chair and
Annabel said, "Someone just got lucky."

Draco looked at the young girl and said, "Anna Banana that is none of your business." The stern
effect was lost because he was blushing profusely and the others couldn't hold it in anymore, bursting
out with their laughter.

Professor Snape had taken the books from Draco's hands and looked through all of them. He pulled
out his wand to review the spells on the books and listened as Draco explained the books or
scholastic journals. They were going to be placed on the tables of the Great Hall so that the students
would be able to see and have them for the rest of their time attending Hogwarts.

These books were hide bound course explanations and selection forms. The courses were separated
by tabs per year and with different coloured tabs per course. They would begin to fill in
automatically with the available courses for the year starting with the mandatory courses and then the
optional courses.

So if you happened to be a brand new first year, then the book that you would receive would only be
filled with the first year course information. Should someone protest, like Hermione could have done
if this had been initiated during Harry's first year, she could have been tested and probably advanced
classes or skipped a grade or two. Second year student would still have this course book, but then
they would have the information from the first and second year, and so on and so forth.

It wasn't going to be effective for the sixth or seventh years too much as their books will only contain
the summaries of their first years at the school. They would have to continue with the courses as they
had begun them with their goals already pre-set to their choices. Fifth years will have a bit more
options due to the fact that it is their O.W.L. year and that they could get good counseling this time
around, instead of putting up with their choices, like many of the sixth and seventh years. Any year
under the fifth, were going to be able to use them for course selection and it is going to be used as a
place for the students to select their optionals.

The book magically recorded the information if the student used their wand like pens. It was quite
innovative and that was an idea from one of the Charms Journeymen. If something that is commonly
used to record someone's magical signature was a person's wand, why not have the wand work for
them. The students only had to print their names on the covers and the books would remain theirs for the rest of their lives.

The charms in the books would allow for a temporary map of the school for the first month only and then it would disappear. The books were also charmed to only work for the one whose name is printed on it and the books would also always find their way back to their owner. It was also the one place where the students could see their marks per class, but only as a pass or fail, not a numerical grade. Those were only going to be given at the end of each semester.

Overall Snape was impressed that the book even came about, but then Harry's idea to be innovative and challenging to the students and the teachers was quite interesting in itself. At least the school will be credited for successful ideas and so would anyone involved.

"These are perfect. You can tell the Headmaster that I approve of them. However, this will be a year of testing new things, won't it?" He said to the others and just to Harry through Draco's ball.

Harry sent the go ahead to Professor Flitwick, to mass produce them and link them to the course schedules determined by the passing O.W.L.S. and the written student subject interest forms that Dumbledore had instituted at the beginning of this summer. Obviously the students will be revising that once they arrive and see that they have more choices.

Professor Snape handed one to each of them and took away the extra ones for Harry and Neville. "Let Dudley deliver the one to Neville. I think that Neville is curious about him and he won't have much time to get to know him, now that we are so close to the end of summer," he said absently, looking through his own book and signing his name on the cover with his wand.

"Very well," the Professor said, getting up to leave. "Maybe you can persuade your friends that the Headmaster is sincere in his offer of sanctuary for the year."

Draco just waved at him as he exited the rooms. The others looked closer at the Slytherin Prince and as one they began to ask, "So who are you shagging?"

"Are they good?"

"Is it a guy or a girl?"

"Details we want details," one of them said.

Vincent drew the line at that and said, "No we don't. Not with Annabel in the room, no descriptions. That's private Blaise."

"Well if it was all that private then why is he covered in hickies?" The Italian retorted.

"It's not to show off, besides Vince is right. It's private," Draco returned. "You'll find out September 1st anyway and it will cause a stir, so enjoy the fireworks then."

"Just one thing," Pansy said.

"Yes."

"Neville?" She asked. "Are you on a first name basis with the squib of Gryffindor?"

"He's not a squib," Draco defended him. "He's brilliant in Herbology and Professor Sprout has accepted him as an apprentice. You know how rare Herbologists are these days, so don't put him down."
"Merlin…" Blaise exclaimed. "Next thing you know you'll be defending the Golden Boy, Potty-Head."

Draco’s eyes shone with a silver light and he stood up tall, glaring at all of them. "If I did, what would you do?"

"I'd wonder what made you change your mind and then demand to know why?" Blaise said. Pansy and Vince nodded in agreement. Annabel looked on in worry.

Draco sighed and then said, "He saved me this summer." He told them about what happened at his house between himself, his mother and his father. He told them what he experienced and then through the ball he asked Harry if he could tell his friends about the Draekon part of it, as it would take their minds of some of their hurt and it just might push them to learn something new.

Getting the O.K., Draco told them about the house-elves and how his trust in the ones that obeyed his father was fading, telling much of his story on how he was rescued and how he had actually lived like a muggle for the later part of his summer til being offered sanctuary too. The house-elves served their evening meal in the common room and they continued to exchange their stories well into the night.

Draco stayed with them because he knew that Harry was still in the middle of meditating on his connection with Voldemort.

---------------------------------

Meanwhile, Professor Snape sought out Dudley in order for him to deliver Longbottom's book to the bumbling Gryffindor. Although he had to reluctantly admit that the boy was a genius when it came to plants and he was sure that Professor Sprout could not have found a more worthy apprentice, so long as the boy stayed out of a potions classroom.

---------------------------------

Dudley looked at the book in hand and waited for the ones who worked the greenhouses to return. He saw Professor Sprout and she told him that Neville had volunteered to stay and finish the planting.

Making up his mind, Dudley decided that now was a good time to return the luncheon favor, with a picnic basket of his own. He had the help of one of the house-elves put something together and set out to meet the curious boy. 'If he has any questions, I suppose that I can answer them,' Dudley said. He had already gained permission from Harry to talk about the mini-greenhouses and anything else that came to mind.

Taking the course book and picnic basket with him, he was walking towards Greenhouse 3, when low and behold there he was, walking towards Dudley.

Neville was surprised that the one who caught his attention was on his way towards the Greenhouses. Looking down at what the boy was carrying, his brown eyes began to sparkle in appreciation of the basket. Smiling he looked back up to see a strange, stunned look on the guy. "Are you all right?"

Dudley looked up at the question and nodded. "Yeah, I'm fine. I thought I'd return the favor from the other day and bring some dinner. Would you care to join me? It seems that there is a good view from that hill over there," he said teasingly. 'OH God, am I flirting with him? He's a guy!! Not that it matters, but I've never flirted with a guy before.'
Neville blushed at being reminded that he had been watching the two men plough the other day and then something startled him. ‘Is he flirting with me? Uh-oh, the better question now would be do I want him too?’

Dudley waited until Neville was in step with him and then said, "Lead the way. You know these grounds better than I do, maybe you know of somewhere we can talk. It looks like you might have some questions for me. At least that what Drake said and I'm curious to know why."

"I hope that is not the only reason that you came with that basket," Neville said. He then realized how that sounded and he blushed in horror at what the other might be thinking.

Dudley didn’t know what to think because he was caught in an image of a green-thumbed imp, blushing at something he must have said, but darned if he couldn't focus on the words that were just said. He tilted his head a bit, shook off the image and stopped Neville’s babble with an upraised hand. "It's okay. Whatever you just said is okay. Let's find someplace to just chat and get to know one another. By the way my name is Dudley Dursley…and I'm a muggle-squib."

"Neville Longbottom," the Gryffindor replied. "I was always afraid that I would be a squib. How do you handle it? Doesn't it frighten you not to be able to do magic? What do you mean by muggle-squib? How did you come up with those little green-house ideas, they're so cute! How did you..."

Dudley chuckled and then laughed. He wrapped an arm around Neville's shoulders trying to stay up. "Calm down, I'll answer your questions. You're beginning to sound like Harry's description of his old friend Hermione when he described her as a… wait a minute let me get this right…” He was still holding onto the shy Gryffindor, but was leading him towards another hill with a view of the lake. "Ah, now I have it. He described her as a 'babbling fountain that spewed tons of questions and answers', and you sounded like that babbling fountain, but you know what?"

"What?" Neville asked nervously watching, as Dudley put aside a journal looking book and set out their diner.

"I like that you want to know," Dudley said with honesty. "Some of the answers may surprise you and some may shock, but I hope that you will understand after a few of the answers you get. Shall we?"

"Hum?"

"Let's eat and then we can discuss the rest over some tea," Dudley said settling down on the picnic blanket. He looked up and saw the uncertainty in Neville's face. He gave an understanding look and then gestured his welcome.

Neville smiled again, sat down and settled in to get some very interesting answers.

---------------------------------

August 29, Middle of the Night

Harry was finally finished reeling in the loosened connection that had nearly been severed by the distance he had traveled in the summer. The connection had stretched beyond its original form and was about to be cut by the actions of the Dark Lord.
However, Harry was able to catch it and reel in most of it back into himself, as most of the link was part of him and he didn't want old Tommy Boy to gain some of his abilities or his magic. In fact Harry took some of Voldemort's because he knew that in order to break Snape's tie to the Dark Doofus he would need some of the connecting magic.

Harry collapsed where he lay after he had finished his task. Dauphin and Draco's little familiar had kept his company. Dobby popped in and covered him with a blanket, dropping a pillow near Harry's head. Harry sought out the object and curled in on himself dreaming.

---------------------------------

**August 30, Early AM, before the sunrise**

Harry woke up, screaming from a nightmare. It was just a vision, but truly it was also truly a nightmare. Privet drive and all of Little Whinging was up in flames. He was able to see the firefighters coming in and the Aurors, but unless he went there he would never be sure of this vision.

'I thought that I had disconnected that link,' he thought. Then he realized that Voldemort had sent him a final vision with the severed end of their old connection. "No," he said and then he screamed. "NOO! YOU GOD DAMNED SON OF A BIIITTTCH! AAAAAHBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBB"

His screams woke the castle and some of the inhabitants. Harry was not affected by the spells that Voldemort had cast in his vision, as that was the first thing that he disconnected, but the vision was in living colour and clear. One of the last ones that he would ever see and it had to be the death of Dudley's immediate family, including Aunt Marge, who had come to visit.

Draco woke up with a start that morning because of the angry and hurt emotions that were flowing through the bonds. He got up face and raced out of the Slytherin common room before any of the others there had realized it. He ran to his quarters and sought out his mate, who was screaming himself hoarse.

"Harry," he shouted to gain the other's attention. "HARRY!"

Draco woke up with a start that morning because of the angry and hurt emotions that were flowing through the bonds. He got up face and raced out of the Slytherin common room before any of the others there had realized it. He ran to his quarters and sought out his mate, who was screaming himself hoarse.

"Harry," he shouted to gain the other's attention. "HARRY!"

Harry turned his blank eyes towards the sound of his mate. There were tears streaming down his face. "Draco we need to go somewhere and you need to tell me exactly what you see. Do you understand? This is very important."

"Of course Harry," he said. "Let's just clean up a bit..."

"No," he said. "We won't be seen, but I need to know and I need to know now. Not later."

"Okay Harry," Draco said concerned. "Let's go." He walked up to his mate and took his arm like he had been taught, when they had gone shopping together.

"Hang on," Harry said and apparated them through the wards.

---------------------------------

**August 30, afternoon**
Dudley was sitting on the ledge of what Harry called the ‘Astronomy Tower’. ‘There’s a nice breeze here,’ he thought. He was just sitting there contemplating his choices now. There wasn’t much that he could do at this time. ’Harry did promise that a funeral would take place if I wanted it, but I don’t want one nor do I want to go to it.’

His thoughts turned to the times when his mother showed him her love in the only way that she wanted love shown to her, through praise and material things. His father was proud of him in his own way, but sometimes that wasn’t enough and most times he knew that it wasn’t right, but they had been his parents and he loved them back. Just like most children do.

Hogwarts was keeping an eye out on him because he didn’t have a huge magical core like the other students. Harry had told them what had happened and he had asked that Remus and Severus go take care of the details on the sly. They were to Obliviate who they can and get transfer papers for Dudley to attend another school.

Dudley was offered the option to return to his old school or to do correspondence course via the internet for an actual muggle educational certificate. “You have to finish your school year,” Harry had told him. “It doesn’t matter if you don’t go to college or university, but you must finish your year. You need High School certificate in order to have more choices in your future.”

“I understand Harry,” Dudley had said through the tears that couldn’t stop flowing down his eyes, after Harry had told him about his parents and his neighbors. “I only need three courses to finish off at school anyway. I had doubled up in the first three years, so that my last year would be easier. No one knew, not even my parents.”

“That’s wonderful,” his cousin had said. It was strange to Dudley to hear that proud tone coming from him. “You are also welcome here. You can attend any of the optional courses that you want and if you’d prefer to assist in some of the other courses you can. We’ll just have to test your levels. I know that your magic is muffled and that’s why you’re classed as a squib, but nothing says you can’t assist in the areas that you know, like Muggle Studies or perhaps gardening, maybe even helping Hagrid out with the animals that he brings in. It’s up to you.”

It was a lot to think about and that’s why he was in the tower. He needed time to put some of his thoughts in order. Hogwarts was a wonderful lady. She told Harry that maybe Dudley could use the Room of Requirement to vent his anger and sadness. It was a good idea, unfortunately Dudley didn’t have enough magic in him to make the request, but Hogwarts arranged it for him.

Dudley had gone into that room and noticed that there were many breakable things. There were things he could throw and there were also things that he could hit, like punching bags. All it took was a thought, the thought that he would never see his parents again and that it was all the fault of a muggle hating Wizard. He raged, vented, shouted and cried. It was something that he had needed and he was grateful to Hogwarts for her understanding.

‘That fucking bastard has a lot to answer for,’ he thought. ‘My parents, Harry’s parents and every victim hurt and tortured for his cause. God he reminds me of Hitler sometimes. He wants to completely eradicate a race of people with no magic. He’s going to breed out the magic if he does that.’

A calming breeze came through the room. It was a warm breeze too. He heard a noise by the stairs and when he looked up his eyes met a set of understanding light brown ones. “Uh... I’m sorry to disturb you,” Neville said. “I just wanted to see if... if there’s anything I could do.”
“No,” Dudley said looking back out of the window. “There’s nothing that anyone can do, not right now anyway. Thank you for asking.”

“You’re welcome,” Neville said turning away and about to head back down.

“Neville,” he asked in a questioning tone.

Neville turned back into the room and then walked over to stand next to the blond muggle. “Yes?”

He said shyly putting a hand on the shoulder closest to him.

Dudley looked at hand on his shoulder and then placed his on top. “Harry is taking care of the paperwork regarding their burial. The legalities and other financial stuff the goblins are having their human muggle representatives working on that.” He sighed taking the delicate looking yet calloused hand in his own. You can’t work in the dirt and with certain tools without developing working hands. “I just have to make a choice about my schooling now. Do I stay here and finish through correspondence or do I return to finish my schooling?”

Neville sucked in a breath at the thought that Dudley could actually chose to leave. ‘I don’t want to influence him in staying, but I hope that he will,’ he thought. “It’s a hard choice to make isn’t it? Can you stay and finish here? Is that even a possibility? I do know that it was difficult for me to choose to become an assistant and it was even harder for me to ask to become an apprentice.”

“Sure it’s possible,” Dudley said. “Drake and I found that there’s a trick to it. But, tell me why it’s a difficult decision to become an assistant?”

“If I became an assistant, then I would be leaving my grandmother alone for the extra year that I would be assisting in teaching,” he said. “If I didn’t then I would have been living with her for another year or two before moving onto University or an apprenticeship. I asked for the apprenticeship now, just in case Professor Sprout said no. So what’s the trick? Does anyone else know? How is that going to work?”

Dudley snorted and said, “From everything that I’ve heard about your brilliance with plants, how could you have doubted her answer? I’ll explain that at a later date, all right?”

“All right. As for me, there’s a part of me that will always doubt things like that,” the Gryffindor said. “I think it comes from a time that my family thought that I was going to be a squib; that I would fail to get into Hogwarts. It got so bad that I eventually thought that I might fail too.”

Dudley took the hand from his shoulder and held it in his own. It was a first for him to do such a thing and he still wasn’t certain about his actions. “I know what I’d like to do. I just hope that I don’t resent or begin to hate the magic. I certainly hope that I don’t get jealous of what the others can do here that I can’t.”

“You’re staying!” Neville said with an excited hopeful tone that he tried to muffle down, but which still sort of squeaked out.

“You want me to?” Dudley asked, a little surprised to hear the happiness come from the other. “Why?”

“Honestly,” Neville began and once he received the go ahead he continued. “I truly don’t know. I’m glad that you told me the truth about your past with Harry, but for some reason I just want to get to know you some more.”

“I’m glad,” Dudley said sincerely. “I’ve never had anyone interested in me before. Many were interested in my fighting skills and I do know that my ‘friends’ were the fair weather kind because
they only call me once in while this summer. They didn’t visit or anything. I even caught them
talking about me behind my back at school, more then a few times, so I knew what they were like."

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Neville said. “I didn’t have many friends, as I would have liked in my first
year. I shared a dorm room with the ‘Boy-Who-Lived’ and that’s all that many wanted to know
about me. I didn’t tell anyone anything and that’s mostly why I was left to my own devices during
that year.” He shrugged, it didn’t bother him anymore. He was glad to have gotten a chance to know
the real Harry.

“My first real friend is Drake,” Dudley said. “He’s not a bad guy and I can see where he’s coming
from, although he was in a very bad shape when I first met him.”

“Could you tell me about that?” Neville asked.

“Sure, but I’m getting kind of thirsty and could something to nibble on,” he said, looking at Neville’s
neck in a teasing light. ‘God, where is all this coming from? I’m still flirting with him!’

Neville blushed and said, “Flirt!”

“I’m not trying to be,” Dudley said with a small smile, squeezing the hand in his own. “You’re kind
of cute when you blush, did you know that?”

He stood up, still holding that hand and decided he didn’t care who saw him, so he began to walk
out the door leading the flustered Gryffindor. “Come on I’ll show where I’ll be staying for the year
here and I need to tell Harry my decision.”

“Okay,” Neville said. He still a tinge of red across his nose, but was happy that the tall blond was
feeling better. Internally he was super-uber happy that Harry’s cousin decided to stay. ‘I guess that in
time he will be able to properly grieve or maybe say goodbye to his parents. Still I’m glad that he
will be staying.’

---------------------------------

TBC…
Chapter Eighteen

September 1st

It was a day that most of the Students from Hogwarts had been anticipating for the entire summer, none more so then Hermione Granger because she couldn’t wait to be able to fully use her magic again. Of course when she was in a completely magical area like Grimmauld Place, before the Order couldn’t meet there anymore and had to choose another place. There was the Burrow or Diagon Ally where she was able to use her magics. Still she couldn’t do it in her own home with her parents because of the magical strictures against the use of underage magic or the use of magic in muggle areas.

She was still considered underage even if she was about to begin her seventh year because her birthday was in late September and she would only be turning seventeen then. The reason she was allowed early entry was that her marks were high and she had the capacity to learn with the others. Dumbledore took a chance with her in many ways from the first year, but it has blown up in his face and there is nothing that he could do about it now.

Hermione was sitting in the train car waiting for Harry to show up like he always did and her eyes glanced away from the window for a moment, looking at the red-head sitting next to her reading surprisingly anything, but a Quidditch book. His actions had changed some over the summer, making her wonder why and filling her with suspicions.

She turned her gaze back out the window on the look out for that familiar messy dark haired boy that she was determined to have as her own this year. This was a decision that she had made during one of the many excursions to Diagon and Knockturn Alley for more books. She had a plan to make Harry bond with her and then she was going to bring him over to the Dark Lord. ‘Besides, Ginny and Cho did say that he was an easy lay and that he definitely had more going for him in his pants,’ she thought.

‘It's not like I’m interested in his brain because he doesn’t seem to know that he’s got one. I can’t believe how easy they said it was to slip him a potion ‘micky’ and have him fall to the Subliminus spell. I think that I’m going to have research that spell and potion some more. There has to be more to it then because Harry can fight the Imperious Curse.’ Her mind then returned to the stuff that
The new timing, as well as the last minute revision of the course lists and uniform changes had many parents and students scrambling to get what they needed for this school year. Some families found that their rate of tuition had been adjusted, thereby, making it more affordable to let their children attend. Others, who had been there at the Headmaster’s grace and on the promise of scholarship, found that no such thing had ever existed at Hogwarts.

Explanations were given and then the parents had to make a choice on whether to continue sending their child to Hogwarts or not. It turned out that it only happened to some of the families that were involved in the Order, like the Weasleys. Only they had this problem and perhaps a few of the muggleborn families too. Dumbledore was paying for their tuition with Harry’s funds in order to buy support to his cause.

The Weasleys weren’t happy when they found out. They didn’t like charity and they certainly didn’t like the fact that Dumbledore was buying them off. They had thought that they had been able to send their children to Hogwarts without having to pay for tuition, by honest means. They were furious with Dumbledore once they found out the truth.

Hermione was gathering new books that she planned to study from during her final year at Hogwarts. She had picked up several, based on the rumors of new courses being given at the school. She paused for a moment to look in a window and then just as she was about to move on, she caught the reflection of the tall red-headed Weasley that had taken to following her everywhere. He was one of her ‘good’ friends and occasional fuck-buddy. She only did it with him because she wanted sexual experience, she had no deeper feelings for him, but that was unfortunate because there were several things in the Wizarding World that she had no idea about. It was going to blow up terribly in her face because Albus Dumbledore and a few previous Headmasters and Ministers of Magic had decided to keep certain information from the muggleborn students.

The reasons were obvious, but some the Wizardborn had no knowledge of these things either, no matter how they had been raised, wizard style or muggle-raised. It was only through parents and siblings that some of the information was still handed down to new generations of Witches and Wizards.

Her thoughts wandered over the strange behaviour that Ron was doing nowadays. He seemed to always be there on the fringe of her vision and he never seemed to want to be away from her. Little did she know the some of Voldy’s Death Eaters were laughing at her behind her know-it-all back because of it.

Ron sometimes irritated her, but most times she was glad that he was around. It was boring to have no one to boss around or tell them what to do. It had never once occurred to her that she was influencing him or changing him in any way shape or form.

However, she did see an improvement to his study habits and his penmanship. Also there were times that when they were together it was blessedly free of what she called, ‘Quidditch Speech’. It was a special language only known to those who were enthusiasts of Quidditch.
It was a language of hand and body movements that contained a lot of “Did you see...”, “Do you
know...”, “Yeah, what about...” and on and on. It was a droning kind of language that rose in
volume as the talking got heated. Fights were also a part of that language, but no one could get hurt
from those fights, as they were mostly shoving matches.

‘God,’ she thought. ‘I hate that sport. It’s so stupid. There are much better ones in the Muggle
world. How come we can’t have those in the Wizarding World or taught at school. You’d think that
a school that takes in muggleborns would have something that would allow us to play too.’

That summer, apart from a couple of summons to the Dark Lord’s side, she spent most of it
researching and studying. She did have fun using new spells on that little girl that had defied her
Dark Lord.

Ron had taken to watching the girl that he had slept with several times and knew that he was the
loser of their relationship. She didn’t know that and he wasn’t about to tell her until his end of the
situation had been closed off. He hoped that the Headmaster or someone at the school would be able
to stop him from accepting further demands from such a bossy woman.

He told his parents about it and they had scolded him for his foolishness. “You knew better then to
get involved like that,” his mother had screeched at him. “You’ve made you’re bed and now you’re
going to lay in it.”

His father had tried to approach Dumbledore, but the Headmaster didn’t consider that as important at
the moment. Arthur Weasley knew that there may be some potions to help out his son, so he had
written a carefully worded letter to the only Potions Master that he knew. He needed help for his son
or else Ron was going to fall even further than the meager help that they could give.

When Arthur Weasley had his answer he told Ron that there was going to be help for him at school
and that he was going to have to wait until summer was over. “I can’t do anything else, but someone
will help close the demands of the bond. However, you’ll be stuck with the changes that have
happened. There’s nothing that anyone can do about that. But, if you ever want to be able to hold a
Quidditch book or even play that sport again, I suggest you keep your mouth shut about it around her
or else.”

Arthur Weasley was no fool and he did see the changes in his youngest son, so he offered the only
advice that he could to allow his son a measure of happiness in his unhappy union. Ron nodded his
agreement and that’s why he never spoke about Quidditch or anything that involved the sport around
Hermione. He was surprised that she never used the ‘Subliminus’ spell on him to get him to stop.

Now that they were getting ready to go to school he couldn’t wait to see who would be able to help
him out of his predicament.

September 1st

Ron was sitting on the train, hoping that no one would come into their compartment. He didn’t want
anyone to see him reading a book and studying. Hermione had watched him over the summer and
had helped to improve his study habits, but it was not something that he wanted to do. It was his last
summer, by the Gods and he should have been able to have some fun.

A last ‘hoorah’ or a final farewell to childhood, but that came earlier, during the sixth year when he
had followed Hermione. He wishes now that he hadn’t, but he had just slept with her and he was concerned because she was acting weird. Well she had been acting like that all year, but it was different now. He was her lover and he felt that he had a right to know if she was all right.

The Mark on his arm was tingling. It was a reminder of what happens to foolish Gryffindors who are too nosy for their own good. However, on the bright side it was clear that he had been bonded to one of the Dark Lord’s flock and that one had brought her bonded with her to be Marked.

Actually what she told the Death Eaters and Voldemort was, “If he was thick enough to follow me, when I didn’t need a keeper, then he has to accept his consequences. Do whatever you want with him, I don’t care.” She watched as he was tortured and when he was offered the option to join or die.

He looked into her eyes and knew then that she never cared about him or anyone else. She had ambition and the knowledge to use it to her advantage. He chose to serve Voldemort because that was his form of revenge on the girl. Soon he was going to be free of the bonding compulsions and soon she was going to learn that some things should never be taken lightly in the Wizarding World. He was, after all, a brilliant strategist. He had the patience to wait.

---------------------------------

The parents dropping their children off at the platform noticed that there were four extra cars to the train. They also noticed that there were a lot of teacher’s aides, assistants or Journeyman wandering around and assisting the students with their belongings.

The parents also knew that they were a part of the school due to the full school crest on their robes and the house colours in piping scrolling down the outside of the sleeves either from shoulder to elbow or elbow to wrist. It looked like there were protective runes within that scrollwork too.

This pleased or eased the minds of the parents that were sending their children off for the first time, perhaps it was the third or fourth of their brood. In the past, prior to the rumors of Voldemort’s return or during the ten year lull in his activities, there had been minimal protection on the Hogwarts Express.

During Harry Potter’s third year there was a minor increase in adult supervision, as someone was needed around to watch over the children as the Dementors sought the escaped convict, known as Sirius Black. It wasn’t enough, but now it looked like the Headmaster was taking things more seriously and in that the parents were pleased.

There were three adults per train car or section, one at the front, one at the back and one in the middle. Not to mention all the prefects around.

The train was getting ready to leave and Hermione was getting anxious, as Harry had yet to arrive. Ron knowing her concern said, “You know he might already be at the school.”

“Why would you think that?” Hermione asked wondering how he knew her concern. Not once considering that Ron would be just as concerned for Harry.

“He never did like taking the train because all of the first years staring at him. Since he sort of ran away from his relatives and there is the fact that the Order couldn’t find him, it makes sense that he’d get to the school on his own.” Ron said. “Perhaps he’s already there.” To him it was a sound strategy and it certainly made sense.

Hermione thought about that and realized that it was entirely possible that Harry would be heading towards the school by a different method. ‘Hell, I bet he’d fly to school on his broom just to stay
away from the gawkers,’ she thought. ‘I’ll give him hell for it though. Making me worry... Don’t worry my pet we’ll soon be bonded and in the Dark Lord’s grace.’

An announcement was made on the train systems PA. “Attention, all students! Attention, all students! All the fourth year Prefects please report to car number three. Attention, will all the fourth year Prefects please report to car number three. All remaining Prefects, please remain seated, the first meeting of the year will take place at Hogwarts. Only the fourth year Prefects please report to car number three. The remaining Prefects, please stay put, your meeting will take place at Hogwarts.”

“Now that’s odd,” Hermione said.

“What’s odd?” Ron said. “In case you didn’t notice, there were extra adults around who were guiding all the Prefects to very specific and different cars. There’s also no Prefect car this year.”

“What?” She explained. “Then how will we find out who’s the Head Boy or Head Girl? How will we find out about what’s new at the school?”

“The announcement said that we’ll have that meeting at the school,” Ron said. “Plus the train left earlier then it normally does, so something has changed.”

“I heard what the announcement said,” she groused. “I just don’t like remaining in the dark any longer then I should be.”

“More time to read,” he said picking up his book and continuing from where he left off. In that she agreed with him, as the train lurched forward. She pulled one of her new books and began to read it.

The door to their car opened to admit a few of their friends and they began to talk of their summer. Luna opened the door and looked around for a bit, but then moved on. It was strange to see her, well maybe it was not so strange for her to be wandering around, but it was strange to see a Slytherin and a Hufflepuff following her around.

It looked like they were looking for someone. Truthfully, though, Luna knew about Ron and Hermione being influenced in another direction, away from the light. Seamus got up and went to speak with her. “Hey Luna,” he said.

“Seamus?”

“Who are you looking for?” He asked and then he noticed the worried looking faces of the students with her. “Who are you all looking for?”

“I’m looking for Zabini, Parkinson and Malfoy,” the Slytherin said.

“I’m looking for Vincent Crabbe and Neville Longbottom,” said the Hufflepuff.

Seamus was surprised that there were four missing Slytherins and one missing Gryffindor. “Why don’t you ask one of the adults? Maybe they know something.”

Luna looked him with in a strange light and said, “What a good idea! Why didn’t we think of that?”

The others looked just as shocked and then shrugged. “There should be one at the end of the car, which is the closest,” Seamus said proving that he had some observation skills too.

“Thanks mate,” the Slytherin said, heading off in that direction. That shocked him. A Slytherin thanking a Gryffindor was not something he had experienced yet. The Hufflepuff nodded his thanks and took off after the Slytherin.
“Thank you,” Luna said. “They were asking about their friends and I had decided to help them out.”

“That’s great,” he said. “Do you want to come back with me to visit with the others?”

“No,” she said. “I think I will go back to my own car.”

“Oh,” he said hoping to get to know her a bit better.

She smiled at him gently and said, “You can join me if you like.”

“Thanks,” he said and followed her to the car that she was sitting in. It turns out that there were mixed years and mixed Houses in the car. He had a lively conversation with them about nothing serious for the remainder of the trip.

The Slytherin and Hufflepuff found their answers and were relieved to hear that their friends were all right and they returned to their own mixed cars. It was a strategy that Dudley and Neville had brought forward. The loner type students or the younger years were helped onto the train and into compartments with a mix of other students.

It broke the ice and some tension. It was mainly the younger years, as the older ones were kind of set in their House ways. Seamus figured out that this must be something new that school is trying out. ‘It’s not a bad idea,’ he thought returning to his own car in order to put on his robes for the new school year.

Another announcement came over the system throughout the whole train.

“Attention students from years two to seven, attention students from years two to seven. Upon arriving at the school and entering the Great Hall, please seat yourselves at the table with your year number on it or floating above it. I repeat. Second to Seventh year students, upon entering the Great Hall, please take a seat at the table with your year number on it or floating above it.

First years only, please follow the large man that calls out to you once you step off of the train. First years, only, please follow the large man that calls out to you once you step off of the train. The train will be arriving at Hogsmeade Station in thirty minutes, please change into your school robes. The train will be arriving at Hogsmeade Station in thirty minutes, please change into you school robes.

Welcome to a new school year.”

There was a lot of noise coming from the Great Hall. The students followed the advice and several of them that had been in the mixed cars found that they were now seated together at the same table. This allowed them to continue their discussions and it made the teachers hopeful that the students would be able to get along.

All of the tables had not been set for the evening meal, as it was still in the middle of the afternoon. There were bowls of fruits, jugs of water and glasses available for those who were thirsty or needed something to nibble on.

The students in the Great Hall had been wondering about the changes they saw in it. It was obvious that the houses were no longer going to be separated during their meals. The four huge portraits of
the Founders were definitely new too.

The timing for the student’s entry into the Great Hall was precise and calculated. It was closely monitored and coordinated by the newer staff members. Their morning meeting had been quite lively. They had all been warned that a confrontation may be happening and that it was best to get the students seated as quickly as possible for when the sixth and seventh years came in.

---------------------------------

“Mr. Weasley,” Professor Snape said, sneering at the red-head. “If you'll please, follow me.” He stalked off leading the Gryffindor to an office alongside the main corridor, away from the other students.

Hermione wasn’t pleased to have to walk into the Great Hall on her own, but she was used to it anyway because it has happened more then once in the past. She was curious to know why the Professor needed to see Ron.

Ron was getting nervous, standing there in front of the Professor. “Sir, can I ask what this is about?”

Professor Snape pulled out a small potion vial and held it out to the nervous teen standing in front of him. “I believe that this is something you need to take before returning to the Great Hall,” he said in a peeved tone.

He really didn’t want to help to boy in this, but Harry still had a soft spot for this Weasley. The fifth to seventh years were already going to be given something similar to close off any partial bonds that may have been formed by past indiscretions. This was only going to happen after everyone had activated their monitoring devices and only after the evening meal was over.

Ron looked at the vial and because it looked exactly like the one that he and Hermione had given to Harry, during their train ride home last year, he doubted that the contents were what he needed, but he asked anyway, “What is it?”

Snape glared at the idiot. “It’s a potion. It will close off your half-assed bond with that mudblood. Your father requested it and I suggest that you drink up before you lose your complete ability to think for yourself. There are plenty of announcements that are going to be made in the Great Hall and you’re delaying my part in it. So quit dawdling already and drink it.”

Ron became furious at the way the Potions Master addressed the issue and at the name that he called Hermione. Then he quailed back realizing that the ‘Greasy Git’ knew about his dilemma. The Gryffindor in him rose to the occasion and he gagged down the vile concoction.

“That should stop you from accepting any more bond orders or requests.” He looked down his large nose and sneered at the foolishness that was Ron Weasley.

He ushered the teen out of the office and headed down a teachers corridor in order to return to the head table. Harry promised that there would be some fireworks and telling offs to some select few of his ‘friends’. Snape didn’t want to miss any part of that.

Ron had to return by the front way to the Great Hall. He was almost there when he heard, “HARRY, WHAT do you THINK you are doing?” It sounded like his mother, so it could either be Ginny or Hermione. Since he’d drunk the potion from Snape, he didn’t really care if it was Hermione and therefore he was in no great rush to return to the others.

Ron casually arrived near the door and saw the other seventh years milling about the main doors. Looking in he could see a glimpse of what was going on inside and watched the tail end of an event
that he had missed while he was with Professor Snape.

Harry had Colin Creevy’s camera in his hands and he was in the process of exposing the film from the back of it. He was pulling it out bit by bit ensuring that nothing could be used or salvaged. Ron could guess what happened. The little sixth year idiot had taken another picture of Harry and the ‘Gryffindor Golden Boy’ was having none of it.

The seventh years were still waiting in the Hall. Ron walked over to Hermione and asked, “Why are we waiting here?”

She humphed and answered loudly, “We are waiting for the sixth years to be seated, properly, at their table. I don’t know why we have to stand here and wait, but it seems that Colin snapped off a few pictures of Harry and Harry is objecting to it. Harry shouldn’t have been in there in the first place, he’s supposed be out here with us and the other seventh years.”

One of the teacher’s aides, holding the seventh years at bay, received a signal to allow the remaining student to enter. “Please proceed to your table under the portraits of Salazar Slytherin and Helga Hufflepuff,” she said, pointing in the direction of the confrontation.

Colin was in tears of the loss of all his pictures and Ginny had her hands on her hips, in a perfect imitation of her mother. Something that Harry couldn’t see and really couldn’t care less about. Hermione pushed forward and was about to give him ‘what for’ too, when her way was blocked by none other then the Slytherin Prince.

“He’s not done yet, Granger,” he said. He crossed his arms and remained were he was stopping her progress. The other seventh years maneuvered around them and sat down so that the only ones standing were Ginny, Colin, Hermione, Ron, Draco, Neville, Harry and Dudley. Draco continued talking. “Please let him finish whatever he’s doing. That little spud deserves it.”

“What’s it to you Malfoy?” She spat out, snarling at him and trying to get around him again.

“It’s funny and fun to watch, that’s what it is,” he said explaining his reasons for interfering. “It seems that he has finally learned a little something about the Law regarding Privacy of the Individual and Journalism, in the Wizarding World.”

Her eyes widened. “There’s no way that he could have learned that,” she said.

“Oh,” a tall blue-eyed blond said, no one knowing that he was a muggle in their midst. “Why couldn’t he have learned?”

“Dumbledore never allowed...,” she stopped realizing that she almost let something out of the bag.

That’s when Harry finished with the film and tossed the camera back to Colin. He also tossed a smallish book to him saying, “I suggest that you read and memorize it. If you don’t, I will not be held responsible for the consequences. Now EVERYONE HEAR THIS.”

He said it loudly, gaining the attention of everyone in the Great Hall. “You do NOT have permission to take my picture. NONE of you do and from this point on I’m invoking the Right of Privacy and News Blackout for myself, my immediate family and those that I consider my extended family, SO MOTE IT BE.”

The magic that flared surprised many of the children who had never before been in the presence of a very powerful wizard. The power roared through the school pulsing outward away from the school to hit every magical story seeker, newscaster and media hound that falls under the United Kingdom Ministry of Magic. All they would know was that someone extremely powerful had invoked their
Right to Privacy from the Media, but not who and they wouldn’t know for a long while.

The magic also hit those that Harry considered his family and a protective shield sprung up around Dudley, Draco, Remus, Neville, Severus, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, as well as himself. There was a conditional shield around the Weasley twins due to the fact that they take out advertisements, but any news that involved Harry the twins wouldn’t be able to divulge to anyone. Bill and Charlie Weasley were too far away to be affected by it, but the remaining Weasleys were on their own.

“Remind me to send an owl to the twins Draco. They need to be aware of this development,” Harry asked his mate. “Now for those of you, who do not have the benefit of the book that I’ve just given out to Mr. Creevy. I will explain, in the most basic terms, the conditions of what you’ve just experienced. You will not be able to take pictures of me or anyone related to me in any way, shape or form, EVER, unless I ask you to or you gain my permission.

If you do so, without permission, then the pictures you take will never turn out. Write any news articles about myself or anyone related to me and there will be similar consequences that will increase exponentially, for example: trying to develop a picture for a newspaper, magazine or any article of some sort more then three times, your prints will be unclear or the process of developing those pictures could cause an explosion and damage either the pictures, the area or yourself. Therefore I strongly suggest you curb the need to spread written gossip.”

“Apprentice Potter,” the Potions Master stood up from the Head table and everyone focused on him. “Now that that is settled, perhaps you would kindly remember that the first years have yet to be sorted.”

Harry acted like a typical Gryffindor and blushed at the admonishment. “I apologize, Professor Snape. I'm sorry everyone, let’s take a seat and finish this later.”

He sat down and was quickly followed by Draco on his left, next to his Slytherin friends that had taken sanctuary in the school. Dudley sat quickly on his right, followed by Neville next to him. Colin and Ginny had to return to the sixth year table on the opposite side of the room.

That left Ron and Hermione trying to find a place to sit. It wasn’t easy to get a seat next to their ‘best’ friend because the table was filled with seventh years that refused to move. They had to sit at separate ends of the table and in between two different groups of students that wanted nothing to do with either of them.

“Better,” Professor Snape said. “Let’s bring in the first years.”

The first years were all sorted in short order. Everyone had clapped and welcomed them to Hogwarts. They were all seated together at the same table as the second year students. However, the Sorting Hat was not done yet.

“Mr. Harry Potter, please step forward,” it called out loudly.

Harry was startled and muttered, “What is that bloody thing up to now?” Draco and Dudley snickered, knowing the full story of Harry’s problems with the Hat.

He stood up and since everyone was watching, but he wasn’t too certain that no one at his table would try to trip him, so he used his walking or guiding stick. It was that same one that he’s had since his strange journey began.

Tapping his way up to where the Sorting Hat waited, everyone realized that there was something off about the fact that Harry needed a cane to guide him. He smirked when he heard the murmuring.
knowing that should they try to tell someone or anyone, then this information will get no where. He was now standing in front of the stool with the waiting Hat.

“What are you up to?” He asked it in a clear tone.

“I want everyone to know about the multiple houses that the teachers and assistants have scrolled down their arms. You will tell them or I’ll let out your secret Headmaster,” the hat projected to him in his mind.

“Very well,” Harry said out loud. He stood up on the platform next to the hat and then addressed everyone in the Great Hall. “Deputy Headmasters and Headmistresses, the Sorting Hat wishes for me to relay a bit of news to all of students, in regards to the multiple house colours that some of the Professors and assistants have.”

“Go ahead young Mr. Potter,” Professor Flitwick said. “It will save us an extra announcement later.” The others nodded in agreement.

“Attention please,” Professor McGonagall said tapping her glass. “Go ahead Apprentice Potter.”

“Would all of the Professors, teachers’ aides and assistants that have multiple house colours please stand up,” Harry asked. Several of the Professors and assistants stood.

Remus, who was seated next to the Potions Master, also stood up and that’s when Severus noticed that the piping on the werewolf’s robes were predominantly blue and grey, Ravenclaw colours. There were minor flashes of Gryffindor and Slytherin colours within the scrollwork.

Severus gave the wolf a side long look that said they were going to talk later. Remus just looked down at him, gave a small smirk and a wink before returning his attention to the proceedings in the Hall.

Neville Longbottom stood up and so did Dudley, as they were assistants and both had multiple house colouring on the piping of their robes. The seventh years near them realized that these two were either apprentices or assistants to some of the classes in the school.

Neville had dominant Gryffindor colours with the Hufflepuff colouring flashing within and Dudley had all the House colours in nearly equal amounts on his. It was rare, but since he had never attended Hogwarts he had developed basically all round and had the features of all the houses were in him.

“As you can see,” Harry said, drawing everyone's attention back to him and the explanation he was about to give. “Many of them have multiple house colours. It seems that in order for some students to be comfortable in talking or consulting with a Professor or assistant, they would prefer to seek out someone wearing their own House colours. The Sorting Hat has sorted everyone in the Great Hall, but since there are some who would fit into more than one House, the Hat felt it was best to indicate to them what their primary House was, followed by any secondary or tertiary House, as well.

The dominant colouring on their sleeves, do indicate their primary house. All others are secondary, which should make all of you realize that they carry House Pride for all Houses that they choose to display. The Sorting Hat wants me to be sorted like the teachers, as I am an Apprentice and an Assistant.

Here’s a little unknown history for all of you. I know that I was sorted into Gryffindor, but in the beginning, during my first year the Hat had wanted me to be placed in Slytherin House. I made the choice to not go there, so it placed me in my secondary House, which is Gryffindor. Isn’t that correct Hat?”
“That’s right, but now that you are here, I would like to converse with you about it once more,” the Sorting Hat said.

Harry smiled at the Hat and said, “Very well.” He lifted it up and set it down on his head.

The Hat chortled and said to Harry’s mind, “I knew it. You have changed Headmaster. You must allow me to re-Sort you into your multiple houses.”

“Many won’t like it, but as there are many things in life that change whether they like it or not, they’ll have no choice, but to accept this,” Harry said to the Hat in his mind. “Do as you please, but do not tell them that I am the Headmaster or I’ll let the Weasley twins have a go at you in order for them to replicate you for their Joke Shop.”

The Hat chuckled and then said, “You are devious and really should have been in Slytherin. I’m almost sorry to say that you don’t have much Gryffindor in left, still you have a smattering of all four, but...,” his voice projected to the school. “Your dominant houses are Slytherin and Ravenclaw. Your secondary houses are Hufflepuff and Gryffindor.”

“Thank you Hat,” Harry said. “Will that be all?”

“I’ve done my job,” it said and then fell silent. Harry returned to his seat and returned his focus to the Head table ignoring many of the protests from those in Gryffindor House.

Professor McGonagall tapped her glass again and said, “Attention please. Attention!” It took a bit, but the Hall was quiet after a few more protestations from the other members of Gryffindor. She nodded to Professor Sprout to take up the reigns.

The shorter woman stood up and waited till everyone focused on her. “Thank you for your attention. This school year will be vastly different from many previous years at Hogwarts.” She nodded to Professor Flitwick, as he was the one who was stronger in charms, so he called forth what they needed. In front of every student a journal type book appeared and on top of the book a plain cube shaped box.

Professor Snape pulled out his own box and set it in front of him. “Please open the boxes in front of you,” the Herbology Professor said. “Tap the object inside with your wand or pick it up with your hand. Professor Snape will demonstrate.”

The Potions Master opened his parcel, lifted the small crystal looking ball out of the box and then he just tapped it once with his wand. Many of the students imitated him, not realizing that the crystal was activated by touch. Some of the students poked at it with the fingers or their wands, but that was enough to activate them too.

Many were startled when the balls began to float around their heads and that’s when the noticed that all of the teachers had one too. Professor Sprout went on to explain what they were and what they did. Lots of the students were outraged by the fact that Hogwarts was instituting such action, but Professor Sprout had pulled out a stack of papers, which Professor Flitwick distributed to all the students.

Professor Snape stood up and said clearly, “Silence. That is enough. Do you actually think that your parents are unaware of what goes on in this school? Read the papers that you’ve just received. Your parents and guardians have already given their consent and it doesn’t matter how old you are. If you are still living with them, then these forms have all been properly signed.”

He sat back down, listening to them grumble, but they quieted down. Most were going to write to
their parents to find out the truth, but they were going to be severely disappointed. Their parents approved of the safety measures, even those parents who were Marked wanted their children, who may have been Marked or not, to be safe within the school. They had been given the go ahead from Voldemort and he was fully aware of the new measures. This was all done before the attack on Privet Drive.

Professor Sprout returned to her seat and Professor McGonagall stood up. “Moving on,” she said. “The books in front of you list all of the courses available for your year. Unfortunately for the fifth to seventh years, your Mandatory Courses have been set by your prior years. You are still welcome to take any of the Introductory Optional Course that you wish, but we will be instituting some advanced level options later in the month once everything and everyone has been settled.”

Hermione, who needed to know, stood up and asked, “Could we have some examples?”

“Fifth to seventh years will be remaining behind after the evening meal for further announcements. So the examples will be given then, Miss Granger. Kindly sit down and have some patience,” Professor McGonagall answered. Hermione sat down with a huff.

The Transfiguration Professor then proceeded to explain the books and how they worked. Every student began to open them, using her example, which was of course Transfigurations. The older years grumbled and murmured how unfair it was for the lower years to have better choices, but a few noticed that they also had more courses then the later years.

“As you can see some of the selections are not optional and are based on the requirements that are set out by the Ministry of Magic. The mandatory courses are all highlighted. Optional course selections must be made by tomorrow evening or else you will have no options for the year, is that clear?” She asked the first to third years.

“Write your preference in order of first, second and third choice. You will find that it will be first come, first served. However, first and second years will have their options on the semester basis. So if you do not get your first choice this semester, you have a chance getting it the next. Understood?” She looked at the nodding heads of the first and second table. “If you have any questions about those courses, you may ask the Journeyman and teaching assistants sitting next to the sixth years or speak to the assistants seated at the seventh year table next to you.”

“Third to seventh years, your optional courses will last year round, unless you select one from the first year lot, so be sure that you select the ones that you want to take. Testing will be done on the first day of your optional class to see what level you are at for that particular subject. Group tutoring may be an option to bring up your levels to that of your companions or independent study may be made available to you, should your levels exceed the introductory sections of the optional courses.

If you are in doubt about your career choices or path, feel free to see a counselor or go to your Head of House for advice,” she pointed to the four counselors that stood up and to each of the Heads of House. “We will be happy to assist you. For an overview of generic careers, there is a list in the last section of your books will give you an overall view of the classes needed to reach those goals. However, they are not specific to specialized fields, so I suggest that you see one of the counselors to fine tune your course selections.”

She turned her attention to the sixth and mainly the seventh years. “Unfortunately all of you will have to continue on the career or course you have currently begun. The advanced levels for the optional courses unfortunately require that the pre-requisites are met and you don’t have the time to make up what you need. Still the first to third year Introductory Course options are available to you, however I advise that you hold off on that decision until after our meeting this evening.”
She sat down and watched as the first and second years looked through their books. Many of the students were looking through the books and Hermione was pissed off that such changes would occur only after she was nearly finished with Hogwarts. ‘It’s not fair,’ she thought. ‘I would have loved these courses at the beginning. How dare Headmaster Dumbledore, change things like this. I’m going to give him a piece of my mind the next time that I see him.’

The sun was setting and the house-elves called back the water and fruit. They quickly emptied the tables and waited for the signal to send the place settings up to the Great Hall. Professor Flitwick tapped his glass to gain their attention.

“Please put your names on your course journals. Just use your wands like you would any pen or quill and write your names on the covers. This action will magically tag your book to you and it will never be lost, stolen or misplaced for very long. This is how you need to write your optional course selections in order of preference within the book, but for now after you’ve written your names on them, please put them away and leave your hands and arms off the table for the next ten minutes. Quickly now,” his voice carried throughout the Hall.

Everyone complied with his request and once their names were magically written on the books and the books were tucked away, the student complies and sat slightly away from the table. That way their arms and hands were no longer in danger of being switched out.

The signal was sent to the kitchen elves and the table settings appeared, placed just like they should be. The first years were startled, but the others took it all in stride, they knew that the evening meal was coming shortly.

Professor Snape stood up and everyone focused on him. It was not something that he was used to, but understood the need. “A few start of term announcements before we begin. One the Forbidden Forest has that name for a reason. It is Forbidden and those of you who think that there are no measures in place to prevent you from going in, should you do so you will be in for a surprise this year. Secondly, many of you may be wondering where the Headmaster is, well don’t. He has important research that he is conducting in regards to defeating Voldemort and the defense of this school. He will frequently be absent from the Great Hall, just like this evening.

The Heads of House have all been appointed as his Deputies. Anything that you need to bring forth to the Headmaster will follow a chain of command. Tell any teacher or assistant your issue or concern and they will bring it to us. Should we feel that it warrants a review from the Headmaster, he will then be told your request. This step is non negotiable, understood?”

He glared at many of the students who used to frequent the Headmaster Office during the year. It had been annoying to walk into the office and find several students underfoot. Too bad it was many of the Gryffindors, especially Granger and the Weasleys. “Also our Caretaker, Mr. Filch, wishes to let you know that magic is absolutely forbidden in the corridors of the school. The growing list of forbidden and joke items can be found next to his office doors, that list also includes the entire current inventory of Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes.”

He scowled at the students letting them all know what he thought of pranks and jokes. It was understandable considering his past and the subject of pranks. “Thirdly, fifth to seventh year students will remain in the Great Hall after the evening meal is finished. This is also non negotiable. Understood?” He said arching his eyebrow in their direction and he received several nods of compliance.

“Finally, any future announcements will be taking place either during noon-time meals or during evening meals. You miss an announcement then I suggest that you check the message boards in your common room, as all announcements will be posted accordingly.” He paused for a moment to ensure
that they had all been paying attention. "Very well then, let’s eat,” he said calling forth the evening meal.

Harry spent the majority of the meal analyzing the bonds and partial bonds on the students. He was disappointed that three of the fourth years were under spells of coercion, but he would talk to their Head of House later in order to neutralize the spells and close off the bonds. ‘At least those bonds weren’t like those of his best friends,’ he chuckled thinking about that. ‘They are going to be in for a surprise. Many of them will, but then again I’m glad that many had attended those classes.’

The fourth year Prefects had just finished leading the first years out of the Great Hall and many of the assistant teachers and Journeyman were escorting the rest of the second to fourth years to their dorms and common rooms.

Only the fifth to seventh years remained in the Great Hall with the Heads of House, plus Remus, the medical counselor and a few of the interested or concerned Professors. They had been told what the plans were for these students and many were shocked to find that such methods had been in place to curtail the growth of the muggleborn witches and wizards.

The tables had been cleared and now that the Great Hall was emptied of the younger years the older ones were free to disperse and move in closer to the Head table. The professors all stepped down and joined the students, which was a first for many, but it invoked a calming presence before the storm.

Harry looked in the direction of Professor Snape and nodded. He had gotten everything that he needed from the readings of the monitoring crystals. He was going to mentally direct the potion vials to everyone and a few were going to receive bond blockers while others were going to get placebos. No point in singling out students just yet. This was going to be a general address.

Professors McGonagall and Flitwick noted the signal. Professor Flitwick swished his wand and called forth the potion vials. There was one in front of every student remaining at the tables. Professor Snape had a stack of papers appear in front of him, which happened to be Ministerial Forms that only needed signatures to register the marriage bonds. There was an illusion on them to make them appear as if there were more then there should be.

“Now then,” Professor Sprout started. “Please drink the potion in front of you before we begin. It will take care of any partial bonds that you may have formed during the acts of sexual intercourse. Before you protest and say that you’ve never, be aware that we know and are administering placebos to you. We are trying to preserve the privacy of all students here. Are we clear?”

The students were nervous, but then watched Harry Potter drinking the potion. It was enough for the other to follow suit without question. If he could do it without questioning it and without fearing the potion, then it mustn’t be too bad. Thinking it over, the ones who’d never engaged in the act were kind of happy not to let the others know that they were losers, but soon they would discover that they were lucky ones.

“Good to see that Gryffindor courage be of some use,” Professor Snape said to Harry.

“Of course,” Harry said smirking. “I knew that once I drank the potion, the others would do the same without question. How else can I lead the Wizarding World if not by example?”

Some of the professors snorted or chuckled. “Harry that’s not funny,” Hermione said. “You should be careful on how you express yourself. People might take you seriously.”
“Haven’t you read the recent papers Granger,” Draco said. “They say he’s the ‘Chosen One’ that will help defeat the Dark Lord. Why wouldn’t we follow such a bright and sexy, new ‘Leader of the Light’. He’s definitely better looking then the bearded old coot. We’ve even had the privilege of witnessing the vastness of his power when he invoked his Right to Journalism Privacy.”

Many of the students were nodding in agreement. “Besides,” Dudley said. “Would you have drunk the potion, if he hadn’t been the first to do so? Perhaps you’d have questioned the contents or demanded a copy of the recipe to analyze before drinking it. This way we can move onto the reason that we are still here. So would you please shut your trap.”

“How dare you...”

“That’s enough Miss Granger,” Professor Sprout said. “We have other things to bring up and don’t have the time to listen to you protest every little thing.”

The Heads of House then took a small survey of who attended sexual education classes and those who did not. It was still a shock to see the number of students that haven’t. Information sessions were going to be set up for those students and they were going to get the instruction that they missed, hopefully before they become sexually active.

“The reason you need these instructions,” Professor McGonagall said. “Is that you need to know the dangers of engaging in such activities in the Wizarding World. Disease is the least of your problems. Magical cores are activated during such acts and sometimes people form bonds with one another. The level or depth of these bonds, depend on the strength of your magical core.”

“She’s right,” Professor Snape continued. “The potion that many of you've just ingested has closed off any partial bond that may have been formed during such acts. It is imperative that you realize the consequences. What you may not know is that depending on the level of your bond and the way that you act after being bonded reflects on a change in your status.” He sighed at some of the blank looks that he was receiving. “In short, some of you are considered married by such acts. I have the Ministerial Marriage Forms in front of me and those of you who are married by such an act will have to acknowledge it or face dire magical consequences.”

“Which would be what Professor?” One of the bolder Ravenclaws asked.

“In extreme cases, the loss of your magical core, but more then likely if you are the weaker one, then you will have already lost something of yourself as you may have been deferring to the stronger magical partner in your union,” Professor Lupin said. “The potion prevents any further ‘Bond Demands’ from being carried out, but there have also been cases of madness and suicide if the marriage bond is not acknowledged.”

“Bond demands?” Another student asked.

“Bond demands can be small or large,” Professor De Luka said. “Suggestions to improve your looks, nudges to change the way you look at things and even the fact that you may find yourself waiting for a response or reply from your bond-mate, before taking any action. Bond demands can be anything from a plain statement like, I wish you’d comb your hair before leaving the house, or Haven't you got any manners, please eat with your mouth closed, or I think that you should study more, instead of talking about Quidditch so much. These are just some of the things that you may find yourself complying to.”

Ron blushed because those were a couple of the things that Hermione had told him after the first few times that they had had sex. He quickly learned that the phrasing did not stop him from talking about Quidditch, but it did stop him from talking about it nearly every free time he had or talking about
Quidditch around *her* too much.

Some of the guys had realized that it would not have been a good thing to have engaged in sex, if their partner was not interested in them and soon the instructional sessions were going to be filled with those who wanted to know how to prevent such a thing from happening.

“Focus please,” Professor Sprout said. “Instructional sessions will be set up at a later date and all of you will be attending whether you are bonded or not. In the mean time let’s move on to the rest of the announcements.”

The announcements including the club information that they were planning for the next month, a set up of the next Prefect meeting later in the week and of course some of the Advanced classes that will be available to the older students, like Animagus training or Potions Experimentation. It mollified some of their grumblings as they were allowed to initiate club ideas and request or suggest advanced classes or alternate classes in different areas.

All in all the older students were pleased with the choices that they were getting and the fifth years were able to analyze their courses in more depth then would have been able to, should they have left the room with the other students.

A select few from the fifth, sixth and seventh years were asked to remain behind, while the rest were dismissed, with the reminder that any optional course the wished to attend must be selected by Saturday evening.

The remaining students were few and they were the ones that had form marital bonds. “I’m disappointed in those of you here,” Professor McGonagall said as the Potions Master handed out the forms to the remaining couples.

Harry stayed behind with Draco, but told Dudley and Neville that they could leave, if they wanted to. It was obvious that Harry wanted to get a ‘talk’ with his best friends over with. It was better to tell them now and then avoid them for the week-end; rather than avoid them for the week-end and have a row on the first day of class.

Dudley and Neville wanted to stay behind to offer support and they stayed to witness the information that came forward. It was unexpected from a few of the students, but from Hermione and Ron it was explosive and fun to watch. “We’ll have to show this to the twins,” Dudley whispered in Neville’s ear.

“The twins?” Neville asked softly, his eyes widening as he watched Hermione pulled out her wand.

Dudley was equally surprised, but continued, “Yeah the Weasley twins, Gred and Forge.” Neville nodded and continued to watch as one of the Professors take Hermione’s wand away from.

“I don’t believe it,” she shrieked. “It’s not true. I can not be married to... to... him.” She angrily pointed her finger, in the direction of the youngest male Weasley.

“Why not Miss Granger?... Pardon me, Mrs. Weasley,” said Professor Snape smirking at her. “You have studied the customs of our world, have you not? So you should know all about the bonds that form. I dare say Mr. Weasley knew, didn’t you?”

Ron gulped down the bile that had risen in his throat. He didn’t want a confrontation in front of anyone because Hermione was vicious, but still since her wand was taken away from her, he said, “Yes, it’s true. It’s not something that I was expecting, but it is true. We are bonded in such a manner and you have no choice, but to sign the forms or else lose your intelligence and go insane.”
He waited about fifteen minutes and then proceeded to sign the forms and write down the bond condition for marriage, as well as the stipulation of insanity if the bond wasn’t respected. It was the only time that he could set a magical bond condition, so he set it out to be devastating to her. He didn’t care if he lost his intelligence he was always belittled by her for the lack of it anyway.

She had tears in her eyes. “I refuse to sign those without knowing more about this,” she snarled out. Ron just walked up to her and showed her the conditions that he had set in the marital papers.

The other students, who were bonded, left the room after setting a time for counseling with the Medical counselor and their Head of House. They didn’t want to stay for this confrontation, as it promised to be volatile and they knew that they had more important things to take care of, rather than watch. It was now a domestic dispute. Talk about airing your dirty laundry.

Ron showed her the conditions. “Look,” he said pointing out what he had written. “I’ve set the condition, so now you have to sign or else you will no longer be the brightest witch in our year. This is the Wizarding World and you’ve been a part of it ever since you’ve decided to attend a Wizarding school. It doesn’t matter if you know all the rules and regulations or not, your magic still conforms to it and now you are stuck.”

Hermione glared at him and then said, “You knew. You knew and didn’t tell me. I could’ve...”

“You could’ve nothing,” he said. “You would have soon found out that there was nothing that you could do. There’s another reason why I chose not to tell you and no one else chose to tell you either.”

Her eyes widened when she realized that this was why the other Death Eaters were laughing at her. She had been bonded and never knew it. No wonder she couldn’t be with the ones she wanted, she needed Ron’s permission, due to the bond and he had refused.

She glared at him, but he continued, “I’m not the one with the stronger magical core. You are and you would have soon realized that. I would then have had to listen to you tell me what to, when and how to do it, no matter what it was. You are a very bossy person, so of course I kept my mouth shut. It was sound strategy, especially if I wanted to keep my own mind and not become some hen-pecked husband. I will thank you for showing me how to study. I think my grades will improve now, don’t you?”

He watched the emotions on her face and knew that he was in for some pain, but if he had learned a few things from studying and chess, it was how to protect himself from stray hexes and curses. He would rather be Crucioed by the Dark Lord then have to face Hermione for the rest of his life and that is what he was stuck with.

Hermione was livid and spitting mad. Harry had called for Dauphin because he wanted to watch the proceedings from her eyes. The little runespoor had been out hunting, so she came to him instead of returning to their quarters. She was around his neck hissing and making a commentary on the proceedings which had Draco, Dudley and Harry laughing.

She turned in their direction and hurled at them, “What is so funny? Why are you laughing at this? This is not a joke.”

“You have to admit that your predicament is funny. It would have been if it had happened to anyone who wasn’t expecting this,” Harry said. “Wait a minute, wasn’t there three other couples tagged in such a fashion?”

“That’s right,” Neville said smirking at Hermione. “Only they left the room because they didn’t want to stay and listen to her rant.”
“You’ll pay for this,” she said. “You’ve no right to make fun of me. I’m stuck in a marriage that I did not want with someone who is more interested in chasing glory at the coattails of the Boy-Who-Lived. Plus he’s poor to boot and has no interest in earning an honest living.”

A sharp sound was heard echoing in the Great Hall and Hermione had a hand print on her cheek. Her eyes were angry and wide at the presumption that someone would strike her. Looking up she found the icy blue eyes of what everyone had been jokingly calling her husband. “You don’t know anything about me,” he said. “How would you know that I have no interest in earning an honest living? My parents earn an honest living and so do my brothers. I am still in school and just because I have not truly selected a subject or career to pursue does not mean that I don’t think about it.”

“How dare you strike me,” she snarled.

“That is enough Granger,” Draco said. Everything was getting out of hand. “You still need to sign the forms or you’ll begin to lose that intelligence of yours. You’re going to need it if you want to research ways to get out of your bond.”

She glared at the blond and then finally stalked up to the table, looked at the paper on it and then tore it up. The backlash of such an action, knocked her down and she watched, horrified, as the papers came back together. “It’s binding Miss Granger,” Professor Lupin said. “There’s nothing you can do at this point. If you do not sign, you will lose more then you think.”

She shakenly got back up to her feet and then signed the document. Some of her rage was bond influenced by the lack of signing or acknowledgement, but it was also more then that. They were laughing at her; at least that’s what her mind told her. “There,” she said. “I hope you’re happy because I am not.”

“We don’t care Mrs. Weasley,” Professor Snape said.

“My name is Hermione Granger and not Weasley,” she said. “I may have signed the document, acknowledging the marriage, but I’m still keeping my name.”

The others just shook their heads at her foolishness. Dudley was also confused, “Why can’t she keep her own name?”

“It’s Wizarding tradition,” Neville explained. “If there is a marriage between two people, but neither spouse share the same last name, then the magical benefits are split, this also includes income. It’s the same for hyphenated names in a marriage. The income would be split and can not be shared. If Ron were to get a job that pays more then hers, she would never be able to access his earnings even after his death, just like he would never be able to access hers. Because he signed the papers first, it is his name that is primary and the one that she should’ve taken.”

“He had allowed her the chance to sign the papers before him,” Draco said. “Weasley and everyone else told her that she had to sign the papers. He didn’t have to wait, but in doing so, should she have chosen to sign it first, he would have taken her name and then become Ronald Granger. Since she didn’t, he was able to add a bond condition that was detrimental to her, plus sign the document first, therefore making his the name that should be taken.”

“Is there a time frame for that?” Dudley asked. The others looked at him and wondered about it.

Ron answered him, “There is. As soon as a marriage bond is known by both parties, the marriage documents must be signed. If the magically stronger of the two doesn’t sign within fifteen minutes, once the knowledge of the bond is known, then they forfeit some of their magical strength to the other balancing them out equally. They then have to take the name of the first one who signed or else
lose magical access for funds, properties and other things, like income.”

“How do you know that, Mr. Weasley?” Professor Snape asked.

Ron sneered at Hermione and said, “I studied it.”

His tone of voice and the look he was sending her caused everyone to want to laugh. They tried to hold it in, really they did, but it was just too funny. Harry’s eyes brightened with his mirth, Draco tucked his head in the crook of Harry’s neck to muffle the sounds, but his shoulders gave him away.

Neville’s own eyes were bright and he was pursing his lips together, Professor Snape let out a sound that could have been a choked down chuckle and Remus chuckled openly. Dudley smiled and shook his head, it was too good. From everything that he has heard about those two, it was funny to see her put in her place by those three words.

“Well,” Professor McGonagall said. “I think that this is enough for this evening. If you two will follow me, I will show you to your new rooms.”

Hermione watched everyone in the room and then asked a question that had everyone groaning. “Harry why are you and Malfoy suddenly so friendly with one another?”

“He’s my bond-mate,” Harry said. “My husband, if you prefer. We bonded just like you and Ron, only it was during this summer.”

“Does that mean your name is now Malfoy?” She asked assuming that Malfoy had signed the papers first.

“Granger, you are an idiot,” Draco said. “Didn’t you hear anything that was said in here tonight? The magically stronger one signs all documentation first. Whatever made you believe that I have the stronger magical core? My name is Draco Severus Potter.”

“You willingly gave up your father’s name,” she asked incredulously. No wonder Lucius was pissed off at the last meeting. His heir was gone and he no longer had his father’s name or backing with the Dark Lord. Draco was going to be hunted just like Harry.

“Well of course I did,” Draco said. “That man would have had me trussed up and standing in front of Voldemort this summer, if I hadn’t managed to get away. Thankfully I had a lot of help from my husband and his family.” He looked at Dudley with thanks and then he kissed Harry on the cheek.

Harry nuzzled the cheek nearest to him, kissing it with love. “Your very welcome luv,” he said. “It’s getting late and I for one have had a long day. I’m going to turn in and let you two work out what you need for your bond to grow or whatever. See you guys on Sunday aftern...”

“Harry...” Draco said in that tone of voice.

“All right,” Harry said grinning. “See you guys Monday morning.” He held up his hand to stop the protests of his former best friends. “Ah... don’t argue with me. I have a lot of things to do before the first day of class and none of which you can help me with. By the way Ron, you’re the Quidditch captain this year and you need to find some team members to fill in the missing slots, including Seeker because I’m not allowed to play this year.”

“Why not? You know that Slytherin will cream us, if you’re not there,” Ron protested.

“I can’t play either Weasley,” Draco said. “I’m only allowed to coach my team and we have several players to replace too. So don’t feel too bad about it.”
Neville, Dudley and the few remaining professors had left, leaving only the four of them to talk. Everything had wound down from Hermione’s original outburst and it looked like they were talking just like they wanted.

“Harry, are you and Malfoy really married?” Hermione asked, still displeased that her carefully laid plans to seduce Harry were trashed because she couldn’t even be with another. It was so unfair. Ron was still free to screw around. ‘At least I think so,’ she thought.

“Yes we are Granger,” Draco said. “Kindly remember that my last name is Potter and I will only answer to that name from now on.”

“Yes Hermione,” Harry said, showing their matching rings.

Ron looked at them closely and knew what they were. “Holy Merlin’s sweet shit,” he said. “Those are Dwarven made.”

Harry turned to his former friend and said, “Yes they are. How did you know?”

“Bill showed us some when we went to Egypt that summer,” he said. “They made many of the jewelry for the Pharaohs during those times. There were still some around and it was discovered that the method used to create those pieces matched the dwarven articles that were found in other areas of the world. How did you find them?”

“You know me, with luck,” Harry said.

Ron snorted and agreed, “Yeah only you could find something like that with luck.”

“Looks you guys, it’s getting late and we have a full two days to prepare for classes on Monday, so I’ll see you then,” Harry said.

“What a minute,” Hermione said. “Do you know why the new teachers were not announced this evening and are you teaching? What are you teaching?”

“New teachers and their assistants will be announced tomorrow during lunch or the evening meal. Yes I will be teaching this year and no I will not available until Monday morning breakfast. I suggest you both enjoy the last week-end freedom that you’ll have for a long while,” Harry said. He called forth a house-elf and said, “Please show these two to their new rooms.”

Hermione glared at Harry surprised that he would use a house-elf to show them the way, but then she quickly realized that Harry was walking away from them and was not going to be living in the dorms anymore. She turned to look at the house-elf that was patiently waiting for her and noticed the new uniform of the elf. Pleased that she might have done something positive to influence the elves into wearing clothes, she never knew that it and many of the other elves were laughing at her behind her back.

It guided them to a door just to the side of the Gryffindor entrance. “Married couples do not live in the dorms,” the house-elf explained. “You will live here and have access to the common rooms only. Good evening.”

---------------------------------

Ron & Hermione (first night at school)
The portrait in front of them opened up to show them in a small dorm sized common room of their own. It had two desks and a small sofa setting for tea. There were three doors in the room, two of which upon opening them they found two bedrooms with a connecting door. The bathroom was the door on the opposite side of the fireplace.

The reason for two bedrooms was caused the last name issue. It was a set up like the old times when the wife and husband had separate beds and sometimes separate rooms, it was set like the old days when the wife had to wait for her husband to visit the matrimonial bed.

Hermione stomped into the room that she had chosen as her own and slammed the door behind her. She wasn’t pleased with the outcome of this evening and she knew that there had to be more to the crystal monitors that were floating around their heads. She set out to try and catch hers to analyze the magics in it, but she couldn’t catch it. It kept floating away.

She also knew that there had to be a way out of the bond she had with Ron. It wasn’t that she didn’t care about him. It was just that she really, really didn’t care about him.

‘It’s disgusting to think that I’m stuck with him for the rest of my life. Well at least he no longer eats with his mouth open nor does he shovel food into his mouth like he used to. I wonder if that was from the bond,’ she thought.

She locked the door from her side of the rooms because she honestly thought that Ron wanted her in that fashion. ‘He’s got another thing coming if he thinks that he’s getting into my pants ever again.’

It seems like Hermione’s life just took a turn down the crapper. She seemed to remember snatches of conversations that flowed in her direction, whenever she was in the middle of research at the Dark Lord’s or some other Death Eater mansion.

“Malfoy’s new toy...”

“Yeah, seems eager to please or is that eager for punishment...”

“Heard he gives great fucking head, well that’s the rumor anyway...”

“Malfoy won’t let anyone near that one...”

“Not like the other four...”

“He wants to keep him for...”

She had brushed off that information as inconsequential because it had nothing to do with her. She never paid any attention to the bruises on Ron’s body nor did she ever ask him what happened to him with Malfoy Sr. behind the closed doors.

Every time that she had used the ‘Subliminus’ spell, she repeatedly told Ron that she loved him. Making him fall further into her thrall, but since her knowledge about magical cores and bonds were limited, it never occurred that to her that she already had power over Ron. However, because she constantly told him that she loved him, he believed in her feelings.

Until the night that she betrayed him. She turned him over to the Death Eaters and to the Dark Lord to do with as they pleased. Also, because she stated that she didn’t care who he was involved with or whether he was faithful or not, it also gave the Death Eaters, free reign of him.

It was horrifying to know that the girl of his dreams was actually the one in his nightmares. Her actions and declarations to those creeps gave him the rage and fury he needed to take the Dark Mark.
Ron did it because he wanted to see her taken down, he had patience when needed.

---------------------------------

Voldemort was amused by the defiance he saw in those blue eyes and he forbade his subordinates from divulging the truth to the upstart mudblood who was the only exception to his glorious cause. The reason that she was the exception was because she was one of the best friends of the Boy-Who-Lived.

Besides it amused him to have something like her to dangle in front of Potter. That and also for the reason that she was an excellent researcher. He had given her free access over the homes of all his Death Eaters and told them that she was to have access to all of their libraries.

It was going to even be more glorious now that he had both of Potters’ friends Marked to him. ‘Potter won’t know what hit him, when they are exposed at the final battle,’ he thought.

The fact that there will be a final battle was not something that Voldemort thought on too often, but it was ever present in his mind that there will be a battle. ‘It will take place at Hogwarts,’ he thought. That was the only place he thought that had the space and ground worthy of fighting on.

It was ideal too and since it was, of course, Dumbledore’s domain he would have the distinct pleasure of taking down the old coot and the Brat-Who-Lived.

---------------------------------

Ron smirked when he saw the separate bedrooms. He was happy not to have to sleep in the same bed as her because he was more then certain that she would do something to him in the middle of the night. This way he could set up his protections and improve upon them during the week-end, now that he had access to the school’s resources.

‘I’m going to have to see Professor Snape about learning to Occlude my mind,’ he thought. ‘I don’t want the Dark Lord routing around in there and I know that Hermione has been learning Legilimency or at least thinking hard about it. I will protect myself in this at least. Good thing we have the week-end to sort things out.’

Ron looked into the room that was going to be his for the remainder of his schooling and was glad that he didn’t have to share with anyone. ‘I’ve had to share too much in my life to even want to have a normal marriage set-up anyway,’ he thought. ‘I’m relieved that I don’t even have to share her bed. It was getting to the point where I almost can’t get it up in her presence anymore. I guess if I need to sort her out... Forget it. I’ll just farm her out like she did to me... Better yet, I know Goyle Jr. wants a chance at her; she’s put him down often enough. I wonder how she’ll like that.’

He, too, made sure that the door between their rooms was locked. The red-head also cast the strongest locking and security spells on his room in order to prevent her from entering. His things for school were already unpacked and set up in his room. He lied down on his bed and let his mind reflect on some of the things that he had been looking up lately.

Meditation magics and mental magics were nearly close to one another. Despite the put-downs from his ball and chain, he wasn’t stupid. He was able to compartmentalize his thoughts and everything that he learned. He just needed minor instruction on how to Occlude his mind and what to expect when someone performed the Legilimens spell.

His mind worked logically and strategically on another plane from Ms. Know-It-All’s. He had books that even she didn’t know about. Ever since he took the Dark Mark he has been stealing from some
of the Death Eaters that had taken an interest in him. Sometimes when he expressed interest in a book from their libraries they would, for an oral favour, give it to him; no questions asked. He would then take the book and copy it or else use the cover of it to hide the book he truly wanted or had stolen.

It was a trick that had made Harry and Hermione think that the only books he had ever read were Quidditch related. ‘I think that Harry knows about the switch though,’ he thought. ‘It doesn’t matter anyway. He won’t know what I have been reading.’

His parents had taught their children many organizational spells. It was important for them to know because they didn’t have any local libraries near them where they could borrow books from. It wasn’t like they had the money to buy lots of books and things for their children.

So they taught their children a few very old, family spells that would allow them to gain information or books by requesting, through very specific spells, the information or specific books that they were looking for. If the information was only on three pages in a book that had three hundred, they had a spell that would copy the pages they needed by copying them directly into their mind.

They could do books like that, but since it took a lot of time it was something that they didn’t do often. It would arouse the suspicions of the book store owners. Not all of their children made use of those spells and despite having taught them to their children, the Weasleys discouraged them from over using them when it wasn’t necessary. They thought that something easily obtained might prevent them from actually trying to learn the regular way.

As for seeking out books, there was another spell that made it easier for them to find the one book that held the most information that they were looking for. That way when it came time to buy a book they only had to pick the best one.

It took some time, but Ron had figured that that spell got easier and faster when it was used often. He practiced with the school library. He was able to use that spell in two minutes to copy one book to his mind, depending on the size of the book. It also enabled him to learn a few interesting spells from some Death Eater homes that he was privileged to visit.

He used his book cover switch trick to fool many of the other Death Eaters, but it could never fool Lucius Malfoy. If he never had a reason to hate Lucius Malfoy, he certainly did now and it was all thanks to that bitch that brought him to the Dark Lord.

Ron would never have been Marked if it hadn’t been for her and he certainly wouldn’t have been used in such a manner if it hadn’t been for her words. Lucius Malfoy had a need to control things and people and after having lost total control over his son, which Ron secretly applauded, the man found someone else to take the brunt of his anger. Malfoy Senior was a sneaky, unhanded bastard to the core.

It was a welcome surprise and relief to find out from Kingsley, before school, that that bastard was back in Azkaban where he belonged. He would still have to be on the lookout for the Malfoy wannabes among Voldie’s posse, but he had several plans to prevent them from ever considering using him in the same manner that Lucius did.

In the meantime, he was going to enjoy the fact that he could play the field and Hermione couldn’t. She was going to have to come to him for sexual release and he wasn’t going to be as accommodating as he had been in the past. He did learn a few tricks from Malfoy and he wasn’t about be used by that bitch again.

‘Yeah, I’ll see if Greg wants a go at her. I won’t be touching her with a ten Knut broom,’ he thought.
‘Too bad he failed this year. Oh, well, I guess that she’ll just have to wait until the end of the year or at least until the holidays.’

“We’ll see how the rest of this year turns out,” he said to himself, looking into the course book for the first time.

The course journal was a real nice piece of spell-work and he noticed that there were a couple of ‘Introductory’ classes that interested him. Since he didn’t have that many N.E.W.T.s. to do, he was going to speak to his Head of House about taking one or two more than the allowed six or else set up a Club or two.

---------------------------------

TBC…
Chapter Nineteen

September 2, Neville, Dudley & The Draekons (Saturday)

Neville was standing before the portrait that led to the Founders’ quarters. He wasn’t comfortable being here, but Dudley had asked him if he wanted to watch Saturday morning cartoons with them. ‘Whatever those are?’ Neville thought. ‘At least, I will now find out how Dudley is able to remain here for the rest of his school year. He did say that the trick is part of what he wanted to show me this morning.’

“Go on in young Neville,” Hogwarts said when she noticed that he was standing there for a while. She opened the door for him.

“Thank you madam,” he said politely and walked into the main rooms.

Draco saw Neville in the doorway and called out to him, “Hello Neville. Come on in.”

“Thank you,” the shy Gryffindor said.

“Why don’t you join us for breakfast?” Harry said, looking up from the table.

“Sure,” he replied.

“Dudley should be out in a few minutes,” Draco said. “So you’re going to join us for the Saturday morning cartoon fest.”

“Um...yeah, but I’m not sure what they are?” He replied. “Dudley did say that he was going to show me how you and he figured out the trick to him being able to remain and study from Hogwarts.”

“Well, in our world we have animated books and such, but the muggles don’t,” Draco explained. It was probably better for him to explain it, as he had a first hand experience at what the differences were. “It’s rare now in our world, but you do remember the stage plays that used to happen often.”

Neville nodded. “My Grandmother used to go on about them all the time. She also used to listen to
the radio ones that the muggles had. You know the ones that used to play on the Wizard wireless because of some strange muggle interference, but they just seem to have stopped one day. She doesn’t know why though, but I do know that she preferred to listen to them while she was busy with other things to do.”

“They stopped because the muggles invented television,” Dudley said, coming from his rooms. “Television is a box that has visual plays, like the ones your Grandmother used to listen to. They’re basically mini-plays with commercial or advertisement breaks in between. It took a lot less time to act out a part then it did to come up with the noises that imitated a specific sound. That’s why television was revolutionary for the muggles.”

“I wonder,” Harry said. He pulled out his Headmaster Journal and made a few more notes within it. He was basically writing down the information that he had found out from Neville and Dudley.

“Why are you always making notes like that Harry?” Neville asked, having noticed that Harry did it often.

Harry just wrote down the information that Neville told him about the “radio plays” that no longer aired on the Wizard Wireless. “I make notes to remember ideas for possible clubs for the school. Some of things I write down are to help improve Hogwarts and many others are just ideas to think about sending out into the Wizarding World,” Harry explained. “It certainly won’t hurt if we can corner the market in some things.”

“Harry...” Draco said in a tone. “Don’t get too involved in that right now. We were discussing cartoons and television. As for you, Dudders, you know better then to introduce something new like radio plays.”

“I was that one that brought them up,” Neville said, defending his new friend. “Why is that a bad thing to bring up? It’s not like Harry is considering on purchasing a radio station or air time on the Wireless...” He suddenly stopped talking when Dudley covered his mouth. He quirked an eyebrow at the blue-eyed blond, but only got a nod in return to show that he should be looking at Harry.

Harry was writing again, only this time it looked like there was a fevered gleam in his blank eyes. Draco looked miffed and sent a half-hearted glare at Longbottom. “See what you’ve done,” Dudley whispered in his ear. “It’s taken Draco a long while to get Harry’s mind off of the running of the school.”

Harry smirked as the ideas flowed, but stopped jotting them down after a few key elements were written down. “You have to admit that that is a brilliant idea,” Harry said to pouting mate. “All right, I promise that I will only take mental notes for the rest of the day.” He put away the journal and gathered his nearly uncooperative mate into his lap and arms. He began to nuzzle and the softly kiss the pale cheek, moving down to the sensitive neck.

“Harry,” Draco gave a half-hearted protest, allowing his mate to have his way and kiss away his pretend pissy mood. “We have company and you promised...” the rest of the sentence lost in another kiss.

Neville watched, amused with the ease that Harry stopped the protestations, but then he also noticed that Draco was only playing a part to get kisses or attention.

He was aware that the hand that had covered his own mouth was still there, he tried to remove it by taking it into his own. Dudley however was lost in thought at the possibility of a radio play centered on Hogwarts or a radio station run from Hogwarts.
Neville wasn’t so bold as to lick the hand or do anything of the like to gain Dudley’s attention, so he just elbowed the guy in the ribs. Dudley grunted at he sharp jab he received from the normally non-violent Gryffindor, but then he blushed when he realized that his hand still covered his friend’s mouth. “Sorry,” he said softly, removing it.

“It’s OK,” Neville said and then he cleared his throat loudly to gain the attention of the two snogging Draekons. Once they focused back to him, he continued with their previous conversation. “I understand about the mini-play concept for the television from what I remember about radio plays. It still doesn’t explain what cartoons are.”

“Don’t the Wizards have their own comics strips Harry?” Dudley asked. This was a subject that he and Draco had never touched on when Draco was living at Privet Drive.

“I don’t know,” Harry said. “Draco? Neville? Is there a comic or animated story in the Wizard World? I mean something for pre-teens or teens. I seem to remember Ron saying something about Martin or was that Morval...”

“Marvin the Mad Muggle!” Draco exclaimed.

“Him?” Neville asked in confusion. “I was never allowed to look at those, let alone read one. My Grandmother thought that they were undignified.”

Draco paused and then took a hold of his crystal, spoke into it. Soon he walked over to the fireplace and threw in some floo powder, talked a few more minutes and then came back to the table with a couple of battered copies of the only Wizarding comic strip.

“Here,” he said. “We can keep these ones, but we owe Annabel a couple of muggle lollipops. This is what we have as a comic. Is this something like what you were talking about?” He passed one Dudley and one to Neville in order for them to have a look.

Dudley was fascinated. It was just like a comic strip, but the panels were animated with sight and sound. It was strange hear the story and watch it. Neville was chuckling at some of the antics he found within the pages, but Dudley didn’t understand what was so funny about the story or some of the jokes in it. ‘I guess you have to be a Wizard to get many of them,’ he thought.

Still it illustrated his point quite well and what he was about to explain to them. “This is very similar to cartoons,” he began. “Except that in the Muggle World, we have a huge selection or variety of comics and they don’t move on the pages like this one. Muggle comics are not animated or active; cartoons are. They’re animated drawings of characters, like this, that are not real, but have stories about them. So in that fashion they’re like the mini-plays. They usually last about thirty minutes with some adverts in the middle of it.”

“I remember,” Harry said. “You would never move from the couch until about one in the afternoon because that’s when the boring sports came on or when Aunt Petunia had a tele-romance or movie about to start.”

“Sports?” Neville asked.

“You’ll see,” Draco said, remembering the golf that found on the internet station. “Can we go down now, Harry?”

“All right,” he said. “Let’s go show Neville something muggle. Just don’t tell anyone else Nev. We don’t want to have the muggleborn stalk us because they miss their Saturday morning funnies.”

“Don’t worry,” the curly haired brunette said. “If you need to, you can charm or ward me like you
did when you wanted us to hide the fact that you’re the headmaster.”

“No,” Harry said. “That’s not necessary. I trust you.”

Neville was led to a room that had only three trunks in it. He was then led to the one in the middle and watched as Draco opened it up to the third compartment. Dudley was explaining the trunks and who they belonged to and a little bit of what they contained. The middle belonged to Draco.

Going down the ladder in the last compartment, Neville notices the office set up with a strange box in the corner. In the opposite corner were chairs and a couch that was similar to the boys’ main sitting room. He was told the story about the shopping that they had done for the furniture, while Draco made sure that the generator had power.

The three boys settled down on the sofa and chairs waiting for Draco to switch on the machines. It was strange for Neville to see a television and soon he understood what the boys meant by thirty minute mini-plays. He was with them the entire morning, enjoying sweets delivered to them one happy house-elf, named Dobby.

Severus & Remus (evening)

Remus followed Severus down to his quarters after the Saturday evening meal. He had been pleased with the surprised look on his mate’s face, the previous night, when the dark man looked up at him and noticed that he was wearing another House’s colours.

‘Maybe this will help him get past the fact that I used to be in Gryffindor or maybe we can make new memories because I no longer have the dominant red and gold colours,’ Remus thought. That Severus was his mate was knowledge without doubt to him now. It was a certainty that his inner wolf knew.

Severus was thinking along those lines too. He was also thinking of the interesting solution that Harry had brought up in order to see if touch could be allowed despite the conditions in the Dark Mark, but that would mean that he would have to reveal something to the werewolf.

He glanced at the man walking next to him and knew that they needed contact or a least be in close proximity with one another to appease the needs of the wolf, but that wasn’t what filled him with anxiety. He was about to reveal his animagus form to Remus and the werewolf was going to take a potion the next week-end. It was a potion that was going to allow him to go into his wolf status outside of the moon’s cycle, giving him some control over the changes.

They were both worried that the werewolf would no longer see him as his mate and they were both worried that he would attack the other. Also, the potion would have a similar effect to that of an Animagus, in that Remus would be able to keep most of his mind and human instincts. That’s what Harry said when he informed them of the possible solution that he had come up with over the summer. It was temporary only until the Dark Mark could be permanently removed.

Harry had studied the dilemma ever since he had watched the magical Wills belonging to his parents and to Sirius. He was surprised that his mum had Seer ability and that she predicted that Remus would find his mate. He was able to deduct who it was, once he heard the parts of their Will to the Potions Master.
He had asked Uluru about werewolves and what he knew about them. He was surprised when he received the answer.

“Were-creatures were humans that developed long ago into a culture of fighters. They were a part of the human race that had opted to turn their magics inward. Doing so allowed them to incorporate the characteristics of a creature any time they pleased. It was always a creature that they had an affinity for, but also a creature that hunts. The animals usually were wolves, large cats or hunting birds, like falcons or eagles.

It was during a War that no one remembers that something went wrong. It was either, a hex, a curse, a potion or a mix of many things that changed their characteristics from being controlled by the individual to being controlled by the cycle of the moon.

It was a slow change, but the outcome is that today, were-creatures, not just wolves, are locked within the mind of a person. What was once an initiation ceremony during the night of the full moon to bring out the animal characteristics is now a time of danger for all humans.”

“Can something be done to improve the nature of were-creatures?” Harry had asked.

“I think that the mind of those afflicted need to have a change of heart,” Uluru said. “I believe that once they no longer fear the results of their change and learn to accept the ‘bonuses’ of being a were-creature, they may have a chance to be freed from the cycle of the moon and actually have some measure of control without fear of slaughtering those near them or those that they love.”

The old coot then produced some scrolls that explained the phenomenon and a section about that old culture that had incorporated animals into their being. Harry studied everything that he could get his hands on and then found a solution that may help the two men out, for the time being.

Ron might not remember, but Molly and Arthur had taught Harry the information seeking and copy spells too, during Harry’s second year. It was when the Weasleys found out that Harry had not been able to read or learn any of his first year spells before going to Hogwarts for the first time.

It was something which Harry was very grateful for because it allowed him to improve some of his Journal ideas and enabled him to learn at a better rate. They didn’t bother to teach Hermione because that girl was not without resource or knowledge. She didn’t need help to learn or research, but the boys did.

Harry didn’t know about the additional conditions of the Dark Mark, but he was glad that he found out when he did because it allowed him to consider changing some aspects of the Mark. That would only happen after both professors had experimented with a few other sections of his idea.

The experimentation time will also allow Harry the time to explore the stuff that Antiok had given him. Hopefully there was something among those ancient scrolls or parchments that he could use.

-----------------------------

Harry’s idea was to have either Remus change into his werewolf form, with the aide of a potion and have Professor Snape get used to the creature’s presence. Remus’ wolf would also have a chance to get used to Professor Snape and decide whether the man was his truly mate or not.

The potion would also begin to merge the minds of the wolf with Remus’ own. However, Harry wanted to do that in a controlled environment. The youth did present his parents’ old friend with a lot of food for thought, in regards to allowing some aspects of the wolf to come forward.

Remus had found that his ordinary senses, that only sharpened a bit, before and after the full moon,
were slowly becoming available to him during other times. Harry’s research and ideas also helped Remus come to terms with his wolfish nature.

However, with the issue of the Dark Mark causing Severus problems with touch and intimacy, especially with those not bound to the Dark Lord, the controlled situations with Severus would have to wait and see. Harry brought something to both their attention to try first and that was contingent on the Potion Master actually having an animagus form.

Remus hoped that the form was something that could handle being in the presence of a wolf. Severus knew that there was no problem there, but the DADA Professor thought that there was something still off about the way the other man was acting. He was acting nervously, ever since he knew that he needed to reveal his animagus form for this experiment.

Severus had never told anyone that he had an animagus form nor did he advertise it by registering it with the Ministry. It was his back up escape plan, should he ever be cornered and he didn’t want to give it up. There was also the fact that he was embarrassed to tell Remus about it.

The Potions Master had studied for his animagus form around the same time that the Marauders were perfecting theirs. He was secretly very happy and pleased with the outcome. He couldn’t wait to let someone know about it, but once he knew what Black’s form was he decided to keep his own form a secret.

It didn’t help that Remus’ senses were active near the times of the full moon. Because when Snape had analyzed the times that Remus actually did prank him, he found that it was around the same times that he had just finished coming out of his animagus form.

Severus could almost swear that Remus had acted on the scent he found around the Slytherin and not on the fact that it was the Slytherin himself that was bothering the inner wolf. That was in part, due to the fact that Remus’ nostrils had flared before the werewolf decided to send him a prank spell.

The gentlemen reached Snape’s quarters because they were more spacious and had more privacy. “Can I offer you something to drink?” Severus asked.

“No thank you,” Remus said. “I know that you’re nervous, but what I don’t know is why?”

“Can you blame me?” Severus said. “Listen, let me tell you something. Every time, during our seventh year, you pranked me after I had just come out of my animagus form. I’m not sure if you knew that or not, but it does not render me anxious to change into my form and out of it only to receive a hex.”

“You were an animagus in during out seventh year?”

“Yes,” he said. “I want to test something first. Have you been doing what Harry suggested? Enhancing your senses?”

“Yes, but what does that have to do with what we’re planning?” The graying man said.

Severus didn’t say a word. He stepped into the loo to change into his animagus form there. He wanted to see if Remus’ wolf could sense his animagus. He used the loo and then changed his form. Severus stayed like that for a moment and the returned back to his old self.

Remus was amused to know that Snape was nervous, but once Snape returned he felt irritated and didn’t know why. Suddenly the DADA Professor was frowning and getting angry. “What did you do?” He asked trying to get his wolfish senses to stop their assault. He couldn’t understand why the wolf in him was angry. “I remember this, but I’m not sure I understand. What did you do?”
“I changed into my animagus form, waited a moment and the returned back to my normal self. During the seventh year you had hexed or pranked me every time I had just turned back into my normal self,” Severus explained. “You only pranked me at those times and I couldn’t figure out why at the time. You usually left me alone, but I had my suspicions that it was your wolf that wanted to hex me. Do you feel that way now too?”

“Yes,” Remus nearly growled, his eyes flashing in amber tones. “I’m not sure why, but it feels like betrayal. Like you’ve been doing something you shouldn’t have or maybe it’s something else.”

“It’s something else, all right,” Severus said. “I never thought that your wolf would be jealous of my animagus form.”

Remus looked at him as though he’d lost his mind and then suddenly in front of him there was the most gorgeous, solid black Arctic wolf. It had very dark eyes, was about two feet tall, but more than three feet long, nose to tail tip. Then it was gone and in front of him was a very nervous Potions Master.

Remus’ senses were sending the signal that he was betrayed and it didn’t register to the wolf in him that the man in front of him was the same being, as the wolf he had just seen. “Do it again,” he said. “Do it until my wolf knows that you two are one and the same.”

Severus had understood part of what happened after the seventh year was over. It had been only a guess that the wolf in Remus was jealous his animagus form. So he did it several times, until Remus told him to stop. “Is it helping?” Severus needed to know.

“Yeah,” Remus said. His inner wolf was confused and it tried to come to terms with what it had just scented. “Stand still and don’t move. I need to do something and I don’t want to touch you accidentally.” Severus nodded and waited to see what the old Marauder would do.

Remus walked over to him, opening his senses. He smelled the man and he smelled the wolf that the man had become. He inner wolf was still a little confused, until Remus flashed to the times that Sirius, James and Pettigrew turned themselves from man and to animal.

He was so close to the Potions Master now. He knew that he couldn’t touch the man, but his nose was telling him that there were two different creatures in front of him. In a sense that could be true, as Severus the man had been tortured, raped and hurt, while the wolf was still technically pure and virginal.

Remus’ face was close to Severus’. He inhaled the scent of the man. “You’re nervous and a touch afraid,” he said, breathing in the mixed smells that came from the Potions Master. He stood very close.

“Can you blame me? You’re only inches away,” he said roughly. He too was taking in the smells from the man in front of him. They were so close. It was near torture to know that they couldn’t touch. His own senses were sharpened by his animagus form and that was one of the reasons he had chosen a dog type form. It helped him with potions and ingredients to know when something was off or wrong, either with an ingredient or potion.

Remus was sniffing and snuffling, inhaling the scent. He moved up and down the sharp features. Then he suddenly knelt down, taking his time to smell the arms and hands before going anywhere near the other man’s genitals.

Wolves and dogs have a similar way of acknowledging each. They took in the scent of genitalia because their strong noses can detect the differences among their pack that way. It was just like a
fingerprint, no two were the same.

“Change,” Remus said. Suddenly he was nose to nose with the black wolf that was his mate. His inner wolf, knew that this one was his. It was then that Remus realized that his inner wolf was jealous of the man and not the animagus form. His wolf took in the scent from the creature in front of him and found that the scent of the man was still there.

Slowly it acknowledged that both were the same, just like him and Remus. Remus’ inner wolf had another name, but they were one and the same and they were merging like they should have long ago, but that was going to take some time.

Moony knew that he couldn’t touch the man, but he might be able to touch the wolf. That was Harry’s idea. Let one man touch the animal form of the other to see if there might be an adverse reaction to the Dark Mark connection.

The black wolf leaned in close to smell the man in front of him. He could smell the wolf in the man and found that he was not interested in being the alpha around the other. He sat down and then lowered his upper torso onto his forepaws. Crouching and inching forward in submission to the alpha man-wolf, Severus exposed his neck turning his head up.

Remus understood what Severus was saying. Moony was pleased that this other knew his place. He reached out one hand to the crouching animal, hoping that the touch would not cause the other pain. Tentatively, the hand reached the fur.

It didn’t take too long after that to have a very happy wolf lying on his back to get a belly rub. Remus could touch him and there was no pain, plus Voldemort didn’t know. It was great to be able to enjoy the sensation of actually being petted. No one had ever done that to Severus because no one had ever known about his animagus form.

Remus was smiling and recalling the times when Sirius was in dog form. He, too, could only have enjoyed touch when in that form; when he had to remain in hiding from the Ministry. It was then that he truly looked at the black wolf and realized that Severus didn’t want to replace the memories of Sirius nor would he appreciate being a replacement.

The DADA Professor stood up and away from the animal. He just rolled over watching as the werewolf paced the room a bit. “Perhaps now you’d like something to drink?” Severus asked, startling the other out of his contemplation. He had enjoyed being petted, but now was probably a good time to discuss a few things.

“That’s sounds like a good idea,” Remus said.

“I don’t have anything fancy like your brandy, but this should do,” he said and hand over a tumbler of scotch. A gift from Minerva, two Christmases back. It was better to wait as that particular liquor aged. Severus had saved it and then had been savoring it. Usually during some of his ‘thinking’ times, the times when he needed to unwind and just reflect.

Remus sat down in a chair in front of the fireplace, sipped the drink and said, “Yes. This will do nicely.”

---------------------------------

Harry & Draco (Sunday)
After spending the previous morning in the company of Neville and Dudley, the two Draekons decided that Sunday would be a good time to do put away a few more of things that Harry had acquired during his travels. They were almost done and soon it would be time to do something else.

Harry had quite a number of things that he had just put away in a closet space that he had formed inside of the trunk. It was a secure place where he stored the presents that he had acquired for his mate, his godfather and his new in-law.

He had formed two small closets in order to separate and organize his belongings. One for the potions ingredients that he didn’t want Professor Snape to know about just yet and the other for all the gifts that he had gathered during his travels.

He couldn’t empty his traveling armoire because Professor Snape wanted to see it as is. Harry knew that it was a form of test for Snape to look over his armoire, but Harry also knew it was a way for the professor to find out about the potions ingredients that Harry had collected.

Unfortunately for Snape, Harry was wise to that and decided to remove his more expensive and very rare ingredients, as those were difficult to come by. It was chance that Harry ended up with some of the ingredients that he did and he was not about to share some of them, no matter what, with his Potions Master, not just yet anyway.

Draco was in his own trunk watching a few of the movies that Harry had given him and Draco was amused to see that some of the translations were off. It was fun to watch a ‘foreign’ film and understand the dialogue. He was just waiting for Harry to finish his cleaning up.

Dudley was in his own trunk, bottling the rest of the liquor that he had just finished distilling. He had put aside the recipes for the burgundies and the moonshine-like ones, in order to make more batches of the pale orange and the sparkling yellow one that the goblins had liked. He was making sure that the recipes were sound for each before trying to mass produce them.

In the meantime, the bottles that were done could be given as gifts without having a name brand added to them, as long as the patents were filed accordingly. He was also waiting for Harry to finish organizing his trunk because the boys had plans to go to Gringotts today to sort out a few things.

Griphook was busy with his own staff in order to have the documents ready for transfer. Harry had asked him to look into his land holdings and check out a few of the estates or homes that were part of his heritage. Some were rundown old things that were better off torn down and re-built or better to let the land settle a bit before farming it. It depended on the young Headmaster’s plans.

It was easy to see that he was going to be one very busy goblin and it was a bonus that he had such a large family as they had gathered one evening, after finding out about his promotion. The elders of the Hook Clan were impressed with the way that Harry Potter was moving around and affecting changes to the school.

The young man had gained the respect of one of their members by just remembering his name. It was a worthy young man to align themselves with. The Clan had taken a collective vote and it was unanimously decided that they were going to align the Hook Clan with the wizards and only the ones under the Potter banner. Of course such a monumental clan decision had to be brought forth to the King of the Goblins, but after listening to their reasons and the fact that it was a clan decision the King had set it down in their records.

The King himself was surprised, but then he never heard a bad word about the boy when he had
traveled the tunnels of Gringotts. He was even surprised that one of the Generals was praising the innovative young man, as he was present when some of the decisions were made to include non-banking goblins for the assistance to the caretaking of the school.

An old contract was found and reviewed. This contract was made by their ancestors that had aided in the building of the school. It basically stated that the Goblin Stoneworkers’ Guild could be called upon in order to assist in repairing any physical damage to the school. It was a contract that fell into disuse, as the old Headmasters and Headmistresses forgot about it or were politically inclined to forget about it.

The King then allowed the Hook Clan to present the contract to the young Headmaster and that was only one of the things that Griphook was preparing to discuss with Harry today.

---------------------------------

Harry had just finished transferring the old ingredients, potions and journals from the armoire that was a write off. It was too decrepit and was falling apart. Harry said a spell that tore it down to its most basic form of wood slats and nails. This spell also removed all protective, preservative magics from it.

In doing so it allowed the item to peel apart and any hidden compartment would be emptied in doing so. Also, should something have been stuck and not retrievable at the time, it would come free through this spell. There was a very small flat journal that fell through, two cutting tools and one spoon that fell away from the resulting spell.

Harry called those items to him and stored them in one of the closets of his trunk that he dubbed ‘Potions Junk’. He always liked the word junk because it brought to mind that junk could be anything. Potions junk was just that, anything and everything related to potions would be found his Potions Junk closet.

His other one was called ‘World Junk’. Basically it contained junk that he had collected from his travels. These were the items that he wanted to keep secret for the time being, as they were mainly gifts.

The shelves that Draco and Dudley had provided for him were soon filled, but it was clear that Harry needed some more shelving and that was one of the reasons that they were going to head out of the school to Gringotts and then to a furniture store.

Sometimes it is good to be the Headmaster because he could apparate out of the school anytime, bringing along Draco and Dudley.

---------------------------------

**September 2nd & 3rd – Students**

The students were filling up the Great Hall for breakfast. The school bells woke them up that the morning, ringing at eight o’clock. The school clock or bell was programmed to ring at every hour and every half-hour, up until nine o’clock in the evening, every evening. The first time the clock rings on the week-ends is at eight, but during the week it is set to ring at six in the morning.

The students are about to be in for a surprise regarding there weekly schedules. Even if the students were not up to hear the eight o’clock chimes they were awakened the blaring announcements every fifteen minutes, stating that all students needed to be present in the Great Hall by nine o’clock this
morning.

This was a first for many of the students that had been attending for several years now and even Hermione was miffed at having to be present in the Great Hall because it was going to cut in on her study time. She wanted to read ahead for the courses that she was planning to take, plus she was still pissed off about having been married and not told.

Ron chose to ignore her for the duration and hoped that he could avoid her for the remainder of the school year. It was not going to happen because right now she was miserable and planned to make everyone miserable too.

The students were all gathered in the Great Hall and soon the Deputy Headmasters and Deputy Headmistresses were announcing the new teachers that would be taking over some of the courses. The students were able to see the Professors’ names next to the course outlines for their year.

It was just after the introduction of all the new Professors and their assistants or aides, minus Neville, Draco, Dudley and Harry. They were only going to be present on the first day that they were going to teach their classes because at the moment they were watching Saturday morning cartoons. That’s not what the Deputies thought or told the students.

“Neville Longbottom is apprenticed to Professor Pamona Sprout and will be assisting with Herbology. Dudley Dursley will be assisting Professor Rubeus Hagrid with Care of Magical Creatures and assisting with Professor Rose Morgan in Muggle Studies. Draco Potter will be assisting in Professor De Luka part-time in History of Magic and Wizard Studies. Harry Potter who is apprenticed to Professor Snape will be assisting in Potions and the Defense against the Dark Arts class,” Professor McGonagall said. “They are currently away from the school running a few errands and ensure that the shipments we are expecting today will come through smoothly.”

The doors to the Great Hall were opened a short time later by house-elves that were guiding a few of the delivery men and creatures through. They were dropping off loads of metal, glass, cured leather or hides of non-magical creatures, various types of wood and many, many other big and small items. Most were going to be sent to their respective classes, but some of the things remained in the Great Hall.

Once the last load was dropped off the Professors continued on with their presentation. Professor Flitwick began, asking, “Will all the students stand up and move to the side walls?” As soon as his request was complied with several of the materials were charmed onto the tables of the Great Hall. “First, second and third years please look in your journals and move to the locations indicated on the map found on the inner cover. Professors and assistants please do the same. Those that state you are to remain in the Great Hall please do so.”

Soon the Hall was emptied of the first, second and third year students who were guided to five different locations and separated into the groups together. The teachers or aides that joined them, immediately begin to teach the first and second year youngsters a few Muggle games like soccer and baseball, if they were outside.

Volleyball and basketball were taught, if they were the ones inside. Again these were only for the first and second years, as they were mixed together. This was when they were told about the new physical aspect of the school terms and they were all going to remain in these groupings, if there was no conflict to their courses for the first term.

Those that were outside were learning the very basics of the games and once the weather turned
colder they were going to move indoors and practice inside. It wasn’t like magic couldn’t compensate because they were going to use the Room of Requirement for their needs.

Those that were inside were going to learn the basics of those sports, but they were also going to learn one fun game called Dodge Ball, where everyone could participate and ability did not matter. The groups were to learn one sport each, hence the four mixed groups of first and second years, at four different locations for the time being. They were taught the rules of the games and then they were shown basics according to the game that they were going to play.

The third year students were all taken to another location of the school and they were given the choice to either learn proper exercise and moves in order to be able to run the obstacle course that was going to be set up or learn a Muggle game called tennis. Some chose the training for the obstacle and others chose the Muggle game. A few didn’t know what to choose so they pulled lots and went wherever the papers said.

In the afternoon they too were going learn about Dodge Ball and then once they had played a few games the groups would be coming together in the afternoon to play a mini-tournament, outside. This was an excuse to exhaust the first, second and third years, but at least they were learning something completely new or they were having fun.

The fourth to seventh years were put to work in an assembly line formation in order to produce the mini-greenhouses. Professor McGonagall oversaw the transfigurations aspect of it by half of the sixth and seventh years, to form and shape the mini-greenhouses.

Professor Flitwick and his crew oversaw the charms required by the other half of the sixth and seventh years, to allow for the preservation of the plants and the shrinking of them by younger student who have not learned the spells yet.

Fourth years were put to the task of forming and shaping different types of wand holsters. Fifth years were charged with putting them together or sewing them together with magic and colouring them with charms.

The fourth to seventh years were a little pissed that the younger students were playing games, but then they were also happy because they were able to use their magics. They needed to exercise their magical channels because they weren’t able to in the summer.

In the afternoon, everything that had been assembled by the students, were distributed to the student body for their courses. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in reviewing the courses and making the selections that they wanted for the year.

The active day that the younger years had was exhausting and resulted in some of the little ones falling asleep in their supper. The older years picked them up and carried them to their dorms, prior to setting up a discussion regarding potential courses or classes not presented to them.

The following day was pretty much the same as the day before, but this time the first to third years were all out of doors for the morning and were engaged in learning how to skip or jump rope, play hopscotch and tag. The older years were separated and were taught the same sports that the younger years had learn the previous day.

The sports were to increase the student activities and their physical fitness. It was also at that time that they all learned that when the school bell rang at six in the morning, the students were to be present in the Great Hall in their sweats and ready for morning calisthenics, no exceptions.

For the first day of class, each teacher or aide was assigned a group of ten to fifteen students and they
were sent one of the least used classrooms of the school. That was going to be their assigned rooms
for their morning and evening workouts, prior to meals, for the remainder of the term.

The students were going to learn a series of stretches and exercises to increase their flexibility and
strength. These were just basics because during the DADA courses they were going to get more
intense fitness program that were going to increase their speed and other abilities.

-------------------------------

TBC...
September 4th - First Day of Class

The students were surprised that morning to know that their schedules appeared on the second page of their course journals and that the map provided on the inner cover of it was still there. They were warned that the map was temporary and would disappear after a month’s time, but it would also allow the students a chance to see more of the school.

The older years were shocked to see many of the courses that they had were with all four houses, which was something that would usually only happen during their N.E.W.T.S. year. Now it looked like it was going to be something for all of the years at the school.

The first years were tired from their morning workout and they were nervous about their first potions class of the year. Most of the upper years had warned them about Professor Snape all day Saturday and Sunday, but the students were surprised to find that many of their teacher’s names were not the same as the older students had suspected.

Looking over their schedules they realized that the professors actually wrote which books and equipment they needed to bring with them for their first class. Many of the first years were happy not to have to brew first thing and others weren’t because they had been looking forward to creating a little mischief.

Walking into that first Potions class the students were surprised at the setting of the desks in the room. There four desks in a group, two desks facing the other two. The desks had different house colours and that’s when they knew that the houses in this class were going to be separated.

“All right everyone,” Harry said. “Enough standing about, pick a seat and sit in it, we don’t have much time.” The students shuffled in and soon everyone was settled at a desk that was the same as their house colour.

“Thank you,” he said. “Now in this class we will be learning the intricate art of Potion making. I call it an art because one false move or false ingredient will result in something grotesque either to sight,
sound or smell. It can also cause bodily harm.”

This caused a few of the students to giggle. “Yes, I said the word smell because smell will be a factor to successful potion making. I don’t expect you to be experts on your first day, but I certainly expect you all to Pay Attention!”

**Thwack!**

A small rubber ball landed on the desk of one of the students that was whispering in a corner. It startled them and caused the one in front of the whisperer to give a tiny squeak. “If that was a potion ingredient not intended for your cauldron, you would have had to deal with the consequences of your inattention.” Harry glared in their direction.

“Yes I know that my name is Harry Potter, but what is so great about that name. What is so great about my name that causes you to not pay attention?”

“Your Harry Potter the Boy-Who-Lived,” the startled first year said.

“What does that have to do with potions?”

The first year frowned and said, “Nothing?”

“Correct,” Harry said. “It has nothing to do with Potions, so you will keep your mutterings and whisperings to yourself and save them for the Defense Against the Darks Arts class. Understood?”

“Yes sir,” the first year replied.

“When I say understood, I want everyone to answer,” Harry said. “The grouping that you are in will be your group for the remainder of this term. You will learn to cooperate and turn in your assignments collectively. There will be a collective grade and an individual grade. Understood?”

“Yes sir,” they all said.

“Now, perhaps you’ll be pleased to know that you won’t be actually brewing anything this week, however what we will be learning is classroom safety, proper cutting techniques and begin training your observational skills and analysis. This is not a cooking class Miss Daniels,” Harry said, sending the rubber ball to **Thwack** her desk just in front of her nose. “Do not persist in that line of thought, it will get you severely hurt or even killed. Is that understood?”

“Yes sir!” She squeaked in embarrassment, flushing that she had been caught telling a muggleborn what potions would be like.

“Everyone, understood?” He asked loudly.

“Yes sir!” They shouted.

“Good,” Harry said. “Now that is not to say that what we learn here can not be used for cooking, but the same can not be done in reverse. Ingredients in this world, meaning the Wizarding World are not the same as those found in the Muggle world. Even Muggle or non-magical ingredients are affected by the ambient or surrounding magics therefore you will guard your ingredients and learn to cultivate the ones you need in Herbology and learn to render them in Care of Magical Creatures. Understood?”

“Yes sir!” They said again loudly.
Harry swished his wand and dispensed a journal book to each student. They were to mark down their observations in it. “Now I will brew something simple. Something that only requires three ingredients, but I will change one of the ingredients three different times and you will all begin your first observational journals. These are not notebooks for Potions class, so do not take notes in it. This journal is for potion analysis and ingredient break-down. When I demonstrate a potion or should you be fortunate enough to brew one, this book will be your guide or salvation should you cock it up. This is where every step you take will be written down, including the results should the colour or the smell or even the texture change.”

He proceeded to list the potion ingredients three times on the board and in same quantities, with one difference to the cutting method of one ingredient. He then set up his cauldrons, adjusted the flames to all the same temperature. “Now watch as I brew this simple potion. In the first potion I am chopping the ginger root, in the second I am slicing and in the third I am crushing it. Note that the temperature is the same for all three and the direction that I’m stirring or mixing the ingredients is also the same.”

“Does the speed of mixing a potion affect it?” One curious little snake asked.

“Yes it does. Five points to Slytherin for asking. Never be afraid to ask about anything regarding the process. There is a reason for every move and timing. We will get into that further in the week.”

He then proceeded to explain the differences in the cuttings and how it may affect a potion. “I hope that all of you are taking notes because this is part of Potions work and you will be tested on this.”

Harry smirked to himself when he heard some the students scraping to get their writing tools and notebooks. “It is important in Potions, to find out which ingredient works, why it works and what made it work. Was it the mixing, the cutting or the interaction? Perhaps it was the temperature or the direction or speed that I used when I stirred the ingredient or maybe how I dropped it into the cauldron?”

Very soon his three potions were done, but the only differences to the method that he used to brew them were just the different styles used to cut up the one ingredient. “Now I want all of you to walk by the cauldrons and make notes in your journals, which ones are different and why. Is it the colour, texture, perhaps the smell? Quickly now, don’t be shy. There is nothing in the cauldrons that are harmful to any of you.”

The students slowly walked up and saw that the first cauldron, where the ginger root was chopped, was filled with a yellowish, thick substance. The second cauldron, where the root was sliced had turned to a limy green colour and was slimy looking. The third one, where the root was crushed, actually looked like bubblegum pink soap.

The smells from all three were different and the last one was the sweetest, but there was something in the way that Harry was looking at them or listening to them that made them wonder if the last one was perhaps the deadliest of the three.

“Now that everyone has observed the differences and marked them in your journals. Let’s discuss what this potion actually is supposed to be,” he said. “It is supposed to be toothpaste or teeth cleanser. Now I want all of you to choose the cauldron based on your observations and figure out which one is the real tooth cleansing potion and which one would be a mistake to brush your teeth with, as it would only make you ill.

You are allowed to use the remainder of class to discuss this in your table groupings and to refer to your texts. You are also free to come up and view the potions, even stir them to check the thickness or consistency.
Your conclusions are to be written in the journals that I have provided to you for tomorrow’s class. I will be taking your journals then and reviewing them while you study all of the safety rules. There will be a quiz on the rules once I am done and then we will go over the procedures on capturing your data accurately after that.”

He placed charms on the cauldrons and moved them to a side desk with the labels one, two, and three on the front, leaving the stirring implements in them, in order for the students to feel free to look at them again before the end of class. As the potion has already been completed, any additional stirrings of the tool would not affect it.

The bell rang signaling the end of class and with the end of class Harry took the three cauldrons and stored them in the corner of his shared office with Journeyman Lang. They had discussed the best method to reach the students and Harry’s observations from his previous years did help. He stayed behind to assist with the second year students.

Journeyman Lang conducted his class pretty much in the same way that Harry did his first class, but in this case Harry walked among the students and used his rubber ball to startle many of the inattentive students. Every time he did he said to them, “Your potion has just exploded” or “Your cauldron has just melted”. It was very effective because soon the students were paying attention to the rules that the Journeyman was teaching them.

The same first years that had Harry for Potions that found themselves with him for DADA. They were surprised to have him twice in one day, but soon they were not too happy about it because of the way he was teaching them at the moment. They had all begun their whisperings to tune of “Oh, my God, he’s the Boy-Who-Lived,” or “Our hero is teaching us! That is so cool.”

They didn’t think that it was so cool after the bell ran and he started attacking them with small rubber balls and mild stinging hexes. It was hard work to run around the class dodging the spells and the balls that he was throwing at them.

“This is not going to be a fun class,” he began, continuing to pelt them with the balls and spells. “Just because my name is Harry Potter does not mean that I am a nice person. Nor does it mean that I will take a fall for you or save you, if you do something stupid. Just like doing nothing and not moving around to save your behinds. This is a defense class. You will learn your limits, which means everything that you can and can not do. You are first years and no one expects you to battle it out. NO ONE expects you to know any spells to defend yourselves, but I certainly DO expect you to run away from a confrontation if you can.”

The smarter students soon turned over their desks and blockaded the incoming spells. That’s when Harry stopped his attacks. “Excellent. Five points per house for each student behind a blockade. That is good thinking. Now everyone stand up.” He swished his wand and placed the desks back in order.

“Sit down,” he said. The first years all ran to obey his orders. They knew that this was something very different from what they had been told by the older students or their siblings.

“Defense Against the Dark Arts is going to be a difficult class for many of you,” he began. “It is going to be difficult because some things have already been trained into you. Others will find this easy, but I hope that all of you will find that you learn something in this class.”

“Now,” he said in a tone that made them pay attention. “The Wizarding World is in conflict. This is not a surprise to many of you. You all know this because you may have heard your parents, aunts or uncles, maybe an adult at the local market saying that there was danger. Death Eaters were around or
maybe some evil person was set free on *technicality*.

It is true that there is an evil madman out there and quite ready to kill you all in your beds while you sleep. He is the kind person to have you hunted down. Maybe some of you have heard that he is fighting for the purity of the Wizarding World, getting rid of the bad blood. Personally I don’t care what people say about that moron.”

The students were shocked. “There is a reason that I call him that and it’s because he chose to call himself Voldemort. That has got to be the dumbest name I have ever heard in my life. Honestly the first time I heard the name I thought it was the name of some kind of smelly cheese.” Some of the first years giggled at that and he just smiled with them.

“I am going to tell you the truth about him,” he told the students. “But first I want to know how many Muggleborns are in the class?” About seven students put up their hands, and then he asked, “How many of you are familiar with the works of William Shakespeare? Particularly Romeo & Juliet; I’m asking everyone in the class.”

Fifteen of the twenty students put up their hands. “That’s wonderful. Now in the works of William Shakespeare there are several famous lines that are quoted often. However the one in particular that I am referring to is ‘A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet.’ How many of you would agree to that?”

Many of the students were shaking their heads and didn’t want to believe it or couldn’t understand the meaning. Harry then conjured a beautiful Tea-rose, white with pink tips, for every student in class and one for himself. “Smell the beauty,” he said inhaling the sweet perfume of the one in his hand. “Doesn’t this Skunk Cabbage smell sweet?”

“Sir,” one brave first said. “You’re holding a Rose.”

“No I’m not,” Harry said. “I’ve decided to change the name to Skunk Cabbage. Still smells the same as a Rose doesn’t it?”

“Yes sir!” The first years said collectively, but they were confused.

“Now, how many of you think that I’ve change the name of this beauty to something stupid? Don’t worry about points or right and wrong. I want to honestly know if you think that the name for this Skunk Cabbage is stupid.”

The students all looked at one another and then they all said together, “Yes sir.”

“You all think that it was stupid?”

“Yes sir!”

“Good, but does it still smell sweet?” Harry said.

The students all began to understand his meaning. Changing the name of the flower didn’t change the nature of it. “Yes, sir, it still smells just as sweet,” one student said.

“Do you all agree?” He asked them.

“Yes, sir!” They all said.

“Wonderful, now let me tell you a tale: In the beginning of this useless conflict, that’s about forty or fifty years ago for you guys. There was a brilliant student here at Hogwarts whose name was Tom
Marvolo Riddle. He was shunned and despised in school because his was a Slytherin student. But that was not the worst of it. He was shunned and despised in his own House because he was a half-blood.

This did not make him a better person or a good man. It made him angry and bitter. So the young man vowed revenge on everyone and everything that put him down. He was very mean. He even caused the death of one student here at the school and blackmailed another into getting expelled. Now with all of that are you afraid of him because his name is scary.”

“No!”

“Good, but think about this. There is no way to find him now, just try finding him in the Floo directory, you can’t. He disappeared and no longer seems to exist. What do you think happened to this Tom Marvolo Riddle?”

“He changed his name,” one Ravenclaw student said.

“Correct, 5 points to Ravenclaw,” Harry said. “He changed his name. How and to what? There are Ministerial procedures to changing your name, but Tom Riddle didn’t even do that. He just changed it and began to use another one that was scary sounding, more so then his own. Can anyone guess what his new name is?”

“He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named,” one student said.

“You-Know-Who,” said another.

“Lord Voldemort,” one tiny voice whispered.

“That’s correct. Tom Marvolo Riddle changed his name with an anagram that he created himself. Watch this.” He demonstrated the method that Tom had shown him in the Chamber of Secrets, with the fire spelling of his name and then he showed the students how he switched the letters.

“There one more thing I want all of you to think about,” Harry told them. “Fear of a name will increase the fear of the person or thing. So we will no longer be afraid to say his name because frankly all of the Muggleborn in this school don’t understand the fear of He-Whose-Name-Sounds-Like-Smelly-Cheese-But-No-One-Is-Allowed-To-Say-His-Name-Because-They’re-Too-Afraid. Honestly, who began this world of hyphenated names, they are so dumb. That includes the one who started calling their Wizarding hero the “Boy-Who-Lived”. What happens to the boy when he grows up and begins to get gray hair? Do you think the Wizarding World will still be calling that old man a boy? Think about it. Now for the rest of this class we will be overcoming that fear of Smelly-Cheese-Man and we will say his name.”

Harry swished his wand and began a list of names that the students were to run through. Every once in a while the name Voldemort or Lord Voldemort popped up. The students were soon giggling because Harry put Voldemort’s name in between the names of some fancy, but rotten smelling cheeses.

Soon they were able to chant in increasing volume the, “voldemort, Voldemort, VOLDEMORT, VOLDEMORT.” That was the only thing that the students were saying for the rest of the class. Some were calling the Dark Lord in soft tones, sing-song tones, low volumes and loud volumes.

The best was one youngster that obviously had vocal lessons because he sang the name starting at his
top range and dragged it down like a funeral dirge. As the bell rang for the end of class, Harry called out, “2 points to every student every time they successfully said the name Voldemort.”

---------------------------------

The points in the House hour glasses were rising and falling throughout the day, but it was amazing that the top House for the day was Hufflepuff. This was due to that one brave first year from Harry’s DADA class.

The day wasn’t over. The first years were treated to a less violent Care of Magical Creatures due to the fact that Dudley was there ensuring that Hagrid had to modify his classes to fit in the least dangerous creature first. Hagrid really didn’t want to, but with Harry’s help and Dudley’s limited understanding of the dangers regarding magical creatures; it helped Hagrid to tone down the more dangerous aspect of his classes.

There was an added assistant to those classes plus one house-elf that was expert in the care and feeding of the animal and a goblin that explained the history of the particular animal that they were studying. Harry didn’t want any mishaps to occur and therefore he had forced Hagrid into arranging a curriculum that respected the more delicate natures of the younger years.

He and Draco had brought to him several suggestions and had also wanted Hagrid to include other magical creatures that don’t quite require care, but more of species respect. So now the half-giant was teaching the younger students about other species as well as the magical creatures with the aide of a house-elf and a goblin.

In their first class of Herbology the students were shown how to use their mini-greenhouses. They were given instruction on the best soils and nutrients that specific plants needed in order to grow. It was Harry’s list of ingredients that they were going to plant and begin to grow in order to learn how to harvest their needs for his first and second year potions classes.

Professor Sprout with Neville and the others of her team had prepared cuttings that were able to grow at faster rate then normally required by a specific plant. It was something that they needed to have prepared for their potions classes and perhaps gain a better understanding of the plants and properties found in them.

Their transfiguration classes and charms classes only had minor modifications to their courses to reflect the new more useful spells that Harry wanted the first years to learn. It wasn’t a stretch, but to learn practical spells in the beginning would allow a greater understanding to the differences as the spells get harder. Changing the matchstick to a needle is all well and good, if you needed a needle to sew. Provided you knew how to sew.

Harry suggested that the students learned something a little bigger to feel successful, prior to learning something small that required the concentration they haven’t yet learned to master. He suggested a shard of wood to a teaspoon, since everyone drinks tea. The size was relative and it was a more successful transfiguration spell for a first year then the matchstick one. Rowena and Godric had discussed several of these types of spells with the transfiguration professor.

Professor McGonagall didn’t see anything wrong with trying it out. Just like Professor Flitwick changed the first charm to Lumos first, as many first years may be afraid of the dark and knowing how to create their own nightlight, no matter how dim, would ease their minds. He didn’t see any harm in it.

The other classes that were not related to magics were in fact conducted pretty much like the muggle classes from primary schools. It was a testy time when many of the teachers realized that some of the
students had no discipline in their writing and soon the students were being drilled in proper writing
techniques for a solid fifteen minutes prior to even doing anything on their course schedules.

The second and third years were also subjected to those drills in their classes prior to beginning any
of their non-magical subjects. This even included the optional classes that may require extensive
writing or not.

If someone couldn’t read your writing, then obviously you didn’t write anything worth reading. That
was the motto that all of the teachers had decided to follow with and therefore all the students were
subjected to it. If anyone could not read it, then the student would lose marks for poor penmanship
and a whole grade because it would be deemed as though the student did not answer the question.

The older years were surprised at the differences in the teaching methods that some of the Professors
had started to use. Most were pleased with the chance to learn something different and new. There
was one class and one teacher that did not change his methods too much and that was Professor
Snape.

He still maintained zero tolerance for foul ups in his class, but the students did notice that he took
points from his Slytherins because they were endangering the entire class with their ingredient
slinging. He did inform the students that he wouldn’t tolerate such disrespect any more.

To prevent further mishaps, he actually made sure that they were taught the safe shielding spells for
their cauldrons and a few other spells to assist in the smooth operation of brewing a potion without
mishap. The spells were based on the type of ingredients used in the potions.

Thus the first day of school continued with the students almost being overwhelmed with a change to
their methods of working. Most of the students found that they had to overhaul their personal work
ethic if they wanted to succeed in their chosen classes.

There was some grumbling from the first and second year students that Harry had taught because of
the rubber balls leaving behind bruises to remind them that they needed to learn how to dodge spells.
One of the older years had asked a group of them and found that they were quite glad not to have
Apprentice Potter as his instructor.

Some of the other students at the first and second year classes were comparing their classes with
Harry and with the other teachers. The third and fourth years were listening to some of the things that
were being said and they too found that they did not want Harry to teach them.

The Deputies were shocked at the method that Harry had begun his classes, but only Professor
Sprout was happy to see that her House was in the lead for points at the end of the day. It was a first
because it was usually Ravenclaw that pulled ahead on the first day.

However, it was a shock to the Deputies that Harry would award a large number of points for being
able to say the name Voldemort. Still they saw how effective it was because since it was the first and
second year students who constantly said, “Voldemort”, “Lord Voldemort” the odd “Smelly-Cheese-
Man”, without fear or shuddering, it was forcing the older students to follow their lead.

A couple of intrepid first years, who were Muggleborn, even went so far as to have Harry conjure up
his roses and then the little ones would take them to the shuddering older year students. The only
thing that the first years would say to them was, “Here and remember that ‘A rose by any other name
would smell just as sweet.’

The Professors and many of the Muggleborns like Hermione were impressed by this tactic because it
was far more effective then any other method tried by the mighty Dumbledore. The first and second
years were earning two points every time they brought a rose to the older years, as that was the
homework that Harry had assigned to them for the first day of classes.

The Deputies and other teachers never knew until the end of the week that the House points were
tied between Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Gryffindor, due to the “Rose” homework.

---------------------------------

TBC…
Chapter Twenty-One

September 14th

The first prefect meeting of the year was scheduled just after the last class of the day and just before the evening meal, on a Thursday. There was going to be an announcement after the meal that would contain the news that there was going to be no Hogsmeade visits allowed for the year. The Prefects were going to be pre-informed in order that they may help to contain some of the students’ concerns or possible negative outbursts.

Due to the Headmaster’s decision to cancel the need for a Head Boy and Head Girl position, the Prefect meeting is going to be headed by two Teacher’s assistants and one Professor. These are going to be permanent additions for the next two years until the Wizarding World was no longer at war. The assistants are going to rotate per term, but not the Professor.

Their first meeting nearly went off without a hitch as rules were gone over and the Prefects knew what was going to happen. They found out that the new fourth year Prefects were designated to assist the younger years in the new emergency procedures that they were learning in DADA. It seems that someone wised up and figured out that there were no drills in evacuating classrooms or assigning specific tasks to students in order to minimize the dangers to the students.

The students didn’t even know what could and could not be done in an emergency situation, but now some plans are in motion to instruct the students in proper Defense; defense of their friends and families, but most importantly defense of themselves here at the school.

To say that the Prefect meeting went off without a hitch would be truly incorrect, as several voiced their opinions about the loss of the Hogsmeade weekends. Most loud was the protest from one Miss Know-It-All about the loss of the Head Boy and Head Girl positions.
“What do you mean that there will be no Head Boy or Head Girl this year?” She complained annoyed in a loud voice.

“It is the Headmaster’s opinion that there is no need for a Head Boy or Head Girl this year,”
Professor May said. She was an average looking woman, but her talents and knowledge were considered unparalleled in her chosen field. She was a new Professor for some of the new music classes that were taking place this year.

“IT seems that many of you may have been politically influenced by outside forces and therefore the Headmaster has decided that no student will be placed in a position of authority, other then the Prefect status that all of you have rightfully earned. Many of the Professors, assistants and even the Headmaster’s Deputies have agreed with the Headmaster’s reasoning in this situation.”

She was there to observe the students in their decision-making and had the backing of two assistants that knew the school. One of the assistants was chosen because of their knowledge regarding the who’s who of the student body represented and the other was chosen for his complete neutrality.

“What do you mean we may have been influenced?” Hermione asked. “The Headmaster and the teachers elect the most responsible student for the task and it is up to that student to uphold the rules set out by the Prefect Code of Conduct. No one here has a political agenda.”

“Now Ms. Granger, you know that’s not entirely true?” Draco said, smirking as she flinched when her last name was mentioned. It was a subtle reminder that he had been one of the witnesses to her humiliating revelation and realization that she had married through magical means to someone she didn’t love.

He was just glad that he was permitted to retain his Prefect standing despite being a part-time teaching assistant. As long as he found someone to replace his Prefect duties, when necessary, the Professors had voiced no objections against his Prefect Status.

Since Prefects were chosen as two per school year and one of each gender, Draco’s first choice had been Blaise Zabini, but was convinced by his friend to choose Vincent Crabbe instead. The reason for choosing Vince was because of his seeming lack of hostility. The others would think that he was too dumb to understand the rules and would therefore be relatively harmless, but they would, also, think that he would be easily controlled by Slytherin’s reigning prince.

Little did they know that Vincent understood everything and that the true reason he was chosen was because he had refused the Dark Mark. Well, that and maybe the fact that he was still fairly big that he could always knock heads together without the use of his wand to get the students to cooperate, didn’t hurt the decision either.

“You know that some students have accused me of pushing the Dark Lord’s agenda and you certainly have advocated an alliance to Light in the past. All of this is considered possible outside and political influence,” Draco explained.

“He does have a point, Hermione,” Ron said. “We are influenced by forces outside this school. However, now that we are here, the decision has been taken away from us. I see no point in arguing or complaining about this any further.”

The other prefects agreed and the matter was set aside. ‘We’ll just see about that,’’ she thought. ‘Headmaster Dumbledore had promised me the Head Girl position and I will have it because I deserve it. Everyone knows that, I wonder what game he’s playing. He promised me this summer.’

She was slowly becoming irked that her requests to see the Headmaster had been turned down time
and again with only a polite note. ‘As though that would be enough to stop me from getting what I want,’ she thought. ‘I’m not some puppy to be satisfied with polite words like they were a pat on my head. I won’t stand for this.’

“As per the notice handed to us by our Heads of House, it seems that we are to monitor some of the students in the dorms and in the other areas throughout the school,” Hermione began, immediately trying to take over the meeting. In this case it was all right because no one knew where to begin the meeting, other than the fact that they had been handed a notice from their respective Heads of House. “Professor May do you have an idea on what we are monitoring them for? I thought that these things around our heads do that.”

Neville spoke up, as he was a part of the meeting when the notices were compiled. “It is mostly to keep an eye out on the younger years to see how they are getting accustomed to the new school year. We also want to make sure that those of us who’ve been used to a different learning system are adjusting to the new one as well.” He went on to further explain by giving samples of what to look for, like signs of depression or not fitting in.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, Ron was constantly looking at the blond youth that was sitting next to Neville. He knew that he’d seen that particular person before, but just couldn’t recall when and where. ‘The blond hair reminds me...I think something has changed about the face...Is that possible?’ He thought, turning his mind over this little mystery because he was bored listening to the explanations.

He was under no delusion as to why he was given Prefect status instead of Harry during their fifth year. It was so that he could monitor Harry, just like the Headmaster was now monitoring all of them during this year. It seems that the old coot was now taking every student into consideration, instead of just protecting his ‘Golden boy,’ he thought. ‘It’s about time too. There are many other students that deserve a chance to be protected.’

Dudley knew why Ron was looking at him, but didn’t want to advertise the fact. He continued to ignore the scrutiny. ‘It will be interesting to see when he’ll actually figure it out,’ he thought. Sitting next to him was a fourth year Slytherin girl.

She was one of the new Prefects, but she had already memorized the rules and understood what Neville was explaining at the moment. Her attention was nearly riveted by something that seemed wrong about the young man sitting next to her. Slytherins made it their business to observe the inner or outer workings of another person. It was something that helped them to learn which buttons to push in order to gain an advantage over their opponents.

‘He looks normal,’ she thought. ‘There’s something missing...Yes that’s what it is. There’s something missing about him. There’s something that’s there for us, but not him.’

Neville was aware that Dudley was under the scrutiny of several people in the room. He wasn’t sure that he wanted Ron to figure that Dudley was Harry’s cousin. ‘According to Draco, Duds had lost a lot of weight,’ he thought. ‘I still don’t believe that it could have been that much, but I refuse to make assumptions without proof. Dudley did say that he would show me the pictures later on. Harry did say that he would allow me to see a couple of memories with Dudley’s permission too.’

Professor May took over the meeting and continued onto explain the plans for the year. She told the Prefects about the clubs that the Headmaster wanted to introduce. The students will be given a list of options only after they couldn’t find something on their own to capture their interest.

Neville’s eyes narrowed a bit when he noticed the attention that the fourth year girl was showing to Dudley. They narrowed further and he frowned when she leaned in to whisper something to him. He
blinking a couple of times once he realized what he was doing and why. ‘Oh gods...’ he thought. ‘I’m becoming possessive of him and quickly too. She’s only a fourth year student and she’s not a threat.’ He kept repeating that she wasn’t a threat in his mind, but his emotions were still slightly boiling with jealous possessiveness.

Dudley was aware that Neville had shifted quite a few times, but his attention was drawn to the tugging on his sleeve that he was receiving from the fourth year student sitting next to him. Looking down, he saw the serious face that she was making. “Scuse me,” she whispered.

“How come you don’t have a monitoring crystal like us?”

Dudley’s eyes sparked with amusement. “You’re very observant,” he complimented the fourth year.

“Oh of course,” she said. “I’m a Slytherin. It’s in my nature to observe. Do you have one?”

“Yes,” he answered. He pulled his collar down and pulled out the necklace hidden within. It was made of several braided leather strands, interspersed with beads and spacers. It was very similar to the homemade types that were made by braided pieces of hemp string that was popular in the muggle world, among the youth of today.

There were three different lengths, seemingly connected and the numerous beads and spacers had runes etched onto their surfaces. The monitoring sphere was half the size the other students and Professors. It was caged in multiple strands of knotted dark leather. Several of the teachers and caretakers of the school that had low magical ability or were technically squibs had been given these as protection against stray student magics. It didn’t hurt that they were protected from stronger magics by these either.

The Slytherin noticed that the majority of the etched runes were for various types of protection against spells, jinxes and hexes. Others were for augmenting the magics in the runes or sustaining their energies. Then there were some runes that she just couldn’t identify and wondered if they were truly runes or not.

It was then that she noticed that he didn’t have a wand holster on his wrist and there was no indication with his body language that he was even carrying a wand. ‘Does he even have one?’ She wondered, thinking that there might be something more to the guy sitting next to her. ‘He’s a fascinating mystery. I wonder if there’s something else about him that is off other then the way his monitoring crystal is not floating around.’

Dudley watched her eyes as her mind was processing everything that she was observing. He also took the time to look at Neville and was surprised to see that the youth didn’t look too happy. It was like he had his own internal dilemma. He shrugged to himself and decided to wait until later to find out what was wrong with him.

“Psst,” the fourth said to get his attention. Once he turned to look at her, she asked, “Do you have a wand or do you do wandless magic?”

“If I did know how to do wandless magic, do you think that it would be wise to tell anyone about it?” He asked.

She was about to say something else when the Professor coughed to gain her attention. The fourth year blushed and said, “Sorry Professor.”

Everyone took the time to give their own input into ideas for clubs, as well as some of their
impressions from the first couple weeks of class. However, they were all shocked when the announcement about the cancellation of Hogsmeade visits came up and there was a great outcry, several arguments and a couple of people in tears when they realized that this was permanent for the year. No visits to the neighboring village and no permission slips would be accepted for frivolous things.

So any students thinking that their parents could write a permission slip to allow any kind of outings were going to be in for a surprise. The parents would have to come to the school and argue their case. Then if and only if the Deputies agree together, only then would the student be able to leave the school in the custody of their parents.

-----------------------------

Meanwhile, elsewhere

In Professor Snape’s quarters, Severus was reviewing the method that Harry and Journeyman Lang were using in their classes. It was interesting to review the memories and he was impressed with the control that Harry had over his magics to direct those little rubber balls.

He chuckled to himself when he noticed that the little blighters never knew that those little rubber balls were imbedded in the classroom walls, ceiling and floors. That way the direction of control would belong to the one who planted them. It was a good idea, but he preferred to view the young Headmaster’s defense classes with Remus by his side because he could see how the new Headmaster was slowly programming the young ones to be alert and to dodge.

Remus made commentaries about the whole process and he too was amused by the method that Harry was using. He was even beginning to plan on using the same method, but he would come with more warning and it would be more difficult for the upper years.

In Severus’ whole life at this school, no Professor had ever taken that approach to Defense. It would be interesting to see the progress throughout the year that is if he lived through the morning calisthenics. He had some fifth, sixth and seventh years in his group and they were the most ungrateful brats he had ever had.

“I wonder if Harry put those ones together on purpose,” he mumbled to himself, after taking a sip of tea. He was in his chambers correcting paperwork, reviewing the memories and coming up with some kind of plan to organize the paperwork that he had been saddled with.

Each of the deputies was given specific tasks that Minerva couldn’t handle on her own. She kept the welcoming letters, book lists and the Headmaster’s new muggle student’s orientation seminar, something new for the following summer to allow muggle-born students a chance to integrate into the Wizarding World. It was also a time for their families to come to the school and visit.

Then and there they would be given the chance to understand that there are differences between the two worlds and be sworn and spelled to secrecy for their protection and the protection of those living around them. It would also show them that they could move away, if that is their choice, or just move “into the neighborhood”, so to speak. It would give their children a better chance to integrate, as there were dual-cultured towns that existed in the Wizarding World.

Professor Flitwick was given the tasks of organizing student and guest accommodations, making sure that they were livable. Because the school mandated that it was to be a sanctuary in times of conflict, he needed to be sure that there were enough emergency accommodations available even if he had to
use tent and luggage magics to make closets into temporary homes using wizard-spacing charms.

Plus he was also given the task of organizing the books in the library, ensuring that the archives were up-to-date and that the charms preserving the books were renewed and up-to-date. He was to look into expanding the library. It was currently two floors up, but needed to be overhauled and therefore he was studying the blue prints of the school to see if the library can expand upwards or be moved to a more ideal tower-like location.

Professor Sprout was busy with Hagrid trying to turn the school back into a semi-self supported system, where the food they ate would be grown at Hogwarts, instead of being bought. However, she was also placed in charge of organizing a couple of committees that specialized in bargaining with Hogsmeade and other neighboring villages. She had goblins and house-elves assisting with that and Neville’s grandmother assisted them by spreading the information by word of mouth to various reputable dealers.

Severus was given the unlovely task of reviewing the supplies lists provided to him by the other professors in the school. He was to try and find the best methods to increase the number of supplies while opening negotiations with other species, like the goblins and a few of the less visibly known creatures such as the centaurs and wood elves.

He was also to assist Professor Flitwick with the books and research or seek out new volumes or any volumes and/or family sets sold at auction to help the library grow. He didn’t mind that part because Harry was very good at bargaining and the new Headmaster was allowing him to have a first look at any potion book or journal that he may manage to obtain or any book he was interested in.

He snorted softly to himself; he wouldn’t be surprised if Harry copied them first. The total number of books that Harry had access to… was only hinted at, but Severus knew that he would be able to access them eventually. They bargained for that too because Harry wanted to view some of the books that Severus had inherited from Grimmauld Place.

The Potions Professor still had not been able to remove them from that home and the twins allowed him to retain the library space for the time being. In fact they had created, with home magics, a new entryway or cloakroom that would allow the Professor to apparate directly into the house into the new library entrance. Of course this was only agreed on the condition that the old sourpuss Professor reviews some of their new products or the potions used for their products.

‘Damn you Potter,’ he thought. ‘How did you ever become good at bargaining and mediating? He’s even got me considering a meeting with Remus in were-wolf form. How would that even be possible?’ This was something that he was seriously considering due to the fact that Lupin was managing to merge the wolf and man together slowly, but surely.

Wolf pack behaviour was different depending on the environment, number of wolves and the type of wolf involved. Unfortunately it seemed that the wolf in the DADA Professor had recognized his mate and was not about to let him go anytime soon. Remus had taken to marking Severus’ animagus form any way he can and for now it seemed a little squicky to anyone who happened to know about it.

Wolves are much like dogs, release musk scents fluid from their genitals and that’s what the DADA professor was doing. Snape in his animagus form would submit to being petted and rubbed by his naked mate and said mate would do what he could in human form to mark his mate appropriately. Remus’ mind was merging on those occasions. So whenever his human side tended shied away from what needed to be done to appease the wolf, the wolf would take over.

Fortunately for both older men that it was only Harry that knew for the time being because he could
speak to both of them. Harry being blind couldn’t see the interaction and that in itself was a small blessing. He brought along all the books and the notes he found in order to assist the men in their quest to be free of the Dark Lord and actually develop a future together.

It was interesting to the men how Harry came about to compile some of his journals and that’s when another issue was brought up. How did Harry manage to study so much during this past summer? The physical changes in him were negligible in that many students are hit with magical puberty in different ways. Especially if there is any magical creature found within their bloodlines.

The student body did notice that Harry, the boy-who-lived, certainly became easier on the eyes, but he was always someone to watch from a distance. You’re not supposed to get too close to a celebrity and it was surprising to see that Harry acted normally most of the time... If you don’t count the fact that he was now hanging around with the Slytherin Prince a lot of the time.

Severus loved the gossip in the school, but no one was ever going to know about that. He just liked to be in the know about certain things. Unfortunately for him, he had on more than one occasion compared himself to the nosey ex-headmaster, in the matter of needing to know about any unusual occurrences in the school. It was a throw back from the days when the Marauders roamed the halls trying to cause trouble.

The dark man sighed and sipped his brandy hoping that the Prefect meeting was going well. He had wanted to be the teacher in charge, but Harry told him that he only wanted that position to be able to terrorize Ms. Granger. ‘The brat was right, but how did he know?’

His thoughts were soon interrupted by a knocking at his door.

---------------------

Harry was bored. Truthfully he was missing his mate, while his mate was away at the first prefect’s meeting of the year.

He had already organized many of his ideas for the classes this year and his new potions classroom was nearly completed with the help from the goblin builders in the Hook clan. The clan had declared their allegiance to him on the Sunday that they had been able to escape the school before that first day of class, at the beginning of the year.

Draco and Neville had never heard of such a thing and Dudley was hardly surprised, since he really didn’t know everything that was and was not possible in the Wizarding World.

Still, Harry was surprised and pleased that they would willingly do so and not for the purpose of gaining warriors for the war, but more so for the cultural differences that he could learn from them. He outlined a few of his plans for the school.

Once he found out about the old contract to maintain the physical building itself, well his plans to modify his potions classroom with a few other rooms were soon contracted to the Hook clan builders first. Then with their advice he was able to find out about some of the rare goblin specific businesses that could handle the scope of maintaining Hogwarts and soon the students would no longer be surprised or shocked to see workers of various species in the school, as a wall was re-enforced or perhaps taken down and a new corridor opened.

Harry decided to make an entirely new classroom setup for the first and seconds years. To which, they would learn during an announcement once the room was done. He had decided to use a nearly muggle format in that the work stations for the potions work.
The walls of the class would contain the stations with a small sink for emergency rinses, three door cupboards above and two door cupboards below. His desk arrangement would remain the way it was. It wasn’t like they could make potions every class.

In the upper cabinet, behind the middle door would be generic potions for basic emergency healing. The doors, on either side of the emergency one, contained specific temperature storages for ingredients that needed to be kept cold or hot. One door opened to a frig-like environment and the other to an oven-type, the temperature could be monitored to a specific degree in both with the handles being the temperature knobs.

The lower cabinets with the doors marked one and two, the first years would be able to store their potions equipment without worrying about leaving something behind in the dorms. The door marked with the number two was going to be for the second years. Each door would be secured to the student's magical signature for the year. The only things that they would ever have to worry about are their own personal potions ingredients and ensuring that they were rendered properly.

Harry had also scheduled future guest speakers to come to the school and address certain classes. It was an idea that he had presented to the teachers prior to the start of the school year, requesting that they bring forward any names that they felt the students should know about.

Famous witches and wizards were all well and good on the trading cards, but if no one knows about them or are not into that hobby, how would the students know about the possible careers available to them when taking a particular class or choosing a particular field to branch out in.

With all of that done and having a few more things percolating in the back of his mind, it’s been quite some time since he’s had free time to himself and now he didn’t know what to do. In the past he was occupied with Quidditch, however now he could no longer officially play as a student. He was the Headmaster and therefore must maintain a neutral standing with regards to this activity.

(...What to do...What to do...) he hissed. Dauphin was resting around his neck, as usual.

(...Go visit the snarky one...) she hissed back. (...You’ve cleared out your travel armoire and you did promise to give it to him. You’ve also sorted through any extra ingredients that you know won’t remain fresh long enough for you to eventually use them, so bring them to him...)  

(...That’s a good idea...) he said. (...I think now might be a good time to show him that journal I created this summer for Remus. Do you want to come along?...)  

(...Nah, I think that I will nap a bit and hang out with Draco’s familiar. He should name him soon or else the Lil’ Bit will feel like he made the wrong choice to be born...)  

(...I’ll talk to him this week-end and thanks for the advice...) he said. Dauphin slithered off of him and gave him a lazy wave of her tail. Harry smiled at his familiar, happy that she wanted to be his in the first place.

He climbed down his trunk and prepared most of the excess ingredients that he knew could not be preserved too long and set them up in the armoire to show his Potions Master how he had traveled with it.

He even took the travel pack with him because he was planning to get different one that matched his trunk and Draco’s school carryall. The boys had stopped at a few shops in Diagon Ally and at the luggage shop Harry commissioned another backpack for his armoires and carryall of his own to match that of his mate’s, plus another wizard spaced trunk.
Down in his trunk he used his magics to guide him through the extra shelves that he had purchased in order to store many thing from his travels. These things were the ones he didn’t mind sharing with Draco and Dudley.

The ones he needed to hide were behind his “World Junk” and “Potion Junk” doors. They were sealed to only permit his entry. Many things were still in the shrunken state that he needed them in order to travel. To his dismay it looked like he would need another trunk or begin to unload some things into their quarters.

It wasn’t something that he was entirely used to due to the fact that he never owned many things before. Everything that he did own could be packed in his old beat-up school trunk. ‘I guess I’ll have to get Dobby to find or choose the most reliable house-elves to begin moving things around. Maybe some of this could go to a couple our other properties,’ he thought.

Once his ‘old’ backpack’s pockets had been emptied and the armoire to a degree, Harry was ready to visit his Master. ‘Now isn’t that a strange thought,’ he contemplated. ‘It was such a shock to be asked if I wanted to become Professor Snape’s apprentice. I did think that I would have to wear him down first and approach him like convention says I was supposed to.’

Draco was pleased and proud that his mate was asked to be an apprentice without having to seek out a Master, like Neville did. It spoke highly of Harry’s abilities to have impressed his mate’s very fussy Godfather.

Walking through the school’s corridors was a different experience with the students roaming around. Still he was cautious walking near the Slytherin dorms because some of those children seemed to share their parent’s madness in their need to follow ‘Tommy Boy’. It didn’t take long and surprisingly he seemed to know all the possible routes, shortcuts and secret passages through the school.

‘No doubt due to my link with dear old Hogwarts,’ he thought fondly petting the wall closest to him, making his way down to see Professor Snape.

---------------------------------

Blaise had taken to patrolling the halls near the Slytherin dorms. He wasn’t about to let the students wander about or get into trouble. He was also restless and a bit confused, as to what decision to make in regards to requesting sanctuary of the school. He wanted to believe that the school was safe and that the Headmaster would make no demands of him or any of the others that had been rescued from the forest. He never believed that Dumbledore was not the Headmaster, no matter how re-assuring Professor Snape had been with them about that.

He was wary because he knew that Headmaster Dumbledore would never allow such a thing without a price. ‘But we haven’t seen that old coot,’ he thought. ‘We haven’t seen him since the beginning of the school year and that is strange because that old bugger likes the spotlight, always making that same announcement at the beginning of the school year.’

His thoughts then reflected that this year’s announcements were different. There hasn’t been any mention of Headmaster Dumbledore at anytime. The only thing that he could recall was the Professors saying ‘the Headmaster’ and not once did any of them say ‘Headmaster Dumbledore’. It was like they couldn’t say the name of the headmaster.

Blaise blinked quickly a few times as that thought raced through his mind. His thoughts turned into a twisty sort of sensation that maybe just maybe Dumbledore really truly was no longer the headmaster. His stomach lurched at that thought and wondered who it could be now. Obviously it
was someone more competent and someone who cared about all of the students and the school.

Rounding the corner, lost in his thoughts he almost didn’t notice the former Gryffindor Golden Boy up ahead. He paused in his steps and then decided to follow him from a distance to see what Potter was up to.

He had noticed the way that Draco acted around the dark-haired youth. ‘There’s more going here than can be seen,’ he thought. He watched Harry’s progress through the dungeons. ‘That’s strange,’ he thought watching Harry pause in front of the Slytherin common room doors.

Blaise watched as Harry placed his hand on the outside frame and close his eyes. Harry didn’t pause for long, though. He re-opened his eyes and continued on down the corridor. Eventually he stopped before the doors belonging to the private rooms of Professor Snape.

Some of the older Slytherins knew where they were, due to the fact that they may need to get to their Head of House in case of an emergency. He then watched from a distance, as Harry was greeted and permitted entrance to the Professor’s inner sanctum.

Puzzled, Blaise returned to the Slytherin common rooms, paused a bit to look at the place where Harry placed his hand and then shaking his head in confusion he continued on in. He sat in front of the fire and thought about everything he saw. He was seriously reconsidering his reluctance to request sanctuary. ‘It did look like Potter was checking on something,’ he thought, wondering if he should bring this up with his Head of House or someone else.

---------------------------

Professor Snape looked up at the clock gauging the time and found that the Prefect meeting was still in effect, so that meant that it was most likely a house issue requiring his attention. As he opened the door, he was surprised to find Harry standing outside his door.

“Potter,” he said. “What have I done to ensure this intrusion into my private time and quarters?”

Harry hesitated, but then took the bull by the horns and said, “I’m bored. I came here because I’m not sure where to direct my energies. Draco is still in the meeting and everyone else seems to avoid me because I’m your apprentice and also because I’m the Boy-Who-Lived.”

Severus really looked at Potter and found that it might be true. Harry always seemed to be doing something and now it looked like everything that he had planned was moving smoothly. “Come in,” he said on a whim. He was curious to see what he could do to help the Headmaster’s current situation.

“Thank you, Professor,” Harry said, walking in. (...Hello Fawkes...) He trilled to the bird that had made his home in the dungeons with Snape. Fawkes just trilled back a greeting and then tucked his had under his wing to nap.

Harry unslung the pack from his back and sat down on the opposite chair, across from the one that Severus had just occupied. “Can I get you something to drink?” Severus asked, curious to know what Harry would ask for and about the bag near the boy. He was no longer surprised by Harry’s language abilities, as he had learned some of the things that the boy had gained over the summer.

“Tea please,” Harry said. Surprised, Severus set out a tea service with flavoured tea. “Thank you, Professor.” He sighed and sipped his tea.

“Is everything all right?” The usually snarky man asked.
“Hum... oh yes,” Harry replied. “It’s just that a lot has happened in such a short amount of time. It just feels like I’m at loose ends right now. I know that things will pick up once the students have settled further into their classes and clubs. It’s just that my focus right now seems to have drifted away from such things that I’m not sure what to do. I don’t want to join a club or create one, only to have students join because I’m in it or run it.”

“Yes, I can see where that might be difficult,” Severus said. “Surely you have enough on your plate that you do not have to feel like you need to join a club?”

“It would be nice to be able to join a club like any ‘normal’ student,” he sighed. “That’s all I’ve ever wanted. I never wanted to be treated differently from the other students at school. I certainly didn’t expect that adulations that I received once I walked through the wall at the Leaky Cauldron.” He sighed again, not expecting his Potions Master to understand, but then again the man had a brilliant mind. “Sorry, I guess I just needed to vent a little bit. By the way this is for you.”

Professor Snape took the backpack and said that he would look through it later. He paused a moment in his task of making his tea and then continued, saying, “I think I can understand your need to express yourself that way. You are still a teenager, no matter that you have more responsibility then we adults think you should have.” He set out the fixings for tea. “Perhaps something will turn up and you will be able to run a club or join one that catches your interest.”

Harry smiled, knowing that it was likely Remus and Severus who were concerned about him and not the other adults. He just said, “I hope so. Dudley is interested in the radio idea that came up the first weekend of school. I must admit that that appeals to me because I can’t see. Radio plays that used to exist in the muggle world is something similar to books on tape or reading spells that are available their for the blind and they do sound interesting.”

“Radio plays?”

“Neville mentioned that his grandmother used to listen to them, as there was some interference some time back and the muggle radio waves would cross over to the Wizard wireless,” Harry explained. “Old time radio personalities were people like George Burns, Gracie Allen, Abbott and Costello. Not to forget that there were lots of radio dramas, dark mysteries and other stories that had filled the radio waves.”

“I seem to recall a few of them when I was a child,” Severus said. “They seem to have just disappeared one day.”

“I read up about the history of it on Dudley’s internet,” Harry said. “It seems that the frequencies that they used to use were what might have caused the interference. Now with the advent of Television, the frequencies had changed. They changed even more now that nearly everything in the Muggle World has gone wireless and that the cables that they do use is mostly optics.”

“Optics,” the Potions Master asked. “You’re going to have to explain that one to me.”

Harry settled in and continued to explain the differences and changes that have occurred in the Muggle World from what he had been able to study. It was a very lively conversation and several things were discussed and debated. Not once did the two speak about potions or the school, changes to the school or anything that they had to deal with in their regular lives. It was like two strangers meeting on neutral grounds.

By the time that the Prefect meeting was over they had agreed to come together again and discuss things that were outside the norm. Of course the Professor didn’t want this to occur in his quarters, so Harry suggested that they meet up in some of the older classrooms to clean them out and talk as they
Harry couldn’t remain idle and he couldn’t postpone those kinds of tasks. Severus agreed because it was fun to explore parts of the castle that had been left... fallow? Gathering dust and items from ages past. In time they gathered several students who wanted to join them and a couple of professors, including Professor De Luka who was one of the ones who could reveal the history behind some of their finds.

-------------------------------

TBC...
Draco was pleased with the results from the first prefect meeting of the year and it wasn’t like it had been in the past with a Head-boy and Head-girl. He had been certain that had Granger become the Head-girl she would have wanted to take over everything. ‘Thank all the gods that that didn’t happen,’ he thought.

He had been amused to see the puzzled looks on Weasley’s face when he saw Dudley. He was also aware and amused by the growing possessiveness of Neville towards his first true and squib friend. Draco could have been more protective of Dudley had he known the content of the conversation with the fourth year, but he was also aware that Harry and Hogwarts were keeping an eye out on him.

It wasn’t like Dudley would fall back into his old habits. Strangely enough he was fitting in and attending a few of the classes that did not require wand work. He was even able to attend some classes that did have wand work, but that was only as an observer.

‘Neville and Dudley, now that’s going to be interesting,’ thought Draco, watching Neville walk quickly down the hall, as though he needed to get where he was going fast. Dudley looked at Draco and just shrugged because he didn’t know what was going on and then ambled off in the direction of his rooms for his muggle classes, opting not to attend the evening meal today. He was already aware of the announcements.

The Slytherin prince just chuckled softly to himself and then said to the others waiting for him, “You guys go on ahead and I’ll meet you in the dorms. I just need to pick up something from my rooms.”

The other Slytherin prefects were wondering just what he needed to get, but then figured that he would tell them in due time. Draco returned to his... their quarters, sat down in front of the fire and contemplated on a name for his familiar. It was a hard decision to make and it wasn’t one that he wanted to make on the spur of the moment.

He watched his little dragon walk about their rooms and began to talk to him like he would to Dauphin. (...I’m still trying to decide on a name for you Lil’ Bit, but it’s difficult...)
The little purple dragon just huffed. He wasn’t happy about being called Lil’ Bit and it was that damn snake’s fault too that Harry and Draco were calling him that. ‘Well, it’s really my master’s fault for not finding a name for me soon enough...’ he seethed.

(...When Harry found your parent, he wanted to know what your parent’s name was...) Draco said, trying to explain his reluctance to just choose. (...He chose to tell my mate the name that he preferred to be known by, but secretly I think that it was a name that he wanted to be remembered by...)

(...It shouldn’t be that difficult...) The little dragon hissed. He was getting a little irritated too because he had new skin growing in and Draco had yet to oil it to his satisfaction. He wandered into the boys’ room to look for the salve and once he found it, he took it to his master.

Draco watched with an amused expression on his face, as he saw his familiar dragging a jar half his size. The little dragon was struggling not to trip over his long tail and over his six legs. He had to move the tail out of the way, lean back to drag the jar a couple of paces and remember to move his tail out of the way again.

‘It’s too cute,’ he thought, watching the antics. (...Do you want me to help?...)

The little thing just huffed out a puff of cloudy air and glared at his friend. (...You will let me do this...) He said. (...I will get this over to you and you will treat my skin properly. How will I ever become coordinated, if you’re always picking me up and carrying me around. I’m not a baby, despite my recent hatching...)

(...I know, but I also know that there will come a time that I will no longer be able to carry you...) Draco explained. (...I like being able to, while I can...)

The little dragon sat back on four of his hind legs and staying upright with the front two, his tail automatically wrapped around him two times. He looked at Draco and Draco just looked back into the serious eyes of his familiar. (...What’s my name?...) The little creature asked seriously.

Draco sighed. (...It’s not like I don’t have an idea on what to name you. It’s actually down to one of two choices and I’m really leaning towards one, but then I think that the other would be more appropriate. It’s made up out of respect to your parent and all, but the other is more fun and ...)

(...You’re an idiot...) Dauphin hissed, coming into the room. (...and you’re rambling, too. Lil’ Bit...) the dragon hissed like a pissed off cat when he heard the name, but Dauphin just continued on, (...just wants a name all his own and one that you’ve chosen for him. He knows that he might outlive you and that he’s free to change his name when the time comes. At the moment, though, he just wants to be with you and therefore it really doesn’t matter what his name will be. Do you think that my name was Dauphin when I met Harry?...)

(...Wasn’t it?...) Draco asked, curious to know more.

(...No, it wasn’t...) Dauphin said. (...The law of magical familiars is that once a master has chosen you they can name you whatever they want without thought to your feelings. It entirely depends on the master to let you have a choice. Harry said that my skin felt like the skin of a dolphin and that is why he asked if I would like the name Dauphin. I was given a choice at the point, but being who he is I believe that if I didn’t like that name he would have found another and another until we found one that I agreed on. It’s not everyday that a master is that considerate...)

(...Alright...) Draco said. (...I wanted to call you Liok after your father’s preferred name Antiok, but I thought that sounded too much like Lion and I really dislike most of the Gryffindors or well their mentality. Then I found one that was fun and kind of nice, but I...) He bore the scrutiny of four pairs
of eyes and couldn’t help, but feel that he should give him the name that he would prefer to call his familiar. (...I would really like to call you Jinseng instead...)

The little dragon blinked. Draco had not said that he would call him either and he watched his master closely and realized the same thing that Dauphin did about her own. His master would allow him to choose any name so long as it was a name that he and Draco could live with.

Jinseng was an alternate spelling for the herb known as Ginseng. It was an unassuming herb that snuck up on the muggle and Wizarding World. It was something that was both positive and negative, as too much of it can harm, which is true for anything used in excess.

The little dragon uncurled his tail and then walked over to his master leaving the heavy jar behind. (...I think that I like Jinseng...)

Draco looked at the little creature, smiling and said, (...I know I like Jinseng...) He meant that he liked his familiar and then it was settled. He looked at the clock and said, “Oh, shit. I’m late. Come on we’re going together this time.”

He scooped Jinseng and leaned over to pick up the bottle of salve for his familiar’s itchy spots. Dauphin wanted to go too, so she slithered up Draco’s arm when he bent over to pick up the bottle and settled around his shoulders, while his dragon settled in his arms. He rushed through the halls in order to get down to the Slytherin common rooms.

---------------------------------

It was standard for every Slytherin to gather in the common room to hear the results of any decisions or announcements made at the prefect meetings. This was one of the snakes’ secrets.

It was the reason that they never looked affected by the “big” news or announcements that were made in the Great Hall. Well most of the time anyway, they knew it in advance.

Pansy was visiting with a few of the other prefects, so she had been making her way back to the commons rather slowly. It was then that she noticed Draco’s little dash to the doors of the Slytherin entrance and witnessed that same pause that Blaise had witnessed with Harry.

Draco’s hand was touching the outside edge of the entranceway. He paused with his eyes closed, waited a brief moment and then said the password to enter the rooms.

‘That's strange,’ she thought. ‘I wonder what that meant.’

She walked in just as the others were settling down around him, watching him with a bundle in his arms. The other students were not sure what he was carrying, but they did notice that there was also a snake around his neck.

He pulled out the salve and they all watched as the bundle unraveled itself to reveal the smallest and cutest little dragon. Draco poured a bit of oil-like salve in his hands and began to massage the little beast. They all watched as the little creature purred in delight, lolling this way and that to let the Slytherin prince rubbed the stuff into dry looking patches.

“Well don’t just stare,” he said. “Get on with telling everyone before the bell for the evening meal rings.”

“You will explain this later,” Pansy said.

“Sure, now don’t leave anything out,” he instructed, concentrating on his connection with his
familiar. Dauphin was softly hissing instructions to help their bond grow stronger during such contact, but it was also for the best that Draco does this to introduce his familiar rather than hide him away.

The other took up the explanations and the told the students about the announcements that they will be hearing this evening. It was interesting to see the snakes’ reactions.

There were some students who were upset about the loss of week-end privileges in the nearby village, but most of the first and seconds didn’t care. They weren’t allowed to go anyway so they were unaffected by the restriction. The third years were notably the most upset, since they had been looking forward to exploring anyplace without their parents.

The older years were a little more vocal about the restrictions, but they were fully aware that there are more dangers out there. So basically they grumbled and protested because they felt that they had to. They were, however, secretly relieved not to be put in a situation where they could be attacked or even abducted by their own families in order to be marked or tortured.

Most of the students, after having learned the basic gist of the announcements, started to clear the common room and head for the Great Hall. They were, after all curious to see who would be the most vocal in their reactions and were placing minor bets to that effect.

Draco was delayed by his friends. “Drake man, what is going on with you?” Blaise asked.

“Why do you have those two with you?” Pansy asked. “Is one of them yours and yes we want to know what is going with you? Don’t think I didn’t notice that the Professors still haven’t called on you to answer questions in class and you are no longer in the Muggle Culture Studies class?”

Draco sat back down from his standing position, waited for the familiars to re-arrange themselves. He then waited for the others to actually notice that the snake that moved from his shoulder to his arm was a Runespoor and that his own familiar was a dragon.

“Wow,” Anna said. She was walking into the rooms to find her brother and drop off her school supplies. “That’s so cool. The Dragon has a dragon. What’s his or her name? Whoa, you have a snake too?”

“His name is Jinseng and the runespoor’s name is Dauphin,” Draco said. “Jinseng is my familiar and Dauphin belongs to another.”

Blaise and Pansy blinked. It wasn’t often that a witch or wizard chose to have a familiar, but it wasn’t that rare a sight either. What was rare was the fact that Draco obviously went through a magical inheritance during the summer and obtained a familiar.

The changes should have allowed him to be strong enough to not need a familiar. It was just a misconception though and it was one that they were not aware of, since the idea had been drilled into them that only weak wizards needed one. It was just a concept that fell out of use or popularity.

Draco was proud of his familiar and he was happy that Harry had thought to look for his as well as his own. “I know what you guys are thinking,” he said to his friends. He looked around and noticed that some of the sixth and seventh years were still around, curious as to what he was going to say.

He continued on, “A familiar is not something that only a weak witch or wizard needs. That’s just a misconception. It is true that having a familiar can make you stronger and help to ground your magics, but some of the strongest wizards I know have one.”
“Really,” asked one of the sixth years.

“Who?” Asked another curious snake.

“Well, I think that we can discount the old coot Dumbles because he claimed to have a phoenix.”

“It’s true that he has one,” Vince said. “I saw it when we were taken to his office in third year. You remember Drake when Potter sent that silver beast after us. It was when we did that Dementor prank to try and scare him.”

Draco blushed when he remembered that Potter had still gotten the better of him then. He was about to continue his explanations when the first warning bell before the evening meal rang. It was to announce the time in case students were pre-occupied in their activities and remind them to begin to head towards the Great Hall.

“We’ll continue this at a later time,” Draco said. “We should head down to the Hall to see how the others react.”

Many of the snakes chuckled and preceded the small group of close friends. They too were placing their own bets about who would be the loudest. Many thought it would be Weasley, but Pansy knew that it might be some other Gryffindor, as Ron Weasley was a prefect and was well aware of what the announcements for this evening held.

All the students were seated and waited for their meal. Because they had to wait they knew that some announcements were about to take place.

Professor Flitwick was the one to call the students attention. “Due to the political climate within the British Ministry of Magic, the Heads of House, several of the Professors and the Headmaster have come to the decision to suspend all visits to Hogsmeade and any other neighboring town.”

Most of the students were upset and a great majority was, predictably, the third years. Most were vocal about this new restriction because there weren’t that many clubs or things that they could do with their time outside of classes.

It was more difficult for the Muggleborn because the very few clubs that had been formed in the past were exclusive and they were not allowed to join. Also, whenever they tried to start up a club they had always been denied by the Headmaster. They had to petition or send a request directly to him, by passing their Heads of House and any Professor that would have been in a position to help or allow them to form their club. Plus most of the Muggleborns didn’t want to remain confined within the walls of the castle and they had been looking forward to exploring a magical town.

Severus never could stand the volume of noise in the Great Hall, but this time it was really too much for him. His colleague could not even continue his announcement and despite a volume spell his voice didn’t carry too far at the moment.

The Potions Master stood up, from his place at head table, and glared at the students. He desperately wanted to boom his voice out like Dumbledore used to do to call everyone to order, but he was preempted by a flash of light behind him. He maintained his composer and waited for what he knew would be an annoyance.

Suddenly, there was a fireball flash of red-gold with a trilling and chirping light burst from behind the dark man. It did a better job of calling the students attention. Many had their wands at the ready in their hands and Professor Remus said, “4 points per student to their house for the ones with a wand
in their hand. Well done. You’re at the ready, but I do believe that you may all relax now.”

The students were focused on the bird behind the Professors and then proudly put their wands away. It seems to pay to be ready for anything.

The bird or phoenix, now that they could clearly see what the bird was, flew to the Potions Master. It landed on his shoulder and then just settled there for the duration. Many students were shocked that an animal with obvious ties to the light, considered an icon for all things Good and Light, seemed to want to willingly associate with someone who has obviously a very questionable past. That included an association with things considered Dark and Evil.

The Potions Master wanted to glare at the bird for its stubbornness and for intentionally ruining his reputation. He could swear that among the trills and chirps that he could hear smugness in parts of the sounds coming from the overgrown feather duster.

“Before anyone begins to even think about how unfair it is to remain safely behind secure, warded thick stone walls, I firmly suggest that the lot of you allow all announcements to be concluded,” he said sitting back down and glaring at the ones who had prevented the small Professor of Charms to continue his job.

Some students were still staring at the phoenix, but many others turned their attentions back to Professor Flitwick. “Thank you Professor Snape. Thank you Fawkes for that call to attention.”

The bird was being stroked by the gentle fingers of the one he had chosen to reside with. He was in bliss with the attention, but still managed to chirp a reply that sounded like, (...You’re welcome...)

Professor Flitwick smiled and turned his attentions back to the students waiting for the rest of the announcements. “We are terribly sorry for the disappointment that you must be feeling at this time,” continuing his speech.

Many of the students developed similar thoughts, in that not all the professors could understand what it felt like to be disappointed. Some were even convinced that certain professors were pleased to have taken away a treat like this, causing misery in the students. Most of the students were pulled out of these thoughts to continue listening to the announcements.

“We have found a comparison study that had been done on the various private magical and non-magical schools in this part of the world. To our profound shock, it has been found that Hogwarts was severely lacking in some areas of providing all of you with the best and most well rounded education.

That is why we have affected many of the changes to your curriculum this year. Now we feel the need to improve or add something to round your personal life or time. It is not meant as an intrusion, for those of you who believe it to be one. It does not require mandatory participation, but it is an alternative to wandering unprotected among strangers.

You may have noticed workers in and around the school. They were here to prepare various rooms in some of the unused sections of the school in order to allow the students a place or room for the specific use in club activities.

Any student wishing to form a club may do so, providing that they follow the guidelines found on your dorm bulletins,” he paused a moment and then flicked his wand in their direction with a couple of spell words. “The guidelines are now a part of your school journals. We have taken the liberty of listing a few examples, but do not limit your-selves.” He finished his speech and sat down.
Professor McGonagall stood up, getting the attention of the students. “Be warned that clubs do not replace regular classes or class work. Your first responsibility is to your chosen classes and then club activities,” she stated clearly.

“Now let’s eat.” She said, calling forth the evening meal.

As the food appeared several students dug out the journals to read the rules and see examples for the possible clubs. Many were surprised at the well thought rules. It then hit many of the students that this was their chance to do something for fun and not hide their personal interests. Even some of the teachers and assistants pulled out their own journals to read the rules.

---------------------------------

At the seventh year table someone nudged Vincent Crabbe and told him that should begin an artists or drawing club. Several of the students in the hall were doing the same to their friends, encouraging them to initiate a club.

Severus wanted to leave as they noise level increased, but was convinced to stay by the pleading eyes of his mate. “You owe me”, he muttered under all the noise.

“Of course, anytime,” Remus said sending his mate-to-be a smile.

---------------------------------

In the Great Hall nearing the end of the meal, the seventh year Slytherins turned the conversation back to the discussion that they were having about familiars. Some had the feeling that Draco didn’t care who knew and it was probably the best to spread this kind of information to the eager ears of the young ones at that table in front of them.

The first and second years, well those from magical families were well aware of the fact that only weak wizards have a familiar. However, now they were all agog by the new information that they were hearing, as they were now just learning that it is a misconception.

“It’s not true that only weak wizards have a familiar,” Draco began.

“So Draco,” Anna asked from the first and second year table. “Why does it look like you have two?” The others around the Slytherin Prince suddenly noticed that there were two creatures with him.

“One belongs to my mate,” he explained.

“Is that one of the reasons that you don’t get called on in class,” Pansy said. “Is it to protect your mate? Whoever they are? Are you ashamed of her or him?”

“No,” he exclaimed. “I was just too busy with classes to tell you guys. I certainly am not ashamed of him and I just don’t know why I’m not called in class.”

---------------------------------

Meanwhile, Harry was sitting at another part of the seventh year table, as he was late in returning from one of his personal special self-defense classes. His luck seems to have run out because he found himself sitting next to Hermione. Ron was just a few seats down from them.

He still had Neville next to him though and therefore was able to ask him how the meeting went. “So Nev,” he began. “How did the Prefect meeting?”
“It went pretty much like expected,” Neville began. He was still a little upset about his own reactions to the questioning or conversation between the fourth year and Dudley. ‘I wasn’t jealous...Was I?’

“The Headmaster refused to appoint a Head-boy and Head-girl this year,” Hermione complained. “Dumbledore assured me that I was going to be Head-girl this year.”

“Hermy,” Ron said, using a nickname calculated to piss off his... barf ... wife. “Give that a rest will you. The decision has been made and I for one think that they were right not choose anyone this year. There’s nothing you can do about it, so would you just drop it.”

“Don’t call me by such vulgar nicknames,” she said angrily. “You know that I hate that. My name is Hermione and don’t you forget it. Use anything else Ronnikins and I will make your life a living hell.”

‘Yeah right,’ he thought. ‘You already do make my life a living hell.’ He shuddered at the name she used because the twins always used it when they had a prank in progress. He could just imagine how she’d make him remember her name, but all he said in return was, “Don’t call me Ronnikins.”

Despite the seating arrangements, Harry was not too far away from his mate and could hear the hiss of his own familiar nearby, but she was coming closer to him. Dauphin sensed her master was close and she also sensed that some of the students near him were not thinking favourable thoughts towards him.

She slithered off of Draco’s arm and made her way around the food platters, making sure not to knock anything off of the table. It didn’t take too long to reach her master. The Slytherins around Draco were taking note at the direction that she was headed in, knowing that they were about to find out who Draco’s mate was.

Near Harry, someone hitched their breath and another let out a small choked off shriek. Dauphin was nearly there, but she was curious as to who was causing the ruckus. So she lifted all three of her heads and looked around three different directions, smelling the air with her tongues. When no other sound came again she lowered her heads and continued on to get to her master.

Hermione knew that only Dark wizards had a Runespoor as a familiar and that all familiars needed to be registered with the Ministry. “It’s a Dark familiar,” she said. “Whoever owns this one should know that they’re not allowed to have it. Don’t worry,” she said to the second year that had shrieked. “I’ll report it to the Ministry and the one who owns it will be brought up on...”

“I don’t think so Hermione,” Harry said. Allowing Dauphin to crawl up his arm and settle in her usual place around his neck. He turned to the first and second years, plus anyone else left in the Great Hall. The evening meal was over and the students had begun to wander away, even though some food platters remained.

“Harry that’s a Dark familiar,” she said. “Only Dark wizards have them.”

“You are so full of broom dust,” Neville said. “I don’t know what books you got that biased information from, but whoever wrote that down was obviously lying. Familiars are only Dark, if the wizard that they have bonded to is Dark. Besides a Dark wizard does not mean Evil either.”

“Of course it does Neville,” Ron said. “You know that a Dark wizard is the one causing all of the problems we’re having now.”

“No... It is an Evil wizard that calls himself Dark,” Harry said. “He’s evil because there is no conscience in him. He doesn’t care. A Dark wizard or witch will do what is necessary, but regret
many of his or her actions, depending on the outcome. Besides the basic definition of dark is the absence of light. Some witches or wizards just can’t do certain spells whether they are defined as Light or Dark.”

“But Harry,” Hermione said bringing the conversation back to the Runespoor. “You can’t have a Runespoor as a familiar. They are monitored by the Ministry. Did you actually register it with the proper authorities?” She said sternly, as though he ever needed a mother figure in one of his supposed ‘best friends’.

“Yes I have registered her, Hermione,” he said, exasperated by the implication that he didn’t know what he was doing. Dauphin only needed to be registered by one governmental body. He had done it in the country that he found her, due to the fact that it’s usually done in the country where a familiar is found. He had done the same with Draco’s when he needed to explain about the egg of an unknown creature that he carried near his body rather than in his backpack of ingredients.

The day that the goblins had visited the boys at the muggle hotel was the day that the paperwork was updated to include and inform the country about the familiar bond for Draco. That country’s officials had been pleased to know about the ruin in the forest, but were saddened by the collapse of the structure. It had been part of their history.

Harry explained to them that the temple had been returning to nature, as there were no more worshippers there. He also apologized for the quake to the magical officials, but they waved it off because apparently some of the consequences of that had unearthed another find for the historians to explore and they were keen to begin. It seems that everyone got something in the end from that adventure.

“You don’t need to scold me, as though I was a child Hermione,” he said, his irritation at the whole situation. “You are not my mother and I did everything in accordance to the laws we have. Are you angry that I didn’t ask for your permission or advice before performing the ritual to find her?”

“Ritual?” She asked. “How would you know what to do for such a ritual?”

Harry snorted, “You don’t actually believe that you are the only who knows how to study, do you? I did some independent research last year and found the ritual. I was curious to see if I could do it on my own and so after my birthday I did it and found her. Her name is Dauphin by the way.” He said petting his familiar, loving the feel of her warm skin, knowing that it was cause by his mate.

The others around them were curious about it, but pretended not to listen in on such a semi-private conversation. They were drawn to the other section of the seventh year table where Draco began his explanations on familiars.

Harry was interested and therefore said, “If you’ll excuse me, I’m going to sit near my mate.”

He stood up and walked over to the Slytherins, “May I join you?” Neville was close by and nodded his head to indicate that he wanted to join that conversation as well.

Vincent used his weight to force the students down a couple of seats since it was obvious that they were no longer eating, but listening in on their conversation. They grumbled about it, but then moved to the first year seats in front of them. They were adjusted the seats so that the first and second years that were interested in hearing the conversation were now facing the seventh year table.

“Of course,” Draco said smiling at his mate.

Harry smiled back. “So did we miss anything interesting?” He was indicating himself and Neville.
“Potter!” Blaise exclaimed his voice squeaking. “He’s your mate??”

The others were looking at the two with open-mouthed shock. “But you don’t do anything,” Pansy said, thinking back to the times that she saw the two of them together. “You guys don’t even snog in the hallways.”

“It may not look like it, but we do things,” Draco said. “Harry is an apprentice and has been told that certain standards of conduct will be maintained.”

“I respect my master in his wishes,” Harry explained looking in the direction of the Slytherin Head of House. “So it just looks like we don’t do anything. Why? Do you guys need some kind of proof or assurance? We don’t need your approval you know.”

“We know,” Blaise said. “But it would have been nice to know. It’s not like Draco has never told us about his... flings before.”

Seamus choked on his water. “Fling?” He said, “They’re married you half-wit. The matching bands are dead giveaways.”

It was then that the others noticed the wedding bands. Draco was please to have pulled one over on his friends. They all looked a little sheepish to have missed what was glaringly obvious on his left hand.

He hadn’t been hiding his marriage from them and it was true that with the new curriculum they had been too busy to have a good old fashion sit down. He really didn’t know why the other teachers and professors never called on him.

“Sorry old boy,” Blaise said to Draco. “I guess we have been a bit too busy.”

“You’ll tell us about it when you can, won’t you?” Vince asked.

“Yes, I promise to talk about this with you at another time,” Draco said, taking one of Harry’s hands in his to hold. Harry smiled at his mate and kissed the back of the hand in his.

“Now about what you said in the commons, that you didn’t think that Dumbledore had a phoenix for a familiar,” he said, pointing to the phoenix that was still sitting on their Head of House’s shoulder. “I don’t believe that that bird ever belonged to the old Headmaster.”

“It does seem to have attached itself to Professor Snape,” Pansy observed.

“It doesn’t belong to any wizard, young lady,” Salazar said, from the portrait above them. “It did a one time, but since his wizard passed away, I think that he just chose to stick around the school when he truly didn’t have to.”

“Sir,” one of the other seventh years began. “Do you know who he originally belonged to?”

“Of course,” he said.

Helga, the large portrait next to him answered. “He was rumored to belong to Merlin, but I believe that his last master was Salazar.”

“No bloody way,” Ron said, having turned his ear to the conversion.
“Watch your language,” Hermione said. “Little pitchers have big ears.”

“Look lady,” one of the Muggleborn first years said, knowing what Hermione was trying to do. “Language like that is fairly tame and it’s not like some of us haven’t already learned the word bloody and even used it in a bloody sentence. I can think of worse words, so mind your own bloody business and let us decide whether we bloody well want to use the words we hear around us or not.”

Most of the first and second years were glaring at her because she had interrupted an interesting part of the conversation. They didn’t care that one of the prefects swore, most of students had muttered the same thing. It was only that Ron Weasley’s voice carried.

“Yeah, mind your own bloody business,” said a few others.

She flushed with embarrassment when she realized that her input was not needed, but then felt further humiliation to realize that the portraits were waiting to be able to tell the students about Fawkes. She didn’t say another word, but crossed her arms and glared at Ron because he was the one that started it.

He didn’t say a word, but turned his attentions back to the portraits and asked, “Why?”

Salazar just shrugged, “I don’t know. I did the same ritual that almost everyone in my family did and sought out my familiar. Once I found him, I just knew that he was it. What was I supposed to do? Ignore the need to bond with him because he was a creature of the Light. I’m not a Dark wizard you know.”

Several of the students were mumbling at that. “I’m not,” he said trying to get the students to understand the truth of his history. “I never was, but there were some members of my family who were.”

“It’s true,” Godric piped in from the other side of the hall. “His father’s brother was one of them and a right nasty piece of work he was too. He must have passed down some bad ideas to his spawn.”

“I think that the students need to consider that members of any family could have the same surname and have been the ones to fight under our own names,” Rowena said. “We have, ourselves, just recently speculated that a Gryffindor and a Slytherin could have been the ones to cause the rift in the houses of the school. But I can firmly tell all of you here and now that Salazar was a good wizard and worked to improve our world. He didn’t leave this school nor did he ever battle to the death against Godric.”

“You children can never be certain that the history written is at all accurate from our time because many things depend on the point of view that the person is telling the story from,” Helga said. “Perhaps a bit of study into the history of different cultures...”

“My good lady,” Professor De Luka said. “Please do not give away all of my lessons. We have just begun the school year.”

“I am sorry Professor,” she said. “History has always been a passion of mine. Perhaps I may visit you sometime to discuss the history that I know versus yours.”

“I would be delighted my lady,” he said with a bow, taking his seat once more.

Some of the female students were tickled by the new History Professor’s mannerisms, but many others boys and girls groaned knowing that they were probably going to have more work in that class then any previous student. It was obvious that Professor De Luka was not going to be only dwelling on the Goblin Wars.
“So if a Wizard familiar is not only for weak wizards, how come not many wizards have one,” Pansy asked. “Who do you consider a strong wizard that actually has one?”

“It fell out of use,” Draco began. “It wasn’t popular anymore, like a fashion going out of style. Harry has one because he was advised to get one. I have one because my mate thought that I could use the extra protection or assistance. I’m not ashamed of my familiar. As for who is strong, it’s obvious that the Wizarding World considers Voldemort a strong wizard due to the fact that he has continually terrorized us and it seems like there is nothing that we can do against him. My mate is another because you can not deny that there has to be some power in order for him to actually survive all of his encounters against the so-called Dark Lord.”

“Well it’s obvious that Dumbledore had claimed that the phoenix was his,” Vince said. “But why would he do that?”

“Perhaps it was to make him seem stronger to the world at large. To prove to everyone that he was a Light Wizard, working towards the good of the school and the Wizarding community,” Harry said.

“But why not do the ritual himself and get a true familiar,” Blaise said.

“He did the ritual when he was younger,” Hogwarts said. “He just didn’t want his familiar. So he ignored the bond and abandoned it.”

“What!!!!!” The collective grouped gasped at such a thought. “Why?” “What for?”...

The questions continued, but slowly the students recovered from their shock and waited to hear the explanation of why a wizard would not want his own familiar.

“That’s simple and complicated,” Hogwarts said. “Dumbledore did the ritual, but the animal that was to have become his familiar was the Basilisk that had been living in the Chamber of Secrets.”

“What!” Harry exclaimed. “But it looked like the creature had lived there for hundreds of years.”

“It did live in the Chamber, but it also had access to the outside, until Dumbledore did his ritual,” the school explained. “It had to have outside food sources or else it would have starved long ago.”

“It looks like you have a trip to the Chamber this week-end, Luv,” Draco said.

Harry nodded his head, “Yeah. I was going to re-enforce the wards that I put up in fourth year anyway.” He had already closed off all potential entrances, but from the bones of the creatures at the bottom of the drop into the Chamber it looked like he would need to seek out the smaller ones. Merlin forbid… that some traitorous rat get access into the Castle.

“How did Riddle find the entrance to the Basilisk when he was in school?” Draco wondered.

“Pipes,” Harry said. “He probably heard the snake moving through the pipes in the school, just like I did in second year. Good thing that I’m finding out now that the animal was slated to have been a Wizard’s familiar.”

“Why?” One of the second years asked.

“Why do you think?” He returned.

The students paused and thought on that for a moment. A third year Hufflepuff tentatively said, “You harvested the snake for potion ingredients.”
“If you did, then would it affect any potion you made?” One first year Slytherin said.

“You wouldn’t know whether the components will work the same as a regular Basilisk that had never been summoned through a ritual,” said a second year.

“Correct all, two points for each correct answer and three points to Slytherin for the well thought-out question,” he said. “I’ll have to re-label all those jars too, to reflect this information.”

“But doesn’t Riddle already have a familiar. Why would he even bother with the Basilisk?” Blaise asked.

“He didn’t get Nagini until he no longer had a corporeal form,” Harry explained. “He found her in South America when he was still ghost-like.”

“How do you know?” Vincent asked.

“Visions,” Luna said. “The one, who was marked the equal, had been connected to the evil one and had visions. But you’ve changed that.” She looked at him almost accusingly, but then smiled at him. He sensed it and smiled back at her.

“Things do change, Luna,” he said.

“They sure do,” Seamus said looking at the non-hostile gathering at one end of the seventh year table with the mix of years, everyone curious to know about familiars. “I have a question,” he said. “If the Dark Lord only gained a familiar after he lost his body, does that mean that he was weak enough to need one or it was just something he got to make himself look more important, like only he was allowed to get one.”

“Those are good questions,” Millicent Bulstrode said. “But unless you plan to go up and ask him, I think it would be better to leave that one alone.”

Many of the students and several of the teachers agreed with that statement. They weren’t that curious to know why the Dark Lord needed a familiar.

Blaise thought of something else and asked, “If Dumbledore had done the ritual, but didn’t bond with the creature that his magics selected what happens to Dumbledore or the familiar? Are there consequences?”

“Yes, the animal goes crazy and may die. The wizard or witch is denied another familiar through the pain of trying to perform the ritual a second or third time because his familiar is still alive,” Salazar said. “The familiar will lose its purpose in life and being denied a bond is like a killing blow. However, if it is old enough and I suspect that it was, it might have just gone crazy and may have listened to the one person to whom it could talk to and could understand it.”

“Which is why I couldn’t get it to listen to me in second year,” Harry said. “I had to fight it or die because the ghost memory of Riddle was controlling it.”

Everyone wondered how a second year could’ve possibly defeated a Basilisk. They weren’t about to pry, but man did they wish that they could have the story on that.

“Can anyone get a familiar?” A curious third year asked.

The seventh years all paused to consider the answer. It wasn’t something that any of them were familiar with and they certainly never studied that before.
“If you’d allow me,” Professor De Luka said gaining the students’ attentions. “It is always best to wait until your magics have matured enough before attempting any type of ritual magics. This is especially true if your family tree happens to have creature genes. It is sometimes better to wait until you’ve finished school, as magics mature at different rates, depending on a person. Someone could be as old as thirty before their magics have settled. There are ways to test this and of course some family magics will allow certain rituals before their time.”

“In our day,” Salazar said. “We recommended that students wait until they were about fifteen years old to make a first attempt. There was no guarantee that the ritual would work, but there was also no harm in trying it out, some students got lucky.”

“Of course another reason was to allow the students the time to learn the steps to the ritual,” Rowena said. “No ritual should be rushed. All rules and steps to ritual magics had to be learned first, because there are no short cuts to ritual magics. Those that have read anything about them being shortened should look into the life that the witch or wizard had after shortening a ritual. There was always a price for not following through properly.”

“The students had special classes in rituals and those were only offered during sixth year,” Godric said. “Well in our time anyway. Don’t know about this time?”

“It was one of the classes that the Ministry had done away with several Ministers back,” Professor De Luka explained.

“Why?” Blaise asked.

“They wanted to re-classify some creatures under Light and Dark categories,” Professor Lupin said. “I think that it was around that time that the rumours began about familiars were only for weak wizards. Rumors can do a lot of damage.”

“I think that this chatter has gone on long enough,” Professor Snape said spoiling the lively and entertaining conversation. “I’m sure that many of you have papers due tomorrow.” He wasn’t really trying to spoil their fun, but he did know that many students liked to wait until the last minute to begin working on their assignments. “I am also sure that many of you have tests that you need to brush up for,” he said sweeping out of the Great Hall.

The students frowned at the reminder, but there were more than a few Ravenclaws, plus Ms. Granger, that jumped up from their places to rush to the library before is closed for the day. The others left at a far more leisurely pace heading towards their common rooms, chattering about everything that they discovered today.

Professor De Luka did promise to add a discussion and the history of familiars to his schedule, but he did warn them that he didn’t know if it could be done before Yule. The rest of the students dispersed. Blaise and Pansy did manage to extract a promise from Draco that he would visit them on Saturday.

Since Draco knew that Harry was going to be away from the school, he agreed. However, he did ask that Neville and Dudley be allowed to accompany him. The Slytherins didn’t care, they wanted answers.

“Harry,” Luna said, not needing to finish or say a complete sentence.

“Yes Luna,” Harry said. “You can join them, if you want to.”

Draco knew that there was something about the strange Ravenclaw girl, but he nodded his agreement too. She gave them all a whimsical smile and wandered away.
The others just shrugged and continued on to their rooms for the remainder of the evening.

-----------------------------

TBC...
Twenty-Three

Author's notes: Disclaimers & Author's Notes: See chapter one for details.

Legend:

'Thoughts or emphasis'
"Normal speech"
(…Words spoken in another language…)

---------------------------------

Chapter Twenty-Three

---------------------------------

Saturday September 16

Harry had just finished re-warding all the possible entrances found in the Chamber of Secrets and now he was off to Snake’s End. Remus had given him permission to search the Library that he had been willed from Sirius. He was looking for anything on marking rituals and possible slave marks.

‘It’s the only possible reason for the connection lines and compulsions that I’ve seen in Severus,’ he thought. ‘It had to have ritual components, but what are the bloody key components?’

Dauphin was with him for this adventure, even though she’s sure that he could have managed this on his own. (...You’d get in trouble without me…) She had said. (...Besides I want to see for you, like I’m supposed to. We need to practice the merging…)

Merging was new to both of them, but it was a happy discovery that helped when Harry wanted to appear in public without looking like he had a disability.

Harry was to talk to Winky in order to add her to the wards of Snake’s End, as per Remus’ request. He was there to check the warding of the library house and re-enforce the wards, if needed. Dobby had found a house-elf pair for Remus, a young couple with one young child. They were solid looking and they knew what to do to preserve books, as they once belonged to a book shop that went out of business.

Dobby had interviewed them and then after a quick pop back to the school to speak to Remus, he returned to add them to the wards. He explained that their children would not be bonded until they were fully trained in what they wanted to specialize in, but should the adults need any kind of bond Remus was waiting to see them.

The couple looked at one another. They led their child to Winky for her to mind the child and they popped away. Dobby followed to ensure that they got what they wanted. It didn’t take long before they popped back both adults a little awed by the acceptance of the partial bond that would allow them the freedom to have some time off.

It’s not like Snake’s End would need constant upkeep after the first big dusting occurred. They were
told that Winky was the head elf and any requirements for their personal needs would go through her. Winky had developed an understanding that many elves had different needs and that Dobby’s new roll helped them to get what they needed and sometimes what they selfishly wanted.

Not that whatever a house-elf could ever dream of would be seen as selfish in Harry’s eyes and that’s part of what Dobby’s new duties were.

Harry added the family to the wards and showed them into the place. “As you can see, not very many people have been here, but it does need some work in order to bring everything back up to a decent level for researching here.”

“Thank you kind sir,” Jury said. His wife, Pip, nodded and their child Jenk smiled shyly from behind his parents.

Dobby popped back to his work and Winky was looking around the place to make note of the things that the elves may need. She had tried to scold Dobby about the clothes that he was wearing, but he just took her to the school to show her what the other elves had opted to wear.

Curious she went to Remus to ask about making her own clothes so that she could never be given any to break their bond. Remus smiled gently acknowledging her fear and said, “If you make them for yourself then you should be able to wear them without fear of being fired. I can even provide you an allowance to spend on materials. What do you think? I don’t want you to use rags or old clothes. You should be allowed to get something new.”

Winky agreed that she would like to make her own, as she had the time. She did like the way that the school elves were dressed and agreed to make clothes for Remus’ other house-elves. “Uniforms to represent your house, sir,” she said. He agreed as long as she made some for the future young ones to play in. She nodded happily and accepted the “Limited” money pouch for purchases of that nature.

The “Limited” money pouch was something that was specifically made for house-elves. It usually contained between 1 - 100 galleons. The setting depended on the owner/master. It could also have limits of daily, weekly or monthly for the total amount of withdrawal allowed.

It was a form of control that some masters enjoyed to have because the crueler ones would set the thing to 1 galleon a week because that limited what the house-elf could purchase for the household. It gave the evil bastards another excuse to be nasty to their servants, never mind that they were deliberately creating the reason in the first place. It was, after all, a matter of control.

The family was settling in as Harry performed the Weasley magics to find the appropriate books or documents. He tried to narrow the field down to the basics, but even then it seemed like there was too many books and scrolls to go through.

He summoned them all to one room that had a large table set up. He used several charms to separate the information into various categories, but then found that many of the books only had one or two chapters dedicated to the subject he was looking into.

He had come prepared with a journal that he specifically began for the purpose of adding information to regarding bonds, markings, slave marks, servant spells and everything of that nature. Everything from light to very dark or even some of what he felt was evil, those ones included pain and humiliation spells were copied into the journal.

He opens up the journal to a new section and began to copy the specific chapters in order of publication from the most recent to the oldest. He needed to know what was current and what was popular in the past. He organized it in a timeline format that way he could get an idea of what could
have been available to Riddle some fifty to sixty years ago.

It didn’t take too long, as it was the same method that he used to fill his own journals. He used the spells in Parseltongue and was surprise when a few more books flared to gain his attention. He summoned those too and added them under the rune symbol he used to indicate the language.

Harry was about to return the books, but Jury stopped him. “We is needing to learn the format and layout of this library sir,” he said. “We’ll put the books away.”

“Very well,” Harry said, knowing to never take a job away from a house-elf. “You are quite right. Would you like me to sort them by the room that they came from?”

Pip and Jenk paused in their attempt to pick up the books. Jury replied for all of them, “It would help.”

Harry nodded and said the counter spell that undid the sorting spell that he had used on the books. He then said another spell that re-organized the books by the room that they should be stored in. “I think that the rest is up to you. I could have used magics to return them to their original position, but as you said you want to review the organization of this house. I don’t even know if there is a ledger or card filing system in this house.”

The house-elves stated that they would figure it out and shooed him away. He was smiling as he walked away from the strange three story house. (...Why do house-elves always shoo me away?...) He said to Dauphin.

She hissed her laughter, (...You’re too nice...) Harry just huffed and apparated to Diagon Alley.

---------------------------------

Harry had decided that a side trip to the Alley was needed. Besides he had commissioned a carryall like that of his mate’s and had ordered a couple of other luggage pieces, including another larger backpack for potion gathering.

He’d already received an owl at the beginning of the week about their readiness. He sent a reply that he would be stopping by today. It didn’t take long to get that out of the way, so he decided that a quick stop to the Wheezies would be a good idea. He was curious to see if they had anything new.

He was thinking that perhaps a new product, not advertised yet, would be a great monthly prize for his classes. It’s kind of like the recognition that an “Employee of the Month” had. He recalled having seen those kinds of awards at some of the fast food chains that the Dursleys used to take their son to.

The chance at a reward for good work and achievement might motivate the children to learn a few things or improve on others. There was no denying that working towards a goal of grades does not always hold the attention of the younger because there wasn’t any physical reward to it. The first and second years may be a bit young to understand such concepts and that was part of his reasons when he presented the idea to Professor Snape and Remus.

He did explain that by third year the students could grasp the concept of learning, but if they were not used to it, like the Muggleborns were, it was going to be hard to get the students to break their lazy habits.

Remus and Severus decided that a trial run of the ‘tangible award’ system would be up to Harry. He would have to ultimately decide whether it was worth it or not.

That’s why he was now gingerly stepping into the Weasley Wizarding Wheezes. He was on high
alert in the shop because the Twins had triggers and traps. (...I wonder where they are getting their ideas for this...) He said to Dauphin, as he stepped over another spring-loaded floor board. He stepped over a trip-wire that was attached to some kind of gaseous prank.

“Really guys,” he muttered, ducking a questionable beam of coloured light that Dauphin had sensed nearby.

Harry sent couple of his magical spheres out from him deeper into the store trying to sense where the guys were. There was another type of magical signature or presence in the store. It was special and unique in the sense that he had only encountered it for the first time this summer.

He pulled out his wand, sensing that something was also wrong near the back of the store because he knew about the Twins security measures in the store. They were always aware of where everyone was and usually who they were and they did not come out to greet him like they always did.

It was then that he heard a heavily accented voice that he’d never thought to hear again. Well only until the following summer and his next trip to Everest.

“Ye’ve insulted this forger,” the gruff voice grumbled. “Ye be bringing shame ta your family clan.”

“But...” A shaking voice started to say.

“Just a joke,” another said very quickly.

“Silence,” the aggressive one said, following by a choked squeak from the first shaky voice.

(...Dauphin let me see...) Harry hissed.

She was hissing laughter, but allowed her master to use her eyes. It was a strange sort of magic, but it could only have ever happened between a familiar and their chosen witch or wizard.

Harry smiled a little to see what had caused the situation, but when he really looked he noticed that one of the twins was on the ground with a very sharp double bladed ax pressed against his neck.

“Please let him go,” George begged. He never thought that he would ever encounter a creature without any sense of humour.

“Gemini Charbon,” Harry said authoritatively. “Let him go. They don’t know about the insult.”

“Eh?” The short, but barrel-chested being said looking at who was addressing him with such familiarity.

“What are you doing here so far from your home forge?” Harry continued forward, hoping to change the focus from the twins to him.

Gemini removed the ax from the throat and Fred crab-crawled backwards until he reached the wall. George was on him in an instant to see if there was any mark and then held his brother, who was shaken up by the experience. Both had never once thought that they were doing any harm to anyone and they certainly never thought that their jokes could be considered insulting.

The dwarf slung his ax into the holster at his back, glaring at the twins he said, “I was busy teachin’ the whelp manners, but I be lead here ta look for the Drae’konne boy.” He was irritated that someone would interrupt the discipline that he had been about to administer and then he furrowed his brows in confusion.
‘I don’t know anyone around here,’ the short man thought to himself.

He turned around and saw the one that he had been looking for. It was the matter of a moment to notice the three-headed snake and then the Twins were surprised, as the short, stocky man hugged their silent partner around the waist.

“Boyo,” the dwarf said. “Ye are sure difficult ta find.”

Dauphin in the meantime was still hissing her laughter. (...Bright pink...) she hissed. (...His hee hee... hair... b...b...bb...bright...p..p...pink...hee hee...)

Harry blinked and then said to the Twins, “I hope that you two have an antidote ready for that prank because it is an insult to his clan and his people for their hair to be altered in any way shape or form after their coming of age.”

“We didn’t know,” Fred began, moving away from his brother to lean against the back wall.

“Of course we do,” George continued, seeking the pastilles that countered their shop pranks.

“You should have known that this was a Joke Shop, master forger,” Harry said returning the hug somewhat awkwardly. He wasn’t used to contact with many people and usually it was only Draco that he obviously felt at ease with. “What brings you to this part of the world?”

“The stones hav’ begun ta speak again,” the dwarf explained. “Ancients stone columns from our founding Halls hav’ begun ta speak of changes about the man Wizards. I be sent ta investigate the strangeness.”

“Have you gone to the Bank, yet?” Harry asked.

“No, it reeks of goblins,” Gemini said.

Harry laughed and Dauphin hissed her owner laughter. It was funny. Both races have their own odours and scents that are unique to them.

‘I suppose that only a blind person or someone with a very sharp nose can appreciate the differences,’ he thought.

Then Harry explained that the bank’s stones had been speaking too. “The goblins may run the bank, but if the two races once communicated in such a fashion, perhaps we should meet with them there.”

Gemini frowned. “We be havin’ a peace treaty between our peoples. It remains so long we nevva run a business or hav’ a drink together. We be fine then, but we’ve not had anything ta do with another race until you ya scamp, for hun’reds of years. That be since the stones fell silent.”

Harry thought about that for a moment and then asked, “Would that have been about 500 or so in human years?”

“Aye,” came the reply. “Why has something of import happened?”

Harry felt a bit out of sorts and was a touch flustered because it was Hogwarts fault. She started by speaking to the bank building and now the dominoes are falling. The stones of the earth are talking and he wondered just how far it reaches.

He looked in the direction of the Twins and knew that their quick wittedness have just calculated that their dark haired friend has a few more secrets. They had been the ones that broached the subject to
their parents about teaching Harry the family magics back when Harry was a second year.

The young business men had both snapped out of their reverie and summoned their house-elves. Fred said, “You’re not getting out of this one, Harry.”

“Tuck,” George began. “We need you to mind the shop,” instructing the one who loves pranks.

“I don’t want to stay here alone,” the young house-elf replied honestly. It was too much for him to handle on his own and some customers might not take him seriously.

“Gem,” Harry said to the dwarf. “Did you come here alone?” The dwarf shook his head. “Perhaps you should go get your travel companion(s) ready. Are they at the Leaky Cauldron?”

“Aye, boyo,” Gemini said. “We’ll be waitin’ for ye there.”

“Good,” Harry said looking at the Twins, who nodded the agreement. “I’ll collect you there.” They all watched as the short man walked out into the streets and then Harry asked, “Tuck, does it matter the species of being that you work with here?”

The house-elf was curious, but said, “No.”

“All right,” Harry said. “Do you guys mind...?” Receiving their agreement he then said, “I’ll be right back.” He apparated out of the shop and several minutes later he popped back in with two goblins and another house-elf in tow.

Fred and George had given their other two house-elves, Muffin (female) instructions to prepare tea and Spice (male) get a room ready for some company of unknown origins. They were about to pop away when Harry returned with the goblins. That’s when they had a fairly good idea of whom they might be entertaining.

Harry directed an elderly goblin to the cash register behind the counter, setting up a comfortable stool for the old matron. She could still calculate with the best of them and the other goblin was there to assist with her needs, as well as the general shop magics of safely shrinking and packing items. The house-elves were going to be the stock boys and cleaners, both of whom would follow the order of the matronly goblin until the shop closed at the end of the working day.

Once everything was settled at the shop, Harry called Dobby to deliver a couple of notes and one special Portkey letter. He then sent the twins to fetch their father. He needed more information about the Ministry and the Order before taking the fight to Voldemort.

The Twins almost objected, but Harry only wanted some advice from their father. They had to leave their mother out of this for the time being. “If I have to reveal some of my secrets to you now, you will do the same to your father, at least. Besides it will be easy to get him away from work a little earlier in order to visit his sons for tea. Just say that you need his advice, rather then revealing that I’m the one in need.”

They looked at one another, as though to communicate with each other in the secret language of twins. Fred then nodded, “Da really is the reasonable one.”

“Right you are, but Harry mate, you can’t keep hiding from our mum. She will not be happy,” George warned.

“You better come clean with her soon,” Fred said.

“I understand,” he said. “I was planning to send her a special invitation along with one to you guys
to have dinner with us.”

“Good,” said the closest twin.

“The invitation will come properly by Hedwig. She’d be very upset if I didn’t use her for this,” Harry said.

“Really,” said the other twin.

“Why didn’t you use her today?” George asked.

“Yeah, why didn’t you use Hedwig for this, today?”

“Tsk,” Harry huffed. “Today was unexpected, of course. I didn’t plan this you know. I have to go to the Leaky now and you guys need to collect your father.”

At the pub, Harry found his young bearded friend and promptly told him what they needed to do. “Collect your things and will be ready to move on to our meeting place. Sorry Tom,” he said in the direction of the inn keeper, who wasn’t even offended knowing that just being Harry Potter, he needed extra security.

“That’s all right Harry, see you next time,” Tom replied watching them leave through the door to the muggle side of the Alley. He shook his head. It was amazing the beings that he encountered around Harry.

Draco was in the common rooms discussing more of what happened to him this summer and the others came clean about some of the things and choices that they made. Many in the room were not quite surprised about the outcome of those few, as their families were well known for their views.

Draco even went on to explain that even he had been offered sanctuary of Hogwarts. He had accepted and not just because he was Harry Potter’s husband. He had accepted because he wasn’t sure that he wanted to face his parents on the battlefield, especially if his own mother had turned out to be a Death Eater. She wasn’t, of course, but had died instead, never once knowing that her son was free from the ties that bound her to the Malfoy family.

This too he told everyone in the room, told them all what happened continuously over his own summer. How his mother was stopped by his father’s loyal house-elves from trying to help him leave or get out of the mansion. He told them some of what happened to him and how he was able to escape with Harry’s help.

Dudley and Neville had joined Draco in order to answer any questions that the students may have had. Luna brought with her a couple of the four and fifth year Ravenclaws. Another fourth year Hufflepuff, which had friends in Slytherin, had brought a couple of the fourth and fifth years of that house too. Seamus was there with some of the third and fourth year Gryffindors, who wanted to know more about the true goings on in the school and not the complete house rivalry that was so prevalent to them before.

They were all there to learn about some of the things that perhaps the upper year prefects weren’t aware of. Seamus knew that Hermione and Ron would not tell them much and he was tired of not knowing what was going on with the school and some of the other houses. Besides he had made friends with some of the younger years and it was a relief that their dorm only contained three people, who he was absolutely sure about; Dean, Neville and himself.
He no longer trusted Hermione or Ron, but it was feeling more than fact that made him distrust them.
‘Like I’ll take chances with my life now,’ he thought. ‘Dean would kill me, that is, if he was still talking to me again. I’m such a git sometimes.’

Neville hadn’t been happy that Dudley was there to field questions about muggles and squibs. In Dudley’s Friday classes in Muggle Culture he had revealed that he was more of a muggle than a squib, but did have access to very few magics. He even named a few other teachers, with their permission of course, during that class explaining that they were like him.

The reason that Neville wasn’t happy was the fact that Dudley had just exposed his vulnerability to the class and school. He didn’t want anyone to know about it and hadn’t wanted Dudley to tell anyone. It had lead to a shouting match that surprised Harry and Draco because it occurred in their sitting rooms the night before.

To Harry it was strange to hear Neville raise his voice, whatever the reason. However, later that night when Harry and Draco were in bed they discussed it and both believed that Neville didn’t even know what the true reason for the shouting match was. Dudley seemed just as clueless in this instance.

Dudley had said what he needed to say and so did Neville. They were still very unsettled about it, but Neville wasn’t about to let Dudley face the snakes in their home-pit alone.

Draco was surprised that Dudley wasn’t aware of the extent that the quiet Gryffindor was beginning to attach himself to the muggle-squib. ‘I’ll have to get Harry to look at Nev’s magics,’ he thought. ‘Anyone with that much affinity to Earth type magics is bound to have that much more protectiveness about them.’

Harry had been wondering the same thing, but was prepared to go to their Godfathers at a later date for help in the matter. Given a bit of time the situation may resolve itself without his assistance.

Now Draco was in the Slytherin common room with both guys watching the students settle around them. Neville and Draco both watched as that same Slytherin prefect sat near Dudley to question him about the magics that he did have available and about being more muggle than magic. Draco had to admit that he was amused by the unfolding drama between his two newest friends and family.

Dudley was highly aware that Neville was not happy about some of the questions that he was being asked. Maybe it was the fact that it was from the same girl who was talking to him during the first prefect meeting of the year.

Many of the Slytherins were enjoying the freedom of eating lunch in their own rooms, for a change. It was mainly the sixth and seventh years that were there to listen to explanations and options, but there were many fourth and fifth years too.

The sixth and seventh years were the ones feeling the pressure of the outside political events. When they found out that Draco had gained sanctuary they wanted to know more about the cost of such safety. They knew that safety like that would require some form of compensation or payment.

“The Headmaster told me that I wasn’t expected to spy or fight for the light,” Draco began.

“But...” Blaise said. “There has to a ‘but...’ in there. He must want something else.”

“You’re right,” Draco said.

“I knew it,” Blaise said loudly showing everyone that he was more than a little pissed off.
“Hold on to your broomstick before you fly over the handle,” Draco said a little harshly. “Let me explain the situation first.”

He paused, waiting for his friend to calm down. It amused him whenever his friend let a little bit of the explosive Italian out, but not this time. He didn’t want his friend saying something that would set back the plans for the school’s safety.

The rest of the students were patiently waiting for the dark haired youth to calm down. They were used to it in some form or another. Seamus was tickled that the Slytherins had someone just as hot headed as Ron in their dorms.

“We all know about what’s coming in our direction or we have a better idea now than ever before,” Draco continued. “Truthfully those that are ignorant of the situation are the young ones. There are many from first years to third years that have led pretty sheltered lives and the Headmaster does not want them to know about the true effects of war. A sprinkle of innocence should remain to them because they can help others heal afterwards, just by remaining innocent of certain things.”

The older students thought about that and felt that there was some truth in that statement. A young child full of wonder and innocence in the world is something that would remind the veterans that the battle or the war coming was very much worth the fight.

“They are the ones that will be protected while others will be fighting. Logically these children are the ones that should not have come here in the first place,” Draco said. “Parents want to protect their children, but the ones here are obviously the ones that needed to be away from their parents and their parents’ influences. Usually they would have been sent to relatives outside of the country, but most likely they couldn’t be sent away, so instead they are sent to a scholastic institution that is considered the next best thing.”

“We know all that,” Pansy said.

Blaise asked, “What does that have to do with the fact that the Headmaster has a ‘price’ for granting us sanctuary?”

“Patience,” Neville said. For some odd reason his is tone of voice was calming to the others in the room. “He’s only giving the rest of us a little background.”

“Listen before judging,” Luna said calmly. “Everything will become clear very soon.”

“She’s right,” Draco smiled at her before continuing. “Look... I can understand your skepticism, but everything in the new curriculum, the drills and the emergency procedures point to the fact that everything this year is different from what happened in the past. It’s all done for the protection of the students, especially for those in fourth year and under.”

“I chose sanctuary here too,” Dudley said surprising the others. “I know that what few magics I do have allow me to see this building. Now some of you may see that as a weakness, however since I can also see the spell light, I can avoid attacks. I will be ducking and dodging with the rest of the young years, making sure that they all make it safety. There is a list of tasks that can be done by someone like me because I don’t rely on magics to get them done.”

“The list of tasks is not limited to just what you can do with or without magics, but also it is a set of procedures that needs to be done in order to protect and work within the castle while the battle is taking place,” Neville explained. “All of the new club rooms that have been built, modified, or reinforced were made with another purpose in mind. The students will be directed to these specific rooms during the battle and should the castle fall under siege or heavens forbid the enemy finds their
way into the school, these rooms will be hidden away and protected.”

“How?” Seamus asked.

“Once the students reach their assigned rooms, wards are going to be raised,” Draco said. “Within each of the rooms an adult or two will be in charge. Those of us who do not wish to join the fight will be assigned specific tasks within those rooms to assist the adults. The wards actually have some shifting magics in them that will rotate the rooms away from place of battle. It may be complicated, but it will be very effective for hiding the students.”

Neville continued with the explanation, “The tasks can vary from comforting the young ones, to distracting them by telling stories or giving them something to do in order that they feel like they are contributing to the war, like making healing salves, various emergency potions, preparing bedding and bandages for the hospitals. The older students could be placed in charge of communication with the other rooms so that no one is left in the dark or they could be the first person contact with the set of house-elves that will be assigned to each room.”

“How wouldn’t the adults be the only ones in charge?” Vince asked.

“What if the adults were wounded?” Dudley returned. “What if the adults didn’t even make it to the classroom before the wards go up?”

The students in the common room were thoughtful about that and realized that they had choices, more so now than they ever did. They could choose to be safe within the walls of the school and not face their families in battle, but still contribute to the efforts that would protect all of them. They could fight in another way and still remain neutral or work for the school and the students. They could help in a positive light rather than hide away in fear.

These were the kinds of thoughts that they needed to do on their own and many realized that if they had any more questions they could go to any teacher or assistant for it. Most were likely going to go to their Head of House because they were closer to the conflict and would be the ones that they would likely request Sanctuary from.

“Changing the subject,” Dudley said to the students in the room, as he was sure that they needed a change in topic now. “I’m planning a Radio club. It’s a club that will run a radio station from this school. It will be a station that will have regular air-time on the Wizarding Wireless. It will have its own emergency bandwidth that will be broadcast specifically into the homes of the Muggleborn students for their parents. I’m hoping to pre-record some programs to play during the evening for us and have some music piped in the halls or perhaps certain rooms during the day for fun.”

Neville looked at Dudley and said, “Really! Does this have anything to do with Harry?”

“Yeah,” Dudley said. “I figure the press isn’t best source of news that I’ve ever seen and from what I’ve heard on the Wireless, it’s not even up to the standard that I’m used to. I mean I haven’t heard any news or sports on the thing. All I’ve heard are a few bands and music of all kinds. The programming is geared to housewives, with advice on the best house-hold cleaning spells. Is that really the only thing that plays on your wireless?”

“Yes,” Luna said. “It’s like the magazines. They have their specialty ones for anyone that subscribes, plus a very few others that are general. Anyone can begin one; even start their own newspaper, if they didn’t care about making money. However many are in business for profit and most people don’t want to go against the Ministry.”

Dudley shook his head in wonder and a few of the students noticed that he was frowning.
“Are there differences?” A curious fourth year prefect asked. Her question caused Neville to inch closer towards Dudley.

“I think that I’ll discuss this with Prof. Morgan first,” Dudley said. “I’ll ask if I can set up two rooms with the different radio stations to show you guys the difference. I’ll have to discuss something about allowing the muggle airwaves in here or something with the Headmaster before importing the programs. It’s always better to hear them live.”

“Do you actually think that the Headmaster would allow something like that?” Millicent Bulstrode asked.

“Why not?” Dudley asked. “I want to set up something that will send school news to the parents immediately. It will also let the Wizarding World know about the school. It would show those Ministry idiots that we aren’t about to bury our heads in the sand and that we are doing everything that we are capable of to change the way we see and do things. The best thing about running a station from this school is that they can’t stop what we choose to put on the air. Nor can they monitor us or deny us the right to choose whatever programming we want and they can’t stop anyone from tuning in to our station, especially if it’s by subscription.”

He was on a roll and with the bit of research that the family has done so far into this. They discovered a blank section in the magical laws. There is nothing here like the communication commissions of other countries. “I’ve done research, so far, into the access of news, articles that are permitted to be published and any active censorship by the government bodies does not exist at the moment for any new radio stations. You can be sure that once they do the Daily Prophet will no longer be considered a reliable news source. Any person with a valid business proposition can apply at the Ministry section in charge of communication, but they have not denied a request in twenty odd years.”

Dudley looked at several of the stunned expressions that were turned in his direction. “That includes creating your own newspaper, magazine or radio station from wherever you are. Thankfully the Death Eaters and Voldemort never thought about that or they would have been spreading everything they could to prove their own point of view.”

“It’s true,” Draco said. “If anyone wants to create a school magazine or newspaper for family and friends we can. We can also have them published for distribution to a subscribed audience, if we want to and we can sell them regionally too. I would recommend distribution by subscription first as the Ministry cannot object to the enterprising youths of Hogwarts from becoming active parts of the Magical Community. The Ministry cannot regulate anything from this school. No anymore.”

“If the students decide to implement a magazine or several magazines and newspapers,” Luna said. “It would be important to remember that once a paper is up and running the Ministry can’t stop it by putting up new laws to prevent them. My father had the Quibbler up and running before a new ban was placed on publishing certain things. That’s why the Ministry and Prophet always put it down as not being a reliable news source. He’s had threats against his business before, but he surprised them all by having a steady readership, even if they were only family members at times. A readership is still a readership.”

She always wanted to begin her own newspaper and as much as Luna loved her father she wanted to follow her own path. Besides it would give her some experience to initiate a paper from the school and actually have the truth be printed.

“That means that there is nothing from stopping the students from organizing and creating their own magazine or newspaper,” Pansy said. “I guess we just need to brush up on our school law and by-laws to know what’s allowed.”
“I’ve already ordered several different types of muggle publications for the students to see the variety that they have,” Dudley said. “They’re for the Muggle Culture Studies. I’ll request more from the Headmaster, so that all the students can see them. Maybe I’ll get him to order some of the monthlies. That way any student wishing to start a club for the purpose of publishing or creating a magazine or newspaper may gain an idea of the available types and formats. That way no one will be confined to the formats that you know and maybe you can create new ones.”

The Slytherins could only imagine what would happen if a student created a magazine without being limited by content, censorship, or even by their age. They were all aware that there was such a thing as bad press. Every one was also aware that there was a serious lack of credible reading sources when it came to having truthful news about their world.

Sure there were publications that catered to a specific audience, but Potions Monthly was usually for Potions Masters due to the fact that the language used or method used in writing was all higher language and concept.

There was nothing on the market for young readers except for Witch’s Weekly and Quidditch Monthly. There were other publications that were just as specific for Charms and Transfigurations, but nothing that was sold to normal or regular people who did not have a Master in those fields.

“When those publications come in I’d like to see them,” Luna said getting up and heading towards the doors. “I’d also like to have a half-hour slot on your radio station in the evenings. I’m going to look into getting a teacher or assistant to over-see the newspaper club and once I have someone I’ll be posting a request for various positions.” It was logical that she would know what was required to set up something for printing.

“Anyone who plans to create a magazine,” she said looking at Pansy and Blaise. “They would be welcomed to share a club room with me or get my advice on what is needed to begin printing. Plus any news articles can be shared in order to fill up the pages. I do suggest that no one advertises things for now. See you later.” She said leaving the room with some of the younger years trailing after her.

Pansy’s eyebrows rose in surprise that such a statement was directed at her. She always thought that she would be married off and become just a trophy wife. Suddenly it hit her that she had basically ‘run away’ and was now free to do whatever she pleases. Some of the others looked at her and knew that such an idea for her was no surprise because they knew her.

“Why is everyone looking at me like that?” She asked.

“Pans,” Draco started. “Think about it. You’re not obligated to your family. None of you are, if you chose to come here. Begin a paper and gain the experience you need here. Then go out into the world, find a sponsor or two and open up a magazine or newspaper of your own.”

“It’s perfect,” Anna said excited for the older girl. She was the youngest one at the meeting. Vince didn’t like her to wander around the school, especially if she was unaccompanied by at least two older years or four of the younger ones.

She didn’t mind the protection even if it chafed a little, but she didn’t feel that she was as sheltered as some of the others in regards to the ‘innocence’ thing. She knew more then many first years and her current year mates at the Hogsmeade School. She was happy to witness this and gladly stayed to listen to the older years.

“I remember when you were at our house sometime and you re-wrote Prophet a lot of their articles or the Witch Weekly essays for fun. Now is your chance for you to investigate or be an editor of your own paper or magazine at school.” Anna told the older girl.
“Hold on to your broom, Anna,” Pansy said. “If you’ll excuse me, I believe that I need to think about a few things first before making a decision.”

“Prof. Dursley?” Vince asked and when the muggle-squib turned his attention to the husky Slytherin, he continued with his request. “When you go to the Headmaster for magazines, could you ask about any art books or comic ones?”

Dudley nodded, “You got it and don’t worry, he won’t say no.”

“Thanks. I’m going to my room too, to think about a few of things that were brought up here. See you guys later,” he said to the others.

It didn’t take much for club ideas to begin flowing and several discussions started up with various magazine ideas, but then some of the others wanted to discuss things like a flying club, a band club, music, chess, battle, art, drawing, herb growing, cooking, home-making with stuff like knitting and home repair, etc...

Neville and Dudley were about to leave the Slytherin common rooms when Dobby popped in with a note for Draco. They decided to wait and see if they were needed.

Dearest Love,

Please go to Uncle Sev’s rooms with this note and let Nev & Duds advise the other Heads of House that Sev will be away for the remainder of the day and possibly this evening too.

Bring Jinseng with you.

We need to discuss a few things with the Twins.

Your loving mate,

Harry

PS: Anything Duds & Nev need from town, have them make a list and bring it with you. We may be out until tomorrow morning, maybe early afternoon latest.

PPS: Letter...Portkey...15:23...Sev’s rooms. See you soon.

PPPS: I Love You

Draco smiled a goofy smile at the note and then noted the time. He had about an hour to get ready. “Let’s go guys, I have to be ready in an hour and you two need to relate some information to some of the Heads of House.”

TBC...
Chapter Twenty-Four

Saturday September 16 – Later

In the Draekon’s quarters there was a little bit of hustle as Draco told them to get a list ready for Harry. “We might be staying overnight in London, so if you think of a few things that we should pick up before we get back make a list for us,” the blond Slytherin said.

Neville sat at one of the desks in the room to write out a list of possible things to get. Dudley set about wording his request for the muggle magazines and various samples of the different kinds. He specifically asked for some grocery rags.

They’re the kind that you pick up at the counters in the Market Place because you have nothing else to read and you know that they are garbage anyway. Perfect for kindling starter for those homes that have fire places.

Neville requested several muggle seeds and bulbs that were available now, as it was nearing the season for autumn planting to gain spring flowers, like tulips and daffodils. He wanted the boys to pick up a large variety and some of the Wizarding kind too, if they could manage to see that the different bulbs do not mix.

Draco knew that they may be meeting others at the Weasley twins’ home, so he set about preparing himself to look impeccable. It was only an impulse that had him requesting a couple of bottles from Dudley’s alcohol stash.

One was the golden liquor with sparkles that had been named “Snow Drops”, as that had been what the white sparkles looked like. Golden liquid that had crystal drops that looked frosted with snowflake looking speckles on the surface. The other was the potent orange liquor that had gained the name of “Orange Silence”, due to the quiet way it mixed with other varieties of cocktails.

Both recipes had gone through thorough testing and marketability. The testing included mixing for specific species. A list was made available with the products in order for clients to know the best mix possible for a specific species and what was to be avoided.

Dudley had managed to produce several successful batches and the goblins of the Hook Clan
arranged to take care of the production and distribution, for a marginal fee of course. However, Harry had assisted his cousin with the filing of the recipes, patents, and logo and copyrights all prior to the goblins’ assistance for distribution being offered.

They were impressed with the swiftness that Harry had acted on his cousin’s behalf. Not to mention that once everything was filed for one hundred and fifty years, they were locked in. Anyone wanting to produce Dudley’s products needed to pay a fee for the use of the recipe and give him any new mix possibilities discovered with future use in order for him to update the list of mixing options with his liquors.

It was a win-win situation for all because the goblins knew business. They calculated the cost of production versus the availability of the items needed to produce marketable quantities and found that the products could be sold on the high end of the market. This was as long as the dim-witted wizards with money to melt in their coffers never found out who invented the liquors.

Dudley didn’t care if his ‘muggle’ origins were ever found out. The company logo took care of that. The logo was a pair of dragon wings, bat-like looking things, wrapped around a free-floating marble drop. All about one inch tall and the drop was an actual stone easily removed for fun. There was no magic in it, but it was a clever marketing ploy. The marble drops came in various colours and collector styles.

Harry helped Dudley set up an account accessible through credit cards in the muggle world and a special key that he would never be able to lose. A percentage of all sales go to him and another percentage to the goblins running the business on his behalf. The rest is honest company profit, which had the goblins grinning all the way to the bank.

Dudley had kept a large batch of each prior to allowing the goblins to take over the production and sale. He wanted to be able to offer them as gifts whenever the time arose. It was also helping him to test the effects of the years, if he managed to keep some around for five, ten, fifteen and twenty-five years, letting them age naturally.

Remus expressed an interest in exchanging ideas for possible mixes to produce variety. They were currently meeting for about half an hour every week to brainstorm new ideas. Dudley suspected that the differences in their magics may alter a few of the results. They were testing that too.

As it was, the family had fun taste-testing the various results that they had been able to produce under different conditions. Severus was the reluctant producer of hangover potions, but was secretly happy that Harry had shared a better tasting more efficient potion recipe with him.

Dudley went down his trunk to pack a slim bottle with its special crate presentation. The special packages of mini-crates were for the two-foot long, inch and a half wide, bottles of “Snow Drops”. The “Orange Silence” was packaged in droopy looking squat bottles, like a raindrop sitting on its ass with a hanging neck to pour from. Draco thought they were cute.

“Thanks Duds,” Draco said accepting the crate and bottle from him. Jinseng was slung around his neck for the walk down to Severus’ quarters; his tail anchored him by wrapping around Draco’s upper arm for balance.

Dudley and Neville were left behind with specific tasks, but they also knew that they would eventually find out what was going on. Neville didn’t want to return to his room just yet. He felt that he needed to apologize for the way he’s been acting.
“Dudley,” he started. Dudley stood up from where he had been sitting across the room and moved to sit next to the curly haired Gryffindor. His blue eyes gazed into the sincere brown ones.

“Yes,” he said in low tone that caused Neville to shiver almost imperceptibly.

“I’m sorry,” Neville said. He held up his hand to stop Duds from questioning or saying anything. “I’m sorry that I’ve been kind of a bear for the last couple of days. You see... I’m not used to anyone noticing me or paying any kind of attention to me in such a familiar fashion. I’m afraid that it will go away for some reason or another. I guess it’s because it feels like I could lose you before I could even claim... um... never mind.”

Dudley raised an eyebrow at that, but then again he had been doing a bit of research into the various possible outcomes of entering a relationship with someone who had magic when he obviously does not. ‘Nev almost said the word claim. I’m sure of that,’ he thought and remembered the conversation that he had this summer with Draco and magics that get involved during sex. ‘That throws in another factor that I’ll have to look into. What’s the possibility that I will be affected by his magics if we do get involved?’

However, he just watched the gentle blush spread over those cute, round cheeks. He watched, near breathless, as the pink tip of Neville’s tongue moistened the center of the upper and lower lips at the same time.

Neville watched the blue eyes darken as they concentrated on his mouth. It was then that he knew he wanted to be kissed by the person sitting in front of him.

Dudley looked in the honest dark brown eyes and leaned forward slightly. Neville matched him by leaning forward too. Duds heard the intake of breath. It was the slow motion that lent to the sweetness of the situation. He was still looking into those dark eyes, when he tilted his head a fraction.

Neville’s breathing quickened waiting to see what would happen. He froze still when he felt the tip of a tongue brush against his lips to take a taste just before soft pressure was felt. Then there was nipping at his upper and lower lip, before he felt a more solid press of lips against his.

It was a small test. Dudley knew that Neville was interested in him, but he had to be sure that should he in turn choose to be in a relationship, physical or otherwise, with the Gryffindor that his reactions wouldn’t be negative.

The kiss was nice. It was very, very nice. He leaned closer and continued to nip and taste. ‘I guess we’ll be just fine,’ Dudley thought. ‘A little more research and perhaps a bit more interacting with one another and we might just develop something.’

It was then that he felt a familiar tingle on his hands and arms. Neville took hold of Dudley’s hands that had found their way, somehow, to cupping his face with thumbs stroking his cheeks and fingers digging into his hair. His own fingertips were tingling from the magics flowing and pooling in the ends. He needed to touch skin and his fingers found the tanned and toned arms.

Dudley moved away slowly, first. He observed the slightly swollen, wet lips and the change in the depth of colour in the earthy eyes. He smiled softly at the little rapid breaths of excitement and he was more than sure that he mirrored this breathlessness too.

He spoke first, “I think that we need to talk things out before causing more confusion. I also think that you may need to look into your family history for stories or matches with similar... needs?”
Neville knew what he meant, but it also meant that he would need to discuss this with his Grandmother.

“You need to know if your magics are what are pushing you to claim,” Dudley said with frankness and with non-judging sincerity. “I need to see some stats or outcomes of relationships between people with dissimilar levels of magic. I have only a faint hum of magic in me and I don’t want to lose that. I can also feel some magics around me, like when you touch my skin.”

Neville’s eyes widened to the realization that Dudley was right. A squib’s limited magics may not be strong enough to prevent Neville from taking completely over and he truly didn’t want that. They needed to know more before going any further.

“I’ll prepare a letter to my Grandmother. She’ll have the answers we need,” Neville said. “I’m not looking forward to that discussion with her, though.”

“In the meantime... Would you like to watch a couple of movies with me tonight?” Dudley asked. Neville smiled at him and nodded.

“Popcorn too?” He asked hopefully, having recently developed a taste for it.

Dudley chuckled and called a house-elf to provide them with the things that they needed as they headed for Draco’s trunk. Draco had given him and Harry cart blanch to use the entertainment systems.

------------------------------

Draco was standing outside of his Godfather’s rooms, waiting to let in. (...I wonder what is going on with Harry...) he said to his familiar. Before Jinseng could answer him, Remus had opened the door and was motioning for them to step through.

“Hello Professor Lupin,” he said in greeting. “Uncle Sev,” he said walking up to his Godfather, giving him a quick hug, without displacing his cargo.

“Dragon,” Severus said.

“Draco,” said Remus, nodded a greeting in return. “Do you have an idea about what is going on? I only received a note telling me to come here before 15:20.”

“Mine only told me to expect company at that time,” Severus said. He was a little miffed at the brief note that he had received from his apprentice.

“Mine will turn into a Portkey,” Draco said holding it out for the other two lay a finger on it. “It should activate about...”

They were whisked away and soon found themselves in one of the sitting rooms of Grimmauld Place. “...now,” Draco finished.

He looked around at the others who were in the room. He was curious to note that there were a couple of goblins there that he recognized from the time that they delivered the papers to his mate from Hogwarts.

There were also a couple of dwarves that he recognized from the description Harry provided of them. One was bearded with multiple braids and beads throughout his facial hair. There was even some in the hair on his hair and at the sides of his ears.
The other was an elderly looking female without a beard. She was past certain stages in her life therefore the need to maintain facial hair was no longer a capable function of her body. She too had numerous braids and beads in her long hair.

Severus looked around and raised his eyebrows at the company in the room, just like he took note of the location of this strange meeting. Even Remus was surprised at where they were, but was more intrigued by the company in the room.

“Everyone please have a seat,” Harry said. He had spoken to the twins about using Grimmauld Place for this gathering because it was neutral territory. That and the twins wanted to be present for this conversation.

“I brought something to drink,” Draco said, holding out the gift crate and droopy bottle to one of the house-elves in front of him.

“That was very thoughtful love,” Harry said. “But we can’t have any out of respect for the Treaty that the Dwarves and Goblins have, perhaps another time?”

“Of course Harry,” George said, motioning for Muffin to take charge of it and hide it well.

She knew she was the most responsible out of all of them and knew that the offering was very special. She did have other “good” stuff hidden in the house for them to find. That was because she knew that half the fun that the boys had was in trying to find it, but the stuff that she didn’t want found, never was.

The twins loved that about her and she accommodated their childishness up to a certain point. The bonds they had allowed them leeway for many things, but if she really didn’t want to do something they never pressured her.

The twins were even allowing them to go to the Gathering this year, as Harry was allowing the majority of the school elves to go. He had Dobby explain the situation and the twins were all for corrupting young house-elves, but they knew that should Muffin come back in the family way they would follow their friend and allow the young female house-elf time to teach her offspring as she saw fit.

Draco, therefore, handed her the gift crate and funny bottle to put away. “Harry,” he began. “What’s going on?” He asked taking a seat next to his mate.

Just then, the other twin arrived guiding their father into the room. “This way Da,” he said.

“Really Fred! I still don’t understand why I must keep this from your Mum,” Mr. Weasley said. He took a good look around the room and the realized that maybe he would keep this meeting to himself for the time being. He knew that he couldn’t keep something like this from his wife for too long.

“Good heavens,” he said in his own standard greeting. “Harry, how have you been? Severus...Remus... I thought that you two weren’t able leave the school?”

“Hello Mr. Weasley,” Harry said.

“We can leave under certain conditions...Hello Arthur,” Remus explained and greeted. Severus just nodded his own greeting and so did Draco, even though he wasn’t acknowledged.

“There’s a very specific reason why I asked you all to come here,” Harry said getting right to the point. He addressed the dwarves and the goblins in particular, but directed the information to everyone that he had invited.
Severus and Remus were there in an advisory capacity, but Harry was sure that they would eventually figure out some things. ‘Kind of like where I’ve truly been this summer,’ he thought.

Harry then introduced everyone in the room before continuing on. It was when everyone was being served tea that he laid enchantments to protect everyone’s mind and to prevent the information from ever leaving this room. He didn’t want the secrets to get out, so explained what he was doing and why.

“Now that we’re all settled and protected,” Severus muttered. “Would you be so kind as to tell us why we were pulled away from the school and our work?”

Harry grinned, knowing that his master was snarking for the fun of it because the heavens only knew that Severus didn’t care about marking the student’s poor attempts for essays. Still he also had a feeling that Severus enjoyed it at the same time because the only students that he had were the older years. They could at least understand some of what he was trying to get across to them in the scathing remarks that he left all over their essays.

Harry just nodded and then faced Griphook. “This summer you tracked me down because the stones of Gringotts spoke about me and of changes coming at Hogwarts.”

A startled sound came from the dwarves and the elder, Acier Silversmith said, “Why would the stones talk about you, Boyo?”

Harry sighed and then said, “Hogwarts... The school that I go to... woke up.” Predictably the Weasleys were surprised, as Ron or Ginny had not told them any of this in their letters home. There were protections in the school that prevented the knowledge from traveling outside the school walls. “Please don’t get upset that your children never told you, Mr. Weasley. They can’t, due to the protective magics in and around the school.”

“Really... Well, how about that!” He exclaimed. “Does Albus or Cornelius know about this?”

“Albus Dumbledore was fired from his position of Headmaster,” the Potions Master explained somewhat smugly, enjoying the downfall of that manipulative old coot. “The school, once awake, can select the new Headmaster according to the rules laid down by the Founders of the school and the Founder’s Law.”

“Founder’s Law?” Fred asked.

“What’s that?” Asked the other twin.

Severus and Remus explained the basics of the Founder’s Law. Draco produced his school journal to show the changes that were taking place in the curriculum of the school. Mr. Weasley was aware that there were some changes, due to the new uniforms that he had to purchase, but was not aware at how far the changes were.

“Good Heavens,” he said. “That means that there’s a new Headmaster at the school. Why wasn’t there a notice sent out to the parents or the Ministry? We should have been notified. Such changes should never take place without a notice sent out or else there will be cause for concern.”

“Mr. Weasley,” Draco began. “Under the Founder’s Law there is no such requirement. The Ministry is no longer permitted to influence the teachings at the school. Before you ask, neither can the Governors Board for Education. They are not allowed to influence the school either. So they don’t know about the changes yet because they have no reason to know. Not at this time anyway.”

Mr. Weasley was stunned. He was pleased that the Ministry could no longer influence the school,
but he was still stunned. He had been attending meetings with the Order with Albus still heading it and the old man never once said a word. “But... but Albus...”

“He doesn’t know who the new Headmaster is,” Remus told him.

“He could have said that he was no longer the Headmaster, but he wouldn’t have been able to tell you why,” Harry explained. “I suspect he didn’t want to lose his creditability in the Order.”

“But Boyo, what does this ‘ave ta do with ye and the stones of our Halls speakin’,” Gemini said.

Griphook took up the explanation, “We were the first ones to be notified when Hogwarts woke up. The Bank has a special department that was specifically set up to monitor the education given at Hogwarts and several other schools around the world. Before Hogwarts went to sleep, we were instructed to have several things ready and prepared for when she woke. It was the school’s choice to fire the ex-Headmaster Dumbledore and hire a new one.

He was no longer working for the students and the school, but for his own agenda. The Founder’s Law was safety measure built into the school. Our department was created to specifically aid any new Headmaster, if a new one was needful. Though I don’t know why the stones fell silent when they did?”

“What did the stones in your Halls say?” Harry asked the dwarves. “Was it really about me or about the conflict that we are currently in the middle of, due to Voldemort?”

“The stones whispered tha’ changes were happening ta the West on a field of green in the ‘ighlands,” Acier said.

“They also whispered that the Great Beast was still alive, awake yet sleeping,” Gemini said.

Harry’s unseeing eyes widened at that and asked, “You are seeking the Beast?”

“Yes,” said Gemini.

“No,” Acier said at the same time.

The twins pursed their lips together, trying not to laugh. Severus and the goblins let out similar snorts of hidden amusement. Remus grinned at that and Draco frowned as his familiar was speaking to him about something else. Harry just looked thoughtful and hissed to Dauphin to pay attention to their dwarven guests.

Draco then asked, “Why are you looking for the Beast?”

“A moment, please.” Acier said, and then turned to speak to Gemini in their own language. It was a strange tongue that incorporated hand gestures, grunts, coughs and various other throat noises.

(...Merge...) Harry hissed to his familiar. She stuck out her tongues tasting the air and both merged their minds so that Harry could use her eyes to view the conversation. She listened with his ears in order to be able to understand and relate this information to Draco and Jinseng.

(...They’re being awfully rude...) Jinseng said. (...Why do they need to seek out my sire?...)

(...What do you expect?...) Dauphin hissed back, turning one head back to the little dragon. (...They are an introverted society and they rarely ever leave their mountain home...)

(...Quiet, the both of you...) Draco hissed. One of Dauphin’s heads turned to look at him and winked
as Harry took one of his hands and squeezed it gently.

There was a quiet conversation between the Professors, one of the goblins and the Weasleys. The other goblin, Negik, was paying more attention to the conversation that the dwarves were having and to Harry’s intense concentration on it.

Negik could understand part of the conversation, as their language had evolved somewhat from the same roots, the verbal part of it anyway. Time does tend to change the meanings and distort the original way that words were used.

---------------------------------

(...Why don’t you tell him the reason for seeking the Great Beast...) Gemini asked his elder.

Acier responded with a grunt and a hand gesture that was similar to swearing. (...Don’t trust these strangers, do I? The boy has too many secrets and I never liked the fact that he was able to enter our secure Mountain home without disturbing the wards...)

(...That’s not his fault...) Gemini said trying to figure out why she was acting this way. (...I thought that you already knew this...) Acier waved it off, but Harry was suspicious because Acier was the one who had welcomed him to the Hall and was actually kind to him. He wasn’t under any illusion that he would be welcome when he popped into the place, but she was never hostile. In fact she had been quite curious regarding how and why he could apparate there.

(...That entrance that he popped in was one that was reserved for his kind...) Gemini said, knowing that this was not Acier because she knew about the magics behind that particular entrance.

(...I know that, but why was it still active. The last time it had been opened was over two hundred human years ago. We should have had an alarm on it...) Acier waved it off, in an attempt to throw off any suspicion to the imposter that he was aware that something was wrong. (...What does that have to do with you not telling him about the ‘Great Beast’. He might know about it and he might also be willing to tell us, if we’re honest with him...)

(...Whatever...) The younger of the two huffed, in an attempt to throw off any suspicion to the imposter that he was aware that something was wrong. (...What does that have to do with you not telling him about the ‘Great Beast’. He might know about it and he might also be willing to tell us, if we’re honest with him...)

(...No...) The elder one growled. (...This mission is to set up regular contact with certain sections or individuals in the Wizarding World. We are not ready to open the Hall doors to just let anybody through. We are also to find out everything that the Boyo knows...)

Both were now squared off against one another and to everyone in the room it looked they were preparing to come to blows. They were both glaring and growling loudly with displeasure. (...The King was specific...) Acier said. (...We can’t let anyone know that we are seeking the Great Beast’s treasure. If word got out that we’re looking for our ancestral lineage scrolls, there would be panic and uprisings among the families...)

(...I don’t agree with you...) Gemini argued, defending his position. (...He obviously traveled a great distance, since we found him in this part of the world. He could already know. So what if he does? This method is deceitful...)

(...If you refuse to listen to me, youngling, you can just git your ass back to the mountain...) She said. The old one’s task was simple or at least the imposter’s tasks were simple, find the records and destroy them. ‘That little bastard doesn’t know who he’s dealing with,’ the pretend Acier thought. ‘He might have been sent to set up a liaison between Draekon, wizard folk and our people, but I
have a very different purpose here.’

(...Why did you bring up the Great Beast in front of these strangers, who’re not family...) She asked. (...It wasn’t your place or mission to look for the scrolls...)

Gemini’s face flushed a bit, knowing that he shouldn’t have done so, but he had a feeling that Harry would know about the Beast. Harry already knew quite a bit about them by the time he popped into the secure entrance and didn’t seem quite as lost about their customs, as he should have been. (...I thought that he would be able to help us. It’s been too long since the scrolls were lost to the Great Beast that I was sure that he could tell us something about it...)

(...As it is, it looks like I’m going to have to make them forget the questions and perhaps even forget about our presence in their world...) She said, lifting her walking stick and making lazy patterns in air, as though just swinging it in absentmindedness. (...You may have to be sent home after this for the dishonour you’ve displayed here...) She was about to even make Gemini forget the conversation. ‘It’s obvious that I’m not her, by the actions I’m about to take,’ thought the imposter. ‘I need to cover my tracks before it’s too late.’

---------------------------------

Harry was concentrating on the strange conversation between the two dwarves, but when he heard about the memory charm he began hissing in Parseltongue, under his breath, to set up shields against such magics. ‘How dare that imposter try to harm my family by such underhanded methods?’ He thought watching Gemini through the eyes of his familiar. ‘He knows, but I don’t think that he has the right magics to protect himself.’

Harry was right. Gemini was beginning to worry about how he would get out of being hit with such a spell. He quickly glanced at the Draekons and saw the way that the three-headed snake was intently watching their conversation.

He had some suspicion that Harry was able to somehow see what was going on, but he didn’t let the Acier double know about it. ‘I hope that the Boyo can forgive me,’ he thought. He had grown fond of Harry when they had met in the Halls. ‘I don’t have the abilities to prevent the magics.’

Dauphin watched the older of the two and when she sensed the final action to activate the dwarven magics, she said (...Now...)

Harry released his spells just as a purplish orange beam of light was release from the elder’s walking stick. The beam hit the protective shields around everyone in the room, including Gemini. The dark haired Draekon was glad that he had followed through on what he had sensed from the younger dwarf.

The magic once having hit barriers dissipated somewhat. Harry sent out a sensor to analyze it and then to further eliminate it from Grimmauld Place. It wouldn’t do to have foreign magics floating about in the home of his friends and family. You never knew what such lingering magics could do.

Acier was surprised that there were protective shields in place. The imposter was then trussed up quickly and bound to silence, falling over and landing loudly on the ground with a thump. She was still able to see and hear everything.

(...Did you think that just because I invited you here that I actually trusted you, Acier Silversmith or whoever you really are?...) He said that to make the dwarves doubt him. He was actually ready to give them a huge benefit of
the doubt, but her actions were so dissimilar to what he found from Everest that he knew she was not who she claimed to be. Her reactions should have been similar to Gemini’s and she never hugged him. He was prepared to let that go, but definitely not after this.

(...I believe that you are not here to set up contact and open communications...) He said to the bound dwarf. (...I also believe that you have a very different agenda then the one you’ve told Gem here. You’ve brought dishonour into my family’s home and expect to have no consequence come from it...)

Dauphin had been translating the language into hisses the whole time. It took a huge effort on Draco’s part not to react to the words that he heard at the time that the two were conversing, but now he was free to tell everyone else what had happened and why.

“Bad form,” Fred muttered and George nodded his agreement.

“What should we do now?” Remus asked, trying to control his inner wolf from attacking those that threatened his mate and cub. It was ready to emerge without the help of the potion that Harry was working on and was ready to rip out the throats of anyone with intent to harm his cub, but especially anyone that intended harm against his unclaimed mate.

Mr. Weasley was again surprised by the information that he had received and part of the conversation he had with Griphook and the professors was about a solution to gain clarification about the stones of Gringotts. He wondered if there was other places that such things had been set up and they had be speculating possible locations.

It was then that he knew why he had been brought in for this meeting. The boys needed someone that they could trust to have a look around the Ministry for similar things. However now was not the time to think about it, everyone was going to have to wait and see what the outcome from the deception of the dwarves elder was going to be.

Griphook was all for letting the dwarves see their speaking stones and perhaps try to contact their Hall, but not until this attack issue had been settled. The goblin looked at the twins and asked, “May we use your floo? I think that we need some more re-enforcements.”

“It may look like we need more...” Fred began.

“...but it seems to me...” said the other.

“...that Harry has everything...”

“...under control,” they finished. Their nervousness bringing out their twin speak, however they did allow Negik to floo out of Grimmauld Place to seek out whomever he needed to see.

‘She would have never attempted to spell anyone in their family home because she believes that it’s rude to use spells without permission from them first. This truly is an imposter,’ thought Gemini. He’d had a niggling bit of doubt, but that dissipated quickly by the actions taken.

“She was the one that met me at the entrance that I popped into,” Harry said to the bound dwarf. “I get the distinct aura or feeling of bearded male around her right now, but I didn’t then.”

Gemini was shocked, “Tha’s nae possible! She be past the second and third cycles of her life.”

“Is there any magics that your race may have to discover who that person really is? Do you have an idea about how the changes occurred?” Severus asked, curious to find out if the deceit was “Polyjuice” or another potion and whether or not they had counters to the changes.
“Nah, it’s just the ‘juice tha’s been around for a long time,” Gemini said. “Ye’ know the one you add personal clippings ta it.” Severus and Harry nodded, knowing about the potion that Gemini was talking about. “I don’t know of anything tha’ counters tha’ except time. Acier ‘ould be the one ye need ta ask... The real Acier, I mean.”

“What happens now?” Mr. Weasley asked.

“We decided who fights the imposter,” Harry said. “We need to know where the real Acier is and how to save her. The only way to get anything out of him is to fight him.”

“Acier is still alive?” Fred asked wondering how Harry would know. Well, that was until his twin spoke.

“You mean this is like another Moody Mix & Switch, similar to what happened in your fourth year,” George said.

“Damn!” Fred exclaimed. “There are twisted people just about everywhere.”

“Boys!” Mr. Weasley said, as an indication to watch their language, as he watched his sons interpret the conversation. He was proud at how quickly they grasped the situation. “What do you mean fight?” He asked.

Gemini replied. "It’d be in our culture and our laws. Whenever a family member is wronged there is a battle, sometimes ta the death, ta voice and defend our grievances. I canna’ fight this time, even though it be my right as I am a member of the Silversmith family through her. However this fight belongs ta the one who acted against this family and the one who protected it.”

“What was the spell that the imposter wanted to hit us with?” Griphook asked.

“A memory manipulation one,” Gemini said sadly. “It be aimed at me too.”

“Harry?” Remus began.

“Yes,” he replied. “I protected all of us with a shielding spell.”

Just then the Floo came to life as Negik, who was Griphook’s companion and bodyguard, came back with the General and the Head of Gringotts’ Bank. “A month has not even gone by since we last met, Misters Potter,” Mr. Gobknok said to Harry and Draco.

“My apologies,” Harry said. “I am not aware of the reasons to send for you sir.”

“Polite as ever,” Mr. Gobknok said.

“It was my idea,” Griphook said. “I just thought that as Head of the Bank, you would approve the examination of the Stones and see if we could use them to contact Gemini’s Family Halls. I did not believe that you’d have come to visit. We also could use some more witnesses.”

The Head of Gringotts just waved off Griphook’s surprise. He replied in Gobbledygook. (...Miss this chance to meet true dwarves from the Non-Drinking Treaty? Are you mad?...)

His reply caused the other goblins and Harry to chuckle. Draco looked stunned that he could understand them. He sat there blinking his surprise for a few seconds before just sort of shrugging it off. ‘I’ll deal with that another day,’ he thought.

“How do we deal with this one?” George asked, watching the dwarf struggle within the bonds.
Harry hissed and then the bonds were re-secured tightly. They had been loosening bit by bit, as the imposter worked the knots, but Dauphin had been keeping several eyes on him waiting for the right time to inform her master to re-tighten the ropes.

“The ritual room should be the best place to resolve this issue without having to leave the house,” Harry said in the direction of the twins.

“Does it contain magics?” Gemini asked, “Because if it does, then it wouldn’ work.”

“Ritual rooms of any Wizarding home are kept sterile of all magics,” Severus explained. “This is to ensure that any ritual performed in the room can only invoked by the magics that exist within one person. Some of the Dark families liked to keep the blood and other bodily fluids imbedded in the rooms to increase the potency of certain rituals. Most family rituals work best when the blood came from family members, no matter how distant.”

“Spice?” Fred called to their house-elves. “Muffin?”

“We cleansed the room Master Freddie,” Muffin informed them.

“We’s fixed it up new,” Spice said. “We’s knowing that House is belonging to yous and Master Georgie now, so we’s magicked it clean and brand new.”

Muffin was nodding at that and then said, “All bad stuff is gone now. We cleans’d it real good for good Masters.” Spice nodded in an opposite timing from Muffling, like a teeter-totter.

It was kinda cute and the twins knew that if Tuck was with them the nodding of the three of them would have been nodding like the sports fan wave that they had seen at a muggle movie once. They glanced briefly at one another and smiled, they were both on the same wavelength, thanking all the heavens that Harry had been able to find the right house-elves for them.

“I guess that means that the ritual room can be used,” George said.

“Who’s going to do the fighting and how are you going to find out where the real Acier is being held?” Fred asked, curious about what can be done to fine the missing elder.

“I’ll be findin’ er,” Gemini said. “Like I tol’ ye before, I canna fight for ye. I believe that the one that raised the shields has ta be the one ta fight.”

“No,” Draco said softly.

“Drake,” Harry began.

“No... Harry, no,” the Slytherin kept saying, shaking his head in slow motion. Harry went over to where his mate was sitting. He cupped his mate’s face, tilted it to the point where he could capture the protesting mouth with his lips.

He nibbled on the soft lips and heard the whimpering noise that always urged him to explore the body of his mate. He worked his way to the claim marks and rested his lips against them. His arms moved to surround Draco and his hands were giving firm strokes up and down the length of his back. It was calming the panic that the blonde had suddenly been feeling.

“I want to be in the room with you,” Draco whispered in the closest ear.

The others watched the exchange between the Draekon mates, until Remus and Mr. Weasley suggested that the others start heading towards the ritual room. The goblins were questioning Gemini
about the stones that spoke, while the dwarf dragged the bound body of the imposter behind him.

“Dragon,” Harry said. “I have to fight the imposter. Besides you know that he can’t kill me.”

“Prat,” Draco said. “I know that and that’s not what I’m upset about.” He sighed and then said, “I don’t want to see you get hurt.”

Harry grinned when he heard that declaration. “I’m glad that you feel that way, but I can’t avoid this. It’s a matter of family honour.” Draco just quirked an eyebrow and Harry’s little magical senor balls caught the gesture. He always sent lots of tiny ones like raindrops to his mate’s face, which allowed him to reply to the expressive facial gestures. “It’s true. Everyone that was in this room is considered family or nearly family to me, except maybe the dwarves and some of the goblins.”

Draco smiled at the fact that Harry considered his snarky Godfather as family. ‘I suppose that growing up in a family that didn’t consider you part of theirs could make a person cling to whoever accepted them,’ he thought. ‘Maybe that included the goblins, but ever since that Sunday where the Hook Clan swore allegiance...’ Draco noticed that there was in increase in the interaction between his mate and specific goblins like Griphook and some others of the Clan.

“Are we good?” Harry asked.

“Yes, but if you get hurt I’m tying you to the bed for the next week,” Draco said.

Harry hardened slightly and groaned at the thought. He wrapped his arms tight around the blonde’s torso, clinging and groping. He nuzzled and nipped the closest ear and said, “Would you do that even if I’m not hurt?”

Draco was surprised at the imagery that assaulted his mind, as his mate showed aroused interest for bedroom play. The Slytherin was aroused by it too. He moaned softly and pressed his own growing erection against his mate’s.

Reluctantly he pulled away. “We’ll have to wait and see,” he said playfully. “Now I think we had better get to the Ritual Room and find out who you’re going to be dealing with.”

Harry pulled him back against his body and kissed his mate senseless before they made their way to where the others were waiting.

The others knew that it might take some time for the two mates to discuss things through, in the meantime they were as waiting for the imposter’s true face to show Gemini as explained the ‘Matter of Family Honour’ to the humans and goblins with him.

Family honour always came first. It was in their laws to defend any slander, murder, attempts at murder, anything and everything that could damage family honour, even if the dueling or battles lead to death. It turns out that as a culture the dwarves lived pretty much all of their lives in traditional family units. They practiced much of what is considered ‘The Old Ways’ by the wizards and goblins.

The dwarven society consisted of family units and then extended kin in other mountains and followed by the king. These family units met in special social gatherings throughout the years and lived under various mountain ranges of the world. These were closed off from their surrounding neighbours.

They did come together for many reasons, but mostly it was to broker marriages or unions in order to produce offspring. Couples were tested for compatibility of offspring production. Because the couples weren’t allowed to move away from the ‘female’s’ family once a child had been produced, most unions resulted in an exchange of family members by way of apprenticeships. This kept the
families balanced.

These gatherings only took place once nearly every 50 years as that was considered a time for the first cycle of dwarven life to have been completed. Once a dwarf entered their second life cycle they were considered fertile until they fell into their third or forth, depending on the genetics involved.

Little is known about the life cycles of a dwarf, but as it was difficult to produce children. Their second life-cycle was dictated to them by their families and the families of the ‘female’ or carrier of the offspring. As a race, collectively, they had several stages to go through before they were considered “free” to live, as they wanted.

In the matter of “Family Honour” and duels, how the family was defended was just as important as winning or losing the duel. Even if the combatant dies; if he or she fought with everything that they had then they were honoured and the problem was considered over and resolved.

In the rare times that it wasn’t, the King then arbitrated things and that was usually only in a last resort type situation. The King was a title that had passed down many generations and the responsibilities had change over time. He or she was still allowed to make laws, but only after a hearing among the Heads of the Families had come to terms. It was kind of like a Senate and Democracy rather than Monarchy and Communism.

The King was still allowed to make the final decision and his or her magical signature sealed many deals, but the family of rulers was vast and these people had their fair share of wars and strife. That’s one of the reasons that they withdrew into their mountains. Another reason was that humans, especially human wizards were slowly taking over the world and some were not trustworthy seeking the annihilation of any other species.

They maintained their distance and it was on rare occasions that human wizards were permitted to trade with these mountain people, exchanging knowledge and products. However that has not happened for several hundred years.

The King was in place for terms of 100 to 150 years. Gemini being in his third stage of life was close to his forth. His partner had passed away in a mining accident several years prior. He was close to his forth stage anyway, which was about a cycle or two away from the grave so to speak, so the King granted his petition to leave Everest with Acier.

Now, though it looked like he might be on his own if he couldn’t find her. He watched as the Polyjuice wore off the imposter to see who it could be. All of the others were curious too, some were speculating that it was a Death Eater, but if the Wizarding world had not been aware of this species perhaps the Dark Lord didn’t know either.

Gemini had some measure of hope that Acier Silversmith was still alive. He knew that there were some families that lived and breathed under a different set of traditions, some of which were a match to the Dark Arts that some evil Wizards preferred.

The twins had led the way to the cleaned up Ritual Room and everyone had been please to find that there was an observation deck. Since blood and other fluids were used in older rituals, it wasn’t a huge leap of logic to assume that the Dark owners of the past enjoyed watching them take place.

There were comfortable chairs circling the viewing glass. The glass was re-enforced with magics to prevent shattering from the possible backlash of failed rituals.

The observation deck strongly resembled the type used in muggle medical schools and those other kinds of learning facilities. The ritual room was a sterile environment so that when you were in there,
for whatever reason, the only things allowed in were what you brought with you.

In this case, the imposter was there with nothing, but the clothes on his back. His pockets had been turned out and emptied of all possible weapons. The familiar face of Acier was slow to shift to reveal the culprit.

Severus had his suspicions that the ‘juice’ that Gemini was talking about was modified or different from the regular polyjuice. ‘I wonder, if I can get a copy of their recipe,’ he thought.

Remus had an idea that his mate-to-be was contemplating the recipe of the potion that the imposter may have taken. He smiled at him and at the thought of it. His expression changed after a bit because he was concerned for Harry.

His godson was about to fight an opponent without any idea or plan to defeat the imposter. He wasn’t even sure about Harry’s physical fighting skills because he never had the time to check out the “extra” lessons that the Gryffindor was taking.

Gemini watched the changing dwarf intensely. It looked like the potion was finally wearing off and it looked like Harry had been right. Underneath everything there was a beard emerging. The young dwarf was hoping that it wasn’t member of that family.

The darkness of the beard and the multiple braids and beading that emerged dashed his hopes. Every braid, bead, bone ornament and added hair bits told the morbid story of a Dark, murderous life. However Gemini still maintained his hope due to the fact that he couldn’t detect any recent addition that would mark the death of his maternal great grandmother.

The insane eyes of the bound one watched the Draekon come out of bulky school robes. He wasn’t pleased to find the there was hidden strength in the form he saw.

Harry paid no attention to the Twins’ catcalls and whistles as he was stripping. He needed to change some of his clothes in order to properly battle. When he removed his shirts he had exposed his upper torso, revealing toned and hardened muscles.

From one pocket of his robes he pulled out a dark tan leather vest with matching tan and faded dark green arm bracers that fit him from wrist to elbow. He did a spell to switch his current pants into a pair of supple faded black leathers with leg guards the fit from ankle to knee. On his feet he wore nothing and that was to prevent him from being hindered by weight.

Harry then hissed a spell that tied his hair up high in a tail on his head. It was split into nine even braids with various beads interspersing them. He knew that going into the room they weren’t allowed weapons for this, but there was nothing in the house magics that prevented them from adding protections on their person, if it looked ornamental.

Draco was surprised that Harry came prepared, but then nearly slapped himself upside the head. The new Headmaster’s whole purpose in the school was to prepare everyone for things like this unexpected duel. ‘I really shouldn’t have been surprised,’ he thought ruefully.

“Draco,” Harry called to him. “Could you please take Dauphin with you? I can’t take her with me for this.”

“Sure Luv,” he replied allowing the Runespoor to wrap around his left arm. “Why don’t you want her there?”

“I don’t want to worry about her and if I bring her in there she’ll be a target.” Harry explained giving his familiar a final pet and his mate a kiss. He then turned and walked into the room adjusting one of
his forearm bracers.

Gemini was in there already. He was questioning the imposter, “Where is she?” He demanded.

The imposter, once the ‘juice wore off, was discovered to be Shank Slagburn. He was well known among the dwarves as a murderer for hire. There were wanted posters of him everyone in the Under Mountains and local family communities. It wasn’t like there weren’t shady people or businesses anywhere else in the world, inside or outside of the mountains.

It was just that many dwarves from the Slagburn family were known to have dubious connections with the Dark and they had worse reputations. Many became murderers for hire when they couldn’t find employment as mercenaries for non-existent wars. They had a nasty reputation for doing more than necessary in their contracts.

Such was true among many of the races in the world, but in the dwarven families it was harder to change some things. The Slagburns were known as the best at what they do, as long as you don’t ask for details into the things that they do. You didn’t have to ask because it was written in their hair ornaments. These ornaments told the families who did what and when.

Speculations were often rampant about who would contract this family for dirty deeds, but it was one of several that maintained their nastiness. Just like the Blacks, Malfoys and Lestranges of the Wizarding world.

The hidden part of the dwarven world is resurfacing. Gemini had a good idea on where to start looking for Acier. He could even contract out to another member of the Slagburn family branch, but he was not wealthy enough to do that.

He looked on as Harry was preparing for the fight. ‘Looks like the Boyo has an idea of what he could be in for,’ Gemini thought. He hoped that the Draekon could defeat the barrel-chested dwarf that emerged from under the cover of the ‘juice.

The dwarven version of the Polyjuice Potion was slightly different due to the fact that it was specifically made for that race. It lasted marginally longer than the one for humans, but it did wear off over time.

Shank Slagburn was a fine example to his own family. He also knew that his time was running out. He was about to enter his fifth stage of life and no Slagburn has entered that stage since the 1300’s. ‘I’m not about to become the first one either,’ he thought. He sneered at the human youth. “I’ll not be pulling me punches Brat,” he growled at Harry.

Harry faced him and said, “I don’t expect you to.”

The Dark dwarf was letting his anger flow. It gathered in a reddish haze around him. Gemini noticed this and gave the only advice he could. “Keep moving and don’t get hit,” he said.

Shank and Harry made out their terms of agreement. Shank had to reluctantly admit that Harry knew how to negotiate. But once the terms were settled there was no turning back.

If Shank won, it was agreed that he could go free, but would release Acier for a fee. If Harry won, Acier goes free and Shank goes into custody of the goblins. However Shank said, “Boy! Free advice... I’ll not stop ‘til I die. Are you willing ta do the same?”

“I will do what is right.” Harry said, stepping into the Ritual Room. He headed to the far corner scanning with his multi-sensor balls, gathering the dimensions of the room and memorizing it with the speed he needed.
“Hmph,” the Slagburn dwarf grunted, walking in and following the dark-haired Draekon.

Gemini shut the door, locking and guarding it. Until the battle was over the door would remain locked and would only open when there was one survivor left alive.

-------------------------------

TBC...

On a side note – some people have mentioned several times that Dauphin's name meant prince in French. That was true at one point in time. Dauphin is currently the direct translation for the word Dolphin. I checked several French/English dictionaries for that information.

I did look up the word Dauphin in the oldest French Dictionary that I own and have found both definitions for the same word. For the purposes of this story, Dauphin means Dolphin.

--------

Larousse Canadien Complet: Third Edition 1956

*Dauphin: n, m. Genre de mammifères cétacés delphinidés, à bec très long, vivant par troupes dans toutes les mers et atteignant trois mètres de long (*). Constallation boréale.

*Dauphin: n, m. Autrefois fils aîné du roi de France. (V. Part. hist.)

*Dauphine: n, f. Femme du Dauphin
Chapter Twenty-Five

Time passed for all of the observers, but they could not see the final result.

It was with trepidation that Gemini finally opened the door when it had automatically unlocked behind him. When the fighters had entered the room, the door had locked behind them and there was no way that anyone would have been able to enter until the battle was finished. None of the others knew about this, though.

Everyone else in the observation deck was upset because their view had been obscured by a smoke screen pellet that was part of Slagburn’s hidden arsenal. They couldn’t tell if it was over or not.

Draco, however, was able to tell that Harry was still alive and so could Dauphin. The both knew that he was injured, but could not tell how badly. Every time Harry was hit they could sense it in some odd bonded way.

The smoke finally dissipated with the aid of the room’s inner ventilation system.

Harry was standing there with his wings out and drooping. One of them had been slashed. He didn’t try to retract it because it needed treatment in order to heal properly. He had cuts and slashes nearly everywhere, so did the dark dwarf. However, perhaps what attracted almost everyone’s attention was the long, seven-foot halberd imbedded in the chest of the very dead dwarf.

Harry’s head turned towards the door and he reached out to his mate who ran to him, wrapping his arms around him. He buried his face into the crook of Draco’s neck and let the shudders wrack his body. He couldn’t move from the shock of having actually taken a life.

He had been aware of the possible consequences of such a confrontation, but was Gryffindor enough to have hoped for another outcome. Shank Slagburn had given him no choice and no other course of action. That wily dwarf had charmed the door to the room, locking it and preventing interference. When Harry had succeeded in disarming and pinning him, he was hoping to give him a chance to live, but the short man never accepted it.

Stated that it was beneath him to fail and that if Harry didn’t put in more effort into the fight then he would end the Draekon’s life in such a way that his mate would forever be scarred by the image that Slagburn would present him. It was something about disemboweling, playing jump rope with the intestines and a game of ‘Stones’, a game similar to one mixed-up version of Marbles and Craps,
The Dark dwarf stated graphically horror after horror that Harry knew he had no choice.

Gemini pulled the halberd from the body with a squelching sound only to find that it was shrinking down to its original form and automatically cleaning itself. It was Harry’s walking stick that he had re-enforced with metals and magics, before his journey home from Australia. It was what he had hidden in his arm bracer.

Draco took it from the man and said, “Will Acier be freed now?”

“Aye,” Gemini said. “She be in this,” he lifted a mini-jug of liquor to show them. A few spell words and it expelled her in gaseous form, like a genie from a bottle. Another couple of dwarven spell words and she was whole again, free from her confinement.

Fred looked at the two Draekons and said, “Follow me. I’ll show you guys to a room where you can clean up. It’s where you’re going to be staying tonight. No arguments!” He stopped them from protesting. Draco nodded and then guided his mate out of the Ritual room.

Severus watched them walk away saying, “Once you’re cleaned up we’ll be in the kitchen with the afternoon tea. In the meantime I’ll look after our foreign guests.” He directed the words to Gemini who was now aiding his great-something…grandmother to a room that George was guiding them into.

“He’s a qualified healer,” Remus said to ease the frown that had appeared on Gemini’s face, as Severus began to scan the elderly female, who was now lying on one of the beds in the room.

The goblins had one of the house-elves guide them to the kitchens so that they were out of the way. They couldn’t leave just yet. The General and Negik were posted just outside of the Ritual room, as the clean-up and body preservation was taking place by another house-elf. This was to prevent any foreign magics from escaping any bindings that Shank may have had to keep them on him.

Gemini ensured that Acier was settled on one of the guest room beds and moved to the other side getting out of the way. He stayed close by hovering in concern, but knew that there was nothing that he could do at the moment. He was curious about how a wizard would go about treating one of the mountain-folk. He needn’t have worried.

Severus had been continuing his own healer education over the years and was an accomplished medi-wizard without the papers to acknowledge it. He didn’t feel that he needed the papers or the added rank. He had others that covered specific and general medical problems that he was permitted to treat, due to his potions knowledge.

It didn’t take much to scan Acier’s injuries and treat what he could to prevent immediate death. It helped to know healing magics, not only for the times that he spied on the Dark Lord, but knowing such improved his understanding for his beloved Potions.

He was used to treating some of the male staff members of Hogwarts, due to the fact the Madam Pomfrey was there mainly for the school and its students. Some of the males at Hogwarts were shy to approach the matronly medi-witch with their ailments and so in time some preferred to seek out the Potions Master.

The spells he was using at the moment were the same ones that he would use for the Head of Ravenclaw. The short Charms Professor was one of the ones who tended to be slightly embarrassed to see the matron of the Infirmary. His size was always something that he had to overcome and some times he needed special treatment for the ailments that came with his size.
It also made sense that Severus assisted with Acier’s current needs because he had some experience treating the confinement problems that may occur from such a situation. He was one of the ones that assisted in the treatment of Mad-Eye Moody, ex-auror extraordinaire, after his nasty year being stuck in that infamous trunk of his.

Luck was with them because it had been just chance that Shank had just caught Acier unawares. She had always wanted to travel away from the mountain and this was her last chance at adventure, so she may not have taken all the precautions that she should have.

It was also plain luck that her confinement didn’t last a long as Moody’s, but there was still going to be some trauma and other consequences to deal with. One major thing is that she may change her mind about remaining on this journey and for another it was not known how the other mountain folk would react when they heard the news.

In another part of the house Harry was stripped down with the help from his mate and then he was guided into the shower in order to rinse off the residue from the battle.

Draco called forth a couple of their personal elves and had them bring back some changes of clothes for both of them, plus their med-kits. He requested his mate’s potions carryall, knowing that it was always ready to gather ingredients and also ready to brew any simple potions that Harry may need quickly.

He then entered the shower stall with his mate in order to help clean him up and clean the wounds. He didn’t scrub too hard, but was still firm enough in his touch to remove potential infection. In fact he used Harry’s special foaming disinfectant that he had created for such occasions.

It took just a few drops from a dropper filling any wound and the solution would foam up with a medicinal-like disinfectant type of smell. Any germs in the wound would be removed and the foam could be rinsed off or wiped off with a clean piece of gauze.

Draco treated his mate, until he was sure that he had everything. He was extremely careful with the torn wing, but it needed to be done too. After that he wasn’t too sure about what Harry would do for it, but he knew that it couldn’t be retracted until it was treated and healed completely. However, it did stop bleeding.

Harry sighed under the careful attentions of his mate. Once his mate was finished, Harry began the process of washing his mate in a comforting and gentle manner. There was nothing sexual about it. It was also a way to relay his gratefulness to Draco and it was also to reassure him-self that he was still very much alive.

As soon as he was done, they stepped out of the shower and got dressed. Draco was in his normal everyday week-ender clothing, which consisted of casual cargo pants and long sleeve shirt. Harry in his normal jeans, but his shirt was an odd affair to accommodate his wings. It had sleeves attached to the front panel of the shirt. They had to be slipped on first before putting his head through the hole connecting two panels, of which the oddly shaped back panel had ties that wrapped around a couple times to tie off in the front or side however Harry chose. It was specifically made to fit comfortably under the joints of his wings, ensuring that his back was not exposed to the elements and therefore he could leave his wings out, instead of hidden.
The other members and guests of the house, minus Acier, were in the kitchen discussing the events of the day. Fred and George related what occurred in their store and Gemini confirmed it.

The professors were here for another reason, but Harry never clarified what it would be. They did silently suspect that they were about to become the liaisons or a contact point between Mr. Weasley, the Order of the Phoenix, Gringotts Bank and the school.

“Did you know that Harry had wings, brother?” Fred asked his twin.

“Nah,” George replied. He turned to the professors and asked, “Were you guys aware that Harry had developed wings?”

Remus paused a moment before answering, “I suspected that there might have been a possibility of it because he did say that he was a Draekon. The chance of wings was always there, but I don’t know of any books today that contain information on true Draekons and what they are supposed to look like.”

“What about the library that you inherited from Black?” Severus asked.

“I haven’t had a chance to go and visit the place yet, as you well know,” the werewolf replied with his eyes gleamed his nature at his mate. It was a way to remind the dark man who was technically in charge and it appeased the wolfish possessive tendencies, if the Potions Master seemed like he was submissive to the were.

Severus would never admit to such a tendency, but he was an active Death Eater once, before turning spy against them. A Death Eater is basically known to submit to the whims of the Dark Lord and he had been forcibly trained to obey those insane whims.

He had slowly regained most of his dignity, during the time that the Dark Lord was presumed dead. However, now because of Voldemort’s supposed resurrection, he found that falling back into the old submissive pattern to be conflicting and to his chagrin easy too.

Remus’ werewolf did not make things any easier either, but being a wolf animagus helped the Potion Master understand the needs of his potential mate. Severus was still able to maintain his new outlook despite the need to appear to submit to the werewolf.

‘It’s not like things will remain this way permanently. It’s only until I get rid of the Dark Mark and bond with the werewolf. The wolf in Remus is going to be agitated and demanding,’ he thought as he looked down to show his mate what it needed from him.

Mr. Weasley watched the exchange in wonder and knew that things were rapidly going to change within the Order of the Phoenix. It has been weeks, since Headmaster Dumbledore had physically attended a meeting and he was wondering just what was going to happen now with the Order.

The goblins watched the exchange with a non-critical eye and turned back to their own semi-private discussions. Gemini didn’t know what was expected of him for now, but still looked on without comment. The twins didn’t care and they already knew the truth.

They all waited patiently for the boys to arrive and in the mean time, Mr. Weasley was informing the Professors about the recent meetings and events within the Order.

“It’s been down right odd, it has,” Arthur said. “Albus doesn’t show most time anymore, he just sends a message now and then. But as there are no messages coming to us by Falkes, several of the Order members don’t believe that they are from him. It also looks like the Death Eater activity has… well I won’t say stopped, but people have noticed that there is a lot less of it. The Order is worried
that something big is coming.”

“That is very disturbing news, Arthur,” Remus said. Severus nodded his agreement.

“We can confirm a few things,” Gobknok began. “We have been monitoring a few types of transactions from various markets in several of the Wizarding Alleys and Markets around the world. Purchases of protective physical charms, trinkets, pendants and various house protections, aimed against any form violence, coercion, and several types of aggression have risen dramatically. They’ve also gone up in price and the more expensive they are the more that the client believes that the spells will work with greater efficiency.”

The other goblins nodded and Gobknok continued telling the wizards what they suspect. “However we have also noticed that the monies earned from those sales, well they seem to be falling into very specific accounts. Accounts to certain people who… shall we say, do not look at the muggle world in a good light.”

All the people at the table, save Gemini and the other goblins raised their eyebrows and developed questioning looks. This is the first time that any of them had ever received any kind of information from goblins regarding accounts and even general marketing information.

Goblins, in the past, were decidedly neutral with affairs concerning the Wizarding World. They had their own problems and it wasn’t in their nature to offer something for nothing. Information of this nature had left the Wizards stunned in their seats and sipping tea in order to digest this curious fact.

---------------------------------

The boys headed down to the others waiting for them in the kitchen. On their way Draco began to tell Harry about the meeting that the students had in the Slytherin common rooms.

“So let me get this straight,” Harry said. “Luna wants to run a paper from the school, Pansy is considering creating her own magazine, Dudley wants a radio station run from the school, on a subscription basis, and several of the others want to know about the different types of muggle publications out there.”

“That’s right,” Draco said. The he began to chuckle recalling Dudley’s expression and frantic request to exclude a particular woman’s magazine. “Dudley would like you to consider nixing the acquisition of any copy of a magazine called “Cosmo…” or something like it.”

Harry snorted, knowing exactly what the magazine was, but just said, “Now, now… everyone is entitled to see the different types out there… However, I seriously doubt that I can forget it because there are others out there of a similar nature. They are just as bad and worse. They certainly would give ‘Witch Weekly’ a run for its money.”

By this time the boys had walked through the kitchen doorway into a thoughtful silence. It was interrupted by a couple of snorts from Severus and the goblins because they knew about the magazines discussed.

Mr. Weasley just smiled at Harry, but looked warily at the blond standing next to him.

Remus with a concerned expression asked, “All right there Harry?” Wondering how his ‘Cub’ was holding up.

“All right, thanks,” he replied, happy that Remus’ first thought was to ask about him. It had never happened that an adult was concerned for his wellbeing, either physically or emotionally, but this cheered Harry up. It made him ready to continue the conversation with Draco and the others, no
matter the issue.

Severus then said, “You do realize that the company that produces ‘Witch Weekly’ also produces that magazine you’ve just mentioned.”

Harry looked shocked to have learnt that and then said, “That shouldn’t have surprised me, but the quality that I’ve seen in the muggle print is very different to what I’ve been able to glimpse in this world. I guess I should have known it. The information in both is nearly all trash anyway or not just not too useful for lowly human males anyway.”

The others in the room just laughed, as the boys took the seats that were left for them.

“Seriously though,” Harry said to his mate. “The rooms for those kinds of requests are completely outfitted and ready for use at Hogwarts. One’s for printing news, another is set up for magazines and any type of periodicals that the students wish to create, both of which have several huge worktables and there is still another, larger, room set up for all possible muggle publication requests that the students may want.

That one is more like a second library that should hold absolutely no references to the magical world, other then fictional stories that the muggles have created over time. It’s set up with a variety of books and magazines ready for review and use, but as with all new things, should someone request a specific periodical that they are familiar we will get it for them. I think that tomorrow we can take care of Nev and Dud’s personal requests, as I believe they might be slightly more important.”

“Harry,” Arthur Weasley began hoping to change the subject. He had waited until he had Harry’s attention. He had noted that Harry needed to be guided by his mate to a chair at the table. After Harry finished his lengthy explanation, he asked, “Are you and young Mr. Malfoy seeing one another?”

“No, sir,” Harry said. “We’re bonded life-mates... married.”

“We have been since near the end of this summer, Mr. Weasley,” Draco added. Hoping to ease the red-haired man’s concern, he said, “Please sir, call me Draco. If you’re not comfortable with that, then you may address me as Mr. Potter.”

“It wouldn’t be a good idea to tell, mum about this just yet,” George said.

“Yeah, she’d really flip,” Fred said.

“No only that…”

“But she’d be concerned…”

“That Draco is not the proper…”

“Choice that Harry could have made…”

“Well, that and Ginny…”

“Was filling her head with ideas all summer…”

“What kind of ideas?” Draco broke in, voicing his displeasure at the thought of the redheaded slut even trying something with his mate. He remembered his mate’s story of the ‘Subliminus’ spell and what he’d been able to remember after the fact.
“Babies,” the twins said together. “Specifically, grandbabies.”

Furious, Draco pounded his fist on the table and said loudly, “That’s not going to happen with her.”

“Draco!” Harry said sharply. Draco was still feeling emotional due to the fight that Harry had with that dark dwarf that he seemed ready to fight.

Harry pulled him into his lap and just held him, whispering, hissing in his ear that there was nothing to be concerned about. (...Ginny has no hold on me...) he hissed softly. (...She never did. I love you and only you. I know that you’re worried, but we will deal with her deception. For now we need to keep the peace here. Are you going to be all right?...)

Draco leaned against his mate and held him, tucking himself within Harry’s arms, not caring about the others in the room. (...All right...) he hissed his sigh. (...Just get on with this because we have other things to talk about. I want revenge for that even if you don’t...)

Harry kissed him on the cheek and hissed, (...But I do, I’m just not sure what to do at this time. Too many things on my plate right now...)

(...Let me take care of Ginny for you and that Cho bitch. I’m sure that I can get the twins in on something for that ex-Ravenclaw hussy. Please let me do this for you...) Draco hissed back, pleading because some things, like revenge, just needed a true Slytherin’s touch.

Harry laughed at the wording used and nodded his head in agreement. (...Just let me know what you do, by then I’m sure that I could use a good laugh...)

He then faced Mr. Weasley and clearly stated, “There is no way in the world that I could ever consider marrying your daughter. My nature absolutely forbids it. I will make her and your wife understand it.”

Arthur nodded and said, “I understand and for the time being I will withhold this information from my wife. I’m not happy doing that, but I do understand.”

“I have been thinking of planning a dinner with your family and was going to ask Fred and George for the use of Grimmauld,” Harry said, looking in their direction. “I have another request too, but I would like to discuss it privately with just the two of you first. Is that all right?”

“We can talk about that tomorrow morning, if you like Harry,” George said.

“Yeah, please remember that you left some people in our shop and we need to know how to compensate them for their time,” Fred said.

Harry sort of smirked at them and then said, “Well boys you did make me a silent partner, with a contract and all. This contract, gentlemen, allows me to employ the two goblins and one house-elf for your shop. They are now considered your permanent employees. They have been contracted, officially, for the next two years and will gladly take over for the days when you guys are absent and attending Hogwarts for part-time courses.”

The twins blinked rapidly at this announcement. They had no idea that finishing school was an option, but they knew that they needed a bit more formal training, specifically to add to their area of business.

Severus groaned, knowing that he was going to be stuck with the twins in either the seventh year classes or even in a set of ‘Advanced’ lessons that he was just currently testing his students and planning to set up. He knew that there were a few students interested in furthering their knowledge
of potions, but now this… “Harry…” he moaned. “Please don’t tell me…”

“I am sorry Professor Snape,” Harry said, shocking Mr. Weasley with his polite address to the Potions Master. Arthur knew that Harry and the Order’s former spy never got on, but this was nearly too much for the calm man. It was like the world had flipped around and everything that was… now wasn’t.

Harry just continued, “They are going to need a few more things in order for their business to continue growing and expanding. As much fun as it is to experiment blindly, I am more than sure that they are going to need to learn how to do that safely. Perhaps if they promise not to test their products on you… or any of the Teaching staff…”

Harry looked towards the twins and Dauphin was hissing in his ear explaining what they were doing. The twins were whispering rapidly to one another, shooting glances at the people around the table. There were snickers and chuckles throughout their discussion, but it looked like they were considering the proposition with their own form of seriousness.

“We’ll consider it…” Fred started.

“If we can do some extra credit work…”, George continued.

“And that Professor Snape…”

“Considers teaching us…”

“A different way…”

“Of approaching our research,” they finished. They knew that the needed more training, but the method that they were using now was a hit or miss. They wanted more analytical training and figured that the Professor would teach them.

Severus smirked at the Weasley boys and then he turned that smirk right back to Harry. Harry felt the gaze and his eyes just widened. He was shaking his head no, but his Master Teacher just said, “I believe that you boys should attend a couple of the first and second year classes first in order to re-learn how to analyze potion projects.”

Harry slumped, banging his head repeatedly on the table. Remus snorted and then laughed because his mate had just pulled one over on the Headmaster of Hogwarts. Draco laughed with him and the familiars were making noises that sounded just like hissing laughter too. The others around the table knew that it would take time to get to the heart of certain matters, but it was still surprisingly easy to be swept up in this little family’s peculiar dramatics.

“There is no plan yet in place in order to teach you guys,” Harry said. “We’ll talk it over and see what it is that you’re lacking. I’m sure that we can come up with something that will improve your analysis, but I think that a few courses in the Advanced Sessions would not be remiss.”

“How about the two of you plan for the real sessions to occur in November and December, before the yule break,” Remus suggested. “For now, perhaps you should plan to attend the first and second year classes, until November. It’s not going to take long for the boys to catch up to the first and second years and get what they need from those classes. That is if they don’t mind attending with firsties until the Advanced Lessons can begin with Severus?”

Harry sighed and knew that he was probably going to regret this, but he said, “All right. Fred… George… I’ll be sending you a schedule of the days and times that you are to attend the classes. I’ll even give you a Portkey. Don’t be late, you can always get detention, but don’t worry about your
business. The goblins I hired are honourable, plus I’m sure that your house-elf, Tuck, would love to assist them during the times that you’re absent. He’ll be able to help the other house-elf to take care of you store, too.”

It didn’t even take a day for them to think it over. They just said, “All right Harry. We accept everything.”

“Yeah, no testing on the any of teaching staff,” Fred said with a sad, but mischievous expression on his face.

“We promise,” George confirmed with a similar, devilish grin. After the twins’ agreement to attend Hogwarts on a part-time basis, the conversation turned back to its original nature before the distraction of school and the fight for family honour began.

“Gemini,” Harry began. “You stated that the stones in your halls began to speak.”

“Aye,” the short bearded man replied. “They spoke of changes coming from the east, but it be like listening ta an oracle or to prophet speak of future things. Riddles… always with the riddles.”

The others around the table nodded in agreement. There were still tons of prophecies left in the ‘Department of Mysteries’, in spite of the conflict during Harry’s fifth year that had damaged several older prophecy spheres. Even Harry thought back to that confusing moment when he had finally heard the prophecy concerning himself, he frowned against the memory surfacing. He didn’t want to remember that he’d never see Sirius again. Not right now, at least. He’ll remember and grieve later.

“What was that reference to the ‘Great Beast’ that had started the argument between you and the imposter?” Griphook asked. He figured that being somewhat neutral he should begin to open the discussion once more.

Gemini flushed, remembering that he was not supposed to have brought it up and certainly not to virtual strangers. “I wasn’ supposed ta bring that up,” he told them.

“We gathered that,” the Potions Master snarked.

“If you hadn’t, there would still be an imposter in Acier’s place.” Harry said, trying to give a small measure of comfort to him. “We can discuss this later, without any of the others present, if you wish?”

“Nah,” came the reply. “We’re all here under a protection and secrecy spell, that much I be knowin’. I be thinkin’ that I can tell y’all about it. It be the reason I mentioned it in the first place.” He paused to gulp several mouthfuls of tepid tea. “A long time ago, we used ta live on the land and in the grounds. It wasn’ that fascinatin’ a history, but tha’s the start. The creatures tha’ roamed the lands were big, verra, verra big. They were huge monsters tha’ roamed above the earth and we slowly tunneled our way inta tha’ ground, learning to dig and mine the minerals and riches in there. We learnt to forge ‘em too.”

Draco was mesmerized by the tale that he was listening to. This was rare stuff and it was known that the true history of many races, were lost, but why they were lost was never known. He hoped that he could get a couple of memory balls for this because he wanted to write down the information. He quickly returned his attention to the story, not having missed much because Gemini had paused for more tea.

“The largest ones had a name once, but even tha’ be lost through time. It was… oh, about twenty ta thirty thousand years, we recollect, when the ‘Great Beast’ began to speak with my people, negotiate
for our pretties. Many of ‘em were interested just in the ‘pretties’ like they called ‘em. You can probably tell the same by the living dragons. They love shiny objects, crafted jewels and fancy metal-works. My people were learnin’ and creatin’ many new things back then. But the beasts… those huge beasts wanted the things we had made for their treasuries.

They rampaged the world for them and tore up many of our homes and the homes of many other races too, seeking them. My Da’s Da, etc… from the beginnin’ believed that the creatures had intelligence, but were refusin’ to listen to us. They thought us ta be the weak ones. A race tha’ they didn’t believe would survive past a certain amount of time in this world.

It be obvious’ we all showed ‘em because we be still here and they ain’t. It was during a parlay for peace or some’at that a heafty price was demanded. The ‘Great Beast’ wanted our history and our knowledge of working with the minerals that we love. Our king was prepared ta give incomplete descriptions of our processes, that way we be keepin’ our makin’ secrets.

That’d be when another faction of our people be choosin’ a verra different and darker path ta life. They stole an’ gave to one o’ the ‘Great Beast’ the complete history of our king and kin. It be verra odd then that there not be any reference ta it in our old records, but… and mayhaps this has happened to your people, in times of conflict some families are wiped out and their properties become forfeit ta the ruling bodies. Yes?”

There was a brief pause for confirmation of this and Severus was the one who said, “Yes that is true. Even now, if a witch or wizard is known to be a Death Eater their properties are forfeit to the Ministry of Magic’s coffers, especially, if they are brought to trial and have no ‘Living Will’. There is no chance of recovery and there is no law in place for the compensation of such a loss, even if you’ve been proven to follow a different path.”

Remus looked at this mate to be and frowned. Mr. Weasley then asked, “Do you mean to say that Dumbledore never gave you access to your accounts and properties back? He was supposed to after five years, due to the fact that your confinement to the school had ended.”

“Ended?” Severus asked in honest confusion. “It never ended Arthur. The Headmaster had given me a contract to sign with the Ministry’s approval that my sentence be carried out at the school until a complete confirmation that the Dark Lord’s defeat was permanent. It never ended.”

“This is true Mr. Weasley,” Harry said. “The copies are on record at the Ministry, Gringotts, the school’s solicitors and at the school too. Why do you believe that this information is any different?”

“It may not have been published, but there was a lift on his ban that Professor Snape should have known about,” Mr. Weasley explained. “Because of his ‘good conduct’ his sentence was shortened. I thought that you knew. Albus assured me that he had told you and he was to have returned all of your properties back to you.”

Severus frowned, trying to remember such a deal, but nothing came to his mind. Remus was present for that conversation between Mr. Weasley and Headmaster Dumbledore. He was privately pleased for the Potions Master, but had left for another part of the world looking for viable work. He didn’t know that Severus had stayed at the school without a choice in the matter.

“I will look into the matter for you, if you like,” Griphook stated. “It is a matter of interest to keep our most prominent clients happy and right now they’re both Misters Potter. They both look decidedly upset about this too.”

That was only part of it. Draco was upset because his own father would have known about the Ministry decision and should have been the one to inform his godfather. Harry, however, was
beyond livid that the old Headmaster was a manipulative old sod who confined a man to a job without offering anything to assist or ease his work in any way shape or form.

“Harry, mate, calm down a bit will ya,” George asked.

“Yeah, mate,” Fred said. “It’s getting a little windy in here.”

Harry swallowed his anger for the moment, but swore, ‘I will find out everything that I can about the truth of this and if possible return all your belongings to you.”

Severus smiled at that statement and calmly told everyone, “That’s all right Harry. I’ve got most of them anyway. What Dumbledore and the Ministry didn’t know was that I had transferred all of my belongings the muggle world in the form of stocks and commodities. They couldn’t access any of the funds there. I only left pittance in the account so that they could feel superior when they took it. It was what they most certainly assumed was my last galleon. I had placed many physical things into muggle storage, locking them away under another name because I knew that I was going to be asked to spy.”

Draco smiled at the Slytherinism that his godfather displayed and Harry sighed in relief. “Thank the Gods,” he said. “I was ready to battle the Ministry for their incompetence, but not for this. I don’t know that I would have won.”

“Quite all right,” Severus said, glad to finally have the support that had originally been lacking in this case. “The incident is quite forgotten, but five years…?” He turned questioning Arthur.

“Let’s not forget that the old Headmaster is fond of the ‘Subliminus’ spell,” Harry said. “Is it possible to detect something like that after so long a time?”

“That’s a question for a Charms Master,” Remus supplied. “You’ll have to ask Professor Flitwick.”

The house-elves served up the evening meal and the discussions of various subjects continued. Once the evening meal was concluded, they eagerly listened to the remaining tale.

----------------------------------

They were seated in one of the parlor rooms with a blaze from the fireplace heating the room and ensuring that no one caught a chill. Harry had already sealed the slash on his wing with a potion like ooze and the wound was slowly closing, so that by the end of the night it would be healed enough to retract.

The Potions Master had watched Harry create the mixture and then helped Harry’s mate to apply the thick substance. In the meantime the discussions were not held up for this and Gemini had been granted permission to go into Gringotts to examine the stones, while Acier was still healing from her injuries.

Once everyone was seated comfortably, Gemini returned to his tale. “Our people were beginnin’ ta split and change. There were those who wanted ta maintain our traditional ways and there be others who wanted ta leave, be elsewhere learnin’ other things. Y’all know that many thinkin’ beings align themselves ta either light or dark, which represent good n’ evil… Yeah?” The others in the room nodded.

“This be not completely true of all thinkin’ creatures, but most do make a choice durin’ their lives. Some of our kith and distant kin be havin’ dark thoughts then and been choosin’ ta do dark deeds. They ‘ad bin’ wantin’ ta create ‘avoc and chaos in the world. That be the start of the split away from us.
Several families broke away during their path to darkness. With every generation they became darker and darker, until they were what they are today. They lived on the edge, neither here nor there. They were like Shank Slagburn, fighting and hurting others because they could... Cause they liked the hurting they were causing.” He paused to think before continuing on.

“In the far distant past, it was either one or more dark family that stole the records of our lives. We didn’t believe that this would happen until it was too late. The loss of those records caused many battles of honour and wars with my people.”

“What will happen if those records are recovered?” Gobknok asked, knowing that their recovery could possibly lead to more wars for the Dwarven race.

“I don’t rightly know...” Gemini answered honestly. “This request came from the King’s Archivist and from the King himself.”

“Why?” Fred asked. “What else could have happened to turn this question in Harry’s direction?”

Gemini looked surprised at the question. He then looked towards Harry and asked, “Didn’t ya tell ‘em?”

Harry blushed a bit when he felt all eyes on him. He said, “Too many things have happened since then. I didn’t quite have time to tell anyone. So... no, they don’t know about that.”

“Harry,” Draco said in a tone of voice that was demanding an explanation. “You can tell us now, can’t you?”

Harry could tell that everyone was waiting to hear this story. He sighed and then began to tell the story about looking for his familiar and the one belonging to his mate. He left out a few bits of information regarding the gifts that Antiok had bestowed to him because he wanted to go through those on his own first.

It wasn’t like they could tell that he left something out, but Severus and Draco suspected it. They were Slytherins, after all, and withholding information was something that they believed everyone did, no matter what or who they are.

“I don’t know what else to tell you,” Harry said. “What would make you suspect that I would know anything about the same ‘Great Beast’ that your people was involved with way back?” He made sure to keep referring to Antiok without a name because he was not sure how much he wanted to reveal here.

The goblins here were always looking for more gold for their coffers. Harry was under no illusion about their level of service to him, in spite of the Hook Clan’s contracts because those are considered separate from the Bank altogether.

Remus would keep this kind of information to himself, but the twins were also another matter altogether. He wasn’t too sure what they would make of this information other than asking for a peek at the stuff for possible product ideas for their shop. Severus would be the same, except that he’d want more ingredients from Harry. His mate would probably like a first look before everyone else in their group.

Mr. Weasley was an unknown quantity in this weird little setting. Would he reveal this to the Order, the Ministry or just his wife? It was getting to be a little too much like that old muggle show of “This Is Your Life”, which was basically a tell all of a person’s secrets and/or private moments in time.

Gemini truly didn’t know Harry all that well because Harry hadn’t remained in the mountain all that
Hugging the Draekon like he did at the twins’ shop was a quirk for him because it was a way to check for the number of hidden weapons that a body might be carrying. It was not like Harry didn’t know about that tradition because he was certainly felt up by Gem’s people a few times before he was even allowed to sit down and tell his story to the Dwarves of Everest.

The younger dwarf then explained, “The mountain folk felt the aftershocks from deep within the earth. The King and the Archivist believed that they came from the same direction around the last known, physical, location of the ‘Great Beast’. We kept a record of sightings and the last one was to the south-east near the land of the yellow-skins.”

Draco had to ask, “Yellow-skins?”

Gemini nodded, “Folk like you, but with yellow looking skins, dark hair and almond shaped eyes.”

“You mean Asians,” Draco said. “They are a people who settled in the East. Land of the Rising Sun, etc…”

“Last time we surfaced, they was at war, but they be the ones best for teas,” Gemini said. “We ain’t seen any other race since. Mayhaps they changed in time.”

“All races change through time,” Harry said. “It’s not quite polite to identify a race by the colour of their skin because all of the races have been mixing in the muggle world. They’ve moved everywhere.”

“That’s true,” Draco confirmed. He remembered from his time with Dudley this past summer.

“Wait a minute,” George said. “Your people felt the aftershocks of what… what was within the earth?”

“I be talkin’ about the quake in tha’ earth that happened in a’ old jungle to da east. I be talkin’ bout a place near Tee-Beddai,” Gemini explained.

Everyone tried to determine where that could be today, as it was very obvious that the word that the younger dwarf was using was scrambled and grunted in his own language. Then several of the wizards cottoned on and said, “Tibet?”

“Yeah,” he replied, nodding his head and setting his thick beard wagging. “Tha’s what I be sayin’… Tee-beddai.”

Severus was lost in his thoughts, trying to recall what he had heard about that area, but it was Mr. Weasley who had the answer. “It was around the 16th or 17th of August wasn’t it?” Seeing the nod of agreement, he continued on. “I remember the dates because Charlie wrote to us, telling about how the dragons were upset by the disturbance that they felt in the earth. Charlie said that they had a hard time settling the dragons for a long while after that.”

Harry looked sheepish and rubbed his hand on the back of his neck. “Sorry about that,” he said.

“Harry?” Draco and Remus questioned at the same time.

He sighed and then tried to explain. “It was just a couple of spells,” he said. “The ‘Great Beast’, as your people know him asked me for a favour. It wasn’t a difficult choice to make because he had Draco’s familiar. So I helped him out, naturally, in exchange for egg.” He paused a moment and then continued, “I truly didn’t know what the final results were, until I was leaving the country and had to register the transport of an unborn familiar. They were all in a tizzy because apparently the disturbance was such that it uncovered an underground city. The magical archeologists of that
country were very happy and because they were, the authorities were grateful enough not to press charges. They just kindly asked that I leave right away.

Draco looked fondly at the sleeping dragon in his arms. Harry’s head turned in that direction and every eye in the room gazed at the drowsy little lizard, understanding dawning on them. They all watched the little thing give a wide yawn, shift a bit in its sleep and settle back down into the arms of his wizard.

The evening was wound down quickly after that. The goblins re-confirmed the dates and times with Gemini for him to attend the Bank in the next few days without Acier. He was going to go again with her at a much later date, when she had recovered incident. After that they left, leaving behind only the dwarf, who retired for the night into the guest room with Acier.

The human wizards stayed behind to finish up different bits on other parts of their conversation, where Remus and Severus discovered that they were right. Harry wanted Mr. Weasley to have a point of contact at the school in order to pass on Order information and for Mr. Weasley to have an update about the goings on at the school from a trustworthy source.

Mr. Weasley was agreeable to it without question, as he knew that the dinner being planned in the future would have its own revelations for his immediate family. The three adults left the others, as the professors could not remain at Grimmauld due to the fact that Professor Snape always scheduled his detentions for Sunday mornings.

“Why give the brats the time to lie in on a Sunday when it was obvious that they want to sleep through my class,” he growled to the other Professors when they complained about his choice of detention days. It made sense in his mind because he was not coddling them.

Besides Harry refused his Master’s order to take over those detentions, making it clearly understood that any teacher who gave the detention were the ones that made sure that it was carried out. It was the only way to be fair due to the number of teacher’s and aides at the school.

Some of the Professors pooled their detentions, but Harry didn’t because he felt that the first years and seconds years should not mix with the older students for potions detentions. Harry was much harder on them, but they didn’t know that.

He made certain that they learned their lessons in a safe, controlled environment and if the student didn’t respect that during class, well… Let’s just say that the student would definitely find out, personally, just how bad things would be in an uncontrolled environment, they did learn their lessons then.

The twins were given the task to pick up a few of the items that were known to be popular purchases, as mentioned by the goblins, because Harry wanted to examine the magics in them. He suspected that there were hidden Dark Arts triggers and was worried that what was supposed to protect the people would actually harm them.

The twins were curious about the school and the new curriculum, so Harry had Dobby bring them the list of current courses per year, level and he made sure that they received their own version of the journal books. He included the list of things that the first and second year potions students needed, plus he gave them assignments to do in order to catch up.

Notes in the list informed them that they were to attend class on Monday. They had to take the same test that the first and second years had already taken to prove that they knew certain safety protocols for potion making. This had to be done before brewing any potions. That was their first task. Their second was to ensure that they had the proper books and ingredients.
That’s when they noticed who their teacher for that class was. “Oy, Harry,” Fred said, gaining the attention of the dark-haired Draekon and pointing out what he had just found out to his twin.

“Bad form Harry,” George said.

“You could have told us…”

“Now we can’t test anything…”

“On you…” They said.

Harry smirked, just shrugged and said, “I know. Look at the section listing all of the courses and all of the teachers’ names for them. You can’t even aim for the teachers’ aides or the other apprentices.”

There were now several more apprentices at the school due to the fact that the Professors were more comfortable to take them on. They knew that they had a better chance to survive the coming battles, if they were at the school and it increased the number of teachers. This also helped to ensure there were not many students in the class.

“You two will also have to be at the school several times in order to participate in the drills,” Draco said. “We have them at varying intervals and we need to know your strengths in order to place you at key positions.”

The twins were looking over the courses and noting all of the cool classes that Hogwarts was now holding. “Oh, man,” George said.

“Yeah,” the twin replied. “These would have been…”

“So cool…”

“Imagine the stuff…”

“We could have learned…”

“To add to our potential…”

“Future products…” they moaned in mock sadness.

“Guys,” Harry said. “You two are actually a testing ground for future adult continuing education classes.”

“What do you mean Harry?” Draco asked his mate.

Harry waited until he had all of their attention and then began to explain that in the muggle world there were classes known as “Continuing Education”. They were classes specifically geared to assist adults in completing their education or to attend classes of interest in different subjects.

“I figure, if there is a demand for Continuing Education for Adult Witches & Wizards, we could organize a school day or evening courses for the adults in the wizarding world. It’s just an idea that I thought about when the complaints from the fifth to seventh years started.”

“Oh, boy,” Draco said, looking at the others with a pained expression. “Did they ever complain about the fact that they were not going to be able to attend many of these new courses. First years are so lucky... Why can’t we just start over... I wish... What about asking… Bloody whining brats, the lot of them. Who in their right minds would want to be an ickle firstie again.”
Fred and George looked at one another and then looked back at the blond Slytherin. Draco raised an eyebrow to ask what the… when both red-heads raised their hands in the air, claiming that they would love to start school again.

Harry snorted and then started to laugh because he knew that the twins were perhaps the only people in the world who would do something like that. Draco looked away, mumbling something about ‘Nutty prats’, which just launched the Twins imagination for a new candy joke-type product.

They told the boys that they were tired and left saying that they would meet with Harry in the morning to listen to his additional request for the use of Grimmauld Place.

Harry and Draco both went up to the guest room that had been assigned to them. Draco assisted his mate in getting comfortable in the bed without disturbing the wing that was still healing. That meant that Harry was sitting up with pillows re-enforcing his upright position. He knew that later he would naturally retract his wings and shift down during the night.

Draco lay down with his head in his mates lap and fell asleep in that fashion, while Harry was reading some of his journal. He was interested in the information that he had gathered at Remus’ library house about bonding marks and the different types of bonds that existed. He was making sure to finding a better solution to the one that he currently found for releasing Professor Snape from the Dork’s Dark Mark.

He read far into the night. It wasn’t something that any of the others knew, but it was something that had affected Harry since his inheritance. He could never sleep more than four hours in the night, unless he was truly exhausted and that rarely happened. It hasn’t yet at the school, but he was sure that he would have to at least tell his mate, because Draco was getting worried about seeing Harry awake for so long.

It didn’t take long for a nightmare to set in, after Harry had retracted his wings and cuddled up to his mate. His recent battle was mixed with images of the dead that were almost always a part of his nightmares.

“No,” Harry shouted out loud, waking up from the vivid images that had been planted in his mind by Shank Slagburn. He had tears running down his eyes and his mate was awake because of the shout.

“Harry,” Draco asked concerned. “Are you all right?”

Harry pulled his mate towards him and cuddled in, hold him firmly. “Please know that I would do everything in my power to not cause you sadness,” he said.

“I know that Harry,” the blond said. “Can you tell me about it?”

Harry shook his head and said, “It’s just the same old stuff, but something new was added.” He has already talked to his mate about his usual nightmares. He was in order for Draco to understand the depth of Harry’s emotions and how badly the whole situation with the Dark Lord really was. “I dreamt that I had died and that Shank had won. He was doing the most horrible things with my body, playing with the bones while you were being forced to watch.”

Draco knew that dreams had no reason and sometimes the nightmares were just that, a nightmare. “I’m all right Harry,” he whispered to his mate. “You know a lot about me don’t you?”

“Hmm?”
“Like I’d just stand there and let that creature desecrate your body,” Draco said. “I’d likely hex him six ways to Sunday first.”

Harry chuckled because he could see that happening. His mate just continued to rant in that manner for a bit, turning the dark Draekon’s mood around for the better.

Harry turned to his mate and kissed him silent. As soon as they were finished, he said, “Thank you.”

Draco was pleased to have been able to help his mate, but the lateness of the night and the excitement of the day still left him exhausted. Another kiss and nuzzle from his mate, followed him into his dreams.

Harry looked down fondly at his mate, touching his face and *looking* at him in his own way. Feeling the breath against his hand and smelling the underlying scent that made him *know* his mate was there. He sighed and knew that he couldn’t return to sleep, so he cuddled his mate for a while until his brain started working overtime once more.

It was like a motor that once was started there was no stopping it or his thoughts. He reviewed several things in his mind, ordering the information that he was reading before falling asleep. He knew that he was very close to finding the correct ritual that would free his professor, but there seemed to be one or two small details that kept slipping away from his grasp.

Eventually taking deep breaths, he matched his mate rhythm and fell back asleep for the remainder of the night.

-------------------------------

**TBC...**
Sunday September 17th

The following morning Harry had his talk with the twins, while Draco was in Snape’s library reading whatever struck his fancy. Professor Snape had added the boys to the library permissions when they were at Grimmauld picking out furniture. He figured that whatever the boys looked up would not be the same as himself or his mate to be and therefore they would all come across different books or information in order to help with the Dark Mark, the War or anything else of interest to them.

“I was wondering...,” Harry began, but that’s as far as he got, when the twins cut him off.

“Hold it right, there, mate,” George said.

“Yeah, hold onto your Thestrals…,” Fred continued.

“You need to…”

“Begin by telling us…”

“How come you’re…”

“Our teacher and…”

“Why Snape isn’t?” They finished asking.

Harry smiled at the two of them and said, “He asked me to be his apprentice in potions.”

The twins both looked agog at that because it was very rare that a Master of any discipline would ask someone to be their student. It was a sign of talent, if Harry was asked to be Snape’s apprentice...

“Wow,” they said together.

“As for me teaching you, well I guess it’s because I have a certain method for teaching the first and second years,” he explained. “I’m the one who taught them about potions safety and they are just
now learning how to take proper notes, which are the things that you both need a refresher on.”

“Wow,” Fred said. “But we know most first year potions.”

Harry just smirked and then pulled out three potion recipes for them, without a title. It was the same ones that he demonstrated to the first years on the first day of class, with the one different ingredient processed. “Here,” he said. “I want you both to brew these three potions, exactly as written. Bring them in tomorrow and we’ll see how you do.”

He didn’t tell them the purpose or anything other than to make sure that they would take accurate notes about everything that occurs during the brewing process. “It’s a test of your knowledge and note taking skills, which the first and second years have already been tested on.”

George snorted and said, “Yeah right. I bet that you continuously test them with different methods.” Fred nodded in agreement with his twin.

“Oh course I do,” Harry said, not denying it. “They are always tested, but this one is your test to see what you need to learn as opposed to what you already know.”

“All right Harry,” Fred said. “We’ll do as you say, but…”

“No buts,” Harry said. “This will help you get a better understanding for Professor Snape’s instructions and what it is that he wants you to do during his classes. I’ve only got two weeks to bring you up to second years and you must have the basic safety.

You have one month to be with the second years. They do more brewing and analysis then the first years and you need this part of potions brewing. It was a step that even Professor Snape agrees he missed in his prior teaching methods. He even had his aide teach the upper years the same thing for the entire first week of school before he took over their classes. It wasn’t pretty.”

“Tell us,” George demanded.

“Please?” Fred asked.

“Maybe you should just ask Draco,” Harry slyly suggested. “He was in those classes and he has a better way of telling a tale that I ever could.”

“Very well,” Fred said. “But you can’t leave until we hear about it.”

“Yeah,” George agreed. “You guys have to stay here until we know what happened that first week. Now how about you tell us what you need from us.”

“All right,” Harry stated. “October 22 is the night of the new moon and polar opposite of the full moon. I would like to use your Ritual Room on that night to remove Snape’s Dark Mark.”

“What?!!” They exclaimed.

“I thought that it couldn’t be done,” one of them said.

Harry then explained the research that he was doing and how he was really close to finding the correct ritual in order to remove the cursed thing. “It needs to be on that night because he’s Remus’ mate and Remus needs to be a part of the ritual.”

“Really?” Fred said. “I always thought that Sirius was Remus’ mate.”

“Mate mate, not mate friend,” George clarified.
Harry shook his head and said, “No. Snape is the true life-mate for Remus’ werewolf. Sirius has always only been Remus’ friend. I know that it might have looked different, but that’s not how it was.”

Fred looked at his brother and George looked back, both of them heaved a soft sigh of relief. It may have only been one night, but both of them had felt like they were betraying the werewolf. Now it looked that they would have to re-evaluate that night and put it into its proper context.

They both knew now that they were regretting the lack of a repeat, but honestly they thought that Sirius was Remus’ true life-mate. It had never occurred to either of them to ask Sirius about it. Now they could grieve the loss, as they couldn’t before because of the guilt they were feeling.

One night changed their outlook and now one comment changed them again.

Harry felt the change in mood and could only guess at the issue and therefore he didn’t say anything about it. He did ask for to use Grimmauld Place for a family dinner with the Weasleys, Professors Lupin and Snape, Dudley and Neville, and of course his own mate Draco.

The twins agreed to the date. They went to their private lab to discuss everything that they have just learned and began to brew three simple little potions. Harry and Draco had some errands in London and Diagon Alley, so the twins agreed to let them go, as long they came back to have lunch with them. They still wanted to hear about what happened in the Potions classes for the older students.

-----------------------------

Ron was nervous regarding what he was about to do. ‘The Gods know that I don’t like the man, but he’s the only one who can help me now.’ He thought, while wiping his sweaty hands onto the sides of his school robes.

He was walking down to the dungeons, following the dim corridors to the room known to all the students that have ever had detention with Professor Snape. He had to time it just so, in order to be able to speak to the Professor, hopefully, without having any eavesdroppers nearby.

There was an alcove just near the door on the opposite wall, which allowed him to watch as the last of the students left. He quickly walked to the door and knocked on it, hoping that the Professor hadn’t left the room by another route.

Everyone knew that there were several exits, known only to the Professors, for their classrooms. They were apparently connected to the Professor’s private quarters still it seemed that Ron had calculated everything correctly.

“Come in,” he heard a terse reply to his knock.

Ron stepped into the room and noticed that Professor Snape was just cleaning up a few things. “Mr. Weasley,” Professor Snape said. “Now that you are no longer holding up the alcove wall in the corridor, what are you doing here? I don’t recall giving you detention, yet.”

The red-head swallowed past the lump that formed in his throat, but his Gryffindorish streak pushed on. “I am here to request your assistance, sir.”

Snape’s eyebrow shot up in query at the semi-respectful request coming from one of the loudest protesters that he had ever had the misery to teach. “Really,” he drawled.

“Yes sir,” Ron said. “I’m requesting your assistance for a very private matter.”
Severus looked at the sincere expression in Weasley’s face. He then figured that as a Professor and as one of Deputies of this school, he should allow any student a fair an unbiased hearing of whatever problem they feel the need to bring up.

However there were some topics that he would absolutely not put up with, no matter what. So he asked, “I hope that you are not here for advice on marriage or how to handle your wife?”

Ron choked back his reaction to laugh at the complete disdain that the Professor showed for having any kind of conversation related to the love life of teenagers. “No sir, I don’t need anyone to tell me what a cock up that was.” He paused a brief moment and then asked quickly, “I need to learn Occlumency and I am here to ask you to teach me.”

*That* was not any question Snape ever expected from this Weasley. His eyebrows shot up and he couldn’t think of one instance ‘Why?’ the boy would ever need to know such magic. He actually blinked and had to review his memory to be sure that Ron Weasley had actually asked his most hated Professor to teach him the mind magic known as ‘Occlumency’.

The Professor frowned and asked, “Why? Why do you want to learn such an art?”

Ron became red in the face, he hemmed and hawed a bit before asking first, “Is this room secure?”

Again Snape was surprised and after judging the true sincerity of the request, he gestured for Weasley to follow him to another room. It was his office room that was linked to the Headmaster’s, but it was every bit more secure than many other offices in the school. He had needed such a room in order to depart for his spying duties in the past.

Snape summoned a house-elf for tea and to deliver a note to Remus that he would be delayed for their morning plans. The men had planned to spend most of the day getting to know one another and learning how to be together without actually ‘being together’.

That was sometimes the hardest thing for a couple to learn. How to be in the company of another person without saying anything to the other or feeling like they have to. It was a comfort to the werewolf just to be in smelling distance of his mate, so Severus allowed these occasions to continue. Besides he had a feeling that Harry would come up with something to fix the whole Dark Mark thing. Everyday that feeling grew and he was foolishly letting the spark of hope grow.

Once the tea had arrived and the room was spelled secure, Snape asked one more time, “Why do you want me to teach you Occlumency?”

Ron took a deep breath and said, “I need your word sir that what you see will not leave this room… Please?”

Snape nodded, understanding the need for someone to confide in. He certainly hoped it was about something foolish and about school. He watched with growing unease as the youngest male Weasley undid the cuff to the sleeve of his left arm. He wanted the boy to stop, but he didn’t get it out in time, as the boy rolled up the cuff to expose his left forearm.

Severus gasped at what he saw. He looked at Ron with a questioning look, but Weasley only left the arm exposed and stubbornly refused to look at his Professor. He tried to begin to say something, but he was in shock that someone known as the *best friend* of the Boy-Who-Lived would ever take the Dark Lord’s cursed Mark.

“Put it away,” he said gruffly. He waited until Ron’s arm was covered and then he asked, “Why?”
“Hermione,” was all he said. It was all he had to say because Professor Snape was all too aware of the relationship that the two had before arriving at the school for the beginning of their seventh year.

He was, also, just as aware of the conditions within the Mark. It was obvious that the upstart Mudblood know-it-all had brought her bonded to the Dark Lord to be Marked. It was also very clear that the Dark Lord had enjoyed the pleasure of using the friends of the Boy-Who-Lived as true spies for his cause.

‘These two are Harry’s Pettigrews,’ he thought bitterly, but with some relief too. The relief was from the knowledge that he could not be summoned again to that maniac’s side nor would his betrayal to the Dark Lord’s cause be brought forward by these two.

‘Unless, it had already been done?’ This was not something that he wanted to dwell right now.

“I suppose that’s also why you want to learn the art of protecting your mind?” He questioned after his brief moment of insight.

Ron nodded and said, “I’ve seen her studying very specific books on how to penetrate the mind and how to access certain regions of the mind for specific types of assault. She’s not really studying Legilimency, but I know that Occlumency will protect me from whatever that bitch may have planned.”

The Potions Master sighed and wondered whether he needed to inform the Headmaster or not about this. He left the decision up to the seventh year. “Are you planning to spy? Does the Headmaster need to know?”

Ron shook his head and said, “This is for my protection and yours.” Snape gave him a questioning look. “I know about you spying for the Order of the Phoenix and a bunch of other things related to the Order. I need to protect my family. Most of them are members.”

It was then that Severus truly realized that the boy was asking for his help, not to really protect Snape’s position as a spy, but to protect the Weasleys that were a part of the Order. “Very well,” he said. “Wait here.”

He left Ron in the room wondering if his mind was going to be assaulted in the same manner that Harry’s was during their fifth year. The Professor returned carrying a slim book and said. “Read this and return it to me. Try to do some of the exercises listed to help you clear your mind. Once you’ve done that I will schedule you some ‘Remedial Potions’ lessons.”

“Are you going to tell Headmaster Dumbledore?” Ron asked.

“No,” Snape said with certainty. “Never let that man know that you’re Marked or else you’ll begin to find that your family is not as protected as you may think. He is not the kind of man that everyone thinks he is. However you should know that you have the same options of seeking Sanctuary at this school should you ever need it.”

“Not with Dumbledore in charge,” Ron said heatedly.

“Dumbledore’s not in charge,” Snape stated clearly. “Don’t ask. None of the Professors, Apprentices or Aides can tell anything about that. Just know that this is a true fact.”

“We’re not going to be summoned anyway,” Ron spoke candidly. It felt good to get a little bit of this misery off of his chest. “The Dark Lord knew about the permission forms from the parents and agreed to let his follower’s children off the hook from the summonings. You are also being forgiven for this, as it is clear to the children that the teachers can not leave the school either. He’s hoping that
you’ll find a way to report to him soon, though.”

Snape made a non-committal noise about that. But Ron also took that as an acceptance to continue informing the Potions Master about a few other things. “Hermione thinks that something’s up with that and as soon as she’s able to speak to the Headmaster she’s ready to tell him off. She hates that she can’t see him whenever she wants to like she did in the past. Truthfully, the old bastard allowed her access to his books and the wrong books at that. I hope that she never has access to those again.”

“She won’t because she can’t,” Snape agreed. “That’s all I’ll say on the matter. You may leave now and don’t forget to return my property when you’ve memorized it. That will let me know when to begin scheduling your lessons.”

He flicked his wand releasing the spells from the room and wished that the Weasley boy would leave as soon as possible. Ron nodded his understanding of the situation and as he left the room he said, “Thank you, sir.”

Severus shut the door behind the departing teen and locked it, preventing further intrusion into his personal time. He summoned another elf to clear away the tea service and made his way to his rooms where Remus was waiting for him.

Once he was in the room, he saw that Remus was sitting on the couch in front of a low burning fire. The fire was for heat only, as these rooms did not have any Floo access. He morphed into his wolf form and sought comfort from his mate by lying next to him with his head in his mate’s lap. He sighed when the werewolf began to pet him, soothing his nerves from the shocking revelation from the Weasley boy.

Remus watched, surprised, that Severus would change into his wolf form, but was pleased when the dark man sought him out for comfort. Something must have happened to rattle the otherwise unshockable Potions Master. It was something that they would have to discuss later. In the meantime, both men enjoyed the other’s presence in whatever form for the remainder of the day.

-----------------------------------------------

Meanwhile our favourite boys were in London shopping first for the requests that Dudley and Neville had on a list. Then for fun they decided to stop at a couple of ‘Penny Stores’ to pick up stuff for the twins and for Harry’s students.

Those stores had tons of classic joke items and small toys of the muggle past, like ‘joy buzzers’, ‘paddle balls’, ‘half-masks’, ‘goofy-eyed glasses’, ‘bags of glass marbles’ and more. They also had oodles of candy ideas for jokes and for fun, like the famous old ‘Candy Necklaces’ and let’s not forget about ‘Pixy Sticks’, ‘Tootsie Pops’, ‘Gobstoppers’, ‘Jawbreakers’ and so much more.

They also found a place that had an old gumball machine for sale. The boys also brought back lots of different toy capsules that are found now-a-days from machines similar to the gumball ones. It was Draco’s idea to have the twins think about creating a magical version of the machines, as long as the magical patents are owned by ‘Weasleys Wizarding Wheezes’.

Harry sent a quick owl off to his lawyer and his bank manager for counsel on this matter. It wouldn’t do to have something like that be blocked by the Ministry because Muggles thought of it first and he needed to know if something like this was ever requested in the past.

It turns out that there is a muggle patent fee to be paid, but other then that anyone wanting to make the machines and any series of toys or candies for them was permitted. The patent is only for the use of the blueprints, paid per machine built.
However, it was a fairly reasonable fee and fortunately for Harry, he already owned the patent because of his great-great grandfather. The man invested in many things of that nature. Hula-hoops and teddy bears being just a couple of names of things Harry found listed.

On another whim and because Harry felt that he needed a hobby of his own, plus the fact that he discovered he had a liking for them, he purchase several books on crossword puzzles and word searches. It was an idea of his that he wanted to see if he could create his own. He also picked several crossword dictionaries and had a pretty good idea of how to go about creating his own.

Draco picked every toy that he thought would be fun to try out and play with from the ‘Penny Stores’ because there wasn’t any magical equivalent like them in the Wizarding World that he knew about. He even bought a Hula-Hoop, hoping that Harry would show him how it worked.

They left the stores with loaded bags, only to enter other stores empty handed looking for more stuff. In Harry’s case it was for items for his students for his ‘bribe them to learn’ method. Draco was in it more to see the stuff and get ideas for the Wheezes because once he knew that Harry was the third ‘silent’ partner, he wanted to be part of it.

He had some ideas for items and wanted to know if he could create them and then sell them exclusively at the Wheezes. He also wanted to be able to present his ideas to the twins and know that they would consider them with honesty. They were more knowledgeable on what was funny.

The twins agreed to it because sometimes Draco’s ideas were all right, once they could figure out the spells and potions in order to make a particular idea work. Some ideas were for mean or nasty pranks, but many were for harmless ones, which Harry approved.

After they practically bought out the stores, they returned to Grimmauld Place with their loot. The information regarding the patents and using Muggle products was waiting for them by the time they arrived. It seems that the Ministry did not have a ban on Muggle stuff being sold in the Magical Alleys, it just that no one had thought of it before.

Plus there was nothing to prevent them from using the same ideas for toys and candies like the Muggles because the two worlds did not meet for any kind of exchange of goods. The Ministry of course would frown on out right theft of an idea, but if the items or goods created reacted in a magical manner, as such things were usually accepted by their own culture, than the Ministry of Magic believed that there was nothing wrong with it.

The twins were ecstatic with the plan and were goofy over all of the toys, but since Harry only purchased them for their idea potential, they were disappointed to not be allowed to keep everything. Still Harry did in turn allow them to use the patent for the gumball machine and showed the capsule toy idea, which launched them all into babbles of delight at all the toy possibilities.

Harry did caution them about making too many too soon. They needed to be tested and everything first. The twins were not prepared for that, but they were ready to play with the candy versions. That was their main selling feature anyway.

Draco then said to let him be the one to come up with a toy or two for the machine. He was thinking of his project for Professor Flitwick’s class and wanted time to plan it. So, he asked the twins to let him be the first to create the line of toys for the first machine. The twins agreed to it and let it be.

After everything was looked over and Harry had packed and preserved the things for his classes, the boys were ready to lunch. There the twins eagerly waited to hear how the new potions classes went for the senior students.
“We didn’t know what to expect,” Draco began, slowly telling his tale, while eating his meal. “We’d heard lots of stuff from the firsties, but I don’t think that a lot of the senior students truly believed them.” He smiled in his mate’s direction, grinning all out at the smirk he received in return. “It turns out that the first and second years were not telling tales. Harry’s peculiar method to re-enforce safety in the classroom was used.”

The twins were on the edge of their seats, eagerly waiting to hear what happened next. Draco just continued on, “Usually, at the beginning of the year we have specific potions to brew and it was true for us this year. However, the recipe place on the board was a simple one of six ingredients. It was like the Assistant Professor Lang was mocking us.” He paused to take a breath.

“The students were not happy about it and to top it all off. Before we could brew that potion we had to do a Pop-Quiz on classroom safety that we should have known for seven years.” He growled when he said that. “It was humiliating for most of the students in our class. Because they had to produce essays on the missed information by next class and prove again that they knew the procedures. This happened every class for the first week, after that they got detentions with Apprentice Potter.”

“Do tell…” Fred said.

“Well, go on…” George urged.

“After that awful Pop-Quiz, we had to begin to brew the potion up on the board… Now you know how we are in class always trying to mess up another’s potion to make another house lose points. It works with Snape, so some students thought that it would work with this guy. Boy… were they wrong…” He paused to take another bite of his lunch and then continued.

“Whoever sent some ingredient flying into another cauldron, found it splashing in theirs. Woe to the student who sent an ingredient that was not part of the list for the potion on the board. Assistant Professor Lang made them fix the problem caused by the extra ingredient and whether it worked or not they had to test their potions on themselves.”

The twins were kind of grateful that they had not attended school for a while, but they had to ask, “Harry you don’t do that to the firsties, do you?”

Harry shook his head, “No, of course not. However, I do force them to pay attention to what I say.”

Draco chuckled at that and said, “What he’s not saying is that he uses rubber balls of different sizes and colours pretending that they are specific ingredients. He tests the students on their quickness to protect their potions and on whether they know the proper way to correct the mistake. It’s all verbal for the first part of the year.”

The twins looked at Harry with something to awe and wariness. They were not as eager as they thought for the next day when they were to attend class with the firsties. “Harry…” George began.

“What?”

“I thought that I saw your name next to the DADA classes for the first and second years too,” he finished.

Harry asked, “What of it?”

“Are you teaching them too?” Fred asked.
“Yes,” he replied.

The twins blinked several times and then looked to Draco for confirmation. The blond had his mouth full, but he did nod confirming that Harry was the teacher for those classes too. Once Draco finished, he added, “You should see what he did to them for the first class of the day.”

They looked at Harry and it was then that he produced the memory pensieve ball that was set up to record his classroom sessions. There was one that was set up to follow Harry and record the classes that he taught, that way the professors could evaluate his methods. He was allowed to keep them after that.

Holding out the ball, he said, “Why don’t you see for yourselves?” Daring them to go in and experience the firsties first day of DADA class with ‘The Harry Potter’.

“I’m going too,” Draco said, holding out his wand to the ball. “It makes me laugh every time…”

All three went in and in the meantime, Harry worked on several tests for his first and second years of both classes. He just made notes in his teaching journal. It was the one journal that was given to him his Potions Master. The man just gruffly said, “Use this to keep track of your students, their scores and your teaching syllabus. That way you don’t need to keep track of them on separate scrolls and you’ll never lose them.”

Remus had given him one for the DADA classes too. It was in a different colour, but also a different texture made just for him. It made sense because that way he didn’t need to separate the lessons into different sections of one journal. The Professors had gotten together and ensured that the colours and textures were different.

Harry was happy when he received them, even if it was something that he should of thought about getting himself. ‘Family has a right to give gifts Harry,” Remus told him, when he received the DADA teaching journal.

Harry smiled remembering it and every time his used his teaching journals. They were made for the Aides and Teachers to link the classes that were precursors to the higher levels. That way the Professors who were teaching at the higher levels had an idea on what to expect from specific students and knew what was previously taught.

His thoughts were jarred by the laughter from the others in the room, when they were finally finished viewing the first day of DADA class. He put away his teaching journals in one of the secure pockets in his clothing and waited to hear what the twins had to say about the class. For the rest of the lunch, Harry was alternately praised for his great idea and some shuddering as the twins tried the ‘Rose Homework’.

In the end the boys’ last stop before returning to the school was the Wheezies to pick some of their new products. Harry didn’t manage to pick anything up during the encounter with Gemini, so he did that now with Draco’s assistance.

Draco had a knack for finding the most harmless, but “good fun” ones like the twins’ classic ‘Canary Creams’. There were several more in that particular line of sweets that were new, not in Filch’s list yet and he knew that the students would absolutely love the ‘Parrot Puffs’, ‘Choco-Cockatoos’, ‘Robin Raisins’, ‘Nutty Nightingales’, and the ‘Bluebird Buttertarts’.

-------------------------------

Evening back at school
Neville and Dudley were happy with all of the packages of seeds and bulbs that the boys had picked out for them. There was a large variety that Neville had never seen before because they were Muggle versions of similar Wizarding plants. Others were completely new to the budding Herbologist.

He was also happy to note that the boys had picked up several ‘Neutral Pouches’. Their main purpose is to preserve the seeds without the ambient magic of the pouch or surrounding area. This helps to prevent the magics from altering seeds and bulbs. If the magic did happen to interact with such fragile life forms, then the plant growth was affected and also the nature of the plant itself was changed.

Dudley had the various magazines and newspapers sent to the Slytherin common rooms and to a few other students that were present during the discussion. These were extras and considered separate from the room that Harry had readied for the students. The room containing the various muggle books was not yet open to the students because the clubs had to be organized first.

The teachers believed that the students needed to occupy their times productively, but also felt that the students should be firmly settled into their routines so that idle little hands made less messes. Once the clubs were set up, all the club rooms would be assigned accordingly and then the new publications room would be open.

---------

The Slytherins curiously gathered around the table that had been placed against one of the walls in their common room. It was put there by the house-elf who delivered the books, magazines and newspapers from the Muggle World.

Pansy immediately took a couple that grabbed her interest, like ‘Elle’, ‘Cosmopolitan’ and ‘New Woman’. Then she began to compare them to the ‘Witch Weekly’ and ‘Young Witch Weekly’ that were available in her world.

She noticed, with a Slytherin eye, that they targeted a specific audience. Some of the articles didn’t make sense to her, though, because they were related to actors, movies, and music of the Muggle World. However, Pansy wasn’t stupid and therefore she was able to translate the names into the cuter Quidditch Players and to Harry Potter, which were known the British Wizarding World as celebrities.

The others in the room followed her example and chose the magazines or new prints that interested them. The artists or cartoonists were able to see the Muggle comics and manga available. Comparing them to what was currently available in the British Wizarding World.

Something within them began to burn at the lack of diversity in their own society. In their world there was usually only one magazine or news print per specialized subject. This was mostly available and understood by those interested in those particular fields or Masters of those subjects.

The Muggles had no less than at least three or four papers and/or magazines related to the same subject. They were written by vastly different points of views and there were differing opinions written up by just about anybody. It was apparent that they all followed a standard cover layout, but the content were so varied that many in the room couldn’t believe the differences.

Pansy’s ideas were taking hold of her, but she knew they would take time for them to fully mature into a complete product. She didn’t want to begin something at the school only to see it end when she left after her seventh year was done. ‘I wonder if the Headmaster would allow me to continue
this until it could continue on without me,’ she thought.

Blaise was watching her write idea after idea onto parchment after parchment. He knew that most of her ideas would be scrapped or given to another, but like all ideas they needed to be written down before they were lost. He looked around and noticed Vince and his sister were doing the same.

Vincent and Annabelle, who was following her big brother in art stuff, were looking through comics, manga magazines and even a couple of art magazines. They were making note of the differences and noticed that there were formats followed depending on the type of comic created.

They were looking through the manga magazines like ‘Shonen Jump’ and ‘Shoujo Beat’. They were partly confused when they noticed some of the stories were written in a left to right format similar to Japanese writing. Once they figured it out, it was interesting to read the stories and compare to the classic comics like ‘Superman’, ‘Spiderman’, ‘The Fantastic Four’ and many, many others.

---------------

Luna was in her own room looking over the various newspapers that were sent to her. There were even a couple of things called story magazines that were written in a novel size, but contained short stories written by common people. It was a mix of these that sparked her ideas or at least helped her to put them together better.

She had been thinking about this for a long time and was nearly prepared to approach the writing Professor to monitor the club activities for the creation of a school newspaper. She even had a name for her paper ready: ‘The Hogwarts Herald’. It was perfect name because it was going to herald the current events in the school.

---------------

Seamus was looking over more than a few of the diverse magazines he received. They ranged from strategy and logic magazines like ‘Chess Masters’, ‘The Best of Logic Problems’, ‘Sudoku’, etc… to magazines that specialized in specific sports like basketball, baseball, soccer, etc…

It was looking through those ones that he realized that Dean was right about the number of sports associations that the Muggles had. There were so many that he didn’t know where to begin. It was then that Dean walked into the common room and saw them.

“All right,” he said, pouncing on a couple. He quickly looked through them for the articles on his favourite teams.

“What you looking for?” Seamus asked.

“I want to see how my teams are doing,” Dean said.

This startled Seamus because Dean was acting just like the normal Quidditch junkies. They had their teams too, rooting for them, laughing and crying with them at every win or loss. It was still interesting to note that the dark youth was the same.

It wasn’t something commonly seen in the Irish half-blood, but he was sometimes just a little prejudiced against the muggleborn because he was raised with magic. He didn’t mean to do it. But it was a minor argument that the two of them had near the beginning of the year.

“Did they make it?” He asked, extending the proverbial olive branch to his best friend.

Dean grinned and began to show him how to read the stats on the players and which ones were his
favourite teams. Knowing how to read the stats on Quidditch players made it easier to understand the ones he was reading, but Dean still explained how the sports were different because of their different rules.

“I’m hoping to open a club for sports,” he said. “I’m planning it so that the club concentrates on one sport per month, to learn the rules and then just play. I’m thinking of making the meetings Tuesdays and Thursdays with an hour of play and then on Saturday scheduling a tourney. What do you think?”

Seamus grinned at his first year friend and said, “Where do I sign up?”

This caused Dean to laugh and hug him around the shoulders. “I need to think about which teacher or two who would be interested in this.”

“Why don’t you look in your journal?” Seamus suggested. “There were several teachers listed with their interest to monitor clubs and some even listed some of their personal interests.”

Dean pulled out his journal and they both began to plan for the club and who it would be for, plus how to split it into various years, depending on how many would be interested in it, maybe with senior and junior divisions depending on the years.

Draco was in bed for then night. He was quietly contemplating on starting his own club and strangely it had nothing to do with magazines, sports or even creating something. He wanted a club to improve writing skills. The classes that he had attended for improving reading, writing and comprehension were interesting to him, but they were limited because they were mainly for the younger students.

He wanted to learn how to write articles, letters, short stories and essays. His club would also be created to learn how to research for a specific type of writing style. Still he didn’t believe that many would be interested in learning to write for writing’s sake, but he figured that the students who were thinking about a club to create a newspaper or magazine then his club could become contributors for it.

He knew about the power of the written word and wanted to start in the middle by just writing whatever he wanted. Some of the topics for his writing ideas were actually coming from the History of Magic, Wizarding World Studies and Muggle Studies classes that he was attending.

He was of a mind to record the debates in some of those classes and then find a way to get them published in the Wizarding World. He had a lot of time on his hands, four years at least because his mate was under contract with the school.

“I think printing the debates and re-evaluating them would be interesting,” he thought out loud to his mate.

“Just make sure that the teachers and students know that they will be recorded.” Harry said. “I’m planning to submit puzzles to the papers and magazines. Specific to the subjects taught here, what do you think?”

“I think that you’re being quite devious and sneaky,” Draco laughed and then he accused his mate while laughing. “You’re doing anything and everything to make learning things fun.”

“Moi?” Harry said pointing to himself.
Draco pushed aside his papers and then he shoved the ones that were surrounding his mate and said in breathless anticipation. “Yeah.. Toi.”

He straddled his mate’s thighs, grinding into him and snogging him senseless. His erection was growing and he noticed that he mate was not unpleased with the attentions, in fact…

Harry was enthusiastically kissing him back and the he decided to try a little rough and tumble. He grabbed his mate’s knee and flipped him over so that he was now on top and grinding down.

Draco wanted to ‘ride’ his mate to show his affection, so he flipped him back. They did this for a while, as they were kissing and grinding into one another. They were also removing their clothing during their tumble and grabbing onto the skin of their mate that was nearest, rubbing with the palms of their hands or gently dragging their nails over the sensitive bits that they knew would cause the other to pause in a delicious arched reaction.

The blond Slytherin accioed his wand when he was finally on top once more. He then said a spell that bound his mate’s hands above his head and legs were spread apart, bound open. “I told you that if you got hurt that I would tie you to the bed,” he said.

Harry’s reaction was predictable. His erection twitched and released a few drops of pre-cum, excited that he mate was a little adventurous in bed. “Yeah,” he said, his breath hitching as his mate began to explore his body. “I remember.”

“Good,” Draco said. “Your mine to play with now.” He used his nails on the sensitive skin under his mate’s arms, scratching gently with no pressure. It was sweet torture. He leaned forward to lick the skin and then placed sucking kisses, marking him, showing him that he belonged to Draco and no one else.

Draco never forgot about the Weasley-chit and that Cho-bitch. They used his mate for their own purposes and probably tried to make Harry theirs because he didn’t know about the sexual acts and bonding magics. ‘Maybe he was saved from that because he hadn’t matured yet,’ Draco thought, making another hickey on his mate, this time it was on his neck.

‘It needs to be visible to everyone,’ liking that thought a lot.

Meanwhile, Harry was tied to their bed, loving the sensations that his mate was pulling from him. They had already done most of the basics since their bonding. They had even switched top and bottom.

He held back the grin at remembering that because Draco didn’t like it too much. Truthfully Harry didn’t either and that’s when they found out the some people just had their preferences. That didn’t mean that they didn’t enjoy all other aspects of lovemaking.

“Harry,” his mate said, shifting up. “Open up.”

Harry could smell his mate’s arousal just in front of him. He smiled, licked his lips and knew what to do. He listened to his mate and opened up his mouth taking him in and swallowing the erect length. He hummed his enjoyment.

Draco reached up with one had and held onto the headboard, slowly driving his need down that hot, slick throat. He groaned when his mate hummed around him, causing him to suddenly thrust forward. He was close, but that was not what he wanted.

He slowly pulled away, but his mate tried to stop him by keeping up the sucking until he finally pulled free with a slurpy popping sound. He grinned mischievously as he was Harry lean forward to
follow only to be stopped because he was still bound. Chuckling he slid down his mate’s body, continuing his marking kisses and then he settled between his mate’s thighs in order to return the oral favour.

“Draco,” he whispered and sighed, thrusting up, while his mate wasn’t headed there yet.

“Humm,” came a sound like a reply from around one of his testicles. It was taken into a willing mouth, being laved and sucked gently.

“Draco-oo,” he said more sharply, as he was swallowed whole.

Draco in the meantime was slowly preparing himself to ‘ride’ his mate. One finger and then two enter his needy opening. One more and soon he was sliding up his mate’s body. “Harry,” he said. “You have to hold still. Can you do that?”

“Yeah,” he replied breathlessly. “Why?” Then he felt a hand grip the base of his erection and that’s when his magic rolled over his mate and back to him.

He sensed Draco lowering himself and he groaned with need. He felt the opening that belonged to him descend and claim his turgid member, welcoming him.

“Don’t move,” Draco said breathless and shaking from the effort. He released his mate’s legs from their confinement and Harry brought his legs up to place both feet flat on the top of the bed.

Draco shifted a bit and then he slowly began to move. Up and then down, shifting until he found the right angle. “Oh,” he shouted. “More… more… faster.”

Harry braced his feet with his knees bent and then began to move in time with his mate. He was basically trying to buck him off, but not so hard as to actually do it. Draco was riding this through and enjoying himself.

“I’m close,” Harry said.

“Yes,” Draco replied and then he took himself in hand and began jerking off. “I’m taking you with me.”

That was near enough to get Harry to let loose, but he was able to thrust a bit harder and faster. It almost threw off his mate’s rhythm, but Draco knew just how hard he liked it. After one more deep stab to his eager prostate and he came. Spurting and splashing his mate.

Harry smelled the release and felt the droplets fall on him. He was squeezed by the wonderful walls of his mate and he was lost too. He came filling up his mate, thrusting til the last drop was milked from him by the tight ring that his mate seems to have excellent control over.

Draco flopped forward with Harry’s cock still in him. He released the bonds the held his mates hands above his head. Then he felt those long arms wrap around him and those wonderful hands, petting and stroking his back.

“I love you, Harry Potter,” he said.

Harry smiled goofily and said, “I love you Draco Potter.”

He kissed his mate and soon fell out of him when he shifted their positions for a more comfortable sleep. He whispered a cleansing, cleaning spell before they drifted off to sleep. Nuzzling and clinging to one another throughout the night.
TBC...
Chapter Twenty-Seven

Monday, September 18 (Welcome Back Weasley Twins)

The Weasley twins walked into the Great Hall of Hogwarts and both stood open mouthed at the changes that they saw within. The portraits on the walls had all been displaced to accommodate the four huge paintings of the Founders. The students were all sitting at different tables until they realized that they were organized by year.

“Misters Weasley,” Professor Snape said. His voice carrying out through the Hall, as all the students had hushed when they had entered. “You’re welcome to sit with your fellow students,” he said.

He indicated the additional seats at the seventh year table. He, personally, would have had them sit at the first and second year table, but they were taller then those students and they would have blocked their view of the others in the room. He also figured that if they were to sit there they would have had too much fun. The twins were basically just big kids to him anyway.

“Fred… George… What are you doing here?” Hermione questioned in her usual nosy way, however, they never had a chance to answer as Dudley walked into the Hall and saw them.

“Hi guys,” he said. “I just heard the news. Good for you and Welcome Back!”

The twins were happy to see a friendly face and they both said, “Thanks.”

“Join us,” Dudley said, pointing to the same seats that the Potions Master had indicated. Dudley immediately sat to one side of them and Neville soon joined them by sitting next to him and away from the twins. He was one of their old favourite ones to prank, after all.

As soon as the twins sat down and before they could help themselves to anything at the table, two small cubed boxes appeared on their plates. A tiny scroll containing the instructions to activate the contents was next to the box. They opened the boxes to find they each had a little crystal ball inside. Reading the instructions they were about to tap them with their wands, but Hermione stopped them.

“Don’t,” she said.
“Why,” Fred asked.

“Because you’ll be stuck at school like the rest of us for the year,” she said.

“Don’t be stupid Granger,” Draco sneered, as he came into the Hall and sat down next to one of the twins. “You can’t leave because of the permission form that your parents signed on your behalf. These are just general health monitors.”

“What a crock!” She exclaimed and then said, “Once you tap them they’re permanent and you can’t get rid of them.” She hated that she couldn’t study any of them and still has not been able to catch hers.

She tried to catch one belonging to other student’s and couldn’t. She even tried to catch Ron’s when they were both in their room. He let her try, secretly enjoying it every time she failed.

“What makes you think that theirs would even be remotely similar to those belonging to the regular students,” Neville asked. It was obvious that the twins were here by invitation.

“Guys,” Draco said to the twins, sitting next to one. “We already explained these to you. Besides, until you follow the instructions, you can’t eat until the boxes for them are out of the way.”

The twins just shrugged, ignored Hermione’s further protests and touched the balls with their wands. The students watched the little devices begin their orbits around the twin red-heads. Once they were out of their boxes, the boxes disappeared and they were now able to happily load their plates for breakfast.

Hermione huffed in annoyance that they didn’t listen to her. It didn’t long for her usual ‘need-to-know’ buttinski attitude to crop up and she asked again, in what she hoped, was a friendly manner. “What are you guys doing back at school?”

They looked at one another, then at her and then they both began to eat their breakfast as though the answer would be obvious by now.

“Well?” She demanded, feeling that as a Prefect she had a right to know.

“What’s it look like?” One twin asked.

The other one answered, “Having breakfast, of course.”

The first and second years listening in were giggling. Most of them knew that that was obvious by their actions and they also knew that if the Prefect needed to know she’d have been told before now. They knew that there had to be a reason more for the Weasley twins to come to school, but since it really wasn’t any of their business, they didn’t ask.

However they all loved to watch that nosy Prefect get mad. She was a pain to all of them with rules this… rules that and you must follow the rules… blah, blah, blah…

Hermione glared the giggling first and second years into silence. She turned to voice her displeasure, but as the first warning bell rang for morning classes the Weasley twins raced through the double doors and successfully escaped her questions.

The Weasley twins were walking down the familiar passages of their old ‘Alma Mater’ discussing the girl. George asked, “Has she always been this nosy, brother?”

“I don’t know,” Fred answered. “She seems to have gotten a bit scary though. I thought that she’d
“I think that you’re right,” George agreed and then suggested. “Maybe we should prank the stuffiness out of her.”

“I don’t think that would work,” his twin said. “She’s never appreciated our products or pranks before. Let’s just get to class for now.”

They followed the map that had been given to them with their small schedule, turning down an unfamiliar corridor. Soon they were with the firsties waiting for the Potions’ class doors to open.

“Wow,” several of the first years said. “You guys own the Wheezes.”

The twins looked at them and bowed. “We appreciate you patronage at our humble establishment,” one said.

“I recall several of you stopping by before the 1st of September,” the other said.

“We thank you,” they finished.

Before the younger years could be to ask questions, the doors to the class opened and the students all filed in. All the students quickly made their way to their desks and all had noticed the extra desks added to two separate groups near the back of the room.

“Mr. Weasley,” Harry said to one of the twins and then said the same to the other, while facing him. “Mr. Weasley. Welcome Gentlemen, please be seated with the students, where the extra desks have been added for each of you.”

Once the older guys were seated with the first years, Harry continued. “First years… Misters Fred & George Weasley are here to attend class with you and regain an understanding of classroom safety related specifically to Potion making. They are also here for the basics of analysis for the remainder of this month. Next month they will attend classes with the second years. So in their honour…” He gave a dramatic pause, something he had been working on. “Today we are going to have a Pop-Quiz.”

The twins groaned with the rest of the students, but kept their basic humour. It wasn’t like they didn’t know about being tested on the safety procedures, but they were surprised at how Harry conducted it.

“You know the drill everyone, to your stations. Mister Fred, please take this station for your duration here and Mister George, you are to be here.” Harry had effectively separated the twins by desk and by brewing station. They were now at opposite ends of the class.

He had the stations set up with different potion recipes and ingredients ready for the students to brew. The ingredients were all there for their use, but the students had three parchment pages set up for their observations of their processes. He monitored their precautions and threw coloured balls to float above the cauldrons where the students needed to correct their mistakes.

The twins followed the procedures to a tee, but the each had forgotten a different safety precaution. The balls had be gotten rid of by the end of the brewing time or else the students lost marks. Unfortunately the twins couldn’t remember what they had forgotten. They had always been together when they brewed, so they always relied on the other to remember different steps.

They thought that Harry would allow them to continue like that, but he didn’t. Harry had already discussed with the Potions Master and they had come up with this plan. They needed to fully learn
all the steps in order to help prevent errors from happening during their experiments.

“Time everyone, return to your seats,” Harry said after twenty minutes of brewing, which was when all potions should be done. The twins noticed that some of the cauldrons had two or three floating balls above. There were, of course, a couple of cauldrons that had none.

He then called the parchments to him and then he said, “Misters Weasley, you had an assignment, please bring them forward and place them on this table,” he pointed at the one in the middle of the room.

“Your classmates are going to analyze the potions as another part of this Quiz. The rest of you are to go through the analysis process and figure out what the potions are. Put your deductions on these,” he said sending several other bits of parchments to them. “Misters Weasley you can follow your table mates through the process, but you can not provide them the list of ingredients or the potion instruction. Let them show you how the process works, make sure you take notes.”

Harry then sat down, beginning to grade the potions that the students had brewed and to add the deductions for the coloured balls still floating. Each colour had a different value and purpose. There was a colour code similar to the ingredient code that he usually used for his researches. There was another type of colour and texture code for a missed safety process.

It took time for the students to go over the potions that the Weasley twins had brought with them. A couple of the students knew on sight what they were supposed to be because they remembered two of the first three that Apprentice Potter had showed them in their first class. However it was very obvious that the twins missed a couple of steps or because they tried to short cut the brewing process.

The potions were either too thick or too thin and two of them were definitely the wrong colour, but all of the students wrote the physical observations like they were taught to. The twins were writing notes on they way that they were deducting the potions, writing their interpretations. They were all still learning the deduction methods.

Soon all the students were back in their group table and they were openly discussing the potions. They didn’t want to open the bottles because of the strangeness that they detected in them. Harry gave them each a bonus mark for that precaution.

Harry finished his marking and then began the process of showing the students how to work backwards from potion to ingredient and process. Since these ones were brewed by the twins, Harry pulled out three other bottles of what the potions were supposed to look like.

“How these are what the potions that the Misters Weasley should have presented to us,” Harry said. “It quite obvious that a few steps were either missing or something else happened during the brewing process. I will go over the steps to follow in order to reverse the potion to it’s most basic ingredients. Reversing the steps to know what process was used for brewing will take time to learn, so we will begin with trying to break down the ingredients. Doing this may lead you back to the original potion, if it is one that you’ve already studied.”

There were some students looking forward to learning this, but Apprentice Potter was not done. “First, however we need to go over the Quizzes and find out what steps you missed.”

The students groaned at that because Harry made the students talk the process through together and then the ones who missed a step or safety procedure received homework on the missing step or process. They needed to remember why certain steps were important. The reason some were not too happy about was because they had to do this on top of the new stuff that they were learning.
“Now, now,” Harry said. “You know that I only ask for one foot on the missing process and no, you can not write in grossly large letters or else I will expect three feet from you. Understood?”

“Yes, sir,” they all said at the same time. They knew that this was to get the Weasley twins used to Apprentice Potter’s methods.

He then continued on with his lessons, giving additional work for the Weasley twins to brew at home. “We will use the Twins homework in the analysis process of brewing potions. At the end of the month, they will be tested and then perhaps, if you all pass your test, we will ask the Weasley twins to attend as the businessmen that they are for questions and answers.”

This had also been discussed with the twins previously and they loved the idea. It would be great to get the little brains early before they are corrupted by the ‘purity of a well brewed potion’.

Only some Masters can turn those out. The twins wanted to show them the young ones their creation process for coming up with new ideas and Harry agreed that they should know how far things can go, if a different path is taken.

History of potion making was also part of Harry’s Potion classes, but it was the second years that began to learn to do in-depth research into the history of a process, method of brewing or mixing of specific ingredients.

There was only one student, from surprisingly the Hufflepuff House, that tested into first and second year Potions class. She was in the second year on a trial basis, but so far she was keeping up with them. Obviously she was one of the ones that had a perfect score in this class.

She was the one that Harry recommend the twins get accurate notes from in order to learn the processes or other information that they missed by not being their since the first day.

All of the students clapped when they found out about the possible presentation from the twins and when the bell rang they were all chatting excitedly about it as they left the room. Harry remained behind to store the twins’ potions and the originals safely.

Fred and George were watching him. “Guys you do know that you can leave now,” he said. “Unless you have some questions?”

“We do have questions, but do you have time?” George said.

“Of course,” Harry said. “Second years don’t come in until the third period before lunch, but this afternoon I will be busy."

“Why did you separate us?” Fred began.

“Why do you test with coloured balls?” George continued.

“Why are the desks set up this way?”

“Why are the work stations on either side of the class?”

“Whoa, guys slow down,” Harry said. “One at a time and I will try to answer your questions.”

He then began with explaining the separation, to which they agreed that they were limiting their own knowledge by relying on the other. It was easier to use a colour key for himself, due to his disability. However, it was also a way to train the younger ones to remember separate ingredients and processes, if there was a visible colour key for them.
The desks were set up that way in order to separate the houses. He explained his process for the group and individual work. The twins had to learn to rely on their desk mates in order to learn the missing steps.

The work stations were kept apart from the desks that the students used because they were far enough to prevent some ingredient slinging, but also to prevent accidental ink spills into the cauldrons.

Question after question, the twins asked Harry this and that about potions, while he answered everything that he could before the next bell rang. He also told them that their little orbiting balls were their Portkey to and from the school. They where activated automatically 20 minutes before their start of class time, but should the twins be in the school before that, then it obviously wouldn’t activate.

It would activate once they left the main doors into the school and only on the school grounds. Harry didn’t want them encountering trouble on their way to Hogsmeade. He certainly didn’t think that the twins wanted to answer questions from the general public about their reasons for being at the school.

He then handed them each a book of “Single Serving Potions” to add to their tools for this class and told them that they were still going to be able to see him for another two months. He’d also see them for however long their lessons will last Professor Snape.

The bell rang for third period class, at which point the twins realized that they should be leaving to do their homework and return to the ‘day jobs’.

September 20 – After classes, before evening meal

Harry had found some answers to the Marking issue that had been bothering him and to Remus’ werewolf problem. He was currently in a debate with this Potions Master about the ritual and about testing a potion. Actually it was more of a shouting match, but it was certainly very vocal.

The Founders were all in one of the few landscape paintings in Hogwarts that once it was occupied by a portrait figure, no other portrait figure could enter it. It was a quirk of the Master Painter, who made these types of paintings in the past.

He was one paranoid gentleman, so afraid of being spied on. He made them to trap the spies, namely any portrait figure. However, the paintings in Hogwarts were created for the school and allowed control to the portrait figures, if they wanted to have some peace away from other ‘chatty’ paintings.

Anyway, in order for all four of the Founders to occupy this painting, they had to joined hands and will themselves into it, together. Now they were all enjoying a sunny day, in a green field pasture, picnicking under a large muggle Oak tree. They had been laughing as the argument took place in the Potions Master’s private quarters.

“How sir,” Harry tried again to calm the dark man down. “If you’d just look through my notes…”

“No, Potter,” Severus hissed at his apprentice. “I refuse to do it. There’s no way that I would allow that beast anywhere near me to ‘mark’ me in any such animalistic fashion.”

“But Professor,” Harry tried again. “How do you expect…”
“Nothing…” the man shouted. “I expect nothing because I will go through nothing. Nothing can get rid of this, so that means nothing will ever happen.” He sobbed out the last word because the thought of having come so close, only to find failure at every turn… His emotions broke free of their barriers, actually forcing a choked sob-like sound out of the troubled man.

Harry stopped trying to convince the Professor anything, startled by such a sound. In the force of such he knew it was very doubtful that the dark man had heard anything worthwhile. He turned to the painting that the Founders were in and asked that they leave. He immediately locked it with the ability he gained as Headmaster, which prevented any other portraits from entering it. He was also able to lock all other paintings in the room.

He pulled a soft textured, brushed cotton handkerchief and handed it to the man. Severus snatched it from the hand that held it out to him. He was about to hand it back after using it to wipe his eyes, but Harry waved his hand and said, “Keep it. I’ve got zillions more of those things.”

Harry then called Dobby to bring them some tea. He took out a couple of his own version of the Calming Draught and placed them on the table. “Sir,” he said loud enough to gain the attention of his Potions Master. “Please sit down.”

It was then that the Professor noticed that Harry was serving tea, just like the old Headmaster use to do, especially in a time of seeming crisis. He snorted at the sight and then he had to let out a dark chuckle at his apprentice’s next comment. “I could conjure you a fluffy, flowered chair too, but I never thought that those were very comfortable.”

“You’ve gained some measure of sense, Mr. Potter,” he said sitting down at the table and pouring some tea. “I’d have burned it, if you did conjure one of those monstrosities.”

The dark man then picked up one of the potions from the table and examined it. He tried to determine the ingredient(s) that could have changed it from the normal draught that he produced for Madam Pomfrey. The label was clearly written, “Calming Draught”, but it wasn’t clear or pale blue like the ones he made.

“Take it, if you need it,” Harry said. “I’m not going to force it on you nor am I going to spike your tea like the other Headmaster used to do.”

Severus sighed, “I don’t need it now, but perhaps later…”

Harry looked in the other man’s direction and nodded, knowing that it was going to be tested for ingredients first. Then suddenly the look changed to something like an off-center penetrating gaze of someone looking for the truth.

“So… do you want to explain your sudden reluctance to even consider meeting with your mate in his were form this Friday?” Harry asked concerned by the sudden change. “Did you just remember what his form looked like from my third year? Perhaps had a nightmare about it?”

Snape was holding his tea cup and looking into it when Harry started talking, but he looked up suddenly and asked, “What… What?”

“You’ve obviously suffered from a recent nightmare or something of a night terror,” Harry said and before the man could protest he explained. “I can smell the fear on you. It’s in your sweat. That and you do realize that my scar used to be a link to the Dark Lord. It didn’t just link me to him, but to all of his Death Eaters too.”

He paused to let Severus think about this. “It’s more like an echo now, but I can sometimes still feel
the things that the bastard tries to do. I know that he did something to affect your dreams.”

“Stop,” Severus said. “I don’t dream… I haven’t once since I was forced to take the Dark Mark.” He heaved a sigh and said, “I don’t see how I could go from never, ever dreaming to… to… that…”

Harry could tell that the man was very upset and was getting more so. He stood up and walked over to his Potions Master and stood by his side for a moment before he reached down and hugged him. “We can fix this,” he said holding the man for a moment more, tickled by the stunned silence.

“We’re family now. I promise to try and not let you down,” he claimed and then he was surprised to feel the arms of stubborn Potions Professor reach for him in comfort. It didn’t last long enough to be uncomfortable for either of them, but the feelings of family came through.

Harry returned to his seat and then said, “Now why don’t you tell me about it. Maybe there is something in the links within the Dark Mark that needs to be severed before the ritual. I strongly feel that you should meet with Remus this Friday because it will allow you one night to get used to him like that. It’s important for the ritual. I’ve made the calculations for it and the best time to conduct the ritual during the next new moon, which happens to be October 22nd.”

Severus took another shuddering breath and said, “All right show me this ritual and you better tell me how I can live through this Friday without being mauled by the beast.”

He was only grouching now, but he was still concerned about meeting up with Remus in full werewolf form. He had been putting up with the experiment that Harry had set up for the DADA Professor, where the man brought his were-beast forward into his mind and sort of let the beast out.

It was still disconcerting to know that the mild Professor growled a lot. He liked to lick and kiss his mate, when the beast was forward in the mind. There were also some small outwards manifestations of the beast, but they were very minor and didn’t affect his Dark Mark when Remus was growly or hairy.

Harry handed him the book he kept all of his research in and waited for the man to begin reading it. It was a fairly simple yet complicated process. He knew in his mind that this had to be done sooner rather than later.

There was no way around some of the steps, but Harry believed that his Potions Master may be able to now help look into the ritual and potions needed for it. He hoped that the man would have the missing pieces that he needed.

Severus looked through the steps and realized why Harry was pushing for this to happen. The werewolf had to claim his mate in order for the mating magics to override the bond conditions in the Dark Mark. Unfortunately, there was precedent for these kinds of things, but they had occurred long past.

However, sometimes the mating was not strong enough to override the evil within a so-called Dark Mark. The mate was either destroyed in the process or they were Marked in turn by the current Dark Lord or Dark Lady of the time. This was something that Harry hoped that Professor Snape would know how to counter with perhaps another ritual, potion, spell or combination of all.

The dark looked through everything that Harry had written down and soon he was at section with the list of all things that could go wrong. It wasn’t a good list at all because insanity, destruction and death were all there.

He sighed and then said, “Well… You’ve certainly done your homework for this, haven’t you, Mr.
“Of course I did,” he replied. “I just want to know if you could think of a step that would basically cleanse or purify you for your mate. I think that would give you and Remus the edge you need to defeat the Mark. You do know that either I or Draco will have to be present because the Parseltongue spells in the Mark have to be counteracted.”

It wasn’t the first time that Severus had to do a ritual in the presence of others while he was nude and in the middle of certain sexual acts. Some magics worked best with emotions and some rituals required the release of specific bodily fluid. This ritual would effectively take the normal mating, amplify it with the sexual magics of a bonding and hopefully the resulting energy will be enough to push out the tainted magics that were forced into him.

“I may have a couple of purification rituals, but the potions needed for each vary, depending on the results wanted,” Severus explained. “I know that either of you will be present, that doesn’t matter to me so long as there is a good chance that this will work. I won’t have you boys harmed, if the werewolf cannot understand the situation.”

“Well… I was thinking,” he began, but paused when his Professor snorted at the possibility of Harry even thinking. Harry mock glared at the man, which was not very effective because his eyes weren’t focused. He continued with a smile, “I was thinking that Draco and I could be there this Friday to keep you company. Who knows? Maybe one of the languages I was gifted would mean that I can actually talk to Moony. What do you think?”

“You believe that you can speak to him in his full…?”

“Sure, if I can talk to Buckbeak and Hedwig, why not?” Harry confirmed.

Severus took a sip of his cooling tea to consider the possibilities of such information. “If you can…” Harry turned to listen to the man. “If you can… Do you think that you would be able to find out why he attacked me back in school?”

“Of course Professor,” Harry said. “I can promise you that.”

“Very well,” the man said. “I think that I know of a couple of purification rituals, but the best one requires a very rare ingredient that I know I don’t have enough of.”

“What ingredient?” Harry asked, curious to know what kind of ingredient would be difficult to acquire.

Severus swallowed nervously and leaned forward to whisper it. “Amniotic fluid…” he gulped again. “Specifically that of an unborn unicorn, direct from the female’s belly is best.”

“What?” Harry questioned. He blinked for a moment trying to figure out how such could ever be used in a potion. It was not that he didn’t have the ingredient, but a potion. “How… I mean how did you ever obtain something like that?”

“During your first year,” the Potions Master said. “In your detention you found a dead unicorn. It was female and just barely pregnant. Hagrid told me that the unicorns would not mind that I use the dead body, as it no longer had a living soul in it. It was one of the most difficult harvestings that I have ever had to do, but I had to, it was too rare an opportunity.”

He looked down at his near empty cup and waited for the Golden Gryffindor to raise its ugly head in protestation of how wrong it is to desecrate the body of so pure a creature. He didn’t hear anything from his apprentice about it and so he looked up to see a far away look in the eyes of the Draekon.
“Harry?” He asked.

Harry blinked a couple of times. He was blinking away a couple of tears and then eased the man’s concerns, “It’s all right Professor. I’m not going to say anything against that. Why would I?”

“It’s a unicorn… Pure creature… pure Light creature,” he said. “You really don’t see anything wrong with that?”

“If Hagrid told you about it, it was because he knew how the creatures in the forest felt about it,” Harry answered. “They are the ones who would’ve stopped you, if they didn’t want you using the body for potions ingredients. You were given a gift, even though it had been slaughtered by Voldemort through Quirrell.”

“You knew about that?”

“I had to look for it with Draco,” he said smiling, remembering how his mate ran away terrified. Well it wasn’t that funny at the time, but at least the blond had the sense to send help in his direction. “All right, it’s nothing to laugh about, but Draco did scream like a girl back then.”

Severus snorted and knew exactly what Harry was talking about.

“I was in a lot of pain at the time, but I do remember him screaming. Besides,” he said with a faraway look. “When you’re given a gift like that, you can’t turn it down. Even I know that.”

“Harry?” Severus asked. “Did something happen?”

Harry paused and the nodded his head. “It was during my trip back that I found out about how some War Unicorns are made, rather than…” He shook his head. “It’s not the time to tell that story, but I have what you’re looking for and what you need in order to make the purification potion.”

“All right,” the man said a little relieved that Harry was not going to condemn him, but he was equally irked to not know the story of the War Unicorns. He sighed again, sipping his tea and then turned the conversation back to a somewhat safer territory.

“Now let’s discuss how the Weasley twins are doing.” They moved on and a continued their discussion with the best way to teach the twins and of how they were going to treat the first years to a Q & A about their business.

Harry smiled and released the block on the portraits, letting the man know about and soon he was telling him about the potions homework that the Twins had brought. This caused the man to smirk, knowing exactly which steps were missed and why.

It was something that he had had difficulties teaching them, but with Harry pushing them apart, he believed that they were going to finally understand.

-----------------------------

TBC…
Chapter Twenty-Eight

Friday September 22 – Evening of “New Moon”

To have a werewolf come fully out on a night when the moon was not full in the normal sense was something that no one in this room had ever thought or heard about before. It was mutual decision by Harry and his mate that they would both be present for when Severus met Moony for the first time.

The dark man was nervous with very good reason. It wasn’t like the creature had never tried to attack him, but he had the hope that Harry would be able to finally find out why.

‘Why it would do that to someone that it has clearly determined was his mate?’ He kept thinking.

Severus was nervous, pacing up and down the room. He couldn’t help it. He’s been having nightmares on a daily basis by now and that was worrying to him.

He was equally worried about the boys. “Are you two sure about this?” He asked for the umpteenth time.

Draco and Harry both rolled their eyes and answered, “Yes. We’re sure.”

“Don’t worry Uncle Sev,” Draco said. “We have our wands at the ready and we can also call up a protective shield of liquid silver, if needed.”

“That’s right Professor,” Harry continued. “We’re just going to sit here and we’ll make sure that nothing bad will happen to you.”

Before Severus could ask one more time if they were ‘all right’ with this, there was a knock at his door. “Come in,” he said tersely. He was very nervous about this, but he knew that Harry was also right.

Remus came into the room. He was equally nervous about this too because his Godson was in the room. It was not just about Harry, he was concerned for Draco too. It would devastate his mate if the blond Draekon came to harm.

“Hi boys,” he said. “I hope that everything is ready.”
“Yep,” Harry said, not concerned about the whole deal. “Draco agreed to be temporarily blinded and to his ears muffled for any sound that doesn’t involve speaking.”

“Yeah,” the Slytherin youth confirmed and jokingly told them. “There’s no need for me to have that kind trauma. I don’t want to be scarred for life.”

The others chuckled at the face and statement that he made.

He cheekily grinned, right back at them. “Well it’s true,” he said mock-seriously. This caused all of them to laugh and it generally eased the tension that had been in the room since Severus began his pacing.

“Would you like some tea, Professor?” Harry asked, hoping to calm the man nervous man down.

“No,” the nervous man stated.

Remus watched his mate pace with concern that they were not going to be able to connect like they should. He knew that his inner wolf was looking forward to exploring all of the scents that incorporated his mate.

Moony may have seemed like a separate entity and in some respects he truly was. Remus had wanted to be disassociated from the wolf-like creature. It was a natural fear because of the way he was forced into this life of hiding and scrounging for the right to even work in a decent place.

When Harry presented him with a possible plan and chance to change and to grow, it was a relief because his Cub knew how it hurt to be different in such a way. To think that it was some forgotten lore that was the solution for him and his mate.

Moony wanted more than anything to able to finally claim the dark, sensual smelling man. Remus was not that far behind because let’s be honest, sexual relief through casual encounters was not for him and he had never… Well that was a daunting thought too, to know that his mate had been forced into an act that should have belonged to Mooney and him, alone.

Remus and the mind of the wolf were merging. They had developed an understanding and it was true that had they needed such intervention. He only hoped that the wolf would understand his need to care for his mate, but the werewolf was already there. It wanted the dark man.

The DADA Professor was just as concerned about the boys being in the room for this encounter, but he reasoned that they could take care of themselves. He hoped that they won’t be harmed.

“Professor Snape,” Harry began. “You should go now into the other room, just leave the door open like we discussed.”

“But…” Severus said.

Remus looked at his mate, his eyes were flashing with the change about to come upon him. He said, “I was given the potion this morning. It forces the change as the moon rises, just like my normal changes.”

“Oh…” gulped Severus. He was ready for a lot of things, but this one was just about too much. Harry did assure him that he would ask the questions, before letting the wolf into his bedroom. That too was a decision that he had to make and accept.

He knew what the werewolf would do. It would be the same as when he was in animagus form. He
would have to accept his mate and accept being Marked by his mate in *that* fashion. However, his nightmares were very strong now and he hoped that his fear could be overridden by this.

Severus walked into his bedroom and changed from the robe that he had been wearing. He made sure that he had taken a bath to remove the scent from his day of teaching. He did want to secretly please the werewolf, even if he was nervous about this whole process.

He put on a light one with nothing underneath. The changing helped him to calm his mind and to relax into what was about to happen. It was like he didn’t know, but reviewing and using his mind to accept this situation helped him a great deal.

‘It’s almost like nervous anticipation,’ he thought. ‘If I can anticipate pleasure or even some form of contentment from the encounter, maybe it won’t be so bad.’

In the other room, Moony could feel the moon rise and know that it was the wrong one. It was strange to come out on such a night, but the transformation was getting less painful every time the man he was linked to didn’t fight him. He wasn’t trying to make the man submit, but just accept that he was an integrated part of him now.

Remus’ bones shifted and Harry let his magic roam. His memory was brought forward from his third year, on the night that Pettigrew escaped from them. It was different now because he could sense the difference in Moony and Remus. He could sense that they were merging, but he could also sort of see the magics that made the werewolf what it was.

Draco was watching, slightly horrified at the changes that he was witnessing. It was gruesome in an oddly riveting way. He couldn’t turn away, so he was in morbid fascination. Once Remus had fully changed, he saw how the beast that was Fenrir Greyback was a real monster. His father had always threatened him with the bite of that thing, but somehow it was always just a bluff.

He was shaking with the knowledge that his own father would have allowed that creature to bite him. Remus’ form was nothing compared to Greyback’s. Greyback was a monster as a man and as a beast. He knew because he saw that awful werewolf eating humans and loving it.

Harry senses his mate’s unease. “Draco…”

“My fath… my fathe…,” Draco tried to explain, but Harry understood. He stood up and walked towards his mate, not once fearing the werewolf nearby.

He wrapped his arms around his mate and said, “Your father threatened you with the bite of a werewolf, didn’t he?”

“Yeah,” Draco confirmed. “Greyback… He threatened me with Fenrir Greyback. I saw… Oh, gods! What I saw… it…”

“Easy,” Harry said, trying to comfort his mate. “I remember seeing that thing too. He’s nothing like Moony, right?”

He was asking because it was his way of forcing his mate to look at Moony and focus on the difference. Draco wasn’t going to say anything, but Harry was right. The two werewolves were so different that it was almost like they were two entities, different creature with different habits.

“Right,” he whispered. ‘*By the gods, I hope that they are very different,*’ he thought. ‘*For Severus’ sake, I certainly hope so.*’

Remus growled at the name of Greyback and looked around with his wolfish eyes. He saw a couple
of ‘two-legs’ in front of him, but he didn’t feel the need to attack at all. It was a strange sensation. He
sat back on his haunches, arms down in front and waited, cocking his head.

Draco gave the creature a wary, but weak smile and said, “Hello Moony.”

Moony’s mind came forward, linking to the man’s and he shifted forward cautiously. Not that any of
the two-legs ever knew why the instinct of the werewolf is attack first and ask questions later. The
werewolves had always been hunted and the bite to the human carried the genetic memory of those
who were hunted.

His Cub was different. Moony could smell his Cub all over the ‘two-legs’ just in front of him. In fact
he could smell his Cub in the room and realized that one of the two-legs in front of him was his Cub.

Moony was looking around the ‘two-legs’ and Harry sensed that the werewolf was looking for him.
He moved Draco out of the way, behind him and took one step forward.

(…Cub?…) He growled. This sound enabled Harry to gauge the language and call forth the
werewolf’s own into his mind.

(…Moony…) Harry growled back softly, so that only the werewolf could hear him. This startled the
werewolf because no ‘two-legs’ had ever been able to understand him. Far distant memory showed
him that there used to be some of Harry’s human race that could understand the changed ones, but
this is the first time that anyone has ever tried.

Severus had changed and was watching the proceedings from the doorway to his room. He was
leaned up against the side of the entrance with his arms crossed. It was more like he was hugging
him-self, but he watch in fascination because the werewolf in his nightmares was not this gorgeous
creature in front of him.

The name Greyback, spoken by his Godson, conjured images of that man in Severus’ mind and then
he knew what must have been going on. This was something that he felt he must talk to Harry about
because that boy seemed to know how to fix things.

‘I hope that he will have a solution for this,’ Severus thought, watching the werewolf greet his Cub.

A werewolf is a complete amalgamation of man and wolf. It’s supposed to be a mix that should have
augmented the natural senses of the human that they merged with and not include such painful
transformations.

A natural werewolf still had his human’s height, legs that shifted to the hind ones of the wolf for
speed and a tail that swayed with every emotion of wolf-like being. The arms of a werewolf
lengthened to match the legs, to help with running on all fours, but with very hairy, clawed hands
rather than inarticulate paws.

Fur sprouted everywhere, covering the human entirely with a very hairy coat of soft or coarse fur. It
depended on the human being changed. It was also just a little something to protect the animal from
the elements. All wolves are furred creatures.

The human face was most notably changed with the powerful jaws of a canine, the sensitive ears on
top of the head and the nose that could scent everything from dirt, dust and pollen to the magic
ingles that fluttered through the air in magical places.

Moony was as tall as Harry standing and even crouched down he was still massive. He was on all
fours slowly approaching a ‘two-legs’ for the first time in his life. There was something about this
one that felt like family… pack… he needed to know. Slowly he raised his nose to the upturned palm
that waited to be acknowledged.

Draco watched his mate, wondering how Harry was going to communicate, not having heard his mate growl back. That was until he saw his mate’s hand reach for the creature, palm up. He was holding his breath in wonder and hoped that everything would be all right.

Looking at the animal in front of his mate clearly, he noted that it was a very striking beast. There was nothing wrong with him that he could see and he certainly was getting over some of his fear. It did not alleviate his concern for his own Godfather, though.

He knows that the man had gone through a lot and now he was being asked to face down one of his natural fears. He glanced towards the bedroom where his Godfather was waiting and noticed that the man was observing them.

Severus had such a strange look on his face. It was almost one of tenderness and love for them, all of them. He was mostly watching the werewolf interact with Harry and somehow knew that the youth was talking to the werewolf.

Growling undertones, a couple of yips and a bark caused Draco to look at the two in front of him in wonder. He smiled at his mate, feeling pride welling up in him that he was the mate of such a person.

‘*He’s so amazing,*’ he thought, shaking his head in wonder. He wandered over to his Godfather, to talk quietly to him while Harry was talking to Moony.

(…So that’s what happened, both times?…) Harry asked and when he heard an affirmative growl he said. (…No wonder you were upset, but you must know that Severus didn’t know what was going on at the time…)

(…I do now…) Moony returned (…My other has shown me things that are now mine to keep…) It was a roundabout way to explain that whatever one saw, felt or knew that the other was now absorbing it. Whatever it was, experience or memory, now belonged to both and that’s how they were merging.

Harry sort of understood the process, so he growled his understanding of the situation. However he now explained most of what was going on, especially since the werewolf was brought forward out of phase with his natural cycle.

(…There is a reason that you’re here…) He began, but was interrupted.

(…My other has tried to tell me what is going on, but I have a hard time understanding…) Moony confessed. (…Please tell me, can I ever claim my mate?…)

Harry smiled and almost laughed at the one track mind of the werewolf. (…We’re working on that. You see I found a way for the two to fight the evil that has bound your mate. Stop…) He said holding out his hand to prevent Moony from saying anything at the moment. (…Tonight is a test…) (…Test?…)

(…Yes…) Harry then explained what the process was and how long it would take to set up. Severus needed to be purified as much as possible in order to weaken the magics in the Dark Mark on his arm. He told the werewolf that there was a potion for that and a bonding ritual that can override the bonds that were force in Moony’s mate. (…It all has to take place on the next night like this one…)

(…Why?…)
(…Because your claim must be at its strongest and it can not be on the night of the full moon, while you are forced to change…) Harry explained. (…One a full moon night you’re pulled into your nature, but now both you and Remus are in control. You need that to fight the magics and to claim you mate safely. I know you wouldn’t wish to harm him, but the chance of that is greater if it happens on the night of a full moon…) Moony hung his head, considering everything that his Cub told him. His other self, the man, accepted and was very concerned that about harming his mate. The werewolf acknowledged that there was a greater chance of causing harm to his mate because he has been waiting so long.

(…I want to know…) Moony trailed off.

(…I have spelled your mate so that you can not penetrate him tonight or any time his takes on his animagus form…) Harry said. (…On the night that we do the ritual, it will be as though your mate has never experience the act, forcibly or otherwise. We will be basically turning back his sexual experience clock to a time just before he was marked…) (…Really?…) This idea please Moony because his mate would not have the physically memory of being forced. He had that though, (…Will he remember… Will he…?)

(…He will remember having been forced, but physically it will be as though his body has never gone through it…) Harry said. (…There are a couple of other things we can do, but I hesitate to bring them up because it would basically turn everything back temporarily…) (…What do you mean?…)

(…Rituals are complicated and simple, depending on what we are trying to accomplish…) Harry began. (…There are spells, potions and any number of things that can make a person young again. Magic can make your mate fifteen in every sense of the word, but that will defeat the purpose of fighting against the bonds forced on him. So, we are going to purify him with a potion 48 hours before the next new moon night and he will refrain from doing magic for the whole time. We will then go to the Weasley twins’ home and perform the ritual there…) Moony quirked his head to one side and asked, (…Why there?…)

(…They’re family…) Harry said. (…Well, they’re considered family to all of us and that will help with the ritual. Once there, Severus will do a special cleansing ritual first and then when you come forward like you now, you will have to claim your mate as your nature intended…) (…My other is concerned about the strength of our combined magics…) Moony said and tried to explain his concerns. (…We do not want the man to be submissive to the point where he is lost…)

Harry smiled, pleased that Remus and Moony had an understanding of the sex magics involved. (…Don’t worry. You only have to claim Severus and he only has to accept you. Draco, Fred, George and I will be in the four corners of the room and we will fight the Darkness within your mate’s Mark. We will also be witnesses to your bonding by just being there…) Moony was startled, but happy to learn this because that was part of his own needs. Family needs to witness such a union because it blessed them. (…Thank you…) Moony said. (…There will be bonding Marks, but my other would like to give a gift to his mate and has asked that I mention it to you. He didn’t believe that we could speak on such a matter privately…)

Harry scooted forward and listened to the request. He frowned a moment, but then figured that there was no harm in asking, so he said, (…I’ll ask. I don’t know what their reply would be, but if they
decide not to, I will commission it for you from another. I know of a few makers outside of this country and I know that they would do this for me. So don’t worry, you’ll have it no matter what…)

Moony leaned forward and licked his Cub’s cheek. (…Thank you, now introduce me to your mate and then to mine. You two Cubs just…? …)

(…We’re for Severus’ peace of mind…) Harry said, standing up from his own crouch position. (…We will stay in this room and not disturb you two with whatever you do. The door must remain open so that your mate will know that he will have help, should he feel that he needs it or that perhaps you do. However the doorway will actually muffle the sounds from within the room and an Obscurus spell will hide you behind a vague screen…)

(…Why would I seek you out?…) Moony said.

(…Your mate has been having nightmares…) Harry said, walking towards the other two humans in the room. (…He may have one after your exertions. You know exhausted from whatever you two are going to do…)

Moony huffed and decided to focus on the man who was leaning against the doorway. Draco had been leaning against the wall next to his Godfather, but remained a little distant, just in case. It wouldn’t do to offend the werewolf by accident.

“Moony,” Harry said in a normal voice. “This is mate Draco Severus Potter. Draco this is Moony.”

Draco was surprised to be introduced to the werewolf, but followed Harry’s instructions to hold out his palm to be tickled by the snuffling nose. He giggled a bit, but then relaxed a touch and then when the werewolf leaned forward, he began to pet the head and scratch softly behind the ears.

“Does he understand our language?” Asked Draco, who received a lick in reply from the one he was petting.

“Yes,” Harry answered anyway, smiling when he heard his mate giggle at being licked. “Because the two minds are merging, Moony understands what we are saying.”

Severus swallowed a lump in his throat. The werewolf was so close, but there was still a vast difference between the features of this one versus the one in his nightmares. He paused before holding out his own palm to be introduced to the creature.

“Moony,” Harry said. “This is…” He stopped talking when Draco took his hand to guide him away. “Draco…”

“Hush Harry,” he said. “Severus needs to do this on his own and they’re doing fine.” He guided his mate to the table where everything was set up for them to do their homework.

Harry shrugged and knew that Severus or Moony would call if they needed help or anything else.

“Now I’ve asked Remus for Winky’s help,” Draco began to outline his plan for creating capsule pets in the images of Hogwarts’ House mascots. “She’s taking the patterns and altering them with the help of some younger house-elves, not yet bound. They did agree to a privacy and secret spell to contain the information of the tasks that they are doing for the Wheezies…”

He continued to explain how he wanted them to look like and how Professor Flitwick was impressed with the level of thought for his project. The short man did agree that limiting the actions of the “Beany-Baby” dolls was important and of course Draco did plan for his project to be available for market by the winter holidays.
Harry listened and added his own input into the project, advising that maybe a special prize could be issued as part of the selections. There was no guarantee that the kids would be able to collect all four different toys all the time. He even suggested that the special prize incorporate the Hogwarts Dragon and Motto “Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon”.

“Ooh,” Draco exclaimed, writing away his ideas. “Maybe something available in a twenty percent chance of getting the toy dragon, but only after the others had been available for some time.”

The toys would contain some natural animal like actions. Like the Raven with fluttering wings and cawing sound, the badger with waddling digging claws and the sound related to it, the snake with swishing tail and hisses, plus the lion with a huge yawning roar and fuzzy mane that he shakes periodically.

The spelled actions for the toys were going to be simple and contained to one of two possibilities for now. One was what he called the “Clinger”. The toy would cling in a natural fashion to what the child wanted. It was activated by the child’s inner magics. It was a snap action that made the toy cling or wrap around an arm or wrist or even a broom handle.

The other possible action was what he called the “Attached Floppy”. These were going to be slightly smaller ones, but the spell would still be activated in the same manner, but only this time the action was a sort of slapping motion with the back of the animal being pasted or stuck to any surface. The rest of this particular toy was just as described, they just would flop in place, like the old sock dolls where the limbs were weigh down by weight in the tips of the limbs.

There was the Hufflepuff badger in the Hufflepuff colours, Ravenclaw raven in Ravenclaw colours, etc… All of them would have big, huge, sad or happy pound puppy eyes and sometime their heads would bobble up and down.

The Dragon was a brilliant new idea and Draco was already planning for it, writing down the ideas as they came. This one would be different. Oh, it would have all of the same options, but it would have an added feature where it would curl up and fall asleep. The child could then tickle it awake and coloured bubbles would come out of the animal’s roaring mouth. That was Draco’s plan, as soon as the others were completed.

On Professor Flitwick’s advice, he concentrated on the toys first because once he showed the machine plans it to the man they figured it would have been the easier thing to create. The teacher advised the blond Draekon to do the more difficult tasks first and keep the easy task for last. Designing the capsules were another thing that Draco could put off for a bit because he already had an idea based on the little monitoring balls that the students have.

Harry on the other hand had different things to do, like correct the students’ essays and plan more lessons. He was a new teacher after all, even though he did instruct the other is defense during his fifth year.

However at that time he was only doing what Hermione had advised him to teach the others. He was able to give some input, but honestly she was pushy and he was bored. He had been banned from Quidditch after all.

Now he was working on a few tests in the form of crossword puzzles and word search the younger years to learn word recognition and association. He was working with an old book that he had scrounged and finding it somewhere and it was called “Make Your Own Puzzles with Simple and Easy Spells.”

It was advertized a while back in the 1900’s and was something that was published as a gimmick to
promote family time and togetherness. Harry suspected that it was a campaign gimmick from one of the Minister candidates at the time.

Harry was using it for the spells and had stumbled across the first Crossword puzzles. There was even a section for making Jigsaw Puzzles with spells and having particular bits of animation magically activate it, once the puzzle was completed.

Once he had memorized the process it was quite simple to know the terms for the first and second years, but he was currently working on special ones, just in case. He was testing his own knowledge by creating more complicated ones. He was glad that they were in Severus’ quarters because he was given permission to access the man’s back issues of “Potions Monthly” and the school references for the older years’ required reading in Potions.

------------------

(Warning: Following section contains mention and mild actions of bestiality. If this is offensive to you please scroll to the end of this chapter and hit the “Next” button to move on.)

------------------

Meanwhile in the other room, the werewolf was slowly getting to know his mate in a completely natural fashion. He sniffed and snuffled at every area that contained the sharpest, most interesting scents. He licked any close by appendage to, hopefully, indicate understanding and concern because he knew that the human was nervous.

Severus put up with all of it and was glad that Moony allowed him to touch the furred limbs in return. He was a somewhat hands on kind of man, due to the fact that he was a Potions Master. He needed to feel things, like the ingredients and he also needed to smell things to actually know them. It’s what made him a very good Potions Master in the first place.

Moony allowed the touching, sensing that his mate-to-be was looking at him and learning him. His mate-to-be did act instinctively from time to time by lowering his gaze and showing his neck in submission. Whenever he did, the werewolf licked him in acknowledgement.

The robe that Severus was wearing, when he was in the doorway had long since been discarded and what ever was left of Remus’ clothing was discarded in the other when he changed. Remus came prepared with just an over robe and some very loose pants, which was on Harry’s recommendation in order to not have discomfort caused by the tearing of clothing.

The robe he removed just before he transformed and the pants he lost just by standing up in his wolf form. He wasn’t exposed as a human because he was a wolf-kin after all. He was furred everywhere and his sexual organs were sheathed like any other canine.

Currently he was lying very close to his mate-to-be and basically petting him with his clawed and furred hands. The hands are articulate, but they were gentle in their exploration.

Severus was ticklish and a few times he couldn’t help, but let out a chortle or chuckle and even a squeak or two in protestation. However he was more fascinated by the sensations of the gentle brushing sweeps and slight scratching of the claws in the more sensually sensitive parts of his body.

His body reacted naturally under such onslaught that he wasn’t too surprised when he became aroused and even more so when Moony began to lick him from head to toe. The wolf paid more attention to the genitals than anything else, but with Remus, his other, in the back of his mind guiding him in a human fashion, the werewolf was getting more responses out of the dark man. He was pleased with this outcome because it meant that his mate-to-be would be responsive during the actual claiming.
He used his furred hands and claws gently on the body of the human. He leaned down to lick his own penis stimulating it to emerge from the furred sheath. It was natural for the animal to do so, but it also help to stimulate the glands to secret his musky scent to mark his mate-to-be.

Severus was turned and moved into various positions, after which Moony would rub his hardened length all over him secreting the marking fluids. The scent was unique to Moony and Severus was memorizing it in his own fashion.

Curious, he looked at Moony and then directed his gaze lower. There was something very primal about seeing the erection that belonged to the werewolf. He was fascinated by everything. Well, he wasn’t in pain and he was aroused. It was very freeing to feel such sensations without pain and without being forced. He knew in his mind that he had felt any doubt about this sexual aspect of this, Remus would not have taken the potion to bring out Moony.

His own hands were roaming to furred body that was on him, above him and rubbing up against him. He reached down to rub the chest and stomach of the beast. Moony basically rolled over to let him. It was very nice and stimulating.

Severus petted the arms and flanks of the werewolf’s legs. He slowly made his way to the erection that was just jutting from the furred sheath. Curious, but cautious, he examined the furred testicles and the hard length. Petting and stimulating further caused more fluid to be released from the tip. One long finger, dipped in the pool of liquid and bringing it to his mouth he tasted it.

Moony watch this and then flipped Severus onto his front, pulling and pushing him into an “ass in the air” position. He rubbed his hardened length in between the pale cheeks, knowing that he couldn’t penetrate him didn’t matter. He needed to finish this and he wanted his release, his seed to marking his mate-to-be.

Severus took himself in hand and pumped his own organ to completion. He was hot and so aroused that he didn’t quite care at the moment that it was technically an animal doing this to him. Moony was kinder and more gentle at this then any of this previous encounters with such an act. Tugging firmly and quickly in time with the pumping thrusts from behind him, he was soon coming.

Jets of fluid landed on his back and the rubbing didn’t stop until his was re-positioned by Moony. The liquid was rubbed into him and onto his genitals, mixing with his own release.

Moony nipped him on the left side of his neck, enough to leave a mark, but not enough to break the skin. The flesh between the nipping teeth was treated to a mildly rough tongue, driving the mating saliva into it. Only when they fully mate, would Moony be able to break the skin and the marks would be permanent, but this was an acceptable alternative for the time being.

His scent on his mate-to-be and the fact that the saliva was there was still an indication that Severus belonged to him now. Now one else could have access and no one, absolutely no one could have him. He curled around the dark man and listened to him breath deeply in exhausted sleep.

He leaned down to link the tip of Severus’ penis making note that it twitched to a half arousal at such. ‘We have all night my mate-to-be,’ the werewolf thought. He made sure that the man would not be cold, he to fell into a mild slumber, anticipating the next round in his dreams.

---------------------------------

TBC…
October 4th - Evening

The Burrow was quiet in the evenings now, except for the clicking of knitting needles and the squeak of an old rocking chair. The Wireless was playing some soft music for their evening programming.

Molly Weasley was nearly going out of her mind with worry for all of her children. Even the ones that have officially left her nest are giving her cause for worry. Her home was just too quiet without her children underfoot.

Charlie was so far away in Romania. Bill was still digging around in the tombs of dead Pharaohs. Percy was still doing his own thing at the Ministry and refuses to come home, no matter what.

The twins were a real trial to her, as they continuously refused to come home and they wouldn’t even tell her where they were living now. She was their mother and had the right to know. ‘I bet that they’re not even eating properly now,’ she thought to herself.

She was currently listening to the Wireless and knitting the usual Christmas jumpers for her children. Even Percy was getting one, although he kept sending it back to her, she refused to leave him be and one day in her heart she felt that he’d come home.

A tapping at the window, caused her to slip a stitch, but that could easily be corrected in a moment. Looking up she noticed Hedwig was there with an envelope for her. She smiled at the snowy owl and gave her a treat. “You rest up a bit here dear, before you fly off,” she told her.

Hedwig hooted her thanks and appreciation, settling up in one of the rafters. She knew that Mrs. Weasley might want to reply and have it be returned reliably. So she waited to see what would happen.

Molly was curious about the envelope because it looked an invitation. Opening it up, she found that it was one.
Dear Mr. & Mrs. Weasley,

You are cordially invited to No. 12 Grimmauld Place for an evening meal with your family for a belated Celebration of our Bonding. The dinner will take place on the evening of October 6 of this year.

Separate invitations have been sent to your children with the exception of Bill and Charlie, as it is our understanding that they are still currently out of the country. Percy has been sent one too, although we have sincere doubts that he would accept such coming from us.

The evening will incorporate just a small gathering of everyone that we consider our immediate and extended family. As such, your children that are currently attending Hogwarts have been given special authorization from the Headmaster, to leave the school in order to attend our family gathering. Ms. Granger has also been included.

We eagerly hope that you accept and attend our gathering.

This letter will provide you with the security code to Floo into No. 12 Grimmauld Place on October 6 at 6:30pm and will be valid only until 6:45pm.

We hope that you and husband will be in attendance that evening.

Cordially,

Mr. Harold Jamison Potter & Mr. Draco Severus Potter

---------

Molly was shocked and surprised at the invitation. Mr. Weasley was just walking in from another late day at the office when he noticed that his wife was sitting at the table, staring at it. “Dear,” he said. “What is the matter?”

It was then that he realized what the invitation contains. Plucking out of his wife’s limp hands, he read over the contents and said, “Oh, good… They’ve sent it.”

She blinked for a moment and then what he said registered. “What do you mean they’ve sent it?”

“I saw our boys, Fred and George, last month and they hinted that this may be coming,” he said and then knowing her looks, he explained. “They invited me to tea one day. You remember that day, dear. I was late coming home.”

‘Yes,’ she thought. ‘I remember that day and that trumped up excuse that he gave me too.’ She looked at her husband’s sheepish countenance and knew that she was glad that he was never one to play the field, ever.

She smiled at him and said, “Sit yourself down, dear. I’ll get the kettle on, while you tell me again, why… you were late that day.” It was a trick that she’s used over time to get more information out of her husband, especially if he was hiding something that he knew she would be upset over.

However, this time he only replied, “That would be lovely dear. I’ll wash up a bit before joining you.”

Molly frowned at being thwarted, but then she had the time to look at the invitation one more time. That’s when it hit her. ‘Mr. Draco Severus Potter,’ she thought. “Draco…” The only person she knew named Draco was Narcissa Malfoy’s boy.
“Draco Severus Potter,” she said out loud, wondering what was wrong with this picture. Her husband… he hadn’t even batted an eyelash to blink when he read the invitation. ‘He knew,’ she thought. ‘I wonder what else there is to know.’

Arthur was just coming down the stairs anyway, even when he knew that his wife was upset with him. He had kept something from her. He never liked doing that, but it wasn’t as though he lied. There were times he loved his wife very dearly, but she was sometimes a little too nosy regarding those she considered her children.

She was fond of all her boys and had a special love for the twins, but for her own husband to withhold something about Harry, well that was different. Maybe the Order needed to know, but if they did, they certainly weren’t told about it.

A true bond marriage would be on record at the Ministry Archives, but no one had thought to look it up. ‘Did anyone in the Order know?’ She wondered and then she reflected again. ‘No they did not or else Albus would have told all of us about it.’

She watched her husband shift on the landing near the bottom of the stairs. She knew that she was nosy and still it upset her some, but she only served the tea and decided to wait until she saw everything with her own eyes. “Friday is not too far away,” she told him sternly. “I’ll find out then, but you rest assured that I will find out everything that is going on…”

Arthur smiled his love at his wife and simply said, “Yes, of course dear.”

---------------------

Friday, October 6th – Dinner with the Family

Harry and Draco had sent the invitations with various security codes and times for the Floo. They didn’t want the twins to be overwhelmed by everyone arriving at the same time.

They did send them a note via an insta-mail box that they had given them when they were ‘furniture haggling’ at Grimmauld, to tell them that they were headed into London for a couple of hours before heading to their place. That had the added effect of getting a huge shopping list from the Twins, of items that they wanted from the ‘Penny Stores’, in order to duplicate them Weasley style for their shop.

They did ask Harry to get their father a book that could explain the purpose of a Rubber Duck. Harry took it one step further. He surfed the Internet, with help from his mate, and found a song for children with an accompanying book explaining why “Rubber Ducky, made bath time lots of fun.” They planned to pick up an actual squeaky rubber duck to complete the picture.

He pre-ordered it because he needed the old record player version of it, in order for the song to actually be played and heard in the Wizarding World. They also found a record player that was ‘a magically miss-used muggle artifact’, but the modification done was not for mischief, but to actually play music from records in a magical environment.

So the Ministry of Magic, in its infinite lack of wisdom, but momentary flash of brilliance at the time, made the decision to allow the person who had owned this delightful device to keep it. They could do with it as they pleased, so long as they never changed it magically.

Harry picked it up for a bargain price at an old farm auction and he had the original Ministry Letter that accompanied the device so that no charges could be laid against him for owning or giving it
away. In fact with the letter there was the understanding that the current owner never alter it and that this be passed along to the next possible owner, ad infinitum.

Draco had an odd noble-type notion regarding how any new in-law should enter a family and it was not his own notion. He was following an old tradition from another culture. It was something that his mother had drilled into his mind, before she was assisted in moving on from this earthly plain. She had had the secret hope that her son would one day marry out of the Malfoy family and not have someone marry into it.

The notion was one of giving gifts to the family he was being welcomed into. Not that the Weasleys were Harry’s true family, but over time they did acknowledge his mate to be ‘one of their boys’.

So the record player with the toy and story were perfect for Mr. Weasley. Draco added several other records of newer and varied music for Mrs. Weasley. He had a strong notion that once she saw the Ministry sanction for this device she would take over the running and care of it.

With that in mind about the giving of gifts for Harry’s family, he and his mate looked around for appropriate gifts for all of them, just in case. He didn’t want there to be any misunderstanding of the situation. The gifts were prepared and ready to be given, but only if they accepted him as the mate of Harry Potter.

He didn’t want his union with the Draekon to cause a rift between that family and Harry either, but it could be a very real possibility. They even picked something out for Ms. Granger, although he doubted that she would appreciate it, all things considered.

Harry and Draco planned to be there first to greet them, as etiquette demanded, but they were not going to arrive by Floo. They already made their plans and would be leaving the school earlier than the others.

Once they were ready to “Meet & Greet”. Then, technically, it would be Ginny arriving first, followed by Hermione and Ron. Dudley and Neville wanted to arrive after the Professors and then the last to arrive, as planned would be Mr. and Mrs. Weasley.

Even though the boys chose an evening when the full moon was going to be in the sky, the Twins had a room prepared for their Professors. The men had planned a weekend away from the school after the night was over.

They were hoping to visit Remus’ new home, “Lily’s Field”, to see what it needed. Remus wanted to see what was there in order to be able to turn over some rooms for his mate’s Potion obsession. Severus didn’t know about that yet, of course Harry wanted to present the man with the gift of a few ingredients for those rooms.

-----------

The day before:

“The timing is varied… Just in case,” Harry told his mate.

“Just in case of what?” Draco wanted to know.

“In case we want some time to go into London for a couple of hours,” Harry replied. He then laughed because he felt his mate’s entire presence light up with anticipation. Shopping lit him up and he was a whiz in the malls and centers.
“Can we really?” Draco gasped. He was excited to be able to hunt for the things that he knew he would not be able to obtain at a later date. He needed things for his school projects and he wanted to get some Yuletide gifts out of the way, now.

They were going to be able to leave school only a few more times, once for Severus’ ritual and another for a meeting at Gringotts with the goblins and the dwarves, but that was about it. They were going to be confined to the school because it was Draco’s last year and the projects in the seventh year are a lot harder than any other from their earlier school years.

Draco was also studying as hard as he normally would because he was keeping up appearances so that the Mark ones wouldn’t suspect anything. Besides he was there to protect Vince, just like the big guy was there as always, guarding the Dragon of Slytherin. You never knew what rumors would make its way to ‘ole Voldie.

“Sure,” Harry replied to his mate’s excited tone. “Look at the times that everyone is supposed to arrive. I have a feeling that Hermione is going to take the chance to want to call her parents.”

“Really?” Draco asked. “I never thought she would do that.”

“Well you do know that she’s tried to leave the school, don’t you? Several times in fact, but she was blocked by the monitoring crystals,” Harry explained. “Once they step into the active Floo, the monitors will be de-activated and stay here at the school. So, what do you think she’s going to do when she fully realizes that?”

That caused the blond Draekon to pause and think on it for a bit. He then answered cautiously, “Well… If my allegiance was not what it was supposed to be, then I think that I would grab whatever opportunity to inform my leader about certain things.”

“Exactly,” Harry said. “I planned the timing of the meal to begin at about seven in the evening, so with the timing of when they are allowed to Floo into Grimmauld, they will have the chance to leave and come back before it starts. We’ll see if they are affected by curses or perhaps tagged with tracking magics.”

Draco nodded. That was a sound plan, but, “What will happen if they are?”

Harry just shrugged and said, “The house magics and the twins’ magics will take care of that. We need to pretend for the most part that we don’t know anything about them. It’s not like you, ever have to act friendly to them, but I still do. I only ask that you respect Mr. and Mrs. Weasley apart from the members of that family that you don’t like.”

“That’s true,” Draco agreed. “The twins are all right, but I never did like Weasley or the girl. Too moony eyed over the Boy-Who-Lived, the both of them.”

Harry chuckled and hugged his mate. “We don’t need to worry about them, so make a small list of the places you want to go.”

“I just want to go back to the Penny Stores. Maybe look at a couple of material stores to get some “Beany-Baby” crafts and materials. You know for my project for Prof. Flitwick,” Draco said. “Oh and don’t forget about my hula-hoop!”

That’s when Harry’s amused chuckling exploded into laughter recalling the time that Draco was trying out that toy. He was not patient when it came to trying to learn to use it. His emotional frustration made his magic burst out and the result melted the thing into small blobs of warped plastic.

“Don’t worry,” Harry said, still laughing remembering the time. “I promised you that I would get
you another one.” Chuckling he added in his thoughts, ‘Perhaps more than one… Definitely have to get more than one.’

----------

**October 6th**

On the night of the dinner, our favourite boys were partially kitted out for the gathering. They made sure to have suits and such pressed, ready for changing. For the most part, they concluded the shopping they could finish in the short time frame that they had allotted for themselves.

Soon, they were pressed and dressed waiting for the others to show up in the main parlor.

----------

Ginny wasn’t excited to be going, but she acted like she was. It was a prestige for her to be associated with the Boy-Who-Lived. She had certainly bragged to her friends about nailing him in the physical sense, but now, he was married by their Magical Laws, it was her own Mum that she was afraid to see.

During the summer, she had played on her Mum’s needs to become a Grandmother and had hinted a lot of inappropriate things to her. She told her Mum how she was ‘seeing’ Harry, ‘dating’ him and all that entailed with dating in the Wizarding World. It is the getting to know type of ‘seeing’. Some comments about having let nature take its course. These comments made Molly think that what her daughter had implied would come to be.

Ginny just knew how that evening would turn out for her. She only hoped that her mother would not send any Howlers after the fact.

She half expected to see one because of the wording on the invitation, “a small gathering of everyone that we consider our immediate and extended family”. As far as she was aware of, her family had always considered Harry part of their immediate family. Her Mum wouldn’t have held back if she knew her daughter had lied.

Dressed and ready to go, she took the letter, said the name of the house and the code that would allow her entry. She half-considered not going, but figured that a Howler the next morning from mother, probably containing information that she didn’t want her friends to know, would appear.

----------

Hermione and Ron were getting ready in their own suite of rooms. She was nagging him about his clothes and general appearance, while he exercised certain set of learned behaviours that he got from his father.

‘Don’t look her in the eye, nod your head once in a while to pretend you heard every word and do your own thing at the end when it’s too late to change,’ he thought to himself. How he looked was no longer her concern because she never took his last name.

It was more then that, of course, but there was no way that he would purchase something that she knew he couldn’t afford in the first place. Just because she was a Muggleborn and her parents were ‘Doctors’ didn’t mean that he was and neither were his parents. He knew why she was nagging him. It was because she was still pissed off at him for not telling her about their bond.
He shook his head when he saw that once she received the invitation, she made a list of inconsistencies regarding the running of the school, the teachers and some of the other students of Voldemort’s followers. However, he was given the key piece of information that she has been missing from the very beginning.

Ron had been attending regular sessions with Severus and he had given the advice, in a totally Slytherin roundabout way, that he could pass on the information regarding the absent Headmaster Dumbledore. He wasn’t thick and he hadn’t missed that bit from their first conversation, but he did want to be sure that it was all right to relay that kind of information to the Dark Lord.

During one of their scheduled lessons, Severus had paused a moment during that conversation and left the room. It sounded like he was talking to someone in the other room, but Ron couldn’t hear any reply. When the Potions Master returned to the room where they were working on Ron’s ability to Occlude his mind, he received the go ahead to inform the Dark Lord.

‘It certainly looked and sounded like he was getting the go ahead from someone else,’ Ron thought, remembering that time just before they were due to Floo.

Hermione also had a few choice spells and potions ready to present to her Lord with every intention of testing them out on her beloved husband. She would only do so with Voldemort’s permission, but she was certain that he would allow it. Her Master had always given her everything she wanted, so far.

One potion would reverse whatever was stopping Ron from accepting any more bond conditions. Another would turn him into a total sex toy for anyone and everyone who had the Dark Mark on their arm. Another would prevent him from ever achieving completion or satisfaction from the sexual act ever again. There were a couple of other spells for pain and such that she was prepared to use, but again only with the Dark Lord’s permission.

She was soon ready to go and just before stepping into the Floo with Ron, she smirked evilly at his back and then frowned when he turned to look at her. It was very clear that he hadn’t listened to her opinion about the clothes that he should have been wearing for this evening.

----------

Voldemort was contemplating a raid in London when two of his Death Eaters were there requesting an audience. He had wanted to let them wait a long time, but curiosity struck him and so he let them wait for only half an hour before allowing them to come forward.

The female of the pair was something of a quirk in his esteemed organization. She was the only Mudblood and it was an absolute guarantee that she would be the only one. Her mannerisms and disdain of the Wizarding World amused him, just as much as her partner’s seething hate for her made him laugh.

He was smirking to himself about their bond because she never once realized that they were “Legally Married” by magic. Another reason he allowed her to be Marked at the time. He had known that she was bonded with a Weasley brat, but by strange coincidence the stupid boy had actually followed her to a meeting and allowed himself to be Marked.

He was watching them walk into his audience room.

‘Something’s changed,’ he thought.

He watched impassively as the kow-towed to him and he noticed that the girl very close to exploding
with anger. “Interesting,” he muttered before he sent her the Crucio spell.

He had only needed a partial glimpse in the girl’s mind to know that he was not pleased with her hoped for plans. He liked the redhead and Malfoy certainly knew how to train the boys to give proper oral sex.

The chit is not going to get her way and since he had indulged her thus far he felt that he needed to remind her of her place. She was getting far above her breeding and she certainly was not to consider herself as one of his ‘Inner Circle’ because of it. She even thought it her right to demand an audience with him, any time it pleased her.

Hermione writhed in pain and the others just watched her suffer while the Dark Lord interrogated the boy. The others in the room were only Goyle Junior, his father and the wheedling Pettigrew.

“What brings the two of you here? I was under the impression that no student or teacher could leave the school,” he demanded.

“My Lord,” Ron said, keeping his head bowed down. “We were invited to a special ‘family’ dinner in London this evening. We begged leave of our hosts in order for Hermione to inquire about her family with the only intention of coming to see you. Here is our invitation.”

He had snagged it from the floor of their rooms only after she had crumpled it to throw away. She didn’t like the way it was addressed to the both of them. Somehow, Draco had managed write Ms. Granger so that even in writing it was like he was sneering at her and laughing at her predicament.

Voldemort called the invitation to him wandlessly as he released the spell on the girl and turned his red burning gaze to the boy.

“Continue,” he said, after reading it.

Ron gulped visibly, but remained unmoved from his submissive position, “We were given special dispensation from the Headmaster to leave the school for this one occasion.”

Hermione wanted to butt in and explain things, but the Dark Lord was displeased with her. She wasn’t happy about that either. She straightened her clothing as best she could and knew that she would have to use ‘those’ spells to correct her appearance, before they returned to Grimmauld Place.

She really hated ‘those’ spells because those beauty spells never worked well for her. Besides it was about creating an artificial appearance and that was another reason that she didn’t like it. A very justifiable reason in her mind anyway for not liking beauty spells.

“Such an occasion does require some consideration,” Voldemort mused. “Dumbledore must be slacking or showing favouritism to his Boy-Who-Lived.”

Hermione was visibly twitching, ready to provide a list of inconsistencies and every occasion that she had attempted to contact her Master, but was denied.

Voldemort didn’t need a list, especially not from her. Looking at the boy-man next to her, he was intrigued by his mind. He’s been working on his defenses because he could now detect traps against certain spells of the mind. He smirked inwardly.

The boy was taking lessons from Snape. Voldemort had a special place in his unfeeling heart for the snarky Potions Master. It was only on the advice of the girl that he had never called the man to the Marking disaster that occurred this summer.
He’d had his own suspicions about the man anyway, but to have received confirmation meant specialized torture for such betrayal. Nightmares were only one delicious way, plus there was the bonus of knowing that his ex-Potions Master was the mate-to-be to a werewolf.

Not just any werewolf, but one who was close to that blasted Boy-Who-Lived. Greyback was so accommodating and there was nothing that they can do about it. The potion that had been inserted in Severus’ Dark Mark had no cure and no solution.

Ron had lots surface thoughts of hatred towards the girl, but there was also the deep disgust that he now felt whenever she approached him because she had an itch that needed scratching. ‘The boy is cautious,’ he thought. ‘He knows that she’s up to something… Hmm… I wonder…’

He read the boy’s intentions regarding how his wife could be accommodated for her itch. ‘Very interesting,’ he thought. Considering the time that they had and how long it would take, he was very close to making a decision.

The Dark Lord didn’t look at them, just stared near them to make them nervous. It was a trick that always worked because most of his Death Eaters were not that appealing to look at. He did have his preferences, though.

He crooked a pasty white finger at Ron, summoning him closer and whispered in the boy’s ear.

Ron’s eyes widened at the Dark Lord’s plans and the timing of the issue. He blinked, as though considering it because his mind was strategy based. There seemed to be enough time, if someone could make Hermione look just the way she did when they had arrived there. He relayed that to the Dark Lord, stating that she needed to look untouched for when they returned.

“A half hour, my Lord,” Ron said softly to the red-eyed man. “That is the limit before suspicion could be cast at us for taking too long to make a simple felly-tone call and possible visit to confirm they’re all right.” He deliberately screwed up the word telephone because that always amused the Dark Lord and it made the Hermione cringe every time anyone referred to Muggle Technology in the most backward names. It was something that he had observed a while back.

Ron was ready for what was required of him. He had no choice and he knew it, but the thought of Hermione being forced just like him, gave him some sort of vindictive comfort.

“Set her up in the next room and come back to me,” the Dark Lord said.

Ron bowed and took Hermione’s arm, dragging her into the next room. It was a room that she had never been in and it wasn’t one that she ever wanted to be in either because this one was specifically set up for the bonded women of the Death Eaters.

Once in the room and before she could even utter a protest, he cast a spell that separated her from her wand. There were other spells that removed her clothing, tied her up to the bed, ass up in the air and spread out to take whatever came her way.

What was coming were the two Goyles. She was their reward for having killed Vince’s father. They weren’t permitted to harm her much and she was not allowed to have marks on her face or arms, but everything else was permitted.

That’s what they were being told in the other room, while she was given a mild spell that allowed her to be slippery ready, but tight for the men. Ron had removed all potion bottles from her clothing, as she watched from her position.

“The Dark Lord denies your request to use these,” he told her as instructed to by their Dark Lord.
“He’s not pleased that you think you have the right to turn me into a sex toy for all the Death Eaters, when I’m already his to do with as he pleases.” He paused dramatically and then stated venomously, “Just like the day you told him, when I chose to be Marked.”

He walked out of the room leaving her like that and watched to two other men, get nasty satisfied gleams in their eyes, walk in the room. “The timer is set gentleman, as per our Lord’s instructions,” he told them. They only grunted at him and pushed him out of the room.

A half hour was not a long time, but for Hermione it would be forever. She had always escaped the wives’ punishment room, but not this time.

Ron walked back to the throne, where the Dark Lord was waiting. “Master,” he said, kneeling in supplication. He then showed the red-eyed man the bottles of potion that he had collected and had floating next to him. He wasn’t about to touch them, just in case.

“Pettigrew,” Voldemort said.

The wheezing rat scrambled forward and took possession of the bottles, taking them away to be stored in a private chamber within the keep.

The Dark Lord then stood up, placed a hand on Ron’s neck, guiding him out of the main audience chamber and into a private room. Half an hour was not a long time and for Ron it wasn’t as unpleasant as he thought it would.

Then again the Dark Lord was generously equipped and his Master used several ‘pleasure for pain’ spells. In that manner Ron could all tell the others truthfully about the pain, when he had in fact received pleasure.

He wasn’t fooled into thinking that it would always be like that, but for now he enjoyed his own half hour, somewhat. It was still the Dark Lord and the evil man always took what he wanted.

It was during an upward thrust that Voldemort glimpsed at something that was bothering the boy. “What is it?” He asked, continuing his movements to completion.

“I don’t know how to mention this without…” a severe pinch to a nipple and a hard stab against his prostate had him gasping and writhing for more. The human male body was made to deceive its own owner, as just the right thrust can make it seem like it was something that they wanted and needed more of.

“Just tell me,” Voldemort demanded, thrusting harder and pulling the hair to expose the throat.

“I don’t believe that Dumbledore is the Headmaster of the school anymore,” he gasped out, moaning when his shoulder was bit and suckled. He could feel the twitch of the hard length thrusting in him and then felt it grow a bit more before bursting.

Voldemort had his hand gripping hard at the base of the boy’s engorged cock, fisting and pumping fast. “Say that again,” he demanded harshly.

“I haven’t seen Dumbledore at the school,” he whimpered in time to the pumps. “No one has… I don’t believe… that he is… the Headmaster anymore. Too many… changes happening… schooooool.”

Voldemort bit him again in the same place marking him and then pinching the other nipple he allowed Ron to spill his seed. His hand was filled with the liquid from the boy, but as soon as he pulled out of the tight entrance, Ron was on his knees, holding that hand and licking up his spill.
‘Just like he was taught,’ thought the Dark Lord, smiling, pleased with the results of the training.

A few spells and Ron’s clothing were back on him. There were a few alterations on them, but only to the point of making the clothing suit him for his party. They were better fitting and slightly of better quality. It was a small gift from the Dark Lord for the information that he had divulged during their intercourse.

The Dark Lord looked at the time and with about ten minutes to spare. He had Ron tell him all about the inconsistencies that he had seen in Hermione’s mind.

“As you wish, Master,” Ron said, kneeling. From the Dark Lord’s feet he told the evil man everything that he could and some things that he suspected, but there was no evidence for those. A great lack of evidence was also a clue.

----------

Harry and Draco knew about how long it took to make a phone call, but they allowed Hermione and Ron to leave the safety of Grimmauld Place with the understanding that they had to be back by seven. It was that time that was set for the meal and later was set for the giving of the gifts. They also suspected that those two might go visit someone, so they were patient in this.

Mrs. Weasley was notably upset that her youngest boy was not there, she didn’t quite care about Hermione as much as she seemed to in the past. The girl got on her nerves a lot the time, but now knowing about their unintentional marital bond, she strongly felt that the girl wasn’t good enough for her baby boy.

Another thing that occurred while they were waiting was Draco’s charm. He smooth talked all of them, putting them at ease and being very cordial to all of them.

Surprisingly Percy was there. It was good business for the Ministry to have a representative attend such an evening. The Minister of Magic had seen the invitation that his aide had received and had forced him to go.

Percy wasn’t happy about it because he had sworn never to contact his family again and never to be in contact with Harry Potter. His luck ran out because now he was forced to be there in order to issue an invitation to Harry, on behalf of the Minister, to attend a Ministry presentation and ball.

He was being fussed at by his mother, teased by the twins and Ginny. Severus looked down his nose that the ex-student and only Remus said, “Good to see you.”

However, Remus had to beg leave of those gathered there in order to go to the room he had been assigned for his change. Severus went to be with him until the others came back. It was re-assuring to Moony that his mate-to-be was still willing to be with him, even during the full moon.

It was only a couple of more weeks until Severus could finally be free. A solution to his nightmares was available. Harry was preparing the needed potion for that. Soon the Potions Master would experience true freedom from everything related to the Dark Lord when his Dark Mark was removed.

----------

Hermione was not pleased with the results of her meeting with the Dark Lord. She had pain in several places and she was certainly aching from various openings. Her jaws were strained too. Now, she had to suffer through someone else slinging spells at her to make her appear normal.
The women that the Dark Lord had called were Mrs. Goyle and Mrs. Crabbe. Both women were familiar with that room and knew how to keep up their appearance, especially after any time being in that room and being used by whomever.

They were secretly pleased that the upstart mudblood finally got what was coming to her. They also hoped that this wouldn’t be the only occasion for the chit to know that room. Half an hour was nothing compared to the times that they had been in that room and with more than just two minor Death Eaters getting a reward for a job well done.

Ron was in the main room waiting for her and eventually the Dark Lord allowed them to leave. “I understand that this was the one occasion that you could leave and do so without raising the suspicions of the Headmaster,” he stated. “I will be expecting you for the Yule holidays.”

This was directed at Ron, but Hermione was the one who replied for both of them. “Of course My Lord.”

Ron looked at her wondering what she was up to, but shrugged it off. He bowed to the Dark Lord and they both left his domain.

Voldemort watched his smirking Death Eaters and was soon tired of the whole deal.

“Leave,” he told them, having changed his mind about a raid in London. He was too sated at the moment, to even consider a raid. Plus he needed to review and digest the interesting information that young Mr. Weasley had brought to him.

-----------

Ron and Hermione returned to Grimmauld Place, looking almost just like they left. Whatever they were feeling due to their activities was not evident to anyone at the table.

Molly lit into them for leaving Grimmauld Place and going out into London, but since they were back safe and sound she just scolded them loudly. That was until Ms. Granger opened up her big mouth.

“Mrs. Weasley,” she said. “I understand your concern, but you are not my mother. You don’t have a right to scold me. I was only trying to call my parents and see them because I was concerned for them.”

Mrs. Weasley and the others in the room were shocked, but Molly only told her, “I have every right to scold my son, especially since it’s obvious that you’ve been a bad influence on him.”

“Bad influence?” Hermione questioned. “I didn’t ask him to follow me. I certainly can take care of myself. If I had been told about the bonding magics invoked during sex, I certainly would never have slept with your son.”

Mrs. Weasley really didn’t like that tone from the girl, but she was also a very smart woman and caught the reference that the muggle-girl had no knowledge of the sex magics. “What do you mean by that?” She asked. “Everyone is taught about the sex magics in their fifth year. How dare you imply that my son is not worthy…”

“Mum, please,” Ron said. He didn’t like the direction that this conversation was heading in and he wanted it to stop now. “We’ve already had this discussion at the school. We were all surprised about it, although I think that many of the Professors were just as shocked when they realized it. But that was probably just before the start of the new school year. Am I right Professor Snape?”
"Yes," he answered. "It is indeed correct. We’ve been discovering several odd administrative issues that needed to be dealt with. How about we discuss this over dinner or at later date?"

Mrs. Weasley was not happy about being put off, but she knew her boys and their appetites. Besides it’s not like they had never discussed sensitive issues during meals. It was a way to keep the family together no matter what.

Mr. Weasley had heard some of these, but was just as shocked when the discussion really got heated. "Percy," he began. "Do you mean to tell me that you were aware of this in school?"

"It didn’t take a genius, Father, to notice which students actually attended those classes," Percy explained. "I could only think that it was something beneficial to the Wizarding World and that’s why I never mentioned it."

"What about you two?" Their father asked the twins.

"We didn’t attend those classes because we already knew most of it," Fred explained.

George then just added, "Charlie."

Their father let out a snort-like sound, kind of like a hidden laugh. ‘Of course... Charlie’, he thought. ‘That boy was into everything, but at least he was careful.’ He watched all the boys interact with the others around the table.

It was obvious that the twins were having fun and were happy at the moment with whatever was going on in their lives. Then his gaze fell on his one and only daughter. He could sense that something was wrong, but then he had a pretty good idea what it could be. Especially when she looked at Harry with longing, but also with sadness and more than a bit of anger was directed towards the blond Slytherin.

Mrs. Weasley also made the same observation and knew that her daughter had been lying to her all summer. "How is school going for you this year, Ginny?" She asked.

Ginny was startled to have been addressed, as everyone seemed to be having multiple and separate conversations. "Um, just fine Mum," she said. "It’s a little confusing with all the changes that have happened, but I think that I’m doing just fine."

"Changes," the matronly woman said. "What changes?"

That’s when the discussion turned towards the school and all of the new courses. Of course it was also when she wheedled information out of her twins and found that they had been returning to Hogwarts to complete their education.

She was so happy to know that they had not given up, that she was crying, laughing and hugging them at the same time. They were a little overwhelmed, but they put up with her antics because they knew that she had been worried about them for some time.

The meal was soon over and the giving of gifts was about to commence. Draco explained the situation and how he was honouring his mother’s ideas. It really and truly was his mother that told about a culture where the giving of gifts to the ‘In-Laws’ was a form of honour and acknowledgement.

Harry pulled out a sack from his pocket and enlarged it in order to be able to extract the gifts. They were all accepted, some more than others.
Mr. Weasley was tickled with his ‘Rubber Duck’, plus the book and song.

Mrs. Weasley appreciated the record player and the Ministry letter more than the actual records. She knew that she was going to have to listen to them first before passing judgment on Draco’s taste and said so.

Draco didn’t mind because he only replied, “At least you’re honest to let me know. Also, feel free to contact me if you have a preference for one genre or another. I did try to get a few from different eras.” Mrs. Weasley nodded her agreement.

Percy Weasley received a full set of current Ministry Law books. He also received a small “How to…” instructional book about how to read and write reports, with an emphasis on quoting particular Laws.

The Weasley Twins received several ‘toys’ from the muggle world, some were educational and some were just for fun. The best were the board games, Legos, erector sets and the mock archeological sand digs.

They knew that a whole slew of ideas for their shop were just handed over to them, but they are going to take one thing at a time. They knew that Draco wanted to have some input or even create the magical versions of the toy toys.

They were also given loads of candy from all kinds of Muggle shops, including catalogues of the new ideas or themes that the muggles have in abundance. This had them speechless for several long minutes before asking if they had enough to ‘taste test’ them before trying to break them done to the basics.

Ron Weasley was given a five years subscription to Quidditch Monthly, plus Quidditch season tickets to every match available for the remaining school year. A special letter of dispensation from the Headmaster of Hogwarts was part of the package, which enabled him to leave the school and attend the games.

The Headmaster even wrote an additional note about how it would be a good idea to bring a recording device with him for a few of the games in order to get ideas for the School matches. He stated that should Ron wish to bring such a device, one would be made available to him.

Ms. Hermione Granger (should have been a Weasley) received a small portable library in the form of a mini-trunk with two compartments. One of the compartments was already filled the Wizarding World’s version of a complete Encyclopedia A - Z of All Things Magical, Past and Present.

The second compartment was empty save for two gift certificates, which are actually credits, valued at a couple hundred galleons each for two of the most prestigious book sellers in the Wizarding World. One was located in Rome, Italy and the other was in Paris, France, both of which had catalogues of the books available for the common market.

Specialty orders were only ever accepted in person, so that was not an option for her, unless she was permitted to leave the school… only she didn’t get a letter like Ron. This was something that pissed her off, greatly, but she was reserving her comments for when she returned to the school. She didn’t want to get into another argument with the Weasleys or with Harry and Draco here.
Ginny Weasley was a tricky case because they weren’t sure what to get her, if anything.

In the end Draco figured a little revenge was in order and had given her a similar mini-trunk. However, in her case the first compartment contained household items that she would need when she moved out. Linens, pots, cutlery, bedding, etc… Everything needed for a single person.

The second compartment held gift certificates, credits, for specific shops that catered to women who’re about to be married. Shops for wedding dresses, flowers, cake, decorations, etc… There was enough credit in each shop in order for her to have a very modest wedding and it was to assist her parents in the payment of her marriage, should she ever find someone that wanted to have her.

----------------------------------------------------------

**Dudley & Neville**

Neville was there with Dudley as a guest. He never expected anything and so he was surprised to have received several Muggle seeds in a special ‘Neutral Box’, complete with separators for each variety. He also received books on the plant families in the Muggle World.

Dudley received the same except that his was all Wizarding seeds in a ‘Neutral Box’, complete with separators. He also received books on Wizarding plants, but these books were specifically geared to someone with a low magical core. He wasn’t at all offended when he received them.

They both received a small parcel of joining land that contained three greenhouses crossing over from one home to the other. Harry promised them that they would be able to visit them during the Winter Holidays.

----------------------------------------------------------

**Severus & Remus**

Severus Snape received the same set of the books, not the personal journals that Harry had had on him when he was being tested for Potions knowledge. Harry had found a set from the guilds that was written in French.

Draco told him that his godfather could read that language and understand it completely. Harry also duplicated his own personal journal, the large one, for his Potions Master.

Lastly, Severus received a crate of Potions ingredients that were somewhat rare and from distant lands, but mostly the crate contained the Basilisk parts that Harry had rendered during his third and fourth year.

Remus wasn’t there to receive his gift, but Severus promised to give it to him the next day when they were visiting ‘Lily’s Field’ for the weekend.

----------------------------------------------------------

The evening ended quietly when everyone Flooed home with the same codes that they used to come here. That is everyone except the Twins because they were home and Professor Snape who was there with his mate-to-be.

Mrs. Weasley was pleased with everything and she was able to have a private talk with her daughter. She wasn’t too surprised to learn that Ginny had wanted to be the one bonded to Harry Potter. But
even she knew that the magics in their World would never have allowed such a union, especially if it wasn’t meant to be. She thoroughly scolded her daughter for the nonsense she spouted all summer.

Ginny was just glad to have the whole thing over with. She certainly wasn’t planning to have a repeat of the evening and was seriously considering on staying at the school during the Yule holidays. Still she may change her mind later on, but for now she just wanted to avoid her mother.

Every student had returned safely back to the school, with the monitors back in full force. Hogwarts reported that nothing had happened during the evening that warranted intervention from the Headmaster.

So, all in all the evening out was a success.

-------------------------------

TBC...
Chapter Thirty

Sunday October 8th

Peregrine Sprout is the twin brother of Professor Pamona Sprout, the Head of Hufflepuff House. He looked just like her with fly away, tangled looking hair, messy working clothes and short in stature. For a man he was definitely short, though not as short as Professor Flitwick, but then very few people were that short without some magical creature in their heritage.

He is, also, a very unique kind of man with a very unique outlook to magic and what it should be used for. He thought that many people used magic for frivolous things that could have been done by hand.

Tea for example: brewing a pot of tea and having to wait for the water to boil, allowing the leaves the time to seep properly. He considered it an art that the muggles have perfected with their lack of magic. It was something that he truly admired them for.

It was with sadness that he had received several letters over the years from the Headmaster of Hogwarts declining his particular area of magical instruction. Headmaster Dumbledore didn’t want the students of the school to learn about the ‘Forgotten Arts’ or the ‘Lost Arts’ or any of the arcane magics that abound in the Wizarding World. He questioned the old man when his contract was never renewed, but the answer left a sour taste in his mouth.

So, nowadays, you can find Peregrine making things for fun and for the children of many villages. Magical or not he made them all toys. They were just little things that would bring a smile to their little faces, magical toys for the magical children and normal muggle toys for the ones without magic. These little ones loved him for it.

He lived in a mixed community of Wizard and Muggle. He traveled several times a year to various similar communities to sell or give his toys away. However, his true purpose to visiting or traveling was to teach the ‘Forgotten Arts’ in seminars or small community classes.
Any one who was interested was welcomed, although he did caution the elder generation that sometimes they maybe too old for the magics to do what it should have known before they hit their magical puberty. He did give them similar instructions for the muggles methods of those arts and how to short cut those Arts using the known magics.

It wasn’t the same as picturing something and saying a spell to make a specific creation, but his ‘students’ accepted what he told them, mostly after finding out that he was telling them the truth. They paid a nominal fee and paid for their own supplies, not quite the quality he used to obtain, but there he taught them the things he could no longer teach at Hogwarts.

The communities were grateful that he did this because during his travels he was a source of news and general gossip. He was more reliable than the Profit and he was definitely ‘in the know’ about the goings on at the school because of his sister.

His sister was no fool and had asked if he wanted to return to the school when Harry became the Headmaster, but somehow she knew that he would have turned her down. “I have a responsibility now,” he told her. “These communities are waiting for the news. Besides, I’m committed to giving these classes until winter comes.”

“Very well,” she said through the floo connection. “Will you come for the Winter semester at Hogwarts? You know I worry about you out there all alone.”

“I’ll consider it, but honestly Sis, why would Dumbledore change his mind now?” He replied.

She tried to say that Dumbledore was not the Headmaster, but could only say, “The Headmaster is different now.” That was the closest she could come to telling him the truth without the magics affecting her. “That’s all I can say, he is different now.”

“I’m sorry Sis,” Peregrine said. “I’ll have to think about it.”

“All right,” she replied. “Could you do me a favour?”

“Anything!” He replied honestly.

“When you travel to the towns, please spread the word that Hogwarts will be open to those seeking Sanctuary should anything happen to their homes,” she said.

“What???”

“Hogwarts was mandated, in the time of the Founders, to be a place of Sanctuary in times of conflict,” she explained. “The Headmaster has made the decision to bring back that mandate.”

“Dumbledore made that kind of decision?” He asked incredulously.

“No!” She exclaimed, hoping to drive the point home. “The Headmaster did.”

He blinked a couple of times and then it dawned on him. “The Headmaster did?”

“Yes, the Headmaster did.”

He grinned at his sister and promised to begin spreading the word. “I’ll keep an ear to the ground for you, but I can make no promises about the Winter Semester.”

Pamona grinned back at her brother and said, “Thank you. We’re going to need you, especially if communities are taken down or families are in need of anything. Oh, could you also deliver these to
several of the town centres and post them. I think that some real news would appeal to your friends.”

He nodded at her to show his understanding, took the stack of papers and the signed off from the network. He smirked and thought to himself, ‘So, Dumbledore in not at Hogwarts.’ He paused to take some of his tea and then considered something else.

“Where could that old coot have gone?”

Then he started chuckling to himself and humming to the tune of ‘Where could that doggy have gone?’ substituting ‘doggy’ for ‘ole coot’.

“Where could that old coot have gone? Where? Oh where could he be?” Hum, hum.
“With his dick so short and his beard so long?” La-la, da-dum, de-da, dee dee.
“Where? Oh, where could he be?”

He paused to consider the next line, when he happened to glance down at the first paper on the stack. He nearly dropped his tea when he read the name of the paper and the headline.

---------------------------------
THE HOGWARTS HERALD
Bi-Monthly News from “Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry”
Chief Editor, Luna Lovegood
Contributions by Various Sources; see Articles

Introducing a new format for distributing the news, select your preferred headline by tapping it with your wand to go to the article in question. Patented, copyrighted and owned by Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

“Educational Revolution at Hogwarts” – The Headmaster has begun an “Educational Revolution” with the implementation of new courses…

“Complete Classroom Overhaul” – New classrooms have been opened and put to use at Hogwarts, clubs formed…

“The Founders Original Mandate” – Portraits of the Founders of the School have confirmed their original mandate…

“No Ministry Interference” – The Ministry of Magic can no longer interfere with educational practices as per the Ministry Convention for Magical Education of 1223, cross-referenced to the Founder’s Mandate…

“Defense Classes that Teach Defense” – New method of teaching, forces students to duck and dodge. See how they run? Can you?…

“Crossword Puzzle” – Challenge your mind; “Do you remember enough about first year potions to complete the puzzle?”

“Debate Corner: Wizard versus Muggle” – Making tea, which method better and why,
Hufflepuff vs Slytherin, results within…

There were several other headings that Peregrine was interested in, but first he had to see how the paper worked. He tapped his wand and was pleasantly surprised when the article in question blew-up or came forward on the paper. There was three little boxes at the bottom of the page, one that said, ‘Previous page’, another that said, ‘Next Page’ and one in between the two said, ‘Main Page’.

Tapping ‘Next Page’ moved the article to the next page of it, if it had more than one page or to the next article if the first was only one page in length. Tapping ‘Previous Page’ returned to the page to the previous one and tapping his wand on ‘Main Page’ return him to the main page of the newspaper.

‘That was fun,’ he thought and did it several more times in order to get used to the new format.

There were even a couple of advertisements thrown in and a couple of sections to fill out for subscribing to the paper. There were several subscription forms for various things that were being produced by the school and it looked like it would only be offered with the October papers.

One was for an exclusive link to a bandwidth for a Radio Station, which was about to launch from the school, be produced at the school and stay with the school.

A list of magazines available: one, for young women with its focus on young women and what they can do nowadays, another magazine that focused on publishing the Art from Amateur Artists in the school, one magazine that focuses on comic strips and comparisons between Muggle vs Wizarding diversity in that medium, and another one that produces various comics from the students in the school.

There was even another newspaper called, “The StoryBoard” which only featured fictional stories produced by the students in the school and it claimed to have the same format at the Herald.

He was overwhelmed by the choices, but he slowly filled out the subscription forms for the things that interested him like the radio station, The Herald, an Art magazine and The StoryBoard. Once he filled out the subscriptions and paid, he noticed that they were logged with a service number and then cleared for another person to use.

He then received a letter that popped up directly in front of him. It thanked him for his subscriptions and that his service number was now registered as his for all of his requests. Only one number issued per customer and he could always add another subscription to his service number at a later date.

The letter was to be kept for confirmation and a reference of all his requests. A small pouch was part of the letter for him to deposit his payments monthly or upon receipt of his subscriptions.

The radio station was different. He would have to pay that monthly in order to keep receiving the programming. He was also told in the letter that he would soon be receiving a package containing the necessary receiver to hook up to his wireless, in order to begin receiving the radio station.

The price of 3 Knuts per paper or magazine and 6 Knuts for the station was pittance, but he was still a Professor after all, so he has to show his support and encourage their growing minds.

---------------------------------  

October 13th, Friday
Harry and Draco were sitting next to Severus, as he was dreaming. It was another of his nightmares, but this time Harry was able to visually ‘see’ the magics that were influencing the man. They were getting worse. So much so, that Severus was snapping at his students from the lack of sleep.

On a brighter note, it did appear as though their original snarky and barking Professor was back.

Watching him twitch was not something that Draco wanted to do, but it was something that he needed to do. He was seriously concerned about it and he had promised Remus to keep an eye on the man, as the poor DADA professor was stuck with the detentions he had given out.

Harry had consulted his books and a couple of the scrolls from Antiok. He found the answer, but it was going to take some doing and a lot of trust. He shook his head at he sounds of terror coming from the man.

“I think that we can wake him up now,” Harry said. They had induced the Potions Professor to sleep with a potion that did not prevent the nightmares. They did have to trick him because the man was being such a bastard because of his fears.

Draco performed the spell to wake the man up, but first they moved to the doorway of the room. It was for a quick getaway. They would need to move quickly into the other room, but they were not going to leave until Harry had explained the situation and quite possible the solution.

They dodged the spell blast that was the common wake method that Severus had been using for a week and then some.

“You little cretins,” he shouted. “How dare you?”

“Un… uncle S… s.. sev,” Draco stuttered, but began again, stronger and more sure of his stance in this issue. “Uncle Severus. We want to help you solve this and you acting out like this is quite undignified.”

“Undignified!” The dark man exclaimed. “Undignified… Do you think that drugging me with a potion isn’t?”

“Snape,” Harry shouted, gaining the attention of the man and his godson. “You will calm yourself down right now or else…”

“What?”

“You heard me,” Harry said. “Calm down… Now…”

“You two had no right…” he was heaving from the anger and the betrayal he felt. It was like they had invaded his privacy, but in truth he was just plain frightened. He was afraid that no cure existed. In fact he was quite sure about that.

“Uncle Sev,” Draco began. “We were afraid that you were letting your fear dictate your actions. I couldn’t let you continue and I know that Remus was very concerned about it. Harry’s been researching for nights without end to find a cure and you are not going to miss this chance at happiness because Voldemort messed with your Dark Mark.”

“What?” Severus asked. “How would you know that?”

“Perhaps some tea to calm down a bit more and then I will explain,” Harry said. Getting a nod of
resignation he summoned a house-elf to have the evening meal and a tea service sent to them.

“You know that I was researching all possible Marks and their derivatives,” Harry said.

“What of it?”

“I’ve been concentrating on your new dilemma, ever since I suspected it.” Harry paused a moment and then continued. “I knew that it was possible to alter such Marks, so I researched the possible methods that altered them and how. I was even able to locate the spells and potions that changed them further by adding more conditions to them.”

When he had found out about those kinds of alterations he literally became sick with the thought that that was going on right now. It didn’t surprise him that Voldemort would use such methods to control his Death Eaters from a distance, but he had been able to glimpse a bit of it through the ghostly callings to the Marked students here.

“It is because you are the mate to a magical creature that this situation has been made possible,” Harry explained. “The Git knows you’re the mate of a magical creature. More specifically he knows who that mate is and what he is.”

Severus was shocked and then knew that he shouldn’t have been. Mates, magical creature mates were very susceptible to manipulation if they have been marked in such a fashion, a slave-like fashion. He sighed and asked, “Now what do I do? I feel so close to coming apart every time I have those dreams. I can’t control them and I can’t add anyone to them.”

“Most dreams are under the sleeper’s control, but in your case I know it’s not you,” Harry said. “I was able to see the magics and where they were coming from.”

Draco then said, “It’s your Dark Mark. Something was added to it in order to alter the control and ensure that you never have another peaceful nights sleep. There’s more, but I couldn’t quite see it. What about you Harry?”

Harry stopped to think about it. He tried to contain the image of the magical lines in his mind and then he could sort of see the extra that Draco was talking about. “Hair or fur,” he said vaguely.

Quickly he pulled out the Journal of Markings and made a quick note about the image and the fact that it was either hair or fur that had been added to Severus’s Mark.

“Just a moment,” he said. He searched the journal for other references to dreams and hair.

“Uncle Sev,” Draco said quietly, not to distract his mate. “Please would you let us help you now? It’s getting so close to the 22nd that even Remus was concerned.”

Severus looked into his cup to think about it. ‘It is getting close to that time,’ he thought. ‘I want my wolf… I don’t really want to wait anymore to be with my mate, but…’

“Uncle?”

The Professor swallowed the lump in his throat and nodded. “Yeah,” he said. He coughed to clear the lump and said more clearly, “Yes.”

“There’s nothing to be ashamed about needing help with this,” Draco stated. “I know that I still have my own kind of nightmares and so does Harry. Before you even say it, age has nothing to do with it.”
“I know that,” the Potions Master said. “It’s just that I’ve never had dreams til now. Now they are getting very extreme and quite graphic. They’re absolutely awful.”

“Found it,” Harry said out loud interrupting their conversation. “Sorry,” he said.

“Found what?” Draco asked.

“The potion and spell that will cure the nightmares.” Harry was still reading with his hands and he blanched a little at the description that he had found. “It’s possible, but we need your mate to help us out with the potion and the spell. It’s a ritual. We can use one of the ritual rooms here in the school for it, but Remus needs to be there.”

“Will it delay the bonding?” Severus asked.

Reading further Harry was able to answer honestly. “No, but you will need to sleep with Moony every night until you are fully bonded to him. His presence will help to fight the nightmares.”

Draco frowned, asking, “Moony in full form? Not Remus?”

“Moony in full form during the nights only,” Harry stated. “The same potion that changes him for the New Moon can be altered to work within the time limit of the night leading up until the night they bond.”

“But,” Severus said, pulling out the question that he knew was there.

“Remus will be merging with Moony a lot faster and be more possessive of your time away from him,” Harry said. “He may be more volatile and quite possibly, more growly around others…”

Severus frowned. He didn’t want that man to change too much that the students would begin to be afraid of him. He was a good teacher, but to force the changes. “The students…,” he began to ask.

“He’ll still be himself, only with Moony more to the forefront of his mind,” Harry said as he finished reading the last of the information at his fingertips. “It’s mainly in relation to you that he would growl more. Maybe require you to submit more often to his nature, I’m not sure of the results on the extended use of the potion. However it might be required unless you can sleep in your animagus form without reverting back to your human form during the night.”

Severus blinked and considered that notion. “I’ve never tried it. I don’t know whether I can maintain the animagus form or not.”

“Have you ever slept in animagus form, Uncle?” Draco asked, curious to know whether he had dreams in that form.

“No, I have not. Why do you ask?” The dark man wondered where this was heading.

“I was just wondering if you dreamed in animagus form and whether you’d be affected the same way with the same nightmares,” his godson asked.

Severus shuddered to think how his nightmares would change if he was in wolf form. Worse was the very serious question on whether the Dark Lord would know about his animagus form from the dream or not.

“I don’t think that would be a good idea, Dragon,” Harry said.

“Why?” His mate asked.
“Because it’s not certain that Voldemort is the one directing these dreams,” the dark haired Draekon said. “It could be someone else controlling the dreams with the permission from the Dark Lord. That’s something that is highly suspect at the moment.”

“Really,” Draco said. “Who would it be then and why?”

Harry turned his blank gaze to the Potions Master, cocked his head to one side and asked, “Do you have an idea? In my mind I don’t want it to be whom I’m suspecting.”

Severus gulped the tepid tea and choked out the name, “Greyback.”

Draco gasped, “Him?” He looked to his mate who was nodding to Severus.

“That’s who I’m thinking was given the control,” he said.

“Why him…?” Draco questioned. “That man is an absolute monster.” A knock at the door stopped the rest of their conversation.

“Come in,” Severus barked, upset by that revelation. Remus walked in and sensed the tension in the room.

“Is this a bad time?” He asked. “I need Harry.”

Severus sighed and just shooed the dark haired youth out of his rooms with a wave of his hand. “Draco will stay with me. You’ll be back, yes?”

“Of course Professor,” Harry said knowing that there were still a few more things to discuss. Mainly what to do now and of course he knew that he would have to translate his book for the man before even contemplating the ritual to alter the man’s sleeping patterns.

---------------------------------

“What’s going on Remus?” Harry asked as they were walking down the corridor.

Remus sighed and said, “Ms. Granger is throwing a tantrum in detention.”

Harry blinked, paused and then blinked a couple more times. “Detention… I don’t think that she’s ever had a serious detention before. The only the one I know of is from the first year that I can recall, but I wouldn’t count it because we got that one for helping Hagrid. Which class is this one for?”

“Defense Against the Dark Arts,” Remus said grimly.

“Wha… What…? How…? Why…?” Harry was stunned and he was still blinking rapidly at that thought.

“She refused to run during the practical portion of the class, she shouted at several students and used questionable hexes during that class to incapacitate her ‘enemy’ during the war game we had set up,” the DADA Professor explained. “I gave her detention and when in there I had her and two others write essays fully explaining every hex that they had used during the game and the consequences of such in regards to the Law and what charges could be brought against them.”

Harry waited, knowing that there was more. He wasn’t disappointed.

“They did not know that there were monitoring the spells used during the game and therefore they were caught using a few spells that are not taught at Hogwarts yet. The other two requested a couple of books from the library to which they were permitted to use our DADA house-elf to get them, but
Hermione is refusing to do the work,” Remus explained. “Worse her magics are flaring periodically and I’m worried about what that could mean. Although, my suspicions in the whole matter is that she wants to see the Headmaster so badly that she is taking the only course left to her. It’s like she’s suffering from withdrawal symptoms, too.”

Harry snorted at the thought of anyone have withdrawal symptoms from the lack of Dumbledore’s presence, but his mind just had another nasty thought. ‘Sherbert Lemon – Lemon Drops’, the thought reverberated in his mind.

He groaned and mumbled, “By the gods, I hope not.”

“Hope not what? What Harry?”

“Lemon Drops,” he said.

That was all he needed to say because Remus’ own mind turned that over and wondered the same thing. ‘Would the old bastard have really drugged people with those things?’ He thought. ‘Somehow I don’t think that it would be beneath that old son-of-a… I guess you never know, but if it’s true that girl would need to be tested and examined.’

“She’d need to be tested,” Remus said, voicing his thoughts out loud.

Harry just nodded, but said, “I only hope she’s just trying to see the Headmaster because quite frankly I believe repeated incidences like this demands suspension. Which could be the other path that she’s seeking, what do you think?”

Remus sighed, “We’ve not even reached the two month mark in this school year.” He looked to his honorary godson and said jokingly, “Couldn’t you have failed a year or two so that the seventh year crunch of this War could be postponed for a bit?”

Harry shook his head and smiled grimly, “Nope… I just want to get that over with and move on with my life.”

Remus put his arm around Harry’s shoulder and said, “I understand.”

They were approaching the room for the DADA detentions and Harry felt the magics that had build up in the room. He shook his head at the childishness of the one who once was his ‘best friend’. He hadn’t seen either of them since the supper at Grimmauld Place, but he was very much aware of their activities in the school.

They knew that growing older there was always the chance that they would grow apart. They certainly couldn’t continue to attend the same classes as their interests went down separate paths. “Hermione,” Harry said out loud and scolding, hoping the shock her out of her foul humor. “What do you think you’re doing?”

There was a small pop, like the sound of a bubblegum snap, and soon the room was calm. Harry looked around with his magical senses to gauge the damage and repairs that the room may need. “Well there are several ways to fix this,” he said talking about the room.

Hermione butted in and pointedly asked, “Where’s the Headmaster? What are you doing here Harry? Professor I want to see Professor Dumbledore, this is insupportable conduct from the teachers.”

Remus sighed and said, “He’s not available Ms. Granger.” He looked at the other two students in the room that had put up shields during her tantrum. “Are you two nearly finished?”
They nodded and looked at him with hope. They just wanted to get away from the Gryffindor prefect that used to be one of the nicest students in the school. Now, however, that mask has slipped and no one was falling for her nice routine anymore. She was too bossy.

Remus said, “Leave your essays and scoot.” They zoomed out of the room quickly and against the far wall away from one Ms. Hermione Granger. The DADA Professor looked at the dark haired Draekon and asked, “How do we fix this?”

“Well either the one who caused the damages, fixes it manually or magically,” he said pointedly looking in Hermione’s direction. She just huffed, crossed her arms and looked away. “She could also pay for it or her parents will be billed for it.”

“You have no right to bill my parents,” she spat out glaring back at Harry.

“Actually,” Harry said. “It’s in the school by-laws. You fix it with detention for the remainder of this semester, you pay or your parents pay, before end of the semester. The only other option is suspension, but considering the Headmaster’s position on student safety. I seriously doubt that he would consider such an option, especially with Voldemort running about and wreaking havoc on the Wizarding World.”

“I could care less about that, either I speak with Headmaster Dumbledore or I choose suspension,” she stated.

“Dumbledore is not at the school right now and if you choose suspension, your parents will still be billed for the damages to this room,” Harry said. “It’s in the by-laws.”

“The Headmaster wouldn’t dare,” she exclaimed.

“Ms. Granger,” Remus said with a touch of anger in his voice. “I’ve put up with this for the last time. You will fix this room or your parents will be billed for it. You are not suspended because that would just release you into the Wizarding World and closer to Voldemort’s clutches. Being known as one of the Best Friends to Harry Potter the Boy-Who-Lived makes you an immediate target. Your parents sent you here with the hopes that you’d be protected and by the Headmaster’s decisions you will be.”

She huffed in anger and let loose some of her uncontrolled magics. Harry only trapped it and fired it back at her. “Bad form Hermione,” he said. “You shouldn’t do this and quite frankly I believe that you need to be examined by Madam Pomfrey for possible coercion.”

“You are right Harry,” Remus said. “She’s never acted like this before. Ms. Granger, I recommend that you get physically and mentally examined by the medical staff here and I hope that your good humour returns quickly in order to resolve the issue of this room.”

She scowled and asked, “What if I refuse?”

“You have no choice,” the Professor said. “You must and your parents are going to be notified of the events that led to this mess.”

She looked at her Professor’s frowning face and then to Harry’s calm contemplation of the damages in the room. ‘If I can pass off the bad humour, as having been coerced then maybe I can get out of having to fix this shite or pay for it.’

“Very well,” she said. “I’ll go first thing in the morning.”

She stood up to leave, but Remus stopped her. “Not so fast Ms. Granger,” he said. “You still need to
produce appropriate essays related to the detention that you’ve earned this week. The others made honest attempts and you must too or else repeat this detention on two more occasions.”

Hermione was stunned that she got detention in the first place. She never got to see the Headmaster, was threatened with being forced to pay for the damages that her magic had produced. Also there was the suspicion of coercion against her, forcing her to see the school’s meddling medi-witch. On top of all that she was still expected to produce essays for the detention she had earned for the sole reason of being forced into a meeting with Headmaster Dumbledore, which is continually being denied to her.

She was so close to snapping. She looked twitchy to Remus and Harry was on the alert when he felt magic rise in the vicinity. Suddenly the magic stopped and she sat down, calling for the DADA house-elf to fetch her some books from the library.

She was only seemingly calm.

Harry and Remus didn’t trust her, but there was nothing further to say in the matter. They would both have to wait for the results of Madam Pomfrey’s examination. Harry handed another monitoring and recording crystal. It was the one that they used to record certain classes.

Remus had it called for all of his detentions because there were just some students that needed closer monitoring than others. It was a good thing too that this conversation was recorded because they needed to keep an accurate record to show Hermione’s parents for proof of their daughter’s property damaging behaviour.

Harry left Remus to continue monitoring Ms. Granger’s detention and returned to the Potions Master’s quarters to continue telling them about how to get rid of the nightmares.

---------------------------------

TBC...
Buh-Bye Dark Mark

Severus was already at Grimmauld Place having performed the purification ritual there. It was the safest place for him, so long as he didn’t perform any magics. So he had taken precautions and neutralized the security on his bookshelves, prior to the ritual, in order to be able to read his books without activating or de-activating the magical security.

He didn’t like it, but he could do it. ‘No magic for 48 hours,’ he thought. ‘At least it’s not as painful as removing that nightmare potion and magics from the Dark Mark.’ He shuddered remembering what happened the previous weekend in one of the older Ritual Rooms at Hogwarts.

It was also strange not to be sleeping with Moony next to him, but he was assured that he could do that for the two days required, due to the purification. Moony was too magical and if he slept next to his mate-to-be the magics in him would change the timing to everything that they wanted to accomplish.

No one in the school’s ritual room was prepared for the foulness that emerged from his arm when the nightmare potion was forcibly removed. Nor could they even conceive of the pain generated to replace something similar in order to shift the control back to himself and his mate.

Flashback - October 14th, Saturday

The boys were sterilizing the knives that they needed to use in order to correctly perform the Ritual. They had marked the floors and walls with all the appropriate symbols. This was needed in order to
call upon several special elements. Permission was required from those elements and the markings in
the room called to them and helped to promote an understanding for the magics that were about to be
used and needed in the Ritual Room.

Everything was done as quickly and as simply as possible, but as with all things magical some
things, sometimes evil things, just try to worm its way in and create more havoc. Luckily everyone in
the room was strong magically and they were all fully in their true forms, just like they needed to be.

It’s a delicate procedure to change the control of one aspect to a Dark Mark or Slave Mark, but it can
be done. All you need to do is follow the ritual steps precisely and have someone reliable to take
over the control until such a time as the Mark in question can be removed completely.

In Severus’ case, it was in his best interest to turn over the control of his dreams to his mate-to-be
because it seems that Remus’ sire, for lack of a better term, was the one currently in control.

The werewolf in Remus understood the basics of what had happened, but more than that it seems
that Greyback was considered an Alpha whereas Moony had never challenged him for that role, yet.
Moony preferred to be a lone wolf and to become an Alpha only when it should suit him to issue a
challenge.

Taking the control from Greyback, even from a distance would be considered a challenge to the
Alpha role. The other werewolves would sense it and not respect the current Alpha ever again,
should he lose.

Moony considered that and with the new understanding obtained about every event leading up to this
moment, the werewolf agreed. It wanted to be acknowledged as the stronger and smarter of the two.
Plus to take the respect and leadership from a distance was altogether a better solution then meeting
Greyback in person.

Greyback had the backing of the current Dark Lord and quite frankly it was very inadvisable to meet
in a location where Voldemort could interfere. In this case the battle would take place in Severus’
nightmare and the final result would mean that Severus could be partially bonded in his dreams.

The partial bond would in fact create a link between Remus and Severus, but only if Remus wins. If
he doesn’t then the Alpha can claim the man that they are fighting for and Moony would never have
a chance to bond with the Potions Master.

Severus did say to the others that he could manage the dreams until the day they fully bonded. He
was being weakened by the dreams. They could see it and everyone knew that he may not have the
strength to fight fully when the time came.

“Do you believe that I will fail?” Remus asked at the time. “If you don’t believe that I can do it, just
say so.”

Severus frowned and said, “It’s not that.” He paused and sighed, “I’m just afraid, that is all. I don’t
want you getting hurt in there and that monster is vile. I’ve been able to hold him off, but it feels like
sometimes he’s getting assistance to try and break me down.”

“That’s entirely possible,” Harry said. “Voldemort only handed over control, but it’s obvious that
you’re still connected to the Dark Lord. He may still be able to take over those dreams whenever he
chooses. So yes, I believe that Greyback is getting assistance.”

“Why involve Greyback in the first place?” Draco asked.

Harry paused before talking, but it was Severus who explained it to him. “Greyback is the one that
bit Remus when he was just a boy. He has the closest connection possible to my acknowledged mate. It’s no secret that Remus is my mate-to-be. The Dark Lord knew about it and would have forced me to bring him in to be Marked, should we have decided to bond in spite of the Mark. If we had bonded before, I could never have become a Death Eater.”

Remus wanted to shift so that he could touch his mate, but knew that he would have to wait for the potion to work. On a brighter note, he needed less and less of it prior to shifting. The dosage of the potion was being closely monitored and was being reduced accordingly, which apparently was the goal when this particular potion was in use. It helped return complete control of the were-creature transformations back to the human.

Severus just continued, “I refused to even consider the matter. I didn’t want to have anyone else involved with the Dark Lord in such a fashion. I couldn’t ever consider bonding with him in order to betray him. I’m not that vengeful.”

“That's OK my mate,” Remus said his voice becoming growly, as the werewolf began to emerge. They were all used to it by now, but Draco was always sure to place himself behind his mate.

It had something to do with inner magical creatures and mates needing to be protected from outside sources. It was an instinct that many animals had regarding their mates. It was also something that the Draekon in Harry can relate to and that Moony understood.

Severus was surprised that Moony could talk in a human sounding voice. Moony just sent him a wolfish grin and continued to change into his true werewolf form. Severus grinned back and watched the rest of the transformation.

The boys moved to the Alter that they had risen in the middle of the ritual room. Unfortunately, this was a ritual that needed to be done when the participants were partially dressed because the elements needed access to their upper torsos. It was access to the heart and feelings that was needed more than anything else, as this was indeed going to be a very spiritual ritual with a lot of elements involved.

Severus was given the choice of which particular Ritual he wanted to do in order to remove his Dark Mark and which one to use in order to fix the nightmare issue. He selected the bonding ritual on his own because the final decision was his to make, but he did speak with Remus about it and Remus, plus Moony agreed in their own fashion.

Severus did speak to his wolfish mate-to-be and the boys about the one he wanted to use to get rid of the nightmares. The ritual called for the hairs from family and potential mate. It also called for their blood in order to call them into the dream and help with the battle should it be needed.

"I would like this one to be done,” he told them after mentioning what it was and how it worked. Everyone was stunned, but they were curious on how Severus could explain some of the elements, like a living son.

"Draco, you've chosen to add my name to yours when you had first bonded with Harry. That means that you are more than just a godson in the eyes of Magical Law. Maybe you were not completely aware of this, but in a sense that made you my son."

Draco's eyes watered and somehow he felt the truth in the words. It was very profound to know that when he thought he had lost a father when he gained his mate. He actually gained another father just by acknowledging the man and adding the name Severus to his own.

He looked at his own mate and saw that Harry was nodding. He then realized that Harry knew all about that and had encouraged to take the man's name. "Harry," he choked out the name.
"Yes, I knew," he said gathering his mate in his arms and held him until he was composed enough to continue listening to Severus' explanation. Draco left his mate's arms and hugged his 'new' father, holding him for a while.

Severus continued to hold his Godson “Son” in his arms, relishing the comfort and continued to explain his choices. "Harry you are mated to my 'Son' and therefore you are considered family by default, but it is not anything that I would ever change for the world. You are the best thing that's ever happened to him and to me, even if you only needed to be with you mate."

Harry just smiled at them and didn’t mention a word about how he didn’t really need to claim his mate. Draco might have been safer if he hadn’t mated with him, but the Boy-Who-Lived had long since decided that everyone had the right to choose their own fate. The fact that Draco was actually happy to be mated to him, constantly made his heart soar with joy and sometime with wonder. Loving that beautiful man, the one that chose him never ceased to amaze him.

Finally the Potions Master looked at Remus and said, "I believe in you and I know that you will win. Please consider this Ritual in order to take over my dreams. I'd rather be with you in my dreams more than anything else. Please?"

In the end they were all feeling sappy, but they had agreed to the Ritual that they were now about to perform.

Harry made the potion specific for this ritual. It called for the hair of the son and hair of the mate. It needed to be reinforced with the hair of all those related and that included Dudley's, which he was happy to give. He didn't have the power to participate, but he was related by blood and that was powerful in its own right.

The potion also called for blood from the same sources, plus that of a known 'pure' fighting creature. Luckily Harry had interpreted the ingredient correctly, as it was the blood from a fighting unicorn.

It didn’t come one that was held in captivity and forced to breed, but one that was naturally produced. That was one of the ingredients he had obtained by luck when he had encountered that very special herd of unicorns. In fact they were the ones that laughed at some of his requests, but since he knew what he was doing the head stallion allowed those that wanted to participate and donate as they chose.

Now the potion was complete, they were only waiting in the room for Moony to come forward. Harry was already in full Draekon form and Draco let his hair down from the braids that he loved. They had all taken ritualistic cleansing baths and were in natural fiber pants, that looked somewhat like sleep pants, but that was all they were permitted to wear during this ritual.

“Professor Snape,” Harry said. “You need to lie down on the Alter and then we can begin.”

Moony had fully emerged and was speaking to Harry in the growly tone and voice. (…What are you going to do? My human half has a clear picture, but bleeding my mate? Does that mean that you are going to hurt him?)

(…No, not intentionally…) Harry said. (…Come here and let me show you…) He held up one knife after another explaining where the cuts were going to go and why. (…Cutting will hurt him and he will bleed, but most of what will come out of the wound will be the potion that was injected to control his dreaming. By the time that we make the cuts and purge the foul blood with this potion, Severus and you will be pulled into his nightmare where you will have to battle for him…)

Moony looked at his mate lying there on the Alter and he felt a surge of protectiveness and
possession flare in him. His sire has dared to try and take his mate away from him. That bastard will be paying for it and it was all the better that it would occur in the dream first.

The werewolf then looked at Harry and the Draekon continued to explain the procedure. (...Draco and I will be performing the surgery needed in order to exchange the potion that the Dark Lord used. Once we’ve fully inserted the new potion we will be pulled into the dream too. This is only to help you if you need it. We will lend you our strength because it is the strength of family…pack…)

Moony let out a pleased grumbling sound. He looked at his mate-to-be once more, leaned in and licked his face and neck. (...Be safe…) he barked and nipped the neck that Severus had turned to expose the place that Moony had taken to licking often. It was slowly increasing in sensitivity, but the Potions Master knew that that was going to happen because it was the ‘marking site’ for the bite that would occur when they fully bonded.

The werewolf looked at everyone in the room and waited for his part in the Ritual to begin. The battle was long and furious. The Dark Lord was suitably shocked when Greyback lost his control. He was furious when he discovered that the control of Severus’ nightmares and dreams were completely removed from his power.

Some of the Death Eaters didn’t make it that night, as he blasted them upon sight. The smarter ones removed themselves from His presence out of the pure need for survival. They’d rather take a Crucio later, than end up dead now.

The cuts that the boys opened were on their chests and they were opened in a rune form in order to confirm the notion of family to the elements in the room. Severus’ and Remus’ (Moony’s) chests were similarly cut with a rune form in order to announce their intention to bond, even if the bonding did not occur on this day.

Intent was a large part of magic and it was clear that elements that appeared during this Ritual were all for correcting the warped magics that were forced into the Dark Mark, after that particular Mark had been forced onto the Potions Master. It was wrong to change the inner nature of such a Mark because it could warp the magics within the conditions of the Mark to change and most times not for the better.

Severus was lucky that the potion had been injected only recently, meaning before the end of the sixth year and around one of the last times he was called to Voldemort’s side. If that potion had been in him for longer than two years, the effects would have been drastically worse and the pain of the removal would have not been worth it.

As it is the boys were successful in assisting with the Nightmare Potion removal and had in fact through the use of that particular Ritual bound all of them, including Dudley in absentia, as a family… pack unit belonging to Moony.

Draco was happy to have physical evidence to back up the magical element that he had unwittingly signed at the time of his marriage contract. Harry didn’t care as this was one of the better scars to have and his Potions Master was of the same opinion, as he had his own share of scars that he didn’t care for. Moony only twitched when the rune was cut into the left breast of his chest, but anything that bound his mate-to-be in some form was better than the nothing that they’ve had for the decades since their school years.

---------------------------------

Sunday October 22nd
Severus was touching the rune scar that was formed on his left breast from the night that they had removed the awful potion from his Dark Mark. The scar felt tingly and yet it was comforting, like it was letting him know that he was not alone.

He was sitting in one of the library chairs reading a book that Draco had asked his opinion on. But, Severus still hadn’t had the time to read it with all of the events occurring in the school. However, now that he’s been on basically a forced holiday since Thursday Oct. 19, due to the Purification Ritual that he needed to perform, he has the chance to review the books and the little journal that his ‘Son’ had started.

Remus and the were-creature in him were not pleased to have to sleep without Severus for the duration, but in his consciousness he knew, really and truly, that his mate-to-be was absolutely safe at No. 12 Grimmauld Place. The Weasley Twins had done much to improve the wards of the place and had requested their little pack-family to add more protections to them.

This was all done on the day of the “Furniture Split” because once each person added an element to the wards they were granted permission to come and go as they please within that particular house. Not that anyone in this particular family would ever take gross advantage of this, but they did recognize that there would be a need from time to time.

The Twins only asked to be kept in the loop of events and that was fine by Harry, as it was obvious that these young men were very well aware of event in the Wizarding World and they were only doing their small part in order to overcome the Darkness spreading in the land.

After the Purification Ritual, Severus couldn’t even work with his beloved potions until he had fully bonded with Remus/Moony. It had to do with the magic found in the ingredients and the fact that magic was needed in a person in order to have the ingredients blend like they’re supposed to. So here he was reading the curious book that Draco had stumbled upon about guardian snake gates and magical arches to other dimensions.

‘He couldn’t be thinking what I know my little Dragon brat must be thinking,’ Severus mused. He read the little journal and then followed the path of books that Draco was currently working on. He made notations of other books he found with similar references, when he could. It was refreshing to research something completely unrelated to his potions and it was something that filled his lonesome time at No. 12.

Also, he suspected that Harry had a method of gathering data from libraries, which did not include a book-by-book method. ‘I’m going to get that Brat Apprentice of mine to spill his secrets in this,’ he thought. ‘We will all need it in order to hunt down information in Remus’s library house. I know that Harry had to have used some kind of spell. That’s the only way that he could have found the information and copied them into that Journal of his so quickly.’

These were the thoughts running through his mind as he prepared No. 12’s Ritual Room for the event that was going to occur this evening. ‘Harry promised me the next day off,’ he thought, as he drew another line on the wall by hand.

Everything in this Ritual had to be done by hand, especially at the hand of the petitioner, which is Severus Snape. Luckily his thoughts didn’t have to be fully focused on the Ritual and why he needed to do it, but he did have to pierce his Dark Mark periodically and ensure that the foulness within was part of lines and rune forms he was drawing. Only a drop per form or line was needed at the beginning in order to link the whole image, so he used a muggle pin to prick his Dark Mark.
The Dark Lord was feeling every prick of the needle, but he couldn’t figure out what was going on. It wasn’t like anyone had never tried to remove the Mark before, but he was always aware of their efforts. The Death Eaters who did this were always caught, but this was different. He felt the Master Mark, pricking periodically and with no fixed pattern. It was basically driving him nuts.

If Severus knew this, he definitely would have a perverse sense of satisfaction. On a stranger note, all the Death Eaters were feeling the same thing and so was Harry, although for him it was only a ghostly sensation and not one worth bothering about.

Hermione was being driving insane and Ron only scratched it once in a while. It wasn’t like he had never had an ‘Itching Hex’ sent to a particular section of his body. He was only grateful that he wasn’t his privates.

The other Marked Death Eaters in the school felt the same and had similar reactions to either Hermione or Ron. Many of them locked themselves in their rooms and Houses in order to hide the fact that they were all affected and all in the same location.

Draco noticed this and was able to determine, who were Marked and who were not. Some of the teachers noted the same thing and they knew that they would be bringing this up to the Headmaster at the next Teachers Conference at the end of the month.

The conferences were set up so that all the Professors and Aides could meet in order to discuss particular things with the Heads of House and the Headmaster, without have to resort to too many private meetings. Nothing would ever get done otherwise. That’s not to say that urgent business was not dealt with as they arose, but there was a triage of sorts in progress and many thing did NOT require the Headmaster’s approval.

---------------

Back at Grimmauld Place the markings in the Ritual Room were done and Severus couldn’t wait for his fasting and the final bonding to be done. He was even eager to see Remus again because he found that he missed his company the last few nights.

‘That hairy beast has wormed its way into my heart and soul,’ he thought ruefully to himself, smiling secretively. He only hoped that Harry was able to obtain the magical metal needed to complete the bonding.

Harry, Draco and Remus had remained at the school until the Sunday of the bonding. The boys’ magics were too much and would have overwhelmed the Purification that Severus had to submit to in order for the bonding to succeed.

Only the house-elves of No. 12 had been in contact with him and that was only from a distance to provide meals and tea. Severus had been very confined within that house to a limited area close to his books and close to the Ritual Room. Even the Twins let him be because they cared about the results and wanted the outcome of the bonding to succeed.

‘This Ritual is going to be one of the most complicated works in Sex Magic that I have ever had the misfortune to have been a part of,’ he thought, as he was finishing up with the very last line that he possibly could. ‘I can’t close off the forms until everyone is in the room and in their positions.’

He remembered everything about the Ritual and knew that there would be some unknown element due to his mate because his mate had to choose some end results.

‘I only hope that whatever it is it’s not going to be embarrassing.’ He shuddered to think about some
of the things that he had seen written in Harry’s Journal of Markings. In the past it wasn’t uncommon to have the slave or bonded servant to sport chains and jewelry reflecting their bound status. Even if they were fortunate enough to gain some form of freedom, chains or bonds were very much a part of their freed status. Their history was forever known.

‘This Ritual was my choice,’ he continued to reflect on his choice. ‘I could have gone with something that wouldn’t be as strong or as freeing, but I would have been more confined by such a choice. I will not be hiding who or what I am or was with this bond.’

He was recalling the steps needed in the Ritual in order for everything to turn out in his… their favour.

------- (WARNING: is HERE) -------

Harry’s Journal of Markings – Ritual Steps

Excerpt from the Diary of a Slave – Circa 261 A.D.

“My master looked at me that way again. Once more he asked if I wanted freedom. How can I accept such a thing as I had never known freedom in my entire life. My parents were slaves to his, but he wishes that I speak my mind. Perhaps something will allow me to do just that without fully changing my nature. I can not change my nature.”

“My master performed the spell ritual ‘Verbum Veritas’. I can now answer his questions without worry that he would take offence. I am however very cautious about it as I refuse to offend him in any manner.”

_****_

Excerpt from the Work Journal of Potion Master Horque ni Bausch – Circa 46 A.D.

“I’ve begun to experiment with the old slave spells of my forefathers. How primitive they are too. I wanted to be able to free some of my fathers older slaves, but the spells are failing. Perhaps the potion ‘Dermit Masque’ would help.”

_****_

Excerpt from the Manual of a Chieftain’s Life – written by Burk the Fierce – Circa 210 A.D.

“Ach, never fight those buggers again. They bite. Kept one for fun, but I be thinken she needs to know her place. Will be getten goode welps from that bitch in heat. Musten be sure that she be taken ‘whelpen brew’ to be getten me more sons.”

_****_

Excerpt from Manifesto – written by Darkness Incarnate – Circa 1127 A.D.
“They are all worshippers of my infinite benevolence. That’s right my babies, my creatures, mine, you all belong to me. I have taken of your flesh and branded you with the image of my strength and power, ‘Tatooum Imago Infinitas’. What a wonderful spell to control my little babies, mine, all mine. Listen to me all and answer my call little ones, you will come when I call…”

_____****____

It was very disturbing to read the evolution of all of those various spells, potions and rituals. But Harry was able to find one and amend it to help fight Voldemort’s Dark Mark. This Ritual was especially made for Severus alone.

Harry didn’t think that he would be able to free the rest with this same Ritual and he didn’t dare do it with anyone who was weaker than a specific level in magical power. The removal of magic from those individuals’ would cause them to lose all of their magics and effectively turn them all into Squibs.

Dudley pointed out that there was nothing wrong with being a Squib, but Neville explained that if you’re not born a Squib and are forced to become one, then the loss would cause many to lose their minds. They’d cause themselves harm and quite possibly cause harm to others. This fact has been proven time and again that those born with Wizard magics and have lived with it, can not adjust to the sudden loss.

Harry’s Ritual for Severus called for many factors. First there is a purification ritual where no magic was performed for the following 48 hours, this is only done by the petitioner, Severus. Next they needed a secure “family” Ritual room with a design drawn out in a spiral form, where the four quadrants or corners lead in a stepping stone pattern to the centre of the room where the next step of the Ritual is to take place.

Within the main circle, in the centre of the room, Harry will be excising the Dark Mark from Severus’ arm while chanting in Parseltongue every word to control the extracting of the Dark magics within it, without losing any of Severus’s own natural magic. The boys, meaning Draco and the Twins will be representing the other elements of nature, as well as the earthly directions and they have to chant in counter-point to the Snake language coming from Harry.

That’s just some of the least disturbing elements of this Ritual.

Everyone in the room has to be completely unclothed during this whole process, to ensure purity in all. That means that everyone involved in the Ritual has to take ritualistic baths to fully cleanse their entire bodies, inside and out.

Remus will be present in his full werewolf form and his job in this is to take his mate-to-be in the most animalistic sense. However since they were to be effectively bonded in a union similar to Harry and Draco, Remus with his Moony brain will have to arouse his mate and maintain it for the duration of the Ritual. Remus also has to ensure that the Moony part of him does not change the Potions Master into a complete submissive entity.

That was something that Severus was not looking forward to. Also, in a bonding the exchanges of gifts could be as minor as a ring or major like the “Collaring” of eras past where large pieces of jewelry were forced on the newly bonded, wife – submissive - bottom, to be worn. Let’s not forget that different cultures had different standards and that is still true today.

Moony wanted something in place to ensure that his Potions Master would never be able to remove as it was for protection as well as claiming. He wanted the man to always have in remembrance of this day, the day that they were finally free to bond and they were meant to.
Remus was somewhat of the same frame of mind, but he wanted equality in their union, as much as Moony would allow. Truthfully it could only be as much as Severus would allow, but there was an understanding that it was going to represent his commitment to their bond.

The minds of the werewolf and man had merged enough times that Moony understood and Remus knew that he had to warn Severus about a couple of the elements. Once the Potions Master knew about it, he had to think about that form of visibility for a long while, plus if the bonds were that visual, meaning anything created with metal.

It had to be specially made for a Potions Master and Human Wizard. Severus didn’t want to lose anything he gained from this Ritual and bond, due to the elements of his everyday life. In the end Severus accepted everything.

That’s what Harry had to do. He had to ensure that these items for the Ritual were ready and that everyone had their role clear in their mind. George and Fred were asked to participate, but they were told the specifics before they could jump into this without considering all that they had to do physically.

They explained to Harry that they had been lovers since their teen years. They knew that they when they were to finally bond, in the future, with another person in the Magical form of Matrimony found in the Wizarding World, that it was only to include a third person. They wanted a Triad of like minds, dispositions and ideals. They didn’t a pairing where they would forever be separated, one from the other. They just too close for anything less.

However, getting back on the track of this Ritual, the boys needed to add something of a sexual nature to this. That was so that the magics acknowledge the bond that both the Professors are trying gain. The mated pairs, so to speak, had two elements to add to this Ritual.

The known or acknowledged ‘top’ had to ejaculate with the assistance of their known ‘bottom’. But… it had to be done in a certain fashion. The top or in our case Harry and George had to hold one part of the bonding gift while being serviced orally by the bottom, in this case Draco and Fred. The gift is crafted metal cuffs that would be placed on Severus and Remus/Moony during the Ritual. It was also going to be their visual bond and would last for the rest of their entire lives.

One cuff to be placed on Severus left wrist and Moony will receive one on his right. Another will be placed on Moony’s left ankle and another will be placed on Severus’ right ankle. Mirrored cuffs for mates were a rare occurrence, but this was something that both men had agreed on, as they were specially made for them with very cool and subtle scrolling and runic designs.

Once the cuffs are attached then the two bottoms had to remove their mouths filled with their own saliva and the pre-ejaculate taste of their tops, which they then have to spit it out onto Severus cuffs. This is to acknowledge that he is like them and they accept his role as bottom on behalf of Moony.

The tops then have to take their own erection, pump a few times and spread their pre-ejaculate, plus whatever their bottoms left behind, onto Moony’s cuffs to represent his role as top to Severus.

That’s not all.

The entire thing has to be done with Moony mounted in Severus, pounding into him and bonding in the most primal of senses. All of this had to happen, while Harry was casting and pouring the rest of the needed potion and liquid metal in order to make Dark Mark vanish. It had to be replaced with Remus’ own design for their final ‘gift’, for lack of a better word.

Before anything takes place, even before Harry excises the skin that had the Dark Mark, he had to
carve a design into Moony’s upper left arm, from shoulder to elbow. He had to repeat the same pattern in Severus’ lower left arm, from elbow to wrist, including the section that was going to be covered by a metallic cuff later in the Ritual.

The bloody grooves, in the skin were to provide the path that the liquid metal, mixed with several potions, would follow when it was poured and forced to merge with the flesh of the two men. This is definitely not a Ritual to take lightly and they all had to be mentally prepared for it.

Harry’s part in was more involved because he actually had to maintain his control over himself, his magics and ensure that the inner battle with Voldemort didn’t affect any of them in a negative manner.

Fred and George had discussed this whole thing together in length. It had been a long time since they had heard of anyone or any family conducting a Ritual of this magnitude.

These were things that everyone in the Wizarding World knew to have happened in the past. In this day and age, the only Ritual that they were fully aware was the one where Voldemort had resurrected himself with Harry’s own blood and that was because he told them about it.

They both agreed that they loved Harry as a brother and after thinking this through, they knew that if any member of the own blood family had asked this of them, they would do it. No questions asked.

Severus actually thanked before the Ritual even started and they understood that this was a seriously big deal. The Ritual had to take place on the New Moon night and Remus had to be in full werewolf form.

It began an hour after Moony had come forward and had finished sometime after one in the morning. The Headmaster was very understanding and had even excused the Professors from having to attend class until Wednesday.

They needed the little Honeymoon time with all things considered. The boys were excused only for the following and they had to return to the school for Tuesday classes, but that was alright. They just wanted to assure themselves that the Ritual worked and that the bonds held.

It did work and the bonds were in fine form.

The boys had the two men moved to a room in the house that had been designated theirs for the time being. They couldn’t be pulled apart at the moment because the wolf was locked to him mate, such is the nature of wolves and dogs.

The men were exhausted and so were all of the boys, but Harry was positive that everything had worked out for all them. They were all to rest the following day and he was planning to examine all of them before he and Draco headed by to the School.

Harry wanted to be sure that everything turned out all right and that there would be no adverse effects from the prolonged Ritual or the elements of it.

-------------------------------

TBC…
Sunday Oct. 22, Evening at the school

While, Harry, Draco and Remus were all safe at No. 12 Grimmauld Place, plus Harry being the Headmaster, he was not worried about the school because he knew that he could trust the running of it in the capable hands of his Deputies.

Neville and Dudley were taking the opportunity and time to get a little bit closer to one another. About a week ago, Neville had finally sent off an Owl to his Grandmother to request information about bonding with someone who wasn’t quite up there in magical power or ability.

She had been out of the Country for a bit, taking her mission out on the road. She had been asked by one of her very good friends to speak to certain magical merchants about coming to Hogwarts in the winter after the Yule season for a Winter Festival or Carnival. The plan was in motion to have it set up, perhaps, late in the month of February.

So she was not surprised to have several important pieces of correspondence waiting for her when she returned. Her house-elves collected them and had separated them into appropriate piles measured by importance. Anything from her Grandson was considered number one and was always read first. To her shock Neville was asking some very personal, very embarrassing family questions.

Questions that he should never ask, ‘Unless he is getting involved with…’ she thought, pausing.

Then she turned pale and called her house-elves to pack her things in order to stay several nights at the School. “I will get to the bottom of this,” she muttered. “No one is taking my grandson away from me.”

A few hours later saw this very imposing woman walk up to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The Deputies were surprised to find that the wards were ringing to indicate that someone with leanings towards the Light had arrived.

This was unexpected, as they had yet to receive visitors of any sort at the School. McGonagall only hoped that the War hadn’t started as she wasn’t prepared to receive anyone seeking Sanctuary yet. Make no mistake, the school was ready, but none of the people within that grand building ever
wanted War to break out.

The Deputies were curious and wondered who it could be. They couldn’t send out a carriage, besides this person looked like they needed to walk off some steam. Normally the school should have received a written notice for a situation like this, but it looked like this was about something else.

They waited patiently and then there was a pop. A very normal sound linked to the house-elves in the school and in the Wizarding World. This one was actually wearing a monogrammed tea-towel with the Longbottom Family Crest. Now they knew who was about to arrive.

"My Mistress, the Dowager Lady Amalia Dorcas Longbottom, wishes to see her Grandson," she said. The Professors didn't even have to ask who that grandson was, as there was only one apprentice in the school with the name Longbottom.

"We'll call him to the private meeting room," Professor Sprout said and then pointed out the location to which the little house-elf can guide her Mistress.

The Professors looked at one another wondering what was going on. Professor Sprout called to Tinky, one of the unbound house-elves that had found their way to this school with the help from Dobby. This little elf seemed young, but then there were now several unbound house-elves at the school working for pay until they decide who they wish to bond to and whether they wanted to be bound or not.

As soon as this little elf appeared, with a very soft pop, she said, "Please inform Mr. Longbottom that he has a visitor in Meeting Room No. 34."

The elf curtsied and popped back out.

Tinky knew that Neville and his friend had plans for a romantic meal in the Founders Quarters, but she also heard that a Dowager was coming to the school. She knew that the old woman must be very important to Neville, if he had to be interrupted from ‘whatever’ he was doing with his friend.

She popped into the private rooms belonging to the Headmaster and his family. She found the two young men on the couch just talking to one another about nothing really important. They had yet to eat their evening meal, but they had planned a quiet dinner for two in these quarters while the others were away and taking care of business.

“Sirs,” she said, when they turned their attentions to her. “Mr. Longba'oms sir, you’re bein’ as-ked to meet… a lady in meetin’ rom… tree… four.” She was one of the ones that had a hard time talking, but knew that these two young men would never make fun of her for it because they never did in the beginning, when she had first met them.

In fact Dudley was one of the ones who looked out for her and sometimes called on her to do things for him or to help him out because he lacked the magic. She was slightly different then other house-elves because her elf-magic was stronger, but she was happy to be of use and didn’t mind that the one that called her was someone with little magics, at least someone called on her.

“Who is waiting for him?” Dudley asked.

“Dowa… ger… Long… Ba'oms,” she said slowly, hoping that her slur didn’t show. She wasn’t drunk, she was just born with an inability to speak properly, even by the house-elf standards that wizards expected from them.

Neville smiled at her and said, “Thank you. I will be going down there now.”
Tinky nodded, curtsied and was about to pop out when Dudley asked her something, “Tinky?” She paused and waited anxious to serve. “Could you please make sure that our evening meal stays warm for us? I wouldn’t like it to be cold by the time we can actually eat it and could you please make sure that another place setting is available just in case.”

She nodded happily and went into the other room to cast the spells for the meal to remain warm for the young men and to ensure that there was another place setting. She returned to them, smiling, curtsying and popping away to continue her other chores in the school.

“I take it that your Gran has just arrived at the school,” Dudley stated.

Neville frowned, but answered, “I wrote to her, but I didn’t think that she would come to the school. I just thought that she would write back. I really can’t keep her waiting.”

“Do you want me come along with you?”

“Please,” Neville said. “I'm guessing that you’re the reason she’s here. In fact, I’m sure of it.”

Dudley just stood up and held out his hand. He wasn’t afraid to show their growing relationship and that was just the thing that he knew Neville wanted too.

Hand in hand they made their way to the Meeting Room No. 34. Many students in the Hall and corridors watched the two walking together. Some of the girls were giggling and some of the boys were envious at their freedom, but there were others who thought that it was wrong. Not because they were two guys, but because Dudley was a Squib.

There were still elements to the Wizarding World, where the humans were still very much prejudice to ‘Blood Status’ or ‘Magics in the Blood’, even family lineage could be used against someone if they didn’t have what was once known as ‘Proof of Patents’. It's basically a lineage scroll or portable family tapestry proving your historical links to greatness or perhaps other elements, like creatures, in the past.

That was not the only reason for Mrs. Longbottom’s visit. She was there to find out what was going on with her grandson. His letter was bland and he didn’t even give her any hint at what reason he was seeking this information.

‘Why does he need to know this?’ She thought slightly vexed that there wasn’t more in the letter to point her in the right direction. ‘This will be a delicate meeting,’ she thought, when she was further able to grasp what her grandson was asking.

She had very good friends that still worked at the school, to whom she could find out about more about what was going on. ‘I think that I’ll stick around to find out just what else is happening at the school,’ she thought.

While she was waiting, a house-elf came to set out a service of tea. It hadn’t even been on the table for longer than ten seconds, when the door to the meeting room opened. Finally she was able to see her grandson and was internally startled that he came through holding hands with another young man.

‘He’s obviously a Muggle-born or perhaps just Muggle-raised,’ she observed. It was clear by the mode of dress. ‘Luckily Neville has not been influenced against the tradition of robes by this young man. Oh, my! Isn’t he a looker?’

Dudley walked into the meeting room holding onto Neville’s hand. He directed the Gryffindor to sit near his Grandmother and was pulled to sit just next to the nervous teen. She watched them closely.
and noticed that they were comfortable with one another. 'Just another thing to add to my growing list of questions,' she added in her thoughts.

Neville served his Grandmother her tea and when she stopped him from adding any milk or sugar, he knew that she was not happy. If she had been really pissed off, she'd have asked for coffee, which is a drink that she hates, but helps to keep her in a foul mood. This time he knew that she was only slightly vexed and therefore knew that maybe something good would come from this meeting.

Lady Longbottom took her first sip of the tea and then set it down. She looked directly at Dudley. "Well explain your intentions towards my Grandson," she demanded.

Dudley coughed and Neville nearly choked on his own tea. However, Dudley first made sure that Neville was all right before answering the stately woman. "Your question has many levels," he said, his nerves bringing out formal speech, which was something that he had never shown to Harry or his parents before. "Could you please clarify, exactly, what it is that you would like to know?"

Neville had never heard Dudley talk like that. He turned around and following the standard of his old Potions Professor, raised one eyebrow to ask, 'What the hell?'

Dudley just gave him a slightly sheepish grin and a small half-shrug of his shoulders. His attention was still on Mrs. Longbottom who just continued to observe the interactions between the two of them.

She took her tea in hand and took another sip, this time to hide a small grin and gather her thoughts. She looked at her grandson and sighed. It was very clear that he was besotted with this good-looking bloke. "I would like to know just how far this relationship has gone and whether I should be scheduling a bonding ceremony or an after bonding ceremony."

Both boys were red in the face at the thought that Neville's Grandmother had believed them to be that involved with one another. Before either could speak, she said, "Neville, I'm mostly disappointed that you have never mentioned this young man before now. I thought that I knew everybody that you've claimed to be friends with. You've certainly told me about the people you dated in this school, why haven't you mentioned this one."

"Grandmother," Neville said. "This is Dudley Dursley. He has never been a student at Hogwarts. In fact he is a Muggle. Well a Muggle-Squib, as he likes to say." He looked over smiling at Dudley, who nodded at the woman's open mouthed expression of surprise and shock.

"What?" She asked. "What, pray tell is a Muggle-Squib doing in this school?"

"Teaching," Dudley answered. "I'm a teacher's aide in Muggle Studies and Care of Magical Creatures."

"I can understand Muggle Studies," she said. "How can you help in a class for Care of Magical Creatures?"

"I'm an aide in the class for third and fourth year Care of Magical Creatures," he said. "I help maintain the balance for the teacher."

Her mind couldn't quite understand this and therefore she asked for clarification. So he explained in more detail. "The Professor in Care of Magical Creatures is Rubeus Hagrid. I've been told that he has a fondness for the more interesting and slightly more dangerous magical creature. More so then is suitable for those just beginning to learn about them. I'm there as a physical reminder that he can't bring in the more dangerous ones or the ones that he would prefer to teach about. He has to show at
least the basic ones first. The ones that a young magical child or young student of this school is more likely to come into contact with are not creatures like Hippogriffs."

"Ah," was all she had to say on the subject. She was well aware of Hagrid and his preferences. Neville had mentioned some of the classes that he's had with the half-giant. Secretly she was pleased that this was being taken care of and that there was a way to curb the man from his enthusiasm.

"I believe that this meeting will take much longer than I expect," she said. "You obviously have some serious questions. How about I stay in one of the school's guest rooms and we can take our time to discuss this?"

"Nonsense," Dudley said. "You'll not take some old guest room in this school."

"Young man if you're suggesting…"

"I'm not suggesting you go to Hogsmeade," he replied. "That would be rude. I meant that you will say with me. I live in a suite of rooms in the Founders Tower and you would be safest there. Besides Neville lives there now."

"You're living together?" Lady Longbottom asked. "Neville?"

"We live have separate sleeping quarters, Gran," he said. "I would never move in, in the manner you're implying unless I was properly bonded. I have been raised to know better." He smiled at her when he said this.

She sighed in relief, smiled back at both and then asked them to explain. It was then that she was told that most Teachers, Teachers' Aides and Apprentices live in various parts of the school, in their own private quarters. Their locations were spread out in order to have coverage for the students, should the need arise.

"My room is part of a suite of rooms that Dudley has claimed for his own," Neville said. "Think of it like the wing of a mansion. Each room can be accommodated or changed to become a separate suite linked by a corridor. In my room I have a private library, plus study. There's also an internal greenhouse for magical plants, a kitchenette and alcove for private meals, a private bathroom and loo, plus the obvious bedroom."

"Mine is similar, except that my internal greenhouse contains Muggle plants," Dudley said. "There are two more rooms of similar configuration in my section of the tower and what I would offer to you is one of those extra rooms, if you are willing?"

"Oh my," she said, suddenly overwhelmed. It was strange to feel welcome and be offered something like this. It truly pleased her to hear it come from the young men, as unconscious a thought because that indicated that they wanted her and wanted her to make herself at home within their own space.

"I'd be honoured," she said. "You will show me these rooms now and I will make a plan to stay longer once I've closed up our own home."

Neville nodded, accepting this as is because he truly didn't want her to be in that great house all by herself not in these troubled times. Not only that, but he was getting worried about her, every time that he left for school and had to leave her behind. "Thank you, Grandmother," he said.

She knew that he was relieved and when she looked over at Dudley, she also noticed that he was relieved too. "Well boys," she said. "I'm not getting any younger, so you better give me a small tour of the school, while you show me where we'll be staying."
Dudley stood up and then went behind Neville's chair to assist him in standing. He waited while Neville did the same for his Grandmother. Soon she was tucked in arm and arm between both of the young men and demanding an explanation about that annoying crystal that was flying about her Grandson's head.

"It's distracting," she complained. They laughed and then proceeded to explain what they could about it, while showing her what changes they could see on their way to the Founders' Tower.

---------------------------------

Elsewhere, that same night

Ron watched the Quidditch game so avidly that he never noticed that one of his ‘associates’ had sat down next to him. He was so absorbed in the game and in the recording of it with the ‘Omniooculars’ that the Headmaster had provided to him upon Ron's request, that he was so startled and shocked when he heard a voice drawl, “I’m surprised to see you here free and roaming about on your own, when all other students must remain ‘safe’ within that school.”

Ron nearly dropped the precious device that he was using to record the game, but instead he tightened his grip on them and just said, “I was given special dispensation from the Headmaster. Not that I need to explain anything to you, Lestrange.”

It was indeed Rabastan Lestrange that was sitting next to him. He was curious about this weird red-headed boy that the Dark Lord seemed to favour. He was also very curious to know why any Weasley, a family notorious to rally for the Light, would choose to be Marked by a Dark Lord.

“Does our Lord know about this?”

“I was going to send him something after the game was over,” Ron answered.

“Why not before or now?” Rabastan asked.

The Gryffindor sighed, “Because I’m recording this game to prove that I’ve been here. To further prove that have been here, I have to watch it. I can’t let anyone know that I can roam about. If I hadn’t brought these, then perhaps my time could theoretically be used otherwise. Why do you need to know?”

“Just curious, is all,” the man said. They watched the rest of the game in peace and when it was done Rabastan asked, “You planning to come to any other games.”

Ron blinked. He cocked his to one side, wondering what the man was up to. “Why do you need to know?”

“I just thought that if you had this kind of freedom, you would be able to at least Owl our ‘friend’ to let him know about it,” he said. “Perhaps you could even play the relay and forward messages from the school to him and back. It’s just an idea.”

“I thought about that, but my owl…” he stopped just as Pig showed up. The tiny thing landed in his hair, huffing and puffing with what looked like a large scroll. He gently scooped him up, took the scroll from his owl and then returned him to his head in order to let the little guy recover. Pig liked the red nest, of his Master’s hair, especially for resting in after such a long flight.

Rabastan got wide-eyed when he saw the tiny little thing. He pursed his lips and really tried to contain the laugh that wanted to escape from his mouth. “Prrrp, ga-hurrmp, hah,” he really tried, but
he suddenly got an image of the Dark Lord receiving Owl Post from this tiny, itsy, bitsy, really, truly, non-evil looking little… hooter. “Hah, a-aa—ha ha ha ha. Na, na, a-ha-ha-ah.”

Ron looked startled at the sudden laughter and just smirked at the fact that the big bad Death Eater was nearly pissing his pants with laughter. There were tears running down the man’s face and the poor man tried to pantomime the Evil Dark Lord accepting mail from Pig. Eventually he calmed down, but still chuckled from time to time.

“OK, now I see why you wouldn’t want to burden our friend with this…” Rabastan said, moving his hand up and down to indicate the situation. “I wouldn’t want to sent him there either. He’s such a cute little guy, though.”

Ron nodded and stated, “Thanks, he was a gift. He’s is important to my family too. We only have one other and that one should have long since been retired by now.”

Rumors of the Weasleys’ old suffering owl had made the rounds to those who cared about such things in the Wizarding World. “I understand, but picturing…” he held out his hand to pause and pantomime once more. Hoping that he wouldn’t choke on laughter again, he said. “Trust me. I wouldn’t want that little one to get in trouble.”

“Thanks,” Ron said. He looked at the missive and noticed that Hermione had gathered a few scrolls from the various other students with similar leanings towards the Dark. She knew that Pig could not be sent to the Dark Lord, but if Ron was out he could very well go to an Owl Post Office and forward their messages with a more officious looking owl. “Well, it looks like your idea was thought of.”

Rabastan looked at the bundle curiously. “These are for…”

“Yes,” the red-head replied. “I’ll just send them by Post Office Owl. There should be one in the town nearby.” He made his way down from the stands, but was surprised that Lestrange decided to follow him.

“Just watching your back,” the man said. “This could be important stuff.”

Ron snorted, “I doubt that any student in the school could have anything important to say. Although I feel that I must ask you, if ‘it’ itched at any point in time today?”

“Hmm,” Rabastan raised and eyebrow to question, but got the gist when Ron brushed his hand down his left forearm. “It did.”

“I think that some in the school felt the exact same thing,” he said and looking down at the scroll containing several missives, he commented. “This could very well be important, then.”

“You think an itch is important enough to tell him,” the man asked, wondering what could be going through this boy’s mind.

Ron paused and thought about. “You never know. It depends if anyone else felt it or if everyone else did. I’d be careful later this evening, if I were you. He might decide to ring you up, you know. That’s why I’ll use the Owl Post Office and go straight back to the school.”

“How about I deliver these messages for you?” Lestrange asked. He didn’t think that he would be trusted with such, but then again the boy was a Gryffindor.

Ron snorted and said, “I don’t think so.”
Rabastan gave him a cheeky grin in acknowledgement that Ron shouldn’t ever trust any Death Eater for anything of this nature because they were more likely to stab you in the back or take the credit for whatever…

They walked quite companionably in the near darkness, as many Quidditch games were played while daylight was still out. There weren’t that many stadiums set up for night games, but that’s a Wizarding World kind of thing.

Once at the Owl Post Office, Ron selected a durable Owl and he asked the Post Master for permission to cast a few protective spells on the creature. This Post Master was well aware of the company that Ron had with him and agreed. He didn’t want to lose a bird due to some nastiness that seemed to be gathering.

Ron knew what the Post Master was thinking by how he was watched and he knew that this man obviously had a family, as he was acting twitchy, anxious. He had taken a couple copies of the Hogwarts Herald in order to hand them out to his family, but the twins got there first. So he kept them and out of some obscure reason he took one out of his pocket and gave to the Post Master at the same time when he paid for the ‘special delivery’.

Rabastan looked on, but didn’t comment on the fact that the Gryffindor had given the man a school newspaper. He didn’t care. He was only curious to know whether the boy was planning to see more Quidditch games in the future and so asked him.

“Are you going to be able to see another game in the near future?” He asked. He wanted to know more about the youth, besides he’s always had a thing for red-heads. There was something about them that seemed to have a calming effect for him. ‘Well maybe that’s not entirely true,’ he thought. ‘Red-heads were known to have fiery tempers and strong passions. I guess that’s why I… like them.’

Ron released the Owl Postal bird and was about to walk out of the door when Rabastan asked that question. He looked at the earnest features of the man and gave a somewhat shy smile and said, “Maybe.” He grinned cheekily and disapparated from the spot just outside the door in order to return to the school by the arranged method that the Headmaster had set up just for him.

Rabastan liked that he was able to get an honest answer out of the youth. ‘Well a maybe at this point in time is as honest as he can tell me without giving away the fact that he was in a Seasons box seat,’ he thought. ‘I wonder if he somehow was able to get seasons tickets.’

He returned to his home thinking about the enjoyable evening that he just had. It was very tame by his standards. He found that it has been a very long time since he was able to enjoy being in the company of someone and knowing, with absolute certainty, that he wouldn’t be attacked.

Sitting in his private den he contemplated the shy smile that he had received. He really wanted to get to know this youngster better. However, he would have to be very careful about it.

‘A pet of the Dark Lord is not to be coveted,’ he thought to himself.

He knew all about Malfoy’s boys and he had always thanked his own lucky stars that he never had to go thought that. By the time that he had actually gotten Marked, he was considered too old for such pleasant adult games.

‘Well not only that, but I didn’t have the look that they were seeking,’ he thought, once again grateful because it was true.

He wasn’t that tall nor that short, five feet and ten inches is nothing too remarkable and he was built
kind stocky or wiry. Too much muscle that showed him to be a man that couldn't be defined in any way as 'slender', which was the Dark Lord's preferred structure for sex toys.

His hair was a light brown and his eyes were gray-hazel, but they still pretty much made him an average looking kind of man. He was near the same age as Severus Snape, who was only thirty-seven years old. He was still considered young among the Wizards in this world, but he had not married or bonded at a young age. He'd thought about it, but then he was too far away to make such a decision.

His father had chosen for his brother Rodolfus to have a marriage contract with the Blacks. If his brother had not decided to marry Bellatrix Black, then he would have had to honour that contract. Something that he would never had wanted in the first place. Lucky for him, his brother wanted that bitch.

It was no secret among the purebloods about her and her sisters. They were weird in the strangest sense. 'Lucius was lucky to marry Narcissa because she was no Bellatrix,' he recalled.

Bellatrix had followed her mother's teachings very well indeed. She was always hiding her inner callings to work with the Dark side of the magics. She waited until she was married and fully bonded. Rodolfus did the same and once they were both bonded for the rest of their lives, it was then that she felt her calling to be one of the Dark Lord's followers.

Rabastan's own brother felt that same calling, but Rab never felt that until the time that he was about to make a fool of himself. His father caught him in a delicate situation with another man and before he even knew what was happening, he was placed in his brother's household away from his paramour at the time.

It was only later that he realized he had been about to be bonded against his will to the one that he thought he loved and that he believed had truly loved him back. It was a nasty trick from a Wizard that had wanted this Lestrange to belong to him. The man wanted a catamite, more commonly known as a sex slave without a mind for anything other than fucking.

Rabastan was pissed off because the man had been known to be one who fought for the side of the Light. It was in fact worse because that thing hid his misdeeds with a veil of 'goodness'. When he eventually found out about it, he immediately joined Voldemort's campaign.

It was never because he believed in the Darkness that the Dark Lord was spreading, but because he wanted to chase down all those so-called 'good' Wizards that hid their nefarious deeds in a veil of self-righteousness and, of course, presented a blameless, virginal view for Light side of the world.

Now once again he felt a call to be with another person. Only this time it was someone who was also Marked by the Dark Lord. Worse it was one of Voldemort's known toys.

'A pet of the Dark Lord is not to be coveted,' he thought once more. 'Poor kid, I wonder how it was that he came to be Marked in the first place.'

He had been out of the country ever since they had escaped from Azkaban. He begged the Dark Lord to be able to go out and recruit some of that known Dark creatures that were willing to fight for his Lord's glorious cause. Also, he asked to be able to seek out special resources from known Dark libraries buried deep in the undergrounds. The Dark Lord had agreed, as he was always looking to increase his knowledge in the Darkest of Arts.

Rabastan came back near the end of Harry's sixth and that's when he noticed the Weasley boy. Malfoy had been instructed to take the boy and break him in, as per normal. However in this
particular situation, it was obvious that Lucius was using the Weasley kid to feed his ongoing need to punish that family for whatever reason started that God damned feud between those to houses.

There had been a rumor at the time that Malfoy had wanted to train this boy away from the Dark Lord's presence. However there was also another rumor that followed closely to this one. It was said that the Dark Lord had taken exception to Malfoy's seeming possessiveness of the Weasley that their Lord Voldemort had ordered Lord Malfoy to submit to the red-head for play. All of this was to occur in the Dark Lord's presence.

Subsequent to those, absolutely fascinating, rumors there were several varying reports within the Dark Lord's followers. Several of the more gossipy Death Eaters were heard to have reported seeing Lucius Malfoy unable to properly sit down for two days following and whenever he did manage that feat he was reported to visibly wince, but follow it with a slightly pleased smile.

Rabastan's mind was constantly dwelling between the red-head boy he had just been with and with the image of Malfoy being forced to submit. 'To submit in play to that one…' he paused in his thoughts, as his body took an instant interest when he imagined the passion that the young man could bring to a sex game. 'If he were to let go and really take charge, oh man, I want me some of that.'

He was hard at the thought of all that red-hair flying in passion or anger, he didn't care, it was arousing for him to think of it. He palmed himself and re-arranged his hard-on, when he felt the burning of the Dark Mark. 'Damn it,' he thought. 'Just when I was planning a little bit of self-gratification. What bloody rotten timing and rotten luck. I hope that Weasley was able to return to the school in time.'

He gathered his robes, Death Eater mask and he tried to apparate to the Dark Lord's side. His Mark was burning hotter then ever before and just before he could even say the spell to apparate, he fainted from the burning pain.

He wasn't the only one, as many Death Eaters were unable to get to the Dark Lord Voldemort's side that night.

---------------------------------

The following day

The day after their bonding Severus woke up arching his entire body, stretching and leaning into the stroking hands that were petting him. It took him a slight moment to realize that he wasn't in pain and he knew that there was now only one person in the world who could touch him in that manner. The thought made him smile.

He quickly looked over his shoulder and his smile grew wider. He figured that he'd examine the bonding gifts later. He turned over to face his now bonded mate and continued to smile.

Remus was there in his human form. He was a somewhat hairy man, but most of that could be attributed to the inner wolf. As a child seeing his parents and other family members, he had noted that they tended towards the less hairy side of things after puberty, whereas he gained quite a bit more. He blamed the wolf for this, but at least whatever was there was soft to the touch, just like Moony's fur.

The man smelled his mate and the werewolf in the back of his mind was very content with the results of last night's event. His hands felt the leanness of the man he was wrapped around. He snuffled at
the neck and his hands were seeking just to touch, freely touch his mate.

Severus took the time to really look at Remus and he too was returning the need to just touch his mate. Hands pressed and stroked the hair on the arms and he was fascinated by the curls of chest hair. Peeking from within that nest were two dusky rose nipples that appeared to be sensitive to the patting that the chest was receiving.

‘Interesting,’ he thought, brushing the tip one finger over just the tip and he watched in perk to attention. He was about to do a little bit more, when the hair at the back of his neck was grabbed and he was gently forced to look into the face of his mate.

It wasn’t a demand or command of any kind. The Potions Master looked into the gently amber-brown eyes of his bonded mate and saw the desire to claim within them. He felt that too, as one of his legs was being hooked over a hairy thigh. His own inner thigh tingling from the sensation and there was a semi-thrust or more like a languid touch of groin against groin.

Again that hand in his drew his attention back and he watched with his growing arousal as that delicious mouth descended onto his. A quick kiss to the lips and a tiny mouth cleansing later, they were snogging the breath out of each other.

Remus pulled away from that sinful looking mouth, brushing his lips and nipping at the jaw of his mate. He was moving down to the neck and the mating mark that was there. He laved it with his tongue and then sucked it for a bit.

Severus bucked under that sensation and he felt himself harden even more. He rubbed his erection against that of his mate, when he felt a large hand wrap around both together. He keened and pumped into that hand, while one of his own joined it to double the pleasure.

They fisted together and the dark haired man leaned forward to suck on the collar bone in front of him, while Remus was doing sinful things to his neck and ears. Nipping, sucking and marking them.

Remus rolled them over so that he could look down at his mate and he was breathless at the wanton image before him. Midnight-black hair fanned over the pillows. The lips were still moist and swollen pink from all that kissing. The neck was marked from the sucking kisses, but it was the dark eyes that stared at him from behind long lashes.

They were filled with passion, want, lust and most importantly love. He felt it, just as he saw it and knew that this was it.

He leaned down to kiss that man and took his hand away, pushing that of his mate's too. His hardened cock, free from any fisting hand, allowed him to fully lean and rest his body onto that of his mate. He thrust down in a completely surrounding his mate and began the age old of full frontal body frottage, without the clothes.

Severus was not smothered by such an action. In fact he felt loved and protected. Not only that, but he had never experienced this before. This was something that teenagers experienced in their first sexual fumblings, but not him. He was surprised at how lewd such an act could be, however he only returned thrust for thrust until they were both awash with their orgasms.

Their juices flowed and covered both their stomachs and Remus collapsed his full weight onto his mate. They rested there for a bit, but they soon had to get up in order to clean off the mess or else they would get stuck together.

Once clean with a quick change of the sheets, using magic of course, they returned to bed, snuggling
into one another and returned to sleep, knowing that there would be a repeat of the bonding, later.

-----------------------------

TBC...

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!